



HABITAT - the arrangement of food, water, cover, and space **-IS THE KEY**. This newsletter is a place to share ideas, information, and help answer some of your habitat and wildlife gardening concerns.

We want to hear from you! Letters, e-mail, photos, drawings. Let us know how successful you are as you create wildlife habitat on your property. Complete the online [Habichat Reader's Survey](#).

Write to Me!

Marilyn Mause, Wild Acres Program, DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service,
Gwynnbrook WMA, 3740 Gwynnbrook Ave, Owings Mills MD 21117
customerservice@dnr.state.md.us

[Habichat Reader's Survey](#)

[Native Plant Profile: American Hazelnut](#)

[Maryland Wildlife: Cedar Waxwing](#)

[Geocaching with Children](#)

[When to Plant](#)

[Printer-Friendly Version](#)

.PDF File - Opens with Acrobat Reader

Native Plant Profile... American Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)



Common names: Filbert, American Filbert, Hazelnut

General description: The hazelnut can be a tree or multi-stem shrub that can reach a height of 18', averaging 8' – 10', with a spread of 10' if not pruned.

Leaves: deciduous, alternate, somewhat oval, 3" to 6" in width, hairy underneath

Bark: Brown; young bark is hairy

Flowers:

- Male and female flowers are separate but both types are present on each plant.
- Male flowers called catkins appear in the fall opening in the early spring.
- Female flowers are small and often not easily noticed. They bloom from late February to March.

Fruit:

- Acorn-like nut is produced, thin shelled, 3/8" – 7/8" in diameter
- Nuts form in July and August, maturing in September.
- Nuts are formed in clusters of 2 to 6, covered at first by a husk like covering called a bract.
- Nuts are tasty and high in protein.

Soil: Hazelnuts grow in a wide range of soils from acidic to alkaline. Does best in loamy, moist, rich soil.

Sun: Does well in full sun, but can grow in shade.

Wildlife Value:

- The thick, dense spreading hazelnuts are ideal for cover and nesting sites. This makes them ideal as wood-border and hedgerow plants.
- The catkins, buds and nuts are an important food source for ruffed grouse and wild turkey.
- Nuts, stems and foliage are eaten by beaver, rabbits, fox squirrels, red squirrels, and raccoons.
- Nuts are consumed by the Red – belled woodpecker, Quail, Pheasant, Eastern chipmunk and the White – footed mouse.
- Twigs and foliage are eaten by White-tailed deer.



Landscaping notes:

- Not affected by any major insect pests.
- Can prune any time of the year.
- In the fall leaf color can range from orange to purple.
- As the plant can spread by rhizomes it is an attractive plant to use as a windbreak.
- Can be grown from seed, or seedlings as well as container plants.

Did you know?

American hazelnuts are similar to the European Hazelnuts that are grown to produce the nuts that are used commercially for food and flavorings throughout the world. "Hazelnut" is the old English term for "filbert".

Additional notes of interest from the Arbor Day Foundation:

- High in protein and cholesterol-free, these nuts are both deliciously sweet and naturally healthy. They can be eaten by themselves or sliced, minced, or crushed to add flavor to casseroles, squash, cookies, and candies.
- Woody plants are three times more effective at capturing solar energy than annual plants. This "photosynthetic efficiency" means woody plants used on a large scale could reverse increases in carbon dioxide...and its effect on global warming itself.
- Find out more about the Arbor Day Foundation's Hazelnut Research Field and Hazelnut Project at:
<http://www.arbordayfarm.org/conservation2.cfm>

Maryland Wildlife: Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)



Description: Grayish brown in color with a black mask, crested head and unique hard red wax – like tips on wing feathers. The "Cedar- bird" as it is sometimes known is slightly smaller than a robin at 6 1/2" to 8" in length. Usually found in flocks unless nesting.

Range: Found year round in Maryland. Breeds primarily in western Maryland. Waxwing flocks are highly erratic.

Voice: High pitched , sounds like "see" or a high pitched wheeze They make these sounds as they feed , fly or land.



Nesting: Waxwings nest later in the summer, July to August, when there is an ample supply of berries. Between 4 to 6 blue- gray eggs with brown or black spots are found in a cup like nest made of twigs and grass in a tree 15' to 30 ' from the ground They prefer a conifer in an open site. .Although both sexes help build the nest, the female incubates the eggs for 12 days. After hatching, the young birds stay in the nest about 17 days. Both adult sexes help feed the nestlings. Waxwings can store berries in a pouch in their throat, which they can regurgitate berries into nestlings' mouth. Most waxwings only have one brood per season. They will not reuse an old nest nor will they use a nesting box or platform.

Habitat: Waxwings prefer open woodlands, orchards, hedgerows and residential areas that have berry bearing trees or shrubs.

Food: Almost 90% of the waxwings food is fruit. Cedar berries are a major source , followed by cherry, dogwood, blackberry, chokeberry, hackberry, mulberry, Serviceberry, viburnums, grapes, crab apples, mountain ash, Elderberry, Holly, Greenbriar, and Poison –ivy, The other 10% of the birds diet consists of insects, such

as beetles, ants, grasshoppers crickets and mayflies. Waxwings will catch insects in flight.

Did you know? Cedar – waxwings feed in flocks on berry trees and are known to gorge themselves where they become almost too heavy to fly. They are also known to become drunk on overripe fruit, causing them to fly erratically.

[Click Here to View Video of Cedar Waxwings](#)



1.3 MB file
Opens with Real Player

Video of Cedar Waxwings, provided courtesy of Ed McHugh,
Rutgers University — Camden, Office of Information
Technology.

