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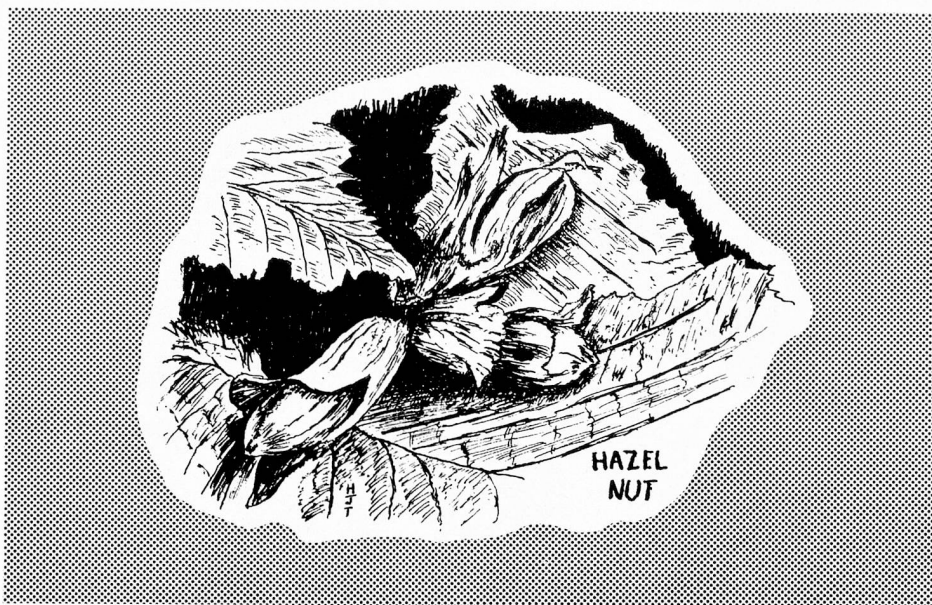
FOR THE GARDENER

HAZEL NUT OR FILBERT (*Corylus avellana*)

Sometimes known as the corkscrew hazel because its branches spiral upwards. It is a native of Europe and is frequently found in our hedgerows and woods, but the size and flavour of the nuts have been greatly improved by means of careful selection. Varieties known as Cob Nuts have short husks whilst those with long husks are called Filberts.

Planting should take place during the period October to March and the shrub will grow quite well in any type of soil but likes good drainage to produce the best results. No special attention is required, but to obtain a good, well shaped and highly productive bush, for the first three years after planting, previous year's growth should be shortened by about half during the spring, after this period no regular pruning is necessary. The bush produces male and female catkins, and one can tell the difference between the sexes as these catkins are usually produced in little bunches of three, two long one short, the longer ones are the males. When pruning as stated above, the cut should be made to a female catkin, however if some of the latter are produced at the tip of a branch or shoot do not prune those particular parts.

The foliage is very attractive, being a red/copper colour in spring and early summer turning to green later on.



Propagation is best done by taking suckers which shoot from the base, plant out into a nursery bed until large enough to plant out in position.

Best varieties are:

Kentish Cob Nut – best for the garden cultivation, large nuts and good flavour.

Kentish Filbert – good flavour, but does not set many catkins. It helps if planted with "Prolific Filbert".

Prolific Filbert – A heavy cropper, small nuts but excellent flavour.

The worst pest is the Nut Weevil. Control is best achieved by shaking the bush thoroughly in summer and removing and burning all nuts with holes in them.

The Hazel Nut was known in Norse mythology as a friend of Thor and thus a protection against lightning and thunderbolt. In the Tyrol the bushes are still used for making lightning conductors. Also Hazel wands have been used from time immemorial for seeking out water and hidden metals.

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