



CORYLUS AVELLANA L.

Fam. Betulaceae

DESCRIPTION

The hazel is a shrub-like tree with slender trunks 2 m high; when fully grown it can reach as tall as 4 m.

LEAVES

Light green in colour and penta-ovoidal in shape, with serrated margins; the leaves are downier underneath, and grow in alternate fashion on the branches, supported by a long petiole.

FRUITS

Commonly known as hazelnuts, which are spherical in shape and enclosed in green bracts protected by a thin, light green husk that becomes woody when ripe, taking on the characteristic brown colour. Ripen between August and September.

HABITAT

Originates from Asia Minor (Mesopotamia) and commonly found in many European countries.

DISTRIBUTION

In Italy this species grows in lowland areas up to an altitude of 1300 m, both in the wild and along footpaths, and in gardens or orchards either singly or in hedges.

FLOWERS

A monoecious tree with single-sex male catkins (which are pendent, appear on the branches in late autumn and remain throughout the winter), and female flowers (in reddish-purple bunches enclosed in a small bud that flowers between February and March) on the same tree. Impollination is anemophilous.

ROOTS

Robust but shallow, with a bunched rootstock.

BARK

Grey-brown in colour with white lenticels and longitudinal cracks.

INTERESTING FACTS

The hazelnut tree is grown to strengthen soil that is prone to landslides. The wood is used to produce charcoal for drawing, and also for gunpowder.

