

Bewitching Witch Hazel

MAKE A BEWITCHING WITCH HAZEL SEARCH PART OF YOUR HALLOWEEN 'TO-DO' LIST!

A search to find this little tree is worth your time in the next couple weeks, as it is loaded with seasonal magic and lore. Visit the woodland of Cannonball Prairie Metropark, or those along Wildwood's Purple or Secor's Silver Trails to find Witch Hazel and appreciate a few of her virtues, such as:

- She's the only tree blooming in Metroparks upland woodlands during the Halloween season, when she sports pretty yellow flowers that fill the air with a fragrant, fresh-linen smell.
- She is so-named because settlers believed her to be bewitched since they couldn't figure out why their horses would sometimes spook in her presence. We know today that the cause was Witch Hazel's truly explosive seed pods that pop on humid nights – shooting little seeds sometimes several feet, with enough power to sting and scare horses, according to folklore.
- As a small, many trunked tree, she was once considered effective in water-witching. Broken branches held with intent and concentration were believed to draw the holder closer to the nearest water source. But don't try this at a Metropark: Our native Witch Hazel has ecological value to various night-flying pollinator moths, and other insects that make their larval homes (called galls) among her leaves and twigs. So please keep her branches in tact!

