

## The Development of *Hamamelis ×intermedia*®

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*Hamamelis ×intermedia* is a hybrid that has occurred spontaneously in cultivation, to date all named cultivars have occurred this way. This article aims to document the introduction and development of this hybrid from its early beginnings to the present day.

### INTRODUCTION

The genus consists of four species: two species, *Hamamelis virginiana* (from which witch hazel extract is derived, for soothing cuts and grazes and used in eyewashes) and *H. vernalis*, the Ozark witch hazel, are from North America; two species are from Asia, *H. japonica* from Japan and *H. mollis* from China.

*Hamamelis ×intermedia* is a hybrid group between *H. mollis* and *H. japonica* which has occurred spontaneously in cultivation, the two species being widely separated in their natural distribution. It occurred initially at three sites, the Arnold Arboretum, U.S.A.; the Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium; and Charlottenlund Botanic Garden, Denmark.

Since that time the hybrid has been raised at various places, mainly in Europe but also in Japan. In recent times many of the hybrids are not primary (from the two species) but are the progeny of *H. ×intermedia* cultivars. Several of these are much closer in appearance to the original parents and may be mistaken for forms of *H. mollis* or *H. japonica*. The remainder of this article chronicles the introductions to the present day.

### ARNOLD ARBORETUM

Arnold Arboretum is where the first recorded hybrid arose. In 1928 William Judd, propagator at the time, collected seed from *H. mollis*. These seeds were sown in 1929 and seven seedlings survived to flowering, the colour varying from reddish, through coppery orange to yellow. Some bloomed sparsely, others retained their dead leaves but one proved to be outstanding and was given the clonal name 'Arnold Promise' in 1963. The epithet *×intermedia* was given by Alfred Rehder in 1945.

The identity of the male parent plant has not precisely been recorded but plants of *H. japonica*, *H. japonica* var. *flavopurpurascens*, and *H. japonica* 'Zuccariniana' were all growing nearby. The habit of growth and leaf shape would suggest 'Zuccariniana' as being the likely parent.

### CHARLOTTENLUND BOTANICAL GARDEN

It is recorded by Johan Lange that seeds of *H. mollis* were sown in the garden as early as the 1920s but no record ensues as to their fate. The only seedlings that were successfully grown resulted from a sowing in 1934. After World War II one of these seedling was selected by Mr. Lange as being superior to the other seedlings and in 1953 was given the cultivar name 'Nina' after the wife of Dr. C. Syrach Larsen who was responsible for sowing the seeds. Unfortunately during the late 1970s and early

1980s some three different clones were distributed from Denmark to Holland all purporting to be 'Nina'. It was not until 1990 that Wim van der Werf and myself obtained true stock from the Arboretum and were subsequently able to identify the correct clone amongst the three available in the trade.

### **KALMTHOUT ARBORETUM**

In 1935 Paul Kort, son of Antoine Kort who started the Arboretum in 1902 from what was then van Geert's nursery, selected a seedling from amongst many which was initially called *H. japonica* var. *superba*, later named 'Adonis' and finally called 'Ruby Glow' when introduced by the Moerheim Nursery of Dedemsvaart, Holland, in 1946. In 1953 George and Robert de Belder took over Kalmthout which had run into a dilapidated state during the second World War. From the hundred or so seedlings raised by Kort around 45 remain today. From these the following were named by the de Belders, 'Jelena'(1955), 'Luna'(1955), 'Diane'(1969), 'Primavera'(1969), 'Vesna' (1970), 'Adieu'(1984), and 'Limelight' (1984).

### **HAKONEYA NURSERY**

Two hybrids have come from this nursery and were raised by the late Kochiro Wada. The first of these was called 'Winter Beauty' (1962), and was introduced into Holland, from whence it soon made its way to England. A second cultivar introduced to England in 1975 by Chris Sanders was called 'Improved Winter Beauty'. This cultivar was not propagated and was thought to have been lost to cultivation in England, attempts to trace the five plants to where they were sold indicated they were no longer in existence.

