

# The Magical Witches of Winter



A Closer Look at the Genus *Hamamelis*

# PDF of Presentation

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# Witch Hazel.....



*“Whilst winter’s hand is yet heavy on  
the land the Witch-hazels boldly put  
forth their star-shaped yellow blossoms”*

– Plant Explorer *E. H. Wilson* 1927

# *Hamamelis*

“Hama” – at the same time

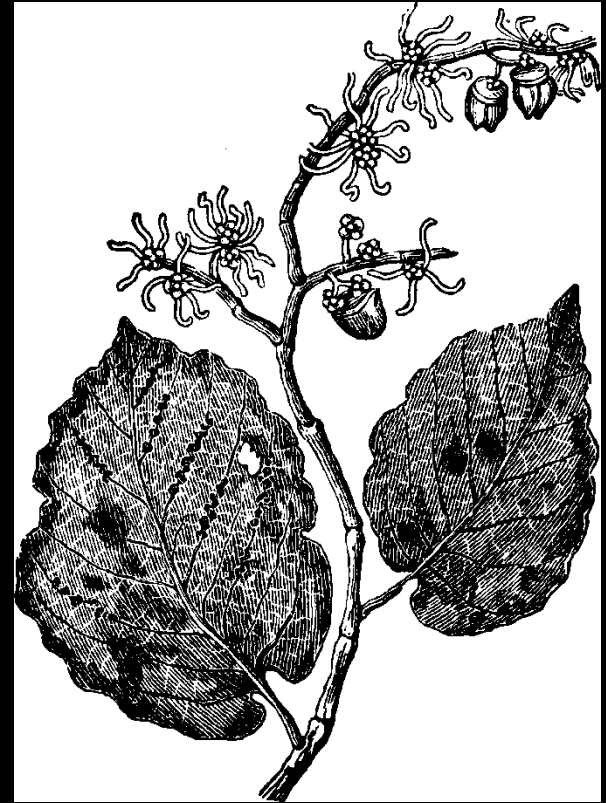
“Melon” – fruit or apple



# Witch Hazel

“Witch” – use of forked stems for water dowsing by “water witches”

“Hazel” – resemblance to the filberts or hazels (*Corylus* sp.)





# Overview



**Bugs Bunny and Witch Hazel II 80992**

(Promotional Use Only — Card Not For Sale)

- Deciduous shrubs or small trees (10-30' tall)





- Simple, oval leaves



- Two-valved capsule







# Naked “hoof shaped” vegetative buds





# Rounded clusters of floral buds



Smooth, dark-grey bark





- Four-petaled, strap-like flowers, born in late autumn or late winter







# Landscape/Ornamental Use

- Unique Flowering Period
- Naturalizing
- Fall Color
- Fragrance
- Woodland Gardens
- Specimen
- Shrub Border





























# Cultivation

- Rich, Evenly Moist, Well-drained Soils
- Avoid Drought
- Best Flowering and Fall Color in Full Sun
- Acidic pH (4.5-6.5)
- Zone 4-8
- Few Pest and Disease Problems
  - Powdery Mildew
  - Leaf Gall
  - Foliage Blight



