Corylus avellana ‘Contorta’

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Introduction

A curious shrub with twisted stems and branches, Walkingstick slowly develops into a nice, rounded form (Fig. 1). Branches grow upright when the plant is young, but eventually droop toward the ground. Flowers emerge and hang from bare stems before the foliage appears in the spring. Fruit is persistent and enjoyed by birds, rodents and humans.

General Information

Scientific name: Corylus avellana ‘Contorta’
Pronunciation: KOR-rill-us av-vell-LAY-nuh
Common name(s): Contorted European Filbert, Henry Lauder’s Walkingstick
Family: Betulaceae
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardness zones: 4B through 8 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: border; container or above-ground planter; accent; cut foliage/twigs
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 5 to 10 feet
Spread: 8 to 12 feet
Plant habit: round
Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
**Corylus avellana 'Contorta' -- Contorted European Filbert**

**Leaf shape:** orbiculate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Current year stem/twig color:** brown  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun  
**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk  
**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Use and Management

Most people plant Walkingstick in a prominent location in the landscape so its unusual habit can be displayed. Place it in a mulched bed or in a mass of low ground cover so adjacent plants will not interfere with it. It can be used as the accent in any garden and is often placed near water, near a deck or patio so passers-by can enjoy it up close.

Pests and Diseases

A foliage and twig blight has been reported.