In 1980, however, Tim Brotzman imported from Japan three plants, 'Winter Beauty', 'Iwado', and an unnamed seedling. 'Iwado' and the unnamed seedling proved to be the same clone. The name 'Iwado' had been given to a clone of *H. mollis* by Wada, and was imported into the U.S.A., which meant the clone that Tim Brotzman has could possibly have been 'Improved Winter Beauty', agreeing as it does with the limited description in the literature. As the situation is quite confused and the full story is unlikely to be unravelled, I have given the cultivar name 'Glowing Embers' (1998) to this plant.

### **HILLIER NURSERIES**

Four hybrids plus one interloper have arisen at the world famous Hillier Nurseries. 'Hiltingbury' (before 1945) and 'Carmine Red' (before 1960) were selected from a batch of seedlings of *H. japonica* which had been lined out in the Chandlers Ford nursery.

Two yellow-flowered seedlings were named and introduced later on, 'Moonlight' (1970), and 'Advent'(1980). A further plant 'Allgold'(c. 1970) was introduced, the origin of this plant, however, is unknown.

### **HEINRICH BRUNS NURSERY**

The importance of this nurseryman in the development of *H. × intermedia* cultivars has not been fully recognised and he is in my reckoning second only to the de Belders. After the second World War he sowed many seedlings, however his nursery closed in the late 1960s and his stock of seedlings was sold to other nurserymen in the Westerstede area (notably Bohlje's and Helmer's) and Hachman in Pinneberg. Some seedlings were also sold to the public and large unnamed plants can be seen in

private gardens in the city. Nearly all of his seedlings were named and introduced by the above mentioned nurseries or Dutch nurseries. The following cultivars are attributable to him: 'Orange Beauty' (1955), 'Barmstedt Gold' (1975), 'Westerstede' (1977), 'Old Copper' (1978), 'Orange Glow' (1980), 'Brandis' (1985), and 'Bernstein' (1996). There are perhaps six or seven other cultivars from Germany that may or may not be his seedlings.

### R.H.S. GARDENS WISLEY

The most famous, *H. × intermedia* 'Pallida', was raised here, the original plant still grows on Battleston Hill. Originally called *H. mollis* 'Pallida' it should not be confused with the true *H. mollis* var. *pallida*, an ailing plant of which is just surviving in 7 acres. The origin of the plant on Battleston Hill is not recorded, it could be a spontaneous seedling or it could possibly have been a seedling from Kalmthout.

### ALBERT DOORENBOS

He was the superintendent of parks for The Hague in Holland and in the late 1950s he sowed seeds of *H. mollis*, from this 'Sunburst' (still growing in The Hague) was named, subsequently introduced by D. Veerman Jr. in (1967). 'Gimborn's Perfume' (1985) is most likely to have come from the same source.

### HEMELRIJK

This unique place is a private Arboretum started by the de Belder's in the early 1960s when they acquired the estate. Here they planted around 1000 seedlings of *H. × intermedia* from seed saved from the best clones in Kalmthout. As they began to flower the inferior ones were weeded out, today there are around 100 seedlings from 30 to 40 years of age. Thirteen seedlings have been named as follows, 'Early Bird' (1984), 'Birgit' (1986), 'Strawberries and Cream' (1986), 'Sara' (1987), 'Harry' (1988), 'Orange Peel' (1988), 'Copper Cascade' (1993), 'Livia' (1993), 'Ripe Corn' (1995), 'Agnes' (1996), 'Robert' (1998), 'Georges' (1999), and 'John' (1999). Some of these seedlings are destined to be the leading cultivars of the future.

### WIM VAN DER WERF

A nurseryman in Boskoop, Holland, who holds the national collection for the Netherlands. He has sown seeds and raised and named the following three clones, 'Wiero' (c.1984), 'Doerak' (c.1992), and 'Twilight' (1998).

### JOHAN VAN HEININGEN

A retired school teacher living in Breda, Holland, who has raised some exceptional cultivars by sowing seed from 'Arnold Promise', 'Jelena', 'Vesna', and 'Pallida' in the main. To date the following have been introduced, 'Angelly' (1985), 'Aphrodite' (1987), 'Aurora' (1987), and 'Alexander' (1990).