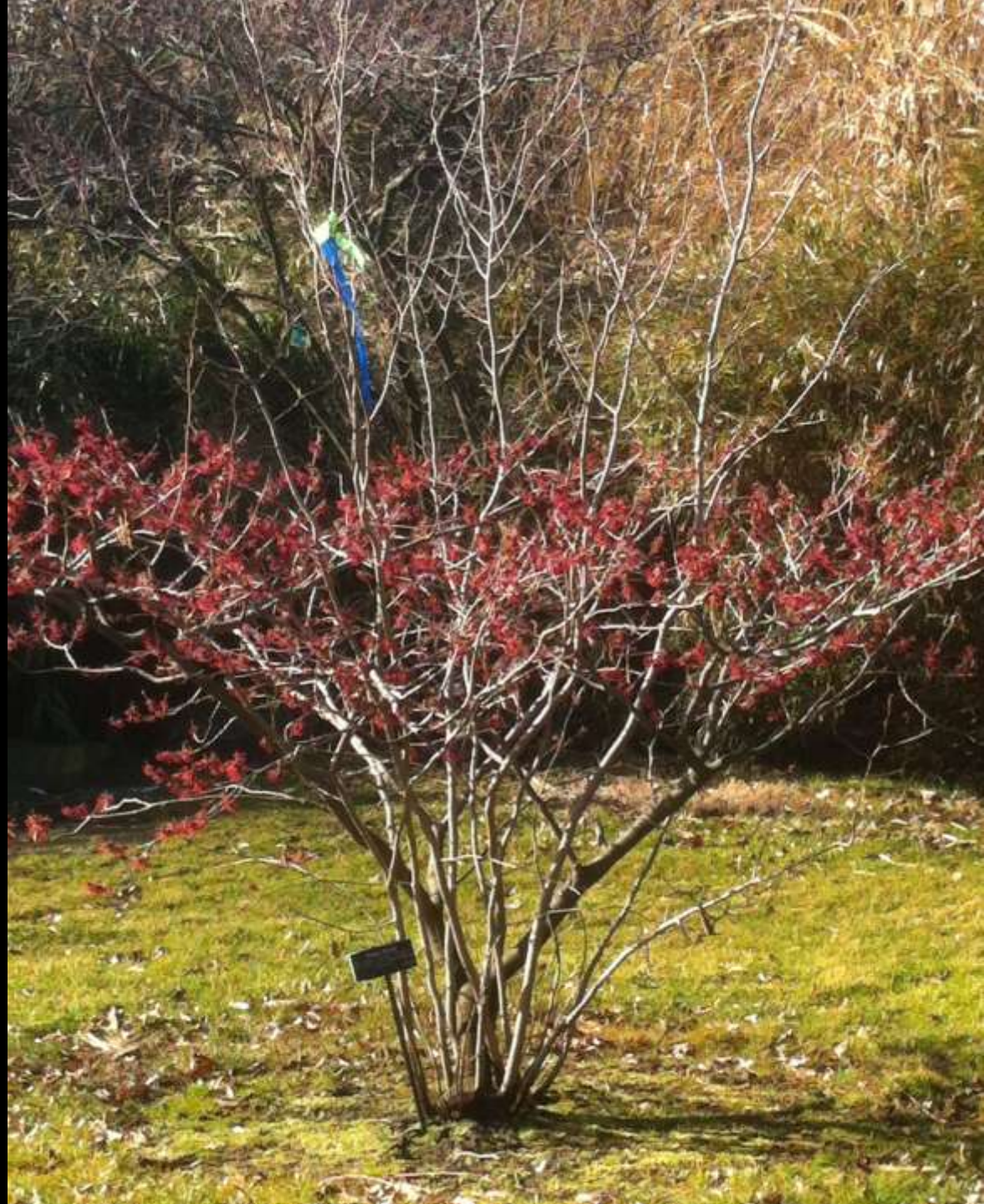


# Special Care/Considerations

- Rootstock Suckering
- Background/Proper Site Selection
- Pruning to Maintain Compact Form
- Leaf Retention

# Rootstock Suckering







# Background/Proper Site Selection



# Pruning to Maintain Compact Form



# Leaf Retention







# Genus Comprised of 5 Species

- *Hamamelis virginiana*
- *Hamamelis vernalis*
- *Hamamelis ovalis*
- *Hamamelis mollis*
- *Hamamelis japonica*
- *Hamamelis x intermedia*

# *Hamamelis virginiana* Common Witch Hazel



# Native Habitat

- Understory
- Dry Woodland Slopes
- Moist Woods







# Habit

- Upright, V-shaped form





# Flowers

- Pale Yellow
- Late Autumn
- Often appear with foliage
- Faint scent













# Foliage

- Medium green
- Yellow in fall





# History of Use



# Divining Rods



*EPREUVE par la BAGUETTE.*



# Magic and the Occult

- A tea made from the leaves & bark of witch hazel was believed to heighten occult powers.

