



Hazelnut/Filbert

Corylus spp.



Tree nuts are usually grown under warmer conditions than are found in Ontario, but there are several types of nuts native to the province that are of interest for local consumption or commercial development (beaked hazelnut, black walnut). There are some non-native commercial species that have been imported. Many nuts require long hot growing seasons, and because they are growing near the northern limit of hardiness, they can be a risky crop. Most are wind-pollinated and self-fertile, although there are exceptions, and wild populations of at least some species appear to have mechanisms in place to encourage cross-fertilization, and produce higher quality nuts when cross-pollinated.

Pollination Recommendations

There are several cultivated species of hazelnut, also known as filbert, and most are European in origin. The most commonly cultivated species is *Corylus avellana*, the European hazel. However, there are several species native to the New World that produce edible nuts, including American filbert (*C. americana*) and beaked hazelnut (*C. cornuta*). Hazelnuts bear flowers in the form of catkins, with male catkins and less conspicuous female flowers occurring separately. Both sexes are found on the same tree (*monoecy*) in most cases, although a few single-sex plants may occur. Beaked hazelnut, at least, is self-incompatible. For all species, growers typically plant two varieties together to facilitate pollination and nut set. European hazelnuts are wind-pollinated, but cross-pollination is preferred despite some level of self-compatibility in this species. Although it produces smaller nuts, the native species are the preferred choice in most parts of Ontario, as the cultivated European hazel is not as hardy.

References

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