

## WITCH HAZELS OF NOTE

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When I first began to study *Hamamelis*, or witch hazels as they are commonly known, in the early 1960s, there were far fewer species and cultivars available than there are today. Apart from the well known *Hamamelis mollis* and some of its cultivars, such as 'Pallida' and 'Brevipetala', as well as cultivars of *H. japonica* such as 'Arborea', 'Sulphurea', 'Flavopurpurescens', and 'Zuccariniana', and *H. × intermedia* 'Ruby Glow', there was virtually nothing else to be obtained from nurseries of the day. Since then about 20 new cultivars have been named and introduced.

Nearly all these are cultivars of *H. × intermedia*, the hybrid between *H. mollis* (Chinese witch hazel) and *H. japonica* (Japanese witch hazel). Several have originated in the Kalmthout Arboretum in Belgium, but others have been raised in England, Germany, Denmark, USA, and Japan.

A number of selections of the North American species, *H. vernalis*, (Ozark witch hazel) have also appeared during recent years. With, perhaps, one or two exceptions, I feel that they do not compare in terms of garden value with the larger flowered species and hybrids referred to above, and so I do not propose to deal with them in this paper.

It is not surprising that with so many new introductions there is often some confusion between growers and customers as to which are the best. There are few places in England where one can go to study and make comparisons among all the different witch hazels now available but there is a fine collection in the Hillier Arboretum, Hampshire, and another in the Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park, Berkshire.

The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens National collection holder of *Hamamelis* is Mrs. P. Edwards, Bonningale Nurseries, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire. Comprehensive written accounts are also hard to come by. None are completely up to date, but the best ones known to me are:

1. Roy Lancaster—series of articles published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1970.

2. Herman J. Grootendorst—*Dendroflora* No. 17 1980. This annual publication is a useful source of information on new cultivars raised in Europe.

For sources of supply in the U.K. a useful publication is *The Plant Finder*, published annually by the Hardy Plant Society.

The following is my personal appraisal of the cultivars of *H. × intermedia* introduced to date:

*Hamamelis × intermedia* 'Advent' (Hillier & Sons, Winchester, 1980)

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Habit	Medium to large upright shrub
Flowering period	Very early (mid-December to January)
Petal colour	Bright, clear yellow
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	Maroon-red
Scent	Faint
Autumn Colour	Yellow

Comments I have only seen the original plant in the Hillier Arboretum, which flowers very freely each year. The earliest cultivar to flower, sometimes fully out by mid-December. However, the petals do not open out completely flat and straight but remain slightly curved with crimped edges. Together with their medium size, this factor may prevent 'Advent' from being regarded as anything more than just another cultivar.

*Hamamelis × intermedia* 'Allgold' (Hillier & Sons, Winchester Before 1970)

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Habit	Medium sized to large shrub with ascending branches
Flowering Period	Mid-season (January-February)
Petal Colour	Deep buttercup yellow
Petal Size	15 to 16mm long, 1 to 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Purple-red
Scent	Sweet but faint
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments Petals are long and narrow and crimped as in *Hamamelis japonica* 'Arborea'. Unlikely to ever become well-known.

*Hamamelis × intermedia* 'Angelly' (J. H. M. Van Heijningen, Breda, Holland 1985)

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Habit	Vigorous, upright-spreading shrub
Flowering period	Very late (late February-March)
Petal colour	Clear, light yellow
Petal size	20 to 22mm long, 2 to 2.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Light green
Scent	Faint
Autumn Colour	Yellow

Comments Exhibited for the first time at the Flora Nova Show, Boskoop, Holland in 1987 where it received a gold medal. Plants have only recently reached England so it is too early to reach a considered verdict on its merits. However, it could be interesting for its large flowers and late flowering habit.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Arnold Promise' (Arnold Arboretum, USA 1963)

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Habit	Medium sized to large shrub with ascending branches becoming vase-shaped with age
Flowering period	Late (February-early March)
Petal Colour	Light yellow
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	Brownish-green
Scent	Sweet and fairly strong
Autumn colour	Shades of orange and yellow

Comments: A valuable plant for its late flowering habit and good autumn colour. Also for its upright habit at least in early years. Makes an excellent container plant and always blooms very freely.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Barmstedt Gold' (J. Hachmann, Germany 1975)

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Habit	Vigorous shrub with narrowly ascending branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (late January-February)
Petal colour	Rich golden-yellow, stained red at base
Petal size	23 to 25mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide.
Calyx colour	Deep claret, slightly glossy
Scent	Light-medium, sweet
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments: A first class witch hazel, likely to become very popular when better known.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Carmine red' (Hillier & Sons, Winchester Before 1960)

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Habit	Medium-large shrub with spreading branches.
Flowering period	Mid-season (January-early February)
Petal colour	Red at base becoming coppery bronze at tips
Petal size	18 to 20mm long, 1 to 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Deep claret red
Scent	Sweet but faint
Autumn colour	Rich yellow

Comments: Superseded by newer cultivars such as 'Diane' and 'Jelena'.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Diane' (R. de Belder, Kalmthout, Belgium 1969)

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Habit	Medium to large shrub with wide spreading branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (late January-February)
Petal Colour	Bronze-red to deep coppery red
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	purple-red, glossy
Scent	Very faint
Autumn colour	Scarlet, orange and yellow

Comments: The best red-flowered cultivar so far, and one of the best for autumn colour. Supersedes the cultivars 'Ruby Glow' and 'Feuerzauber' in most respects.



