Corylus avellana ‘Contorta’ Contorted European Filbert, Henry Lauder’s Walking Stick

Edward F. Gilman

Introduction
A curious shrub with twisted stems and branches, walking stick 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-ill-us av-vell-LAY-nuh
Common name(s): Contorted European filbert, Henry Lauder's walking stick
Family: Betulaceae

Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness 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

Figure 1. Contorted European filbert.
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.
Growth rate: slow  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate  
- **Leaf type:** simple  
- **Leaf margin:** serrate  
- **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

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** brown  
- **Flower characteristic:** spring flowering

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** elongated  
- **Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch  
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
- **Fruit color:** brown  
- **Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
- **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

**Use and Management**

Most people plant walking stick 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.