

COMMON NAMES FOR VASCULAR PLANTS: GUIDELINES FOR USE AND APPLICATION

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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for structure, spelling, use, and application of common names for vascular plants are presented.

We have developed the following guidelines to assist editors, field biologists, naturalists, and others who use common names in their work, to establish a pattern for more uniform usage and application of common names for plants. These guidelines have resulted from an effort to provide a common name for each accepted plant species known for the North American continent north of Mexico, which is now in press (Kartesz 1991). The guidelines cover structure, spelling, use, and application of names. It should be indicated, however, that these guidelines are subject to modification because of common sense, tradition, good taste, and the desire to avoid unreasonable rigidity.

Common names for plants are generally composed of two parts: the first is referred to as the modifier, the second as the group name. The modifier, usually quite variable, provides the uniqueness for each common name at the species level. Conversely, the group name is quite constant, establishing the identity of taxa above the species level, i.e., families, genera, subgenera, tribes, etc. Group names may not necessarily require a modifier. In some cases, for example (usually in small genera), a single word or fanciful phrase is all that is necessary to constitute a group name.

I. GROUP NAMES

Group names are often composed of a single word describing a particular family, genus, subgenus, tribe, or section. These names are of three basic types:

1. **SIMPLE GROUP NAMES:** Simple group names are represented by a single word, e.g.

ash	aster	clover	fern
grass	lily	mallow	mustard
orchid	pine	rose	rush
sedge	stopper	tulip	willow

2. **SINGLY-COMPOUND GROUP NAMES:** These are group names composed of two root-words or elements that are connected as one. Names of this type are composed of a pair of single-syllable words *or* of both a single- and a double-syllable word. For these names, both words or elements should be joined to form a single word (unless the words or elements begin and end with the same letter, e.g. saw-wort, cat-tail), e.g.

bloodleaf	chickenthief	goldenrod	hawkweed
hawthorn	lousewort	mousetail	nipplewort
quillwort	rockcress	sneezeweed	water nymph

3. **DOUBLY-COMPOUND GROUP NAMES:** Doubly-compound group names represent the most complex type. These are names composed of two or more distinct words or elements totalling four or more syllables. Each word or element of this type is separated from the others by a hyphen. These names may be subdivided into the following four categories:

a. Doubly-compound group names with two words, each word having two or more syllables, e.g.

Kenilworth-ivy	monkey-flower
morning-glory	popcorn-flower
pygmy-melon	roving-sailor
treasure-flower	trumpet-creeper
water-horehound	yellow-saucers

b. Doubly-compound group names with two words, one word with three or more syllables, the other word with a single syllable, e.g.

butterfly-weed	burr-cucumber
pincushion-plant	rattlesnake-root
strawberry-tree	scorpion-tail
unicorn-plant	vegetable-sponge

c. Doubly-compound group names with three or more words, e.g. pale *alpine*-forget-me-not (*alpine* is part of the group name, not a modifier)

arctic *sweet*-colt's-foot (*sweet* is part of the group name, not a modifier)

NOTE: In the above examples, since the words *alpine* and *sweet* precede

taxonomically *incorrect* group names, they are set off by hyphens. These examples differ from the two that follow, which include taxonomically *true* groups (see Section IX for a discussion of true groups), e.g.

d. Doubly-compound group names similar to those of category c, but differ by having a “false modifier” as part of the group name, e.g.

fringed *yellow* star-grass (*yellow* is part of the group name “yellow star-grass,” and is not a true modifier)

Sonoran *false* prairie-clover (*false* is part of the group name “false prairie-clover,” and is not a true modifier)

In these cases, neither the modifier nor the “false modifier” should be connected by a hyphen to what follows.

II. GUIDELINES FOR HYPHENATION OF GROUP NAMES

Group names should be hyphenated *only* under the following conditions:

1. when the group name is composed of two words or elements, with each word or element beginning and ending with the same letter e.g.

cat-tail

desert-thorn

five-eyes

saw-wort

trumpet-tree

yellow-wood

2. when the group name is doubly-compound, i.e., when each word or element of a pair has two or more syllables, or when either element of the pair has three or more syllables (see I-3a and I-3b above).

