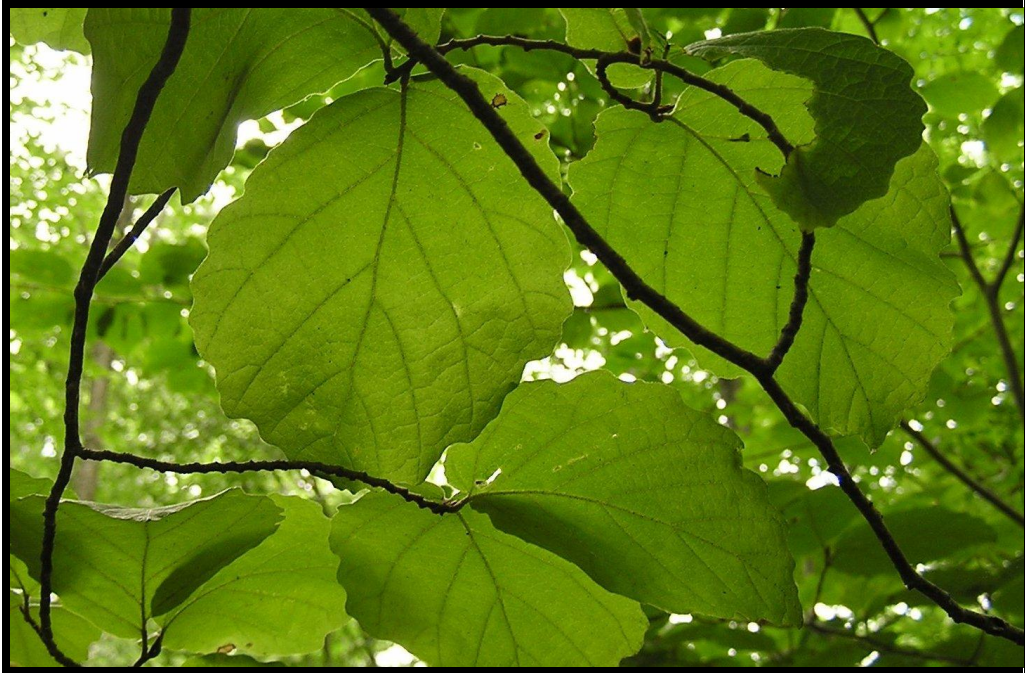


Flora of the Month



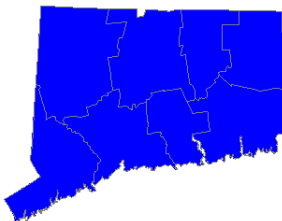
Photographed on the White Trail in the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve

Witch-Hazel

(Hamamelis virginiana)

At-a-Glance

- Habitat: Forest settings with shade or partial shade in dry to moist soil
- Range in Connecticut



Witch hazel is well known for its use on various skin problems. It is an ingredient in many skin products, and witch hazel extract has been sold in great numbers for more than a century. The leaves, bark, and twigs all contain the famous medicinal properties, though the bark has it in the greatest concentration. The extract is used for inflammations, burns, swelling, itching, insect bites and stings, just to name a few. In Eastern Connecticut, it is the foundation of a booming business.

Witch hazel is a deciduous shrub or small tree which can grow as tall as 25 feet, or rarely up to 40 feet. The leaves are alternately arranged, oval, 4 to 6 inches long, with a smooth or wavy margin. The genus name, *Hamamelis*, means "together with fruit", referring to the simultaneous occurrence of flowers with the maturing fruit from the previous year. Unlike most plants in this area, *H. virginiana* flowers in the fall of the year.