

Introduction

Gardeners have traditionally traded plants over the back fence. For many, identification beyond "grandmother's pink rose" is not needed. Others, however, want to know the correct name of the cultivar (a term derived from *cultivated variety*). Is your old white iris *Iris germanica* 'Alba', or is it really 'Albicans'?

An even more vexing problem is authenticating the identification of purchased plant materials from both mail-order and local nurseries. Nurseries receive plants under one name, often from a commercial grower, and are frequently slow to change. Is your 'Black Magic' iris correctly identified, or is it really 'Eleanor Roosevelt'? Have you purchased *Rosa damascena* 'Trigintipetala' because of its anticipated fragrance and light pink flowers but received instead a hybrid with no damask rose genes, dark pink flowers, and little fragrance? Correct identification of cultivars requires consultation of cultivar checklists and ultimately of period descriptions. This brings up another problem: who has published checklists of your favorite plant group?

Our initial interest in compiling a list of cultivar checklists was generated by work in historical restoration. The task was to locate pre-1900 cultivars of ornamentals and to verify them by cumulative checklists (Kunst and Tucker, 1989). We have since expanded this to an attempt to locate all cultivar checklists for ornamental plants. (Because these lists are often scattered and sometimes difficult to locate, we would appreciate any corrections and datings.)

In the following, some historical checklists are included, but we have concentrated on the most recent, updated, cumulative ones. Our cut-off date of publication, with few exceptions, is January 1994.

The ideal checklist includes the name of the cultivar, the date of introduction (or registration), the name of the hybridizer, parentage, description, and colored photograph. Of course, this ideal is rarely achieved, especially in the older literature. For this reason, we have also included botanical and horticultural revisions when cultivars are described and illustrated. Good general references to extant cultivars are Harkness and D'Angelo (1986) and Hatch (1986). The Wisley Trials in the *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Horticultural Society* are recommended for cultivar descriptions; Wright (1984) also discusses many cultivars.

Besides numerous cultivars in its "Cultivar & Germplasm Releases" section, *HortScience* has become the vehicle for publication of cultivar names for unassigned woody genera (Huttleston, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993; Vrugtman, 1994), genera at the Arnold Arboretum (Spongberg, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994a), *Kalmia* (Jaynes, 1989), and *Syringa* (Vrugtman, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1991, 1994b). Listings of other cultivars are supposed to be maintained by International Registration Authorities (American Association of Nurserymen, c. 1987; Leslie, 1986; Schneider, 1986a; Vrugtman, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1989c, 1990b, 1990d). These

designated authorities are further supplemented by cumulative checklists and origination lists maintained and published by specialist societies.

The general starting point for valid publication of cultivar names is the sixth edition of Philip Miller's *The Gardeners Dictionary* (1752). The rules for naming cultivars are covered by Brickell (1980) and Greuter (1988). The American Association of Nurserymen (c. 1987) and Allan (1988) have published guides for the public.

A recent problem that may confuse efforts to stabilize cultivar names is the substitution of trademarks. The statement by the AAN that "under Federal law, plant variety (cultivar) names may not be trademarked" actually runs counter to the current practice in some large wholesale North American nurseries. For example, many horticulturists know the trademarked name *Ilex China Girl*TM but have never heard of 'Mesog', its registered cultivar name. Even the prestigious *Modern Roses 10* (Cairns, 1993) does not list 'Wilwind', the cultivar name, but rather WindmillTM. What, then, is the *real* cultivar name?

The Townsend-Purnell Plant Patent Act of 1930 provides a 17-year patent protection for asexually propagated cultivars, and the Plant Variety Protection Act of 1980 provides 18-year legal protection for sexually propagated cultivars in the United States. In order to circumvent this limitation of time, some nurseries have resorted to trademark names (Chadwick, 1988; Darke, 1991, 1992; Dates and Luby, 1988; E. McClintock, personal communication, 1990; Royon, 1986). While this is allowed by the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (Brickell, 1980), with this practice different cultivars may be substituted under the same trademark name from year to year. Although we understand the monetary reason for using trademark names, we must chastise the nursery industry for creating a vast confusion in the process, and no solution is envisioned for the immediate future.

Ultimately, after having spent good money for 'Munstead' lavender because of its association with Gertude Jekyll, it is disappointing to consult the checklists and realize that you have really purchased 'Compacta'. Errant nursery cataloguers will only be corrected by gardeners who insist on correct labelling for their money.

Arthur O. Tucker

Department of Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Delaware State University
Dover, DE 19901-2277
U.S.A.

Scott G. Kunst

536 Third St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
U.S.A.

Freek Vrugtman

Royal Botanical Gardens
Box 399
Hamilton, Ontario L8H 3H8
Canada

Laurence C. Hatch

P. O. Box 12011
Raleigh, NC 27605
U.S.A.



Tucker, Arthur O. et al. 1994. "A Sourcebook of Cultivar Names, Introduction." *Arnoldia* 54(4), 5-6.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/216911>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/258496>

Holding Institution

Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by

BHL-SIL-FEDLINK

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.