

*Corylus cornuta*

[Synonyms : *Corylus cornuta* var. *megaphylla*, *Corylus rostrata*]

**BEAKED HAZEL** is a deciduous shrub. Native to eastern North America it has thin-shelled brown nuts enveloped with two leaf-like bracts that form a slender beak.

It is also known as Beaked filbert, Beaked hazelnut, *Himalaya findiği* (Turkish), *Hokuamerika no heezeru* (Japanese), *Noisetier à long bec* (French), and *Sarvipähkinä* (Finnish).

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

*Cornuta* is derived from Latin *cornu* (horn) meaning 'horned or horn-shaped'.

The nuts provided food for several North American Indian tribes including the Iroquois and Thompson Indians, as well as some of the Cree, and the Salish and Algonkin tribes.

Records indicate that the Cree tribe stored the nuts for use in Winter, while the Thompson tribe often viewed them as a snack food.

The importance of beaked hazel is underlined however when it is noted by authorities that the nuts were harvested by the Thompson and Okanagan-Colville Indians, and some of the Salish tribe too, in large quantities for trading with other tribes.

Apart from their economic value the Salish used suitable suckers for arrows, and the Thompson Indians made fishing equipment and cooking tools out of young branches.

Beaked hazel was a source of medicine for a variety of problems for some North American tribes. The Thompson tribe are believed to have advocated chewing the buds for a good singing voice, and the Iroquois have valued it particularly for helping teething babies and young children – as well as using it to cause vomiting and as an ingredient in poultices applied to ease rheumatic symptoms. It has provided a remedy for some heart problems among the Algonkin tribe (some of whom also used it for various gut ailments). The Abnaki Indians used it for treating various eye disorders.

The edible nuts, which have a sweet pleasant taste reminiscent of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*), are eaten today raw or dried. Apart from providing a cereal supplement, they can also be ground for flour for making bread and pies. They also yield an edible oil.