3. when the final word or element of the group name is taxonomically misapplied (unless historically spelled as a single word, e.g., buckwheat, toadflax), e.g.

star-grass (not a grass of the Poaceae)

poison-oak (not an oak of the genus *Quercus*)

water-lily (not a lily of the genus *Lilium*)

NOTE: See extended listing below for taxonomically *true* groups (Section IX).

4. when three or more words or elements comprise the group name (see I-3c above).

5. when a word or element of a group name includes an apostrophe, e.g.

adder's-mouth orchid

bishop's-cap

Jacob's-ladder

mare's-tail

Solomon's-seal

St. John's-wort

NOTE: Hyphens should *never* be used for a group name to set off the words false, mock, wild, or true, since the status is already suggested by the exist-

ing modifier. Nor should the unconventional use of hyphens be included in canonizations or in titles of individuals, e.g.

Aunt Lucy (not Aunt-Lucy)

Good King Henry (not Good-King-Henry)

Maid Marian (not Maid-Marian)

St. John's-wort (not St.-John's-wort)

NOTE: Hyphens are also discouraged when separating proper names such as geographic place names or when setting off directions (northern, eastern, southern, and western) from other associated adjectives, e.g.

Blue Ridge gayfeather (not Blue-Ridge gayfeather)

eastern fringed catchfly (not eastern-fringed catchfly)

Great Plains bladderpod (not Great-Plains bladderpod)

Gulf Coast searocket (not Gulf-Coast searocket)

northern marsh yellowcress (not northern-marsh yellowcress)

southern Sierran pincushion (not southern-Sierran pincushion)

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR GROUP NAMES

Group names should:

1. be as concise as possible;
2. never repeat the generic name except when steeped in tradition (e.g., aster, iris, mimosa);
3. reflect official state tree, shrub, and wildflower names when possible;
4. follow long-standing tradition;
5. follow names in popular use (e.g., field guides and conservation literature);
6. be unique for each genus. Understandably, this may not always be possible, e.g., when similar and well-established group names exist for different genera, e.g.

Huperzia — club-moss

Lycopodiella — club-moss

7. reflect as much ethnobotanical heritage as possible, and commemorate aboriginal usage (e.g., pawpaw, a Native American name);
8. be easily understood by avoiding or minimizing the use of technical or unfamiliar terminology;
9. avoid the word "weed" for plant genera with rare species;
10. provide unique common names for well-defined subgenera or subgroups within genera; e.g.

Erythronium: white or pink flower — fawn-lily

yellow flower — trout-lily

Ribes: spineless plants — currant

spiny or thorny plants — gooseberry

NOTE: Occasional departure from the accepted group name is also encouraged in the case of more fanciful, descriptive, or traditional common names, e.g.

- camphor-daisy (for *Machaeranthera phyllocephylla*; departs from the group name tansy-aster)
- dunedelion (for *Malacothrix incana*; departs from the group name desert-dandelion)
- shieldplant (for *Streptanthus tortuosus*; departs from the group name jewelflower)
- whip-poor-will-flower (for *Trillium cernuum*; departs from the group name wakerobin)

(Also see Section VI, Fanciful Phrases as Common Names)

11. be used in the possessive when using animals parts, e.g.

adder's-tongue	bird's-foot-trefoil
crane's-bill	hound's-tongue
ladies'-tresses	mare's-tail
pheasant's-eye	stork's-bill

12. when using animal names, group names should not be used in the possessive, and the policies governing group names should be followed, e.g.

chickweed (not chick's-weed)	dog-fennel (not dog's-fennel)
dog-mustard (not dog's-mustard)	rat-apple (not rat's-apple)
thin-leaf owl-clover (not thin-leaf owl's-clover)	