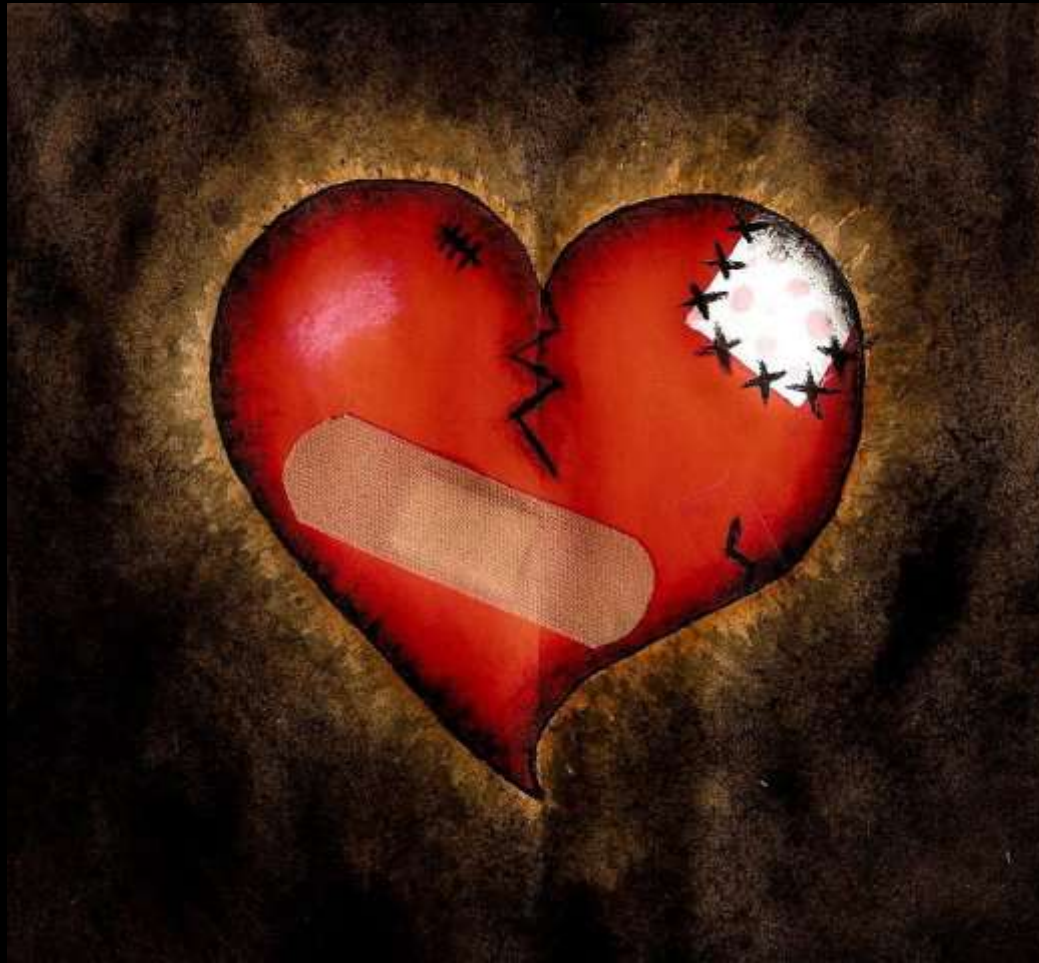


- Witches were said to burn witch hazel wood when preparing a brew.





- Modern witches consider witch hazel a magical herb and utilize it in spells to guard against evil influences and to heal broken hearts



# Medicinal Value

- Used by Native Americans
  - treating cuts, alleviate colds, eye disorders and other ailments



Lester Skeesuk, a Narragunsett-Mohegan of Brothertown, Wisconsin.

- Thomas Dickinson established a distillery in Essex, CT in 1866



# WITCH HAZEL

RELIEVES  
BRUISES-BURNS  
SPRAINS

*BE SURE AND GET*

# DICKINSON'S

YOU'LL NOTICE  
THE DIFFERENCE



- Wood Harvested from Native Stands
- Chipped
- Steamed/Distilled to extract oils