### RECOMMENDED CULTIVARS THAT ARE AVAILABLE FROM SPECIALIST NURSERIES

***Hamamelis mollis* 'Boskoop'** — Most *H. mollis* in garden centres and retail nurseries will be of this clone from Holland, which has recently been given cultivar status. Sweetly scented, medium-sized, golden-yellow flowers stained red at the base, on a bushy plant, early flowering.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Arnold Promise'** — scented, medium-sized, sulphur-yellow flowers petals twisted, on a fairly upright bush of twiggy growth habit, late flowering.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Barmstedt Gold'** — slightly scented, large-sized, golden-yellow flowers, on an upright bush, mid-season flowering, a very hardy cultivar from Germany.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Diane'** — medium-sized, red flowers, on a slightly spreading bush, midseason flowering, good autumn foliage colour in favourable seasons.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Jelena'** — flowers large, a warm coppery orange colour when viewing the bush as a whole, close up, flowers are bicoloured, early, with good autumn colour, on a slightly spreading bush.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Orange Beauty'** — flowers medium in size, orange in colour, mid season, on a spreading bush, young growth in the spring has a purple flush to it.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Pallida'** — flowers very sweetly scented, medium in size, very floriferous, sulphur-yellow in colour, early, on a somewhat spreading bush. The best all round witch hazel.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Primavera'** — flowers with slight scent, medium size, twisted, deep sulphur-yellow in colour, mid season, on a fairly upright bush.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Sunburst'** — unfortunately no trace of scent at all, large flowers, a little darker than 'Pallida', mid season, on an upright bush.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Vesna'** — scent slight, flowers large to very large, light orange overall colour, close up a bicolor, paler than 'Jelena', early to mid season on an upright bush.

#### NEW CULTIVARS OF PROMISE NOT READILY AVAILABLE COMMERCIALY AS YET

***Hamamelis mollis* 'Jermyns Gold'** — previously sold as *H. mollis*, sweetly scented flowers, medium sized, golden yellow in colour, early, on a reasonably upright bush, autumn colour yellow. A reliable cultivar that gardeners should seek out.

***Hamamelis mollis* 'Wisley Supreme'** — sweetly scented flowers, large, of a paler yellow than most *H. mollis* clones. Flowers early, not as upright in habit as 'Jermyns Gold'. A plant that went unnoticed at Wisley for a long time, it was partly smashed down in the hurricane of 1987 but has grown back nicely but unfortunately is in too much shade to show its real potential. Should be available in 2 to 3 years time.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Aphrodite'** — slightly scented flowers, large to very large, perhaps best described as a burnt-orange in colour, certainly different to existing cultivars. Flowers late, on a somewhat spreading bush, an ideal cultivar for the pruning regime.

***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Aurora'** — nicely scented, flowers very large (the largest I have yet seen), a bicolor pale-yellow at the tip grading to light red at the base. Flowers late, on a bushy plant, autumn foliage colour orange.

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Birgit'** — flowers the deepest red yet, small to medium, mid season, on an upright bush, good orange/red autumn colour in favourable seasons.

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Nina'** — plants of the wrong clone have been sold in the trade but it was soon dropped as an unworthy cultivar. The true 'Nina' shows a lot of promise, deep sulphur-yellow flowers, large, on an upright vigorous bush.

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Orange Peel'** — flowers a clear light orange, large, mid season, on an upright bush, with some autumn colour of orange-red in favourable seasons.

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Ripe Corn'** — very floriferous yellow flowers, medium sized to large, mid season, on a slightly spreading bush. The first of the newer cultivars that I have seen that produces flower clusters in the same abundance and freedom as 'Pallida'

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Rubin'** — a good red from Germany, medium-sized flowers, mid season, on a spreading bush, very promising.

***Hamamelis ×intermedia* 'Strawberries and Cream'** — slightly scented flowers, a bicour, pale-yellow at tip grading to red at the base, large, mid season, on a fairly upright bush.

## CONCLUSION

The future will, I think, show some improvements in *H. ×intermedia* clones, there are already hybrids with *H. vernalis* blood in them which are interesting. Work is also going on crossing *H. virginiana* into the winter-flowering species and hybrids. In 50 years time I think we shall see all four species involved in the make up of the best hybrids, an exciting future.