



The ARNOLD
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***Hamamelis* × *intermedia* ‘Arnold Promise’**

(‘Arnold Promise’ witch-hazel) Zones 5-8

The ‘Arnold Promise’ witch-hazel is a natural hybrid that occurred in the Arnold Arboretum landscape. Plant collector E. H. Wilson introduced the Chinese witch-hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*) to the Arnold Arboretum between 1907 and 1909. Several decades later, seedlings were discovered growing nearby in the landscape, assumed to be seedlings of *H. mollis*. Taxonomist Alfred Rehder determined the seedlings were hybrids of two different species, *H. mollis* and *H. japonica*. The plants became recognized as *Hamamelis* × *intermedia* for their intermediate traits. By the 1950s, after years of evaluation, one specimen had noticeably larger flowers and a longer flowering window than the other witch-hazels. This individual was cloned and registered as a cultivated variety known as ‘Arnold Promise’.

This broad, deciduous shrub or small tree is well-suited as an ornamental or accent plant, growing upwards of 12’ in height and 12’ in spread. Its iconic flowering display occurs earlier and heavier than other witch-hazels. Ribbon-like yellow flowers can be enjoyed from late winter to early spring and are highly fragrant. As flowers fade, the vase-like canopy fills out with green, textured foliage. By fall, the foliage transitions brightly into orange and yellow to round out its seasonal interest. The ‘Arnold Promise’ witch-hazel is a low maintenance shrub if planted under the right conditions. Soil should be well-drained but not dry. This plant can tolerate full sun but performs better in part shade. Pruning should take place after flowering and aim to minimize crossing branches, basal suckers, and deadwood. There are eleven ‘Arnold Promise’ witch-hazels currently in the Arnold Arboretum. The most notable specimens can be found in front of the Hunnewell Building and in the Wolcott Bed along Meadow Road.

Planting and Care Instructions

Carefully unpack your plant and choose a location that is partially shaded and protected from foot traffic. Tease apart the roots to encourage them to spread away from the plant. Plant in well-drained soil at the correct depth. The top of the root system should be level with the soil surface. The depth of the hole should accommodate the height of the roots and the bottom should be left undisturbed to prevent settling. The width of the hole should be at least two times the width of the roots. This loosened soil will allow new roots to grow more quickly. After planting, water your shrub well and apply a 1-inch layer of mulch over the area, but do not allow mulch to contact the stem to reduce the likelihood of decay or girdling roots. Water again after mulching, continue to monitor the soil around the root system, and prevent it from drying out until established.