For additional photographs and video footage of Cedar Waxwings, visit:
<http://birds.camden.rutgers.edu/camden.html>

Geocaching with Children



High-Tech Scavenger Hunt

Want to get the children outdoors? Would you like them to learn something about nature in your backyard? Try the activity that involves technology to discover items hidden outdoors - Geocaching.

Geocaching is using a GPS (Global Positioning System) device to locate items, called the cache, that have been hidden outdoors; their location - Longitude and Latitude - of these items are placed on a site on the internet. GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the cache. It is a high-tech scavenger hunt.

You need to place the items at least 20 feet from each other, since GPS units determine approximate location within around 6- 20 feet on the earth. There are many Geocaching adventures you can find on the internet that take you to public places to find caches.

Begin in Your Own Backyard

But to begin, set up your own using your backyard and with the permission of your neighbors possibly their yards as well. Instead of having a logbook at each cache site, have the children put the log information back into the cache container.

For a backyard, your woods or woodlot adventure, use small containers that you can hide under a log, in a hollow tree, under a planter, or in an empty bird feeder, for example. Use old film containers, plastic bottles, or plastic eggs to place your cache in.

For a nature caches, instead of having an object in the container as conventional Geocaching does, have a question about nature that the child will have to answer. They may find the answer by having nature guides given to them in a small backpack prior to the activity. They write the answer down in the log at the site.

You could also have a small can of Play -Dough, in the cache container and have a written request asking them to mold a bird or flower. They can put it back in the cache site or take it with them. Since the children are answering questions at each cache site instead of picking up an object and leaving another object, at the end of the adventure check the children's answers and reward them with a nature book or something else nature or garden related.

Send Me Your Ideas

As this nature-oriented Geocaching activity is a variation of the traditional caching, and is fairly new, we would love to hear about your adventures with with your children and any ideas on how to improve upon these activities. Send your comments to: customerservice@dnr.state.md.us

There is an excellent web site that tells you the basics of Geocaching, GPS units and other related items at www.geocaching.com



When to Plant



The urge is there to dig in the ground once those early days of spring arrive. However, there are a few things to keep in mind when working in the garden or wildlife friendly backyard for the first time since fall.

Soil- You can damage soil's structure if you dig it or work it up too early. If the soil falls apart when you pick it up, it is safe to begin to work with it. If it feels wet and stays in a ball, it is too early. Do some other tasks that are mentioned in this article.

Temperature- Check with your local extension office or extension web site for the last frost date in your area. Tender plants if placed outside too early will suffer from frost damage. Seed planted too early will often remain dormant until the soil warms up or can rot if the soil is too wet. If the seed or plants you have purchased have planting date instructions, follow them! A general rule of thumb is to plant after all threats of frost have passed. Trees, shrubs and some hardy annuals can be planted before the frost free date, but check with the extension office in your area for local recommendations.

Here is a list of other projects to perform prior to planting that will get your backyard or garden in shape for spring:

- **Prune:** Early spring is a good time to prune roses.
- **Weed:** Pull weeds before they have a chance to take over.
- **Cut:** Cut back ornamental grasses
- **Replace:** If plants have been pushed out of the ground by winter's thawing and freezing replant as soon as possible.
- **Remove:** Remove heavy winter mulch that was placed around trees and shrubs that served as protection. Take down any burlap protection that was placed around plants. Same goes for winter tree guards.
- **Sharpen:** Sharpen and clean your garden tools and mower
- **Turn:** Turn over the compost pile if it has been left untouched since fall.

Before you know it, the projects are done, and your garden and backyard are ready for spring blooms!

Note: For Maryland residents your extension contacts can be found by calling the Home and Garden Information Center of the University of Maryland at 1-800-342-2507 their web site: <http://extension.umd.edu/local/index.cfm>

Acknowledgements:

- Photograph of hybrid Hazelnut from Arbor Day Farm, courtesy of Arbor Day Foundation.
 - American Hazelnut Collage Photographs, courtesy of:
Left Column:
(Top): Richard Webb, Self-employed horticulturist, Bugwood.org
(Middle): William S. Justice @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, photograph by William S. Justice courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.
(Bottom): Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, Steve Hurst. photograph by Steve Hurst provided by ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory, Takoma Park, MD.
Right Column:
(Top): Paul Wray, Iowa State University, Bugwood.org
(Middle): Paul Wray, Iowa State University, Bugwood.org
(Bottom): William S. Justice @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, photograph by William S. Justice courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.
 - Photograph of Cedar Waxwing fledglings used in artwork at the top of this page courtesy of Esther McWilliams, from "Beauty of the Big Horns," produced in cooperation with the Big Horn Forest Service, and displayed here with permission from the Big Horn Mountain Country Coalition.
 - Photograph of Cedar Waxwing with berries, courtesy of USFWS/Middle Mississippi River NWR
 - Photograph of Cedar Waxwing with young in nest, courtesy of G. K. Peck, Environment Canada.
 - Photograph of adult Cedar Waxwing on tree branch, courtesy of Ed McHugh, Rutgers University — Camden, Office of Information Technology.
 - Video of adult Cedar Waxwings eating berries, courtesy of Ed McHugh, Rutgers University — Camden, Office of Information Technology.
 - Photograph of 2 young boys with their "geocache", courtesy of Warren Packard, aka "Geek Dad". (Blogsite=http://blog.wired.com/geekdad/2007/03/geocaching_a_go.htm)
 - Photograph of woman with young boy stashing their cache in a tree, courtesy of Jim Braaten (www.SportsmansBlog.com).
 - Photograph of "Geocaching Family", courtesy of Jim Dissette. (website: http://northerncamper.com/things_to_do.html).
-