IV. MODIFIERS

Modifiers are used to establish uniqueness for the group name. Mostly adjectival, they are of four basic types:

1. Those that provide description of plant or animal parts, size, shapes, colors, fragrances, number, and textures, e.g.

hare-foot locoweed	hay-scented fern
long-leaf pine	sharp-keel milk-vetch
single-leaf pinyon	red-seed plantain

2. Those that provide descriptions for plant habits or habitats, e.g.

annual hedge-nettle	bottom-land post oak
coastal-plain mountain-mint	granite stonecrop
vernal-pool snake-lily	water-thyme

3. Those that commemorate individuals, e.g.

Douglas-fir	Gray's lily
Johnson grass	Thieret's skullcap

4. Those that describe geographic locations, e.g.

African basil	Blue Ridge horsebalm
Caribbean hair-sedge	Carolina hemlock
eastern white pine	Ozark spiderwort

V. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MODIFIERS

The following guidelines apply to the use of modifiers.

1. Modifiers composed of two words should be used in the nominative rather than the adjectival form (unless the modifiers are well established in usage, e.g., hay-scented fern), e.g.

broad-leaf lancepod (*not* broad-leaved lancepod)
 little-tooth sedge (*not* little-toothed sedge)
 long-leaf starwort (*not* long-leaved starwort)
 slim-pod rush (*not* slim-podded rush)
 tough-leaf dogwood (*not* tough-leaved dogwood)

2. Modifiers composed of one word should be used in the adjectival rather than the nominative form, e.g.

bearded jewelflower (*not* beard jewelflower)
 crested wheat grass (*not* crest wheat grass)
 jeweled rocket (*not* jewel rocket)
 rusty lupine (*not* rust lupine)
 spotted lupine (*not* spot lupine)
 tufted bulrush (*not* tuft bulrush)

3. Modifiers should be hyphenated when describing plant or animal parts, shapes, colors, sizes, fragrances, or textures, except when referencing proper names (e.g., Ottertail Pass saxifrage), e.g.

bird-bill dayflower	bird-eye speedwell
dog-tooth noseburn	five-leaf cinquefoil
fox-tail prairie-clover	shell-bark hickory
short-leaf cinquefoil	hairy-seed crown grass

4. Modifiers describing color shades should be hyphenated, e.g.

midnight-blue clustervine
 ocean-blue morning-glory
 sky-blue scorpion-weed

5. When describing plant communities or plant habitats, two-word modifiers should be combined as one when *both* words are single-syllable (unless the first and last letters of each word are the same, e.g., sand-dune thistle), e.g.

oldfield milkvine	pineland golden-aster
saltmarsh sandspurry	seaside sedge

streambank leopard's-bane

roadside raspberry

6. When describing plant communities or habitats, two-word modifiers should be hyphenated when *either* word is composed of two or more syllables, e.g.

Arctic-tundra whitlow-grass

coastal-plain daffodil

cold-desert phlox

river-bar bird's-foot-trefoil

sandy-plain clustervine

vernal-pool pincushion-plant

7. Independent, second-word modifiers should remain separated without a hyphen, e.g.

American water starwort (*not* American-water starwort)

dotted wild coffee (*not* dotted-wild coffee)

early blue violet (*not* early-blue violet)

leafless beaked ladies'-tresses (*not* leafless-beaked ladies'-tresses)

sticky purple crane's-bill (*not* sticky-purple crane's-bill)

8. Independent, third-word modifiers should also remain separated without a hyphen, e.g.

lesser yellow-throat gilly-flower (*not* lesser-yellow-throat gilly-flower)

little red-stem monkey-flower (*not* little-red-stem monkey-flower)

9. When commemorating individuals, possessive modifiers *should always* be used (unless well established in tradition e.g., Douglas-fir, Johnson grass), e.g.

Britton's skullcap (*not* Britton skullcap)

Gray's lily (*not* Gray lily)

Hall's rush (*not* Hall rush)

Small's skullcap (*not* Small skullcap)

Ward's willow (*not* Ward willow)

NOTE: When both the given name and the surname of an individual are used, a hyphen is *not* required between the names, e.g.