- Still used widely today in both medicinal and cosmetic products







# Ornamental Value

- Native Plantings
- Late Season Bloom
- Naturalizing



# 'Harvest Moon'









# 'Little Suzie'









# 'Green Thumb'







# 'Mohonk Red'



# 'Copper Curls'





# Late Blooming Selection





# *Hamamelis vernalis*

Vernal Witch Hazel, Ozark Witch Hazel



*vernalis* = “vernal” = winter bloom habit

# Native Habitat

- Understory
- Gravely Beds, stream margins

# Habit



- Spreading, suckering tendency, variable

# Flowers

- Short Petals (smallest of the species)
- Variable
- Pale Yellow, Orange, Deep Red, Purple
- Strongly Fragrant











# Foliage



Dark Green turning yellow, orange, red and purple in fall



# 'Amethyst'









# 'Quasimodo'











# 'Lombarts Weeping'







*Hamamelis ovalis*  
Bigleaf Witch Hazel



# Native Habitat



# Foliage





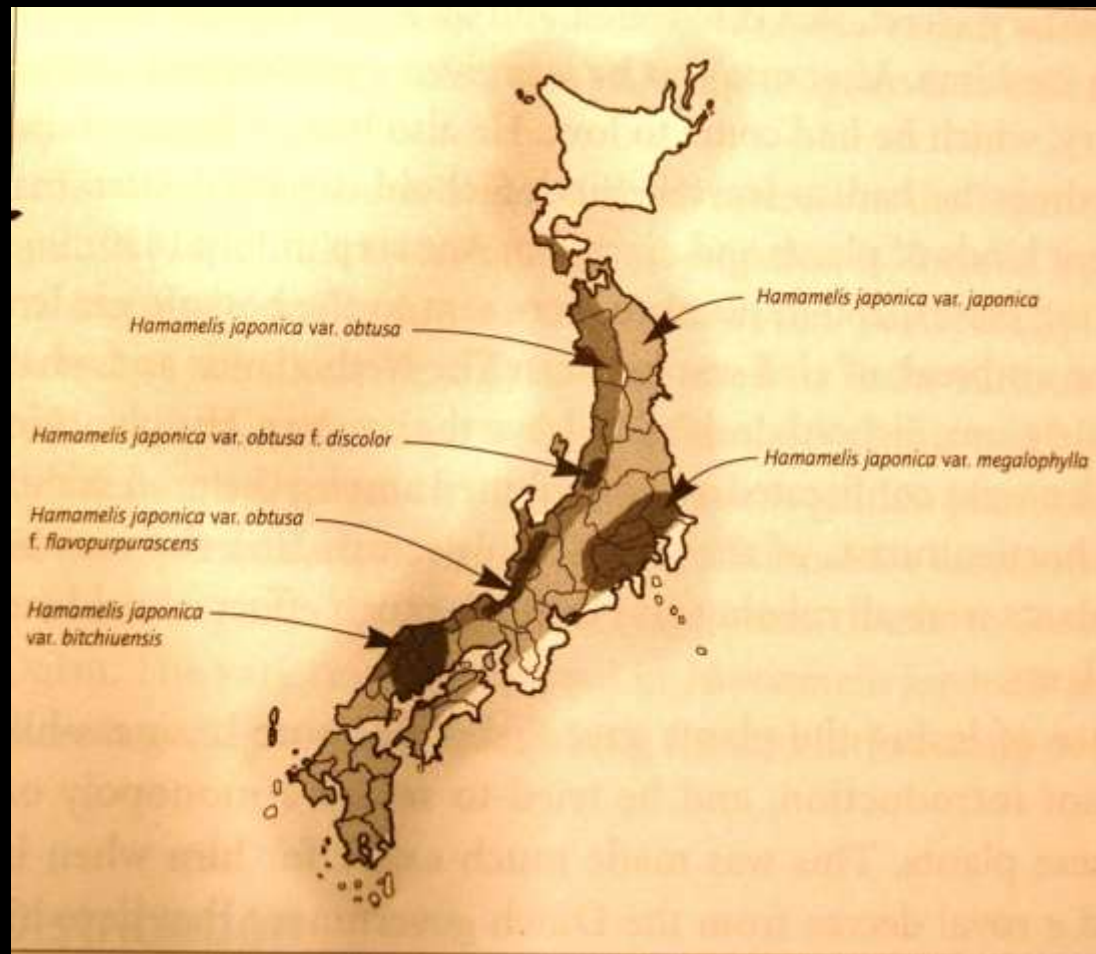
# Flowers







# *Hamamelis japonica*



# Native Habitat

- Sunny
- Reasonably Moist Soils

# Habit

- Variable
- Wide Gene Pool



# Flowers

- Golden-yellow to pale purple



# Foliage

- Similar to *H. virginiana* in shape
- Orange-red fall color





# History of Use

- Branches used for baskets
- Bark Used for building/binding material
- Prized for cut flowers for traditional ceremonies



