

Hazel

About hazel

Left to its own devices, hazel can grow up to 12m and live around 80 years. If coppiced, trees can live several hundred years. Hazel grows in the understorey of woodlands, in scrub and hedgerows.

Coppiced hazel provides shelter for ground nesting birds such as nightjar, yellowhammer and willow warbler and the open habitat encourages wildflowers that benefit butterflies, particularly fritillaries. Hazel leaves provide food for moth caterpillars, including the large emerald and barred umber. The nuts provide food for a range of animals, including woodpeckers, wood pigeons, jays and nuthatches.

Hazel wood has many uses. Historically, this has included thatching spars, hurdles, furniture and poles for beans and peas.



Identifying hazel

#1 Location – hazel grows amongst other larger trees such as oak and birch, amongst scrub and in hedgerows



Autumn catkins



Spring catkins

#2 Buds, catkins and nuts – you will often see green catkins on hazel in the autumn and the more well known ‘lamb’s tails’ as spring approaches. These turn into hazelnuts. The buds of hazel are oval, blunt and hairy and grow alternately along twigs. Nuts grow in the autumn and are enjoyed by animals and birds.

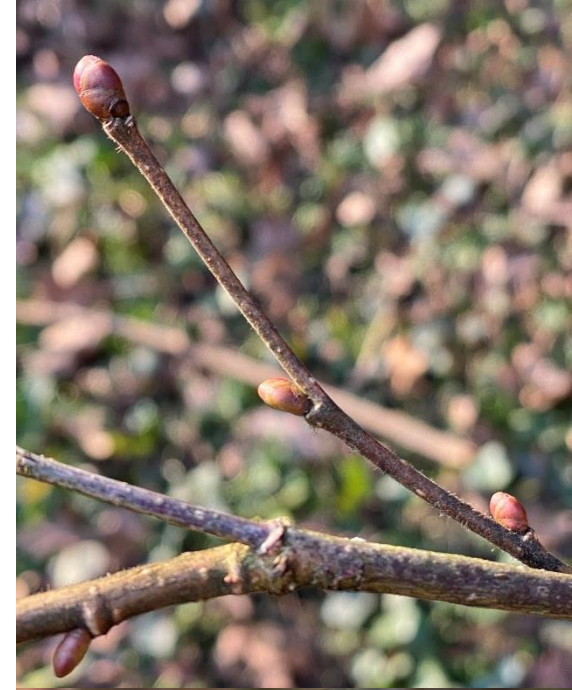
#3 Bark is smooth and shiny, from grey to reddish brown and with a tendency to peel; has visible horizontal ‘warts’

Where to find hazel trees in Torfaen

Hazel is quite common and you will see it along roadsides, in hedgerows and woodlands throughout Torfaen – most easily recognised by the catkins appearing from February.

Try Herberts Wood, Pontypool and Lasgarn Wood, Cwmavon

Buds



Flower

