

Plant Names - A plant may be identified in many ways.

- A. Common names
1. Names people of an area give to a plant.
  2. Advantage is that they are easy to remember
  3. Disadvantage is that they are confusing. One plant may have several names or several plants may have same common name.
  4. No standard form of communication.
- B. Botanical names (Scientific names)
1. Difficult because they are Latin based
  2. World-wide communication with their use
  3. **Binomial system** or two-name system developed by Carolus Linnaeus in 1753. Consist of:
    - a. **Genus** -- is a group of plants having more common characteristics than with plants of any other group. A genus name begins with a capital letter and is either underlined or italicized.
    - b. **Species** -- or specific epithet is the second word of a botanical name. The species is the name given to a group of similar plants within a genus that have common differences with other groups of the same genus. Species names are written in lower case and either italicized or underlined.
    - c. **Variety** or **cultivar** --
      - 1) A true **variety** is a form of a certain species that varies from the established species in one or more characteristics. This characteristic is passed on either through sexual or asexual reproduction. A true variety is written in Latin using a lower case letters and underlined.  
Example: Berberis thunbergii var. atropurpurea or Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea
      - 2) A **cultivar**, or cultivated variety, is a variety that will not reproduce purely from seed over several generations. A cultivar originates as a "sport" (mutation), or as a result of crossbreeding or cross-pollination. It is usually produced by asexual means. Often cultivars have plant patent for exclusive rights to reproduce and sell the plant. The name of a cultivar is written in enclosed single quotes but is not underlined or italicized. Example: Acer rubrum 'October Glory' or Acer rubrum cv. October Glory.
      - 2) Varieties and cultivars that are the result of crossbreeding are written differently. A **cross** or **hybrid** between species is given a Latin name if it is a new species, or a proper name if it is a cultivar. "X" is substituted for the species name. Proper names of hybrid cultivars are enclosed in single quotes and capitalized.  
Example: Abelia x grandiflora is a cross between A. chinensis and A. uniflora. Emily Brunner Holly is a result of a cross between Ilex latifolia and Ilex cornuta and is written Ilex x 'Emily Brunner'.
    - d. **Authority**-  
In scientific writing an abbreviation will often following the scientific name. For example Ilex vomitoria L. The "L." represent Linnaeus who was the first to classify and name this plant. There are several abbreviation that can be found in the appendices of botanical books. The authority is not used much in horticulture trade.