From Seraphiel's Stillroom
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# Hazel Catkins

*Corylus avellana*
*Temperament: Cold, drying*
*Common name: Lamb's Tails*

## What the Old Ones Said

Gerard wrote that hazel catkins are cold and dry, and binding, and that they "stay the lask."
(Lask is an old word for looseness of the bowels.)
In country sayings, many catkins foretold many cradles — hazel long linked with fertility and new life.
The catkins are known as lamb's tails: the male flowers, appearing while winter still holds.

## A Receipt for the Stillroom

*To Fry the Tassels of Hazel, When Winter Begins to Loosen Its Grip*

Ye Shall Need:
*Fresh hazel catkins, newly gathered
*1 egg
*Cornflour, as much as shall make a thin batter
*A little oil, for frying
*Set honey, for drizzling

The Making Thereof:

1. Beat the egg and add cornflour slowly, until the batter be thin yet willing to cling.
2. Warm a pan with but a whisper of oil — enough to slick the bottom, not drown the offering.
3. Dip each catkin gently into the batter, coating it lightly, as one might cloak a friar in haste.
4. Lay them in the pan and fry until pale gold and lightly crisped.
5. Remove to a plate and drizzle with honey whilst still warm.
6. Eat whilst winter watches, slightly offended.

## What We Use Her For

A seasonal sign more than a strong medicine. Hazel catkins remind us that something may be active before it looks useful.
They have been taken as a light tea for winter colds and coughs, and as a simple food when the year is only just loosening.

## A Small Charm for Hazel Catkins

*When the tassels show themselves*
*before leaf or nut,*
*may I trust what has begun*
*without asking it to hurry.*

## Concerning Caution & Pollen

Hazel catkins carry much golden dust and may trouble those with pollen sensitivities.
If thou art uncertain, taste first but a little, and wait a day before indulging further.
Let the body be consulted, for it is the oldest physician.

Plenty of Catkins, Plenty of Pollen