# Ornamental Use

- Naturalizing
- Late Winter/early Spring Interest
- Fall Color



*var. flavopurpurascens*







*var. obtusata*











# 'Arborea'



# 'Tsukubana 'Kurreani' ('Shibamichi Red')







# 'Falling Stars' ('Pendula')











*Hamamelis mollis*  
Chinese Witch Hazel



*mollis* - “soft” – soft hairs on leaves

# Native Habitat

- Dry slopes
- Shade/Understory
- Rare in the wild

# Habit



# Flowers

- Bright Yellow
- Variable size
- Fragrant





# Foliage

- Medium green, broad
- Often pubescent







# Ornamental Use

- Naturalizing
- Late Winter/early Spring Interest
- Fall Color
- Fragrance

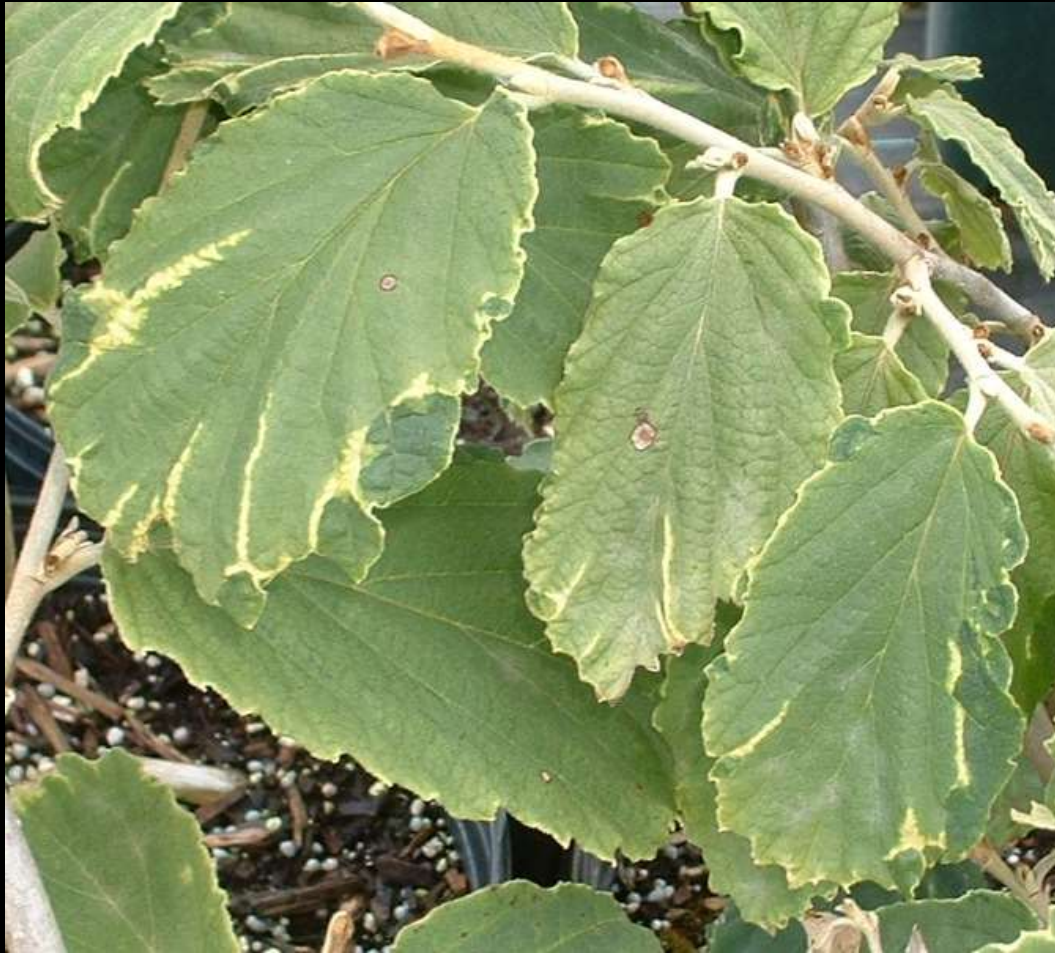


# 'Wisley Supreme'





# 'Gold Edge'





# *Hamamelis x intermedia*

## Hybrid Witch Hazel

- Hybrids of *H. japonica*, *H. mollis* and *H. vernalis* that occur in cultivation
- Intermediate in traits



