

SKY NURSERY

Witch Hazel

Witch hazels (*Hamamelis* species) grow as large shrubs or small, spreading trees. They are valued for their fragrant late winter bloom and their bright fall colors. They are hardy to about -10°F and are easy to care for. They like full sun but will tolerate partial shade, appreciate regular watering in our summer droughts, and like good garden soil rich in organic matter. They do not require regular pruning, and they suffer from few pests. In the Seattle area, most witch hazels will start blooming around January, making them one of the mainstays of the winter garden.

There are several species of witch hazels, as well as a number of excellent hybrid cultivars. *Hamamelis mollis*, the Chinese witch hazel, has fragrant yellow blooms with red-brown sepals. It grows as a large shrub to smallish tree. It typically blooms January-March. *Hamamelis vernalis*, the Ozark witch hazel, has fragrant small yellow or orange blooms. It typically grows as a multistemmed, suckering shrub reaching 6-10 feet tall. Its fall color is usually a bright yellow. The most commonly found cultivars are hybrids between *Hamamelis mollis* and the Japanese species, *H. japonica*. *Hamamelis x intermedia*, as these hybrids are called, more typically stay shrub like, and their flowers come in a wider range of colors: yellow, copper, orange, or red. They usually bloom January-February (exceptions noted below). The hybrids also offer a larger range of autumn foliage colors, and are often characterized by variegated autumn foliage, as each leaf turns two or three colors, sometimes in concentric bands.

***Hamamelis x intermedia* cultivars:**

Arnold's Promise. Large shrub to small tree, covered in fragrant deep yellow blooms in late winter. Fall colors gold, orange and red. Height 10-15', width 10-15'.

Diane. Vase-like shrub with coppery red flowers. Light sweet scent. Best fall color of all witch hazels—fiery reds and oranges. Height 14-20', width 10-15'.

Firecracker. Medium growing upright shrub. Beautiful brick red blooms grading to yellow at the tips of the petals. Best in sun. Fall color reds and oranges. Height 12-15', width 8-10'.

Jelena. Large shrub to small tree. Always a favorite with fragrant coppery orange flowers. Summer foliage is lush, dark green, changing to vibrant red and orange in fall. Height 15-20', width 10-15'.

Luna. Large shrub to small tree, covered in fragrant pale yellow flowers with a burgundy base. Height 10-15', width 10-15'.

Primavera. Blooms a little later than many varieties (February-March). Fragrant blooms are bright yellow. Yellow to orange fall color. Height 12-15', width 12-15'.

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Hamamelis mollis cultivars:

Boskoop. Very free-flowering. Fragrant bright yellow blooms with a maroon base. Chartreuse to yellow fall color. Height 10-15', width 10-15'.

Pallida. Slow-growing variety with fragrant pale yellow flowers. Golden yellow fall color. Height 10-15', width 10-15'.