Alice Eastwood's fleabane (*not* Alice-Eastwood's fleabane)

Carl Mason's ragwort (*not* Carl-Mason's ragwort)

10. When describing plant or animal parts, modifiers (unlike group names) *should not* be used in the possessive, e.g.

fox-tail prairie-clover (*not* fox's-tail prairie-clover)

cat-claw mimosa (*not* cat's-claw mimosa)

stag-horn fern (*not* stag's-horn fern)

11. When designating national subdivisions (i.e., states, counties, and

provinces), nominative rather than adjectival modifiers should be used, e.g.

Alaska-cedar	Alberta spruce
Gila County live-forever	New Mexico milkwort
Utah juniper	Texasplume

12. When designating countries and continents, adjectival rather than nominative modifiers should be used, e.g.

American spurred-gentian	Brazilian peppertree
Canadian thistle	European bellflower
Jamaican-broom	Japanese honeysuckle
Mexican-orange	Persian rye grass

13. When describing geographic direction, adjectival rather than nominative modifiers should be used, e.g.

northern silverpuffs	southern threeawn
eastern teaberry	western sea-purslane

14. When selecting modifiers for related species, parallel structure should be sought, e.g.

broad-leaf sand-verbena	narrow-leaf sand-verbena
false babystars	true babystars
johnnynip	johnnytuck
king-of-the-meadow	queen-of-the-meadow
northern adder's-tongue	southern adder's-tongue
small-whorl mallow	large-whorl mallow

15. For very wide-ranging species, use of local or provincial names should be avoided, e.g.

- common St. John's-wort (not Klamathweed, presumably a local name in the Pacific states)
- common dandelion (not pee-da-bed, local name in northeastern U.S.)
- lyre-leaf rockcress (not Kamchatka rockcress, local name in Pacific Northwest)
- small cranberry (not wren's-egg cranberry, local name used mostly along the coast of Maine)

16. Modifiers should be concise, yet meaningfully descriptive, using the most colorful adjectives and reflecting uniqueness of habitat, geography, toxic or medicinal properties, and flower morphology, color, or fragrance.

17. When selecting modifiers, mere English translation of Latin or Greek epithets should be avoided. Avoid surnames of individuals as modifiers because such modifiers provide very limited information on proper-

ties, characteristics, and other features of a plant.

18. In selecting modifiers, the word “common” and other rather shallow descriptive adjectives should similarly be avoided except when steeped in tradition (e.g., common dandelion).

VI. FANCIFUL PHRASES AS COMMON NAMES

Fanciful phrases composed of two or more words or elements as common names are encouraged. They are often used as substitute names for group names, or they can be used as the accepted group names. Such names should be governed by the guidelines established for group names. Phrase names, especially lengthy ones, should be hyphenated between each word or element, e.g.

devil's-darning-needles	forget-me-not
herb-of-the-crown	jack-in-the-pulpit
kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate	love-in-a-mist
old-man-in-the-spring	midnight-horror

NOTE: Fanciful phrases, however, should be limited to five or six words or elements, thus avoiding excessively lengthy names such as welcome-home-husband-however-drunk-you-be.

VII. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SPELLING

Consistency of spelling and form should be sought for both group names and modifiers. The following suggestions are provided for words with alternate spellings or forms:

- burr (not bur)
- coastal (not coast)
- county should be spelled out (not abbreviated as co.)
- forked (not forking)
- gray (not grey)
- gypsum (not gyp)
- mountain should be spelled out and singular (not abbreviated as mt., mts., mtn., or mtns.; however, Mt. is preferred to Mount)
- pygmy (not pigmy)
- savannah (not savanna)
- woolly (not wooly)
- Allegheny for the mountain range (not Alleghany)
- Great Smoky Mountain for the mountain range (not Smoky Mountain)
- Guadalupe Mountain for the mountain range (not Guadeloupe)

