



### Learning Activity – Plant Names

Take a minute to answer these questions about one person in your immediate family and one person in your distant family.

- What are their first names?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- What are their last names?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- What do they look like?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do they live?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where were they born?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- How tall are they?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

Write a paragraph describing the ways you could tell them apart.

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### Naming Plants

In the last exercise, we named and described people. Plants, like people, have family names, exact names and **common names**. Common names are nicknames that usually describe a feature of the plant. Most people will recognize a Bluebell by the way it looks. The plant is blue and is shaped like a bell.

Generally, common names for plants are used on a work site. However, it is important to know that plant nicknames can be different in different places. To avoid confusion and to help people communicate information about plants worldwide, a **Binomial system** for naming plants is used. Binomial means having two names. For example, *Diets bicolour*. The first name (*Diets*) tells you the plant's family name. The second name usually describes a characteristic of the plant (*bicolour*). Often, you'll see a name in quotation marks; this tells you it is a man-made variety, called a cultivar.

### Person, Place or Thing

The person who discovers a new plant can give it a name. Sometimes the name is related to the person who found it, or it is named in honour of someone. For example, *Hypericum edisonianum* is named after Thomas Edison. The place where the plant is found can also be used, for example *Cornus florida*. The shape of the plant is sometimes found in its name. For example, the plant *Viburnum dentatum* (think of dentures) has toothed leaves. Sometimes the colour is used in naming. *Acer rubrum* is the Red maple (**rubrum** is Latin for red).

### Learning Activity – Latin Name Game

Using a computer, tablet or cell phone, go online to:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/features/latin\\_names.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/features/latin_names.shtml)

Click on the interactive link for Latin Naming and play the Latin Name Game. Enjoy!

### Reading Plant Labels

On plant labels, you will find the family name is written first. It always starts with a capital letter. *Buddleia* starts with a capital B. The descriptive or "exact" name is written second. It always starts with a small letter, for example, *dauidii*. Both names, *Buddleia dauidii*, are written in a language called Latin. Latin is the common language used for plant identification all over the world.

Many English words have Latin root words. A root word is a word or part of a word that is found in many other words. Sun is the root word of sunshine, sunlight, sunny, and Sunday. These root words often help us to find the meaning of words that may not be familiar to us. In plant names, some of the Latin descriptive words are similar to English words that you may already know. We will explore this concept further in the Learning Activity below.





## Learning Activity - Resemblance

Look at the following Latin descriptive words for plants. What English words do you think they resemble? Write your answers in the space provided.

1. fragrantissima \_\_\_\_\_
2. compacta \_\_\_\_\_
3. californica \_\_\_\_\_
4. montana \_\_\_\_\_
5. elephan \_\_\_\_\_
6. mega \_\_\_\_\_
7. grandi \_\_\_\_\_
8. aquatica \_\_\_\_\_

## Example of Binomial Naming

<p>This is Rosemary White. White tells you what family she belongs to. Rosemary is her exact name. Everybody calls her Rosie. In the phone book she is listed with all the other Whites as White, R.</p>		<p>This is <b>Buddleia davidii</b> 'Royal Red'. <b>Buddleia</b> is the family or <i>generic name</i>. <b>davidii</b> is the <i>species</i> or kind of buddleia. 'Royal Red' is the particular kind of buddleia that has been made by humans, a <i>cultivar</i>. Everybody calls it a <b>Buddleia</b>.</p>	
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*"Binomial nomenclature is a formal system of naming species of living things by giving each a name composed of two parts, both of which use Latin grammatical forms, although they can be based on words from other languages." - Wikipedia*







## Learning Activity – Difficult to Remember Names

1. Underline the family name of the following plants.
  - Hermodactylus tuberosus
  - Muscari latifolium
  - Ferraria crispa
  - Calochortus albus
  
2. Circle the describing name (species) of the following plants.
  - Hyacinthoides hispanica
  - Zephyranthes grandiflora
  - Watsonia beatricis
  - Chirita lavandulacea
  
3. Circle which of the following are cultivars.
  - Tradescantia pallida 'Purple Heart'
  - Gerbera jamesonii
  - Antirrhinum majus 'Trumpet Serenade'
  - Bolax gumifera

## Symbols on Plant Labels

Symbols are images used to convey information to the reader. Symbols appear just about everywhere we look. Road signs, box labels and prescription labels all represent examples of labels we may find in our daily living. Symbols are a substitute for words.

In the case of plant labels, symbols are used to describe what conditions the plant needs to survive.

			
shade	full sun	partial sun	drought resistant



## Learning Activity – Types of Plants

Use the Internet or gardening books to research the following:

1. List five shade plants.

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2. List five full sun plants.

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3. List five drought resistant plants.

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