



Information & photos courtesy of Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

<https://www.wildflower.org/>

and The Morton Arboretum

<https://www.mortonarb.org/>



Hamamelis vernalis - Ozark Witch-hazel, Vernal Witch-hazel

[Hamamelidaceae](#) (Witch-Hazel Family)

Synonym(s): *Hamamelis vernalis* var. *tomentella*

A small **tree** or large **shrub** to 15 ft. tall with multiple, crooked stems forming an irregular, open crown. Older stems assume an attractive gray to grayish-brown color. Its flowers, the first of anything to bloom, are yellow to red, four-petaled and 1/2 in. long. To avoid freeze damage, the petals roll up on very cold days. Fall color develops late and is an attractive golden-yellow.

Plant Characteristics **Duration:** Perennial **Habit:** Shrub

Leaf Complexity: Simple, alternate leaves; oval with broadly toothed margins; 2 to 5 inches long. New leaves emerge with a bronze or red cast, then turn to a medium green. Fall color is a good yellow.

Flower arrangement, shape, and size

Yellow, orange or red flowers with 4 strap-like petals in late winter to very early spring; very fragrant.

Bloom Time: Jan , Feb , Mar

USA: AR , MO , OK , TX

Native Distribution: S. MO to e. TX, e. to AL

Native Habitat: Rocky stream banks; moist, open woods

Shape or Form: Multi-stemmed, Round, Upright

Growth Rate: Moderate **Light Requirement:** Part Shade **Soil pH:** Acidic (pH<6.8)

Soil Description: Gravelly to clay soils.

Conditions Comments: Very flood tolerant. More tolerant of high pH than *H. virginiana*. Will sucker and form large colonies. Slow-growing and tolerates pruning quite well.

Propagation

Description: Seeds sown immediately after collection will be exposed to a period of warm temperatures to complete after-ripening. Pretreated seed must be double-stratified seed. Witch hazel can be layered from new wood. Rooted cuttings supposedly come easier from

Seed Collection: Pick fruits from late August to September before they completely dry. Spread to dry so seeds can be removed from **fruit** capsules. Seeds can be stored in sealed, refrigerated containers or directly stratified over winter in moist sand and peat at 41 degrees.

Seed Treatment: Stratify at 86 degrees for 60 days followed by 41 degrees for 90 days.

Commercially Avail: yes

According to the inventory provided by Associate Suppliers, this plant is available at the following locations:

[ArcheWild Native Nurseries](#) - Quakertown, PA

Bibliography

[Gardening with Native Plants of the South \(Reprint Edition\)](#) (2009) Wasowski, S. with A. Wasowski

Additional resources

USDA: Find [Hamamelis vernalis](#) in USDA Plants

FNA: Find [Hamamelis vernalis](#) in the Flora of North America (if available)

Google: Search Google for [Hamamelis vernalis](#)

Cultivars and their differences

Autumn Embers vernal witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis* 'Autumn Embers'): Upright form, 8 to 10 feet high and 10 feet wide; orange fragrant strap-like flowers; red-purple fall color

Red-flowered vernal witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis* f. *carnea*): red-flowered form.

Sandra vernal witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis* 'Sandra'): A large, upright form 10 feet high and 10 to 12 feet wide; yellow fragrant flowers; orange-red to plum-red fall color.