Rocky Mountain for the mountain range (not Rocky Mountains)
 Sierran for the mountain range (not Sierra nor Sierra Nevada)
 Guadeloupe for the country (not Guadalupe)
 Chihuahuan for the desert (not Chihuahua)
 Mojave for the desert (not Mohave)
 Sonoran for the desert (not Sonora)
 St. (not Saint)
 greater is preferred to larger
 lesser is preferred to smaller
 papery is preferred to membranaceous (and membranous)
 pinewoods or pineland is preferred to pine
 seaside is preferred to seabeach

VIII. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CAPITALIZATION

The following guidelines have been prepared to assist in the use of capitalization of proper nouns and adjectives for common names.

1. Capitalize surnames of individuals used in group names and modifiers, e.g.

Bradbury-bush	Douglas-fir
Engelmann's flat sedge	Gray's lily
Johnson grass	Klein's evening-primrose
Nuttall's oak	Small's ragwort

2. Capitalize names honoring nationalities and human races

Chinese hemlock-parsley	Italian lords-and-ladies
Hopi-tea	Norwegian whitlow-grass
New Zealand-flax	Barbados aloe

3. Capitalize the names of gods, goddesses, and other religious figures, including names referring to the deity or holy works

Adam-and-Eve	Adam's-needle
Christmas-rose	Crucifixion-vine
Easter-bonnet	Joseph's-coat
Hercules-club	Heart-of-Jesus
Holy Ghost skyrocket	Joshua-tree
Our-Lord's-candle	Venus' flytrap

4. Capitalize names suggesting titles, canonizations, and ranks of honor, e.g.

Aunt Lucy	St. Catherine's -lace
Queen Ann's-lace	St. John's-wort

NOTE: Capitalization should *not* be used when specific reference to an individual is not provided, e.g.

king orchid	kingdevil
madam-gorgon	princess-of-the-night
princesstree	queen spleenwort

5. Capitalize international and national place names and national subdivisions such as continents, countries, states, counties, parishes, provinces, and territories e.g.

American holly	Asian sword fern
European mountain-ash	Florida bear-grass
Ohio buckeye	New York fern
Shasta County leopardbane	Yukon lupine

6. Capitalize local place names, including the names of cities, parks, and other recreational areas, e.g.

Everglades palm	Grand Canyon glow-weed
San Diego bear-grass	Santa Fe phlox
Yosemite woolly-sunflower	Yellowstone rockcress

7. Capitalize geographic directions only when they designate specific areas or regions, e.g.

East Indian holly fern	North Pacific whitlow-grass
North African knapweed	South American saltbush

NOTE: Mere directional adjectives should *not* be capitalized, e.g.

northern birch	southern cat-tail
western Australian flooded gum	western sand-parsley

8. Capitalize modifiers that comprise part of a proper name and are written in the singular, such as:

bay	basin	butte	canyon
cape	county	creek	delta
desert	flat	gap	glacier
gulf	harbor	head	island
lake	Mt.	mountain	ocean
pass	peak	peninsula	plain
plateau	point	range	ridge
river	sea	straight	valley

Examples of these modifiers include:

Blue Ridge bittercress	Cape Thompson whitlow-grass
Grant's Pass willowherb	Great Basin tumble-mustard
Mt. Lassen fairyfan	Rocky Mountain bluebells
Syes Butte plains-mustard	Wind River tansy-mustard

IX. TRUE GROUP NAMES

The following genera are listed with their “true group” names. All other genera referencing these common names should be considered misapplied.