# Yellow





# 'Arnold Promise'









# 'Sweet Sunshine'







# 'Barmstedt Gold'







# 'Candlelight Vigil'



# 'Westerstede'





# 'Double Gold'





# Red/Burgundy/Purple



# 'Diane'











# 'Birgit'





# 'Foxy Lady'





# Multicolor





# 'Strawberries and Cream'







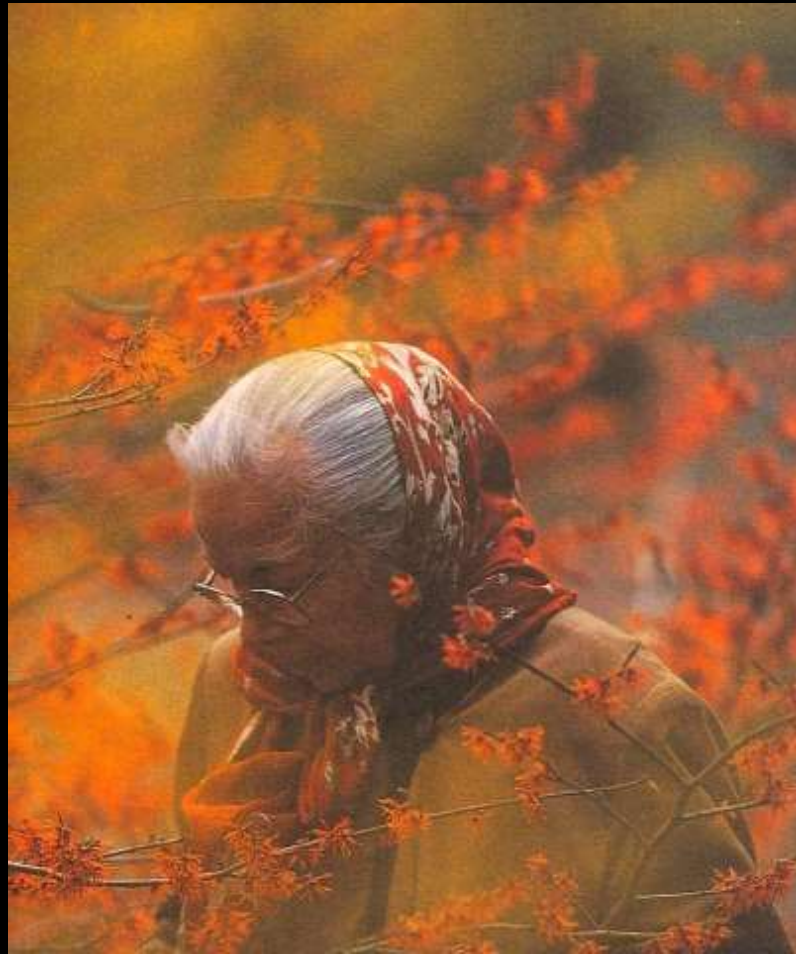
# 'Twilight'



# Orange



# 'Jelena'













# 'Aurora'







# 'Aphrodite'









# 'Gingerbread'







# 'Orange Peel'







# 'Orange Encore'



# Questions?????



Royal Horticultural Society  
Plant Collector Guide

## Witch Hazels



Chris Lane





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# ***OTHER TALKS***



- Lacecaps, Mopheads and Sterile Florets; A look at the Genus *Hydrangea*
- Fun with Color; Variegated Plants in the Garden
- Plant Geeks are Us; Oddball Plants for Oddball People
- Native Plants with a Twist

