

TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS OF LATIN NAMES OF PLANT SPECIES

The attached WTSC Technical Note Range #3 is a list of those plant species names in most common use and their English meaning. The list was developed by Roche D. Bush, Range Conservationist, West Technical Service Center, Portland, Oregon.

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The technical or botanical name of a plant is a combination of two words. The generic word, common to the entire group or genus and the specific word designating the species. The second or species-word usually is an adjective descriptive of some feature of the plant, although it is sometimes geographical or commemorative.

The geographical names often terminate with *-ensis* (belonging to, citizen of), as in *canadensis*. Commemorative personal species-names illustrated by *Agropyron smithi* are quite common. Very many names are compounded from generic names, representing similarity or likeness to. These are usually easy to recognize and most were not included in this list. Examples are: *achilleaeifolius*, achillea-leaved; *achilleoides*, achillea-like.

The following list of species-names and their English meaning are those in most common use and were taken largely from Bailey's Encyclopedia of Horticulture:

<i>abruptus</i> : abrupt, suddenly changing	<i>albicans</i> : whitish
<i>acaulis</i> : stemless	<i>albicaulis</i> : white-stemmed
<i>acephalus</i> : headless	<i>albiflorus</i> : white-flowered
<i>acerosus</i> : needle-shaped	<i>albus</i> : white
<i>acicularis</i> : needle-like	<i>alpestris</i> : alpine
<i>acris</i> : acrid, sharp	<i>alternans</i> : alternating
<i>aculeatus</i> : prickly	<i>altus</i> : tall
<i>acuminatus</i> : long-pointed, tapering	<i>altissimus</i> : very tall
<i>adscendens</i> : ascending	<i>amabilis</i> : lovely
<i>aduncus</i> : hooked	<i>amarus</i> : bitter
<i>aestivalis</i> : summer	<i>ambiguus</i> : ambiguous, doubtful
<i>aestivus</i> : summer	<i>americanus</i> : American
<i>aggregatus</i> : clustered	<i>amphibius</i> : growing both in water and on land
<i>agrarius</i> : of the fields	<i>amplexicaulis</i> : stem-clasping
<i>agrestis</i> : of or pertaining to the fields	<i>anceps</i> : two-headed, two-edged
<i>alatus</i> : winged	<i>andinus</i> : pertaining to the Andes
<i>albescens</i> : whitish, becoming white	<i>angularis</i> : angular, angled

Prepared by Roche D. Bush, Range Conservationist

angustus: narrow
annulatus: annular, ringed
annuus: annual, one year
anomalus: out of the ordinary, unusual
apetalus: without petals
aphyllus: without leaves
apiculatus: tipped with a point
applicatus: joined, attached
aquaticus: aquatic
arachnoides: cobwebby, spider-like
arborescens: becoming tree-like
arenarius: of sand, sandy places
arenicola: sand inhabitant
argenatus: silvery
argophyllus: silver-leaved
argutus: sharp-toothed
aridus: arid, dry
aristatus: aristate, bearded
armatus: armed (as with thorns)
aromaticus: aromatic
arundinacea: reed-bearing
arundinaceus: reed-like
arvensis: pertaining to cultivated fields