<i>Abutilon</i> – velvetleaf	<i>Abies</i> – fir
<i>Achillea</i> – yarrow	<i>Achyranthes</i> – chaff-flower
<i>Aesculus</i> – buckeye	<i>Alisma</i> – water-plantain
<i>Allium</i> – garlic, leek, onion	<i>Alnus</i> – alder
<i>Aloe</i> – aloe	<i>Ageratina</i> – snakeroot
<i>Agropyron</i> – wheat grass	<i>Alocasia</i> – taro
<i>Amaranthus</i> – pigweed, tumbleweed	<i>Anchusa</i> – bugloss
<i>Andropogon</i> – bluestem, broom grass	<i>Antirrhinum</i> – snapdragon
<i>Apocynum</i> – dogbane	<i>Arachis</i> – peanut
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> – manzanita	<i>Aristolochia</i> – birthwort, Dutchman’s-pipe
<i>Aster</i> – aster	Bambuseae – bamboo
<i>Brandegea</i> – starvine	<i>Brassica</i> – mustard, cabbage, rape
<i>Brickellia</i> – brickellbush	bryophyte – moss
<i>Buxus</i> – box	<i>Calluna</i> – heather
<i>Camassia</i> – camas	<i>Campanula</i> – bellflower
<i>Capparis</i> – caper	<i>Capsicum</i> – pepper
<i>Carex</i> – sedge	<i>Carum</i> – caraway
<i>Castanea</i> – chestnut	<i>Castanopsis</i> – chinkapin
<i>Cedrus</i> – cedar	<i>Cichorium</i> – chicory
<i>Cimicifuga</i> – bugbane	<i>Cinnamomum</i> – cinnamon
<i>Cirsium</i> – thistle	<i>Cissus</i> – treebine
<i>Citrus</i> – orange, lemon, lime	<i>Convolvulus</i> – bindweed
<i>Corallorrhiza</i> – coralroot	<i>Corchorus</i> – jute
<i>Corylus</i> – hazel	<i>Croton</i> – croton
<i>Cucumis</i> – cucumber, melon	<i>Cucurbita</i> – pumpkin, squash
<i>Cupressus</i> – cypress	<i>Cydista</i> – with
<i>Cydonia</i> – quince	<i>Cynara</i> – artichoke
<i>Cytisus</i> – broom	<i>Dianthus</i> – pink
<i>Digitalis</i> – foxglove	<i>Diodia</i> – buttonweed
<i>Dioscorea</i> – yam	<i>Dodecabea</i> – spinyherb
<i>Dracocephalum</i> – dragonhead	<i>Drypetes</i> – rosewood
<i>Elymus</i> – wild rye	<i>Epilobium</i> – fireweed, willowherb
<i>Erica</i> – heath	<i>Eucalyptus</i> – gum
<i>Eugenia</i> – stopper	<i>Euphorbia</i> – spurge
<i>Fagopyrum</i> – buckwheat	<i>Fendlera</i> – Fendlerbush
<i>Ficus</i> – fig	<i>Foeniculum</i> – fennel
<i>Fragaria</i> – strawberry	<i>Fraxinus</i> – ash
<i>Gaylussacia</i> – huckleberry	<i>Gentiana</i> – gentian
<i>Geum</i> – avens	<i>Gnaphalium</i> – cudweed
<i>Gossypium</i> – cotton	<i>Helianthus</i> – sunflower
<i>Helleborus</i> – hellebore	<i>Hemizonia</i> – tarweed
<i>Houstonia</i> – bluet	<i>Humulus</i> – hop
<i>Hyacinthus</i> – hyacinth	<i>Hyssopus</i> – hyssop
<i>Ilex</i> – holly	<i>Indigofera</i> – indigo
<i>Ipomoea</i> – morning-glory	<i>Isoetes</i> – quillwort

