



PLANT SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH



Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

This is a beautiful, graceful, and fragrant fall-blooming small tree or shrub. It requires little pruning and offers much in the way of late fall color and insect nourishment. You may come across this species in the understory of a deciduous forest, though it is becoming more popular as a yard tree (for good reason!). Witch Hazel is rather unique in its ability to simultaneously hold flower, fruit, and bud. You may also recognize the name as an ingredient in a variety of skin tonics; indeed, the astringent properties of the twigs, bark, and leaves have long been used topically.

Mrs. William Starr Dana, author of "How to Know the Wildflowers," wonders about Witch Hazel, "*...is it that in the midst of death we have a fore-taste of life, a prophecy of the great, yearly resurrection which even now we may anticipate?*" This, perhaps, is one of the reasons this tree stands out in the season of the thinning veil.

Other lore would have it, though, that the "witch" in the name comes from belief that "if a person scouts an area with a properly-cut, Y-shaped limb, it will bend toward the ground at the spot where it encounters a large accumulation of ground water."

Autumn Cleanup Special

Don't miss out on your chance to claim **\$50 off any garden cleanup services totaling \$325 or more. Use the code BYEWEEDS.** Offer extended until October 31, 2019. Not to be combined with other specials or discounts.

Happy Halloween!

EFTE wants to help you keep it spooky and lookin' good all year—autumn specialties include:

- Tree Services, including removal and pruning
- Integrated Pest Management, including Lanternfly management
- Garden design and maintenance
- Aerating and amending soil
- Weed management
- Installation of a variety of native and pollinator-attracting plants
- Installation of spring bulbs





Did you know that some sunflower heads can contain *thousands* of seeds? This is just one of the many signs of nature's abundance and desire to go on. We can directly support the life cycle of plants by learning how to save seeds. Whether you've found excellent native plants in the wild that you want to support or you really loved a particular crop from an edible plant that does well in your ecosystem, seed saving and propagating is a beautiful practice in stewardship. In addition, seed saving can be a significant aspect of food security and sovereignty.

This is a good season to pay attention to any of your favorite plants that have gone to seed. Amidst the fading and decay can be found the seeds for new life.

TIPS FOR SAVING VEGETABLE SEEDS

- Learn about whether your plants are hybrid or open-pollinated varieties (open-pollinated varieties will produce plants identical to the parents,

- unlike hybrids).
- For beginners, saving seeds from self-pollinating plants like tomatoes, peas, and beans is easiest.
 - Keep in mind that for some crops, if you want to save seeds, you shouldn't harvest all the plants (root crops like carrots, for example, will need to be left in the ground in order to be able to get the seeds from the mature plant).

TIPS FOR SAVING FLOWER SEEDS

- Look for the right timing to snip seedheads. Typically you need to wait longer after the flowers fade.
- If you don't want to separate the seeds right away, you can put the whole seedhead in a baggie and let the seeds fall naturally.
- Especially with composite flowers like sunflowers, not all seeds are viable, so you can plant them thick.
- Dry seeds in a well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight.

TIPS FOR SAVING WILD SEEDS

- If you come across over-harvested plants such as American Ginseng in the wild, consider helping the plant by planting any mature seeds in that same area.
- For many tree and shrub species, the seeds need a stratification period. Essentially, they are expecting a period of cold before a period of warmth in order to germinate. This can be achieved naturally by planting in fall before temperatures dip below 40 degrees, either in the ground or in containers. Sometimes nature's process is slow, so you can also try the "assisted germination" method for seeds, in which you essentially mimic the conditions of nature at your own timing. Often this includes scarification and cold/moist stratification as well as warm/moist stratification.
- Consider the ethics of which plants you're choosing to propagate, where, and why.

If this is beginning to sound intimidating, remember how abundantly nature produces seeds. Experimentation is encouraged! If your plants don't germinate, you can always keep trying with new methods!



Have you seen this mushroom on any trees, logs, or stumps near you? Did you know it's one of the "foolproof" four edible mushrooms for people new to eating wild fungi?

Check out the [new article from our applied research and education branch](#) for all the details on how you can find and add this mushroom to your next meal!

from our social media feed:

Modest Mulching

You've likely seen the dreaded mulch volcanoes around Philly--shopping centers, walkways, highly landscaped areas, and more. It's really a shame to see the potential good of mulch turned into a very unhealthy reality for the trees. The problem occurs when a thick layer of mulch is piled up against the bottom of the tree in a mini volcano shape, covering the root flare as well as lower sections of bark. This practice prevents the bark from receiving much needed air and light and can lead to rot and disease. In addition, trees

naturally grow with their root flare at ground level. Too much mulch can inhibit the process of nutrient movement and can lead to girdling. When done right **(using a thin layer pulled away from the crown of a tree)**, mulch can support moisture retention, temperature regulation, weed suppression, and addition of healthy organic material to soil. But when done wrong, mulch can ultimately lead to sickness and even death of the tree. Be modest with your mulch, people-- knowledge helps us help trees!



Sometimes when we find mulch volcanoes out and about, our crew can't help but help the tree by pulling away that overdone mulch. Make doughnuts, not volcanoes!



Eating for the Ecosystem is a woman-owned business with predominately-female work



crews. In addition to our meticulous and eco-friendly practices such as limiting our carbon footprint and composting landscape debris, we are also committed to helping clients learn more about—and develop stronger relationships with—the plants in our ecosystem.

Help us Grow

If you believe a friend or family member would like to learn about Eating for the Ecosystem, please [forward this newsletter](#).



Gst } vktl x# 645=I exnk js v\ i I gs w} vi q 0E p\ vktl xvi vi vzi h2

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