*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Feuerzauber' (H A Hesse, Germany 1958) (syn *Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Magic Fire')

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Habit	Medium sized to large shrub with ascending branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (late January-February)
Petal colour	Coppery-orange suffused red
Petal size	15 to 16mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	purplish-red
Scent	Sweet but faint
Autumn colour	Orange-yellow

Comments Inferior to the newer cultivar 'Diane' in most respects. No longer widely grown.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Gimborn's Perfume' (Von Gimborn Arboretum, Holland cf 1985)

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Habit	Shrub of medium vigour and rather upright branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (late January-February)
Petal colour	Bright, clear yellow
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	Bright red, slightly glossy
Scent	Sweet and strong.
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments I have only recently received plants of this new selection, so it is too soon to give a considered judgement on its merits.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Hiltingbury' (Hillier & Sons, Winchester Before 1945)

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Habit	Large shrub with widely ascending branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (mid-January-mid February)
Petal colour	Pale copper suffused red
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	Purple-red
Scent	Sweet but faint
Autumn colour	Lovely shades of orange and red

Comments Perhaps worth growing for its autumn colour but inferior in flower to newer cultivars.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Jelena' (R deBelder, Kalmthout, Belgium 1955) (syn *Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Copper Beauty')

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Habit	Vigorous shrub with ascending branches becoming vase shaped with age
Flowering period	Early (late December-January)
Petal colour	Reddish, basal third becoming ochre-yellow towards tip. Overall effect is coppery-orange
Petal size	20 to 22mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide
Calyx colour	Claret-red, slightly glossy
Scent	Sweet but faint
Autumn colour	Scarlet, orange and yellow

Comments Deservedly popular for its large flowers and rich flowering characteristics.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Moonlight' (Hillier & Sons, Winchester 1970)

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Habit	Medium to large shrub with ascending branches
Flowering period	Mid-season (early January-early February)
Petal colour	Pale, sulphur yellow, tinged red at base
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1 to 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Deep claret red
Scent	Sweet and strong
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments Flowers paler and less densely clustered than *Hamamelis mollis* 'Pallida'. Not widely grown

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Orange Beauty' (Bruns, Germany 1955)(syn *Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Orange')

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Habit	Shrub of medium vigour with an upright to spreading habit
Flowering period	Mid-late season (late January-February)
Petal colour	Orange-yellow, stained red at base.
Petal size	15 to 16mm long, 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Claret-red, glossy
Scent	Faint
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments. Rather distinct and attractive in flower, but perhaps overall not in the first division of witch hazels Another cultivar I have seen called 'Aurora' is very similar

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Primavera' (R de Belder, Kalmthout, Belgium 1969)

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Habit	Wide-spreading shrub of medium vigour
Flowering period	Mid-season (late January-February)
Petal colour	Clear bright yellow, stained purple-red at base
Petal size	16 to 18mm long, 1.5 to 2mm wide.
Calyx colour	Claret red, slightly glossy
Scent	Faint
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments: A rich flowering cultivar which is still not well known If it has a fault it is that the petals do not open straight but remain curved and claw-shaped Also they face downwards after the fashion of the *H japonica* parent

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Ruby Glow' (Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium 1946) (syn *H.* × *intermedia* 'Adonis')

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Habit	Bushy, upright shrub with many thin, twiggy branches
Flowering period	Mid-late season (end January-February)
Petal colour	Brownish-red with lighter red to ochre margin and tip
Petal size	10 to 15mm long, only 1mm wide
Calyx colour	Dark purple
Scent	Very faint
Autumn colour	Orange, bronze and scarlet

Comments. Although not without merit this cultivar has now been largely superseded by newer ones such as 'Jelena' and 'Diane'

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Sunburst' (D. Veerman Jr , Boskoop, Holland cf 1965)

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Habit	Vigorous shrub with vase-shaped habit
Flowering period	Early mid-season (January)
Petal colour	Bright, clear yellow, slightly darker than <i>H mollis</i> 'Pallida'
Petal size	22 to 26mm long 2 to 2.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Light claret red
Scent	None.
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments: Outstanding for its large flowers Young plants tend to retain some dead leaves but this habit disappears with age Superior in flower to the well known *H m* 'Pallida' but alas, no scent Not as widely grown as it should be.

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Westerstede' (H Helmers, Germany 1977)

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Habit	Vigorous, upright shrub
Flowering period	late (February-March)
Petal colour	Light yellow
Petal size	14 to 16mm long, 1.5 to 1.8mm wide
Calyx colour	Greenish-brown
Scent	Faint
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments. Probably selected for its late flowering characteristics, which would be of more importance in Germany with their hard winters, although free flowering, it does not compare well with the more brightly coloured cultivars Likely to be superseded by the new cultivar 'Angelly'

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Winter Beauty' (K. Wada, Japan 1962)

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Habit	Medium vigour, small broadly upright habit.
Flowering period	Early (late December-January)
Petal colour	Dark yellow, stained to brownish-red in basal third.
Petal size	20 to 22mm long, 1 to 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Dark red
Scent	None
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments. An attractive cultivar, but not easy to grow Subject to damage or death in hard winters Hardly grown any more in nurseries

*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Vezna' (R de Belder, Kalmthout, Belgium. 1970)

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Habit	Fairly upright shrub of medium vigour
Flowering period	Mid-season (January-February)
Petal colour	Orange-yellow, slight red staining at base
Petal size	20 to 24mm long, 1 to 1.5mm wide
Calyx colour	Deep claret red, slightly glossy.
Scent	Quite strong and sweet
Autumn colour	Yellow

Comments A distinct selection but the very long petals are twisted and crimped which detracts from its appearance a little Deserves to be more widely grown, however