

# The Applecross Trust



## Fact Sheet 6

### Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)

Historically hazel has been a very important tree in the Applecross area, offering both its highly nutritious nuts and its highly useful wood. It can easily be found together with oak and birch in the native woodland areas at Arrina, Kenmore and Toscaig and most spectacularly in the hazel dominant woodland at Carnoch.

Hazel is a member of the birch family and typically has a number of shoots or trunks branching out just above ground level, which has led to its extensive use for coppicing. The growth of successive new stems leads to the formation of a large base, or stool, which can be up to 2m in diameter.

The coppiced stems are ideal for making hurdles, baskets and fish traps and walking sticks as well as making excellent charcoal. Traditionally school children had the job of collecting the nuts from Carnoch in the autumn. As a food source for birds, small mammals and people no other native tree can rival hazel for its excellent nutritional value.

Ecologically, hazel is very important for lichens and is the best host species in the UK for Graphidion lichens, some of which are very rare and for the Lobarion group of lichens, which are the larger, leafy lichens, which include tree lungwort - a commonly seen lichen in this area. The clean Applecross air is very conducive to a healthy lichen population since they are notoriously pollution sensitive.