- Jasminum* – jasmine
Juncus – rush
Lagerstroemia – crape-myrtle
Lavandula – lavender
Ligustrum – privet
Linaria – toadflax
Liriodendron – tuliptree
Loeseliastrum – calico
Lonicera – honeysuckle
Lythrum – loosestrife
Malva – mallow
Matthiola – stock
Mercurialis – mercury
Mimulus – monkey-flower
Morus – mulberry
Myosotis – forget-me-not
Myrtus – myrtle
Nicotiana – tobacco
Ocimum – basil
Oryza – rice
Panicum – millet, panic grass
Pastinaca – parsnip
Petroselinum – parsley
Phragmites – reed
Pinguicula – butterwort
Pinus – pine
Polygala – milkwort
Portulaca – purslane
Primula – primrose
Prunus – plum, cherry, almond, peach
Pyrola – wintergreen
Quercus – oak
Raphanus – radish
Rheum – rhubarb
Ribes – currant, gooseberry
Rosa – rose
Rubia – madder
Rumex – sorrel
Sabal – palmetto
Salvia – sage
Santalum – sandalwood
Satureja – savory
Scirpus – bulrush
Scutellaria – skullcap
Selinocarpus – moonpod
Sideritis – ironwort
Solidago – goldenrod
Sullivantia – coolwort
Swietenia – mahogany
Juglans – walnut
Lactuca – lettuce
Laurus – laurel
Levisticum – lovage
Lilium – lily
Linum – flax
Lithospermum – gromwell
Lomatium – desert-parsley
Lychnis – campion
Malus – apple
Marrubium – horehound
Mentha – mint
Mesembryanthemum – iceplant
Mirabilis – four-o'clock
Musa – banana
Myrrhis – anise
Nelumbo – lotus
Obolaria – pennywort
Olea – olive
Paeonia – peony
Papaver – poppy
Penstemon – beardtongue
Phoradendron – mistletoe
Phaseolus – bean
Pimenta – allspice
Plantago – plantain
Pontederia – pickerelweed
Potamogeton – pondweed
Proboscidea – unicorn-plant
Psidium – guava
Pyrus – pear
Ranunculus – buttercup
Rhamnus – buckthorn
Rhus – sumac
Robinia – locust
Rosmarinus – rosemary
Rudbeckia – coneflower
Ruta – rue
Salix – willow
Sambucus – elder
Sarcodes – snowplant
Saxifraga – saxifrage
Scrophularia – figwort
Sedum – stonecrop
Sequoia – redwood
Solanum – nightshade
Spinacia – spinach
Swertia – felwort
Symphoricarpos – snowberry

<i>Symphytum</i> – comfrey	<i>Symplocarpus</i> – skunk-cabbage
<i>Tagetes</i> – marigold	<i>Talinum</i> – fameflower
<i>Tamarindus</i> – tamarind	<i>Tanacetum</i> – tansy
<i>Taraxacum</i> – dandelion	<i>Teucrium</i> – germander
<i>Thalictrum</i> – meadow-rue	<i>Thuja</i> – arborvitae
<i>Thymus</i> – thyme	<i>Tillandsia</i> – airplant
<i>Trichostema</i> – bluecurls	<i>Trifolium</i> – clover
<i>Tragopogon</i> – salsify	<i>Tsuga</i> – hemlock
<i>Tussilago</i> – colt's-foot	<i>Ulmus</i> – elm
<i>Urtica</i> – nettle	<i>Vallisneria</i> – eel-grass
<i>Verbascum</i> – mullein	<i>Verbena</i> – vervain
<i>Vicia</i> – vetch	<i>Vinca</i> – periwinkle
<i>Viola</i> – violet	<i>Vitis</i> – grape
<i>Wolffia</i> – watermeal	<i>Zea</i> – corn
<i>Zingiber</i> – ginger	

All genera of the following plant families (or major plant groups) represent true types; thus, their group names should not be hyphenated:

- Arecaceae – all names referencing palm
- Cactaceae – all names referencing cactus
- Cucurbitaceae – all names referencing gourd
- Cyperaceae – all names referencing sedge
- Orchidaceae – all names referencing orchid
- Poaceae – all names referencing grass
- Pteridophytes – all names referencing fern and “fern-allies”

The following words are of indeterminate application, not representing true groups, and thus can be used in various group names or fanciful phrases:

balm	balsam	bay
briar	creeper	cress
daisy	flag	haw
hedge	ivy	mampoo
mangrove	osier	rocket
rodwood		

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