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Persian ironwood

Parrotia persica (DC.) C.A.Mey.

The Parrotia, or Persian ironwood, is a close relative of the witch-hazels, genus *Hamamelis*. It looks like a witch hazel but with firmer, more glossy leaves. It is native to the Alborz Mountains, which are located in Iran and Azerbaijan. It grows to be a medium to large multi-stemmed shrub or a small to medium single-stemmed tree, with a height of up to 30, sometimes to 40 feet. The flowers, borne in late winter to early spring, are very small and dark red. The bark peels, leaving a patchwork of tan, white, pale green and gray. Spring color is usually reddish, and the fall color is excellent, ranging from yellow to orange to red. The dead leaves are usually held into and even through the winter. This species is hardy through zone 4.

Cultivation

Persian ironwood prefers full sun and tolerates air pollution well, doing well as a street tree. It tolerates a wide range of soils, with moderate moisture requirements. However, it will give best fall color in a deep, rich soil that is moderately acid. This species is generally free of pests and diseases and is easy to grow in a wide range of conditions.

Propagation

Seed is simple to propagate, needing only a winter's cold stratification to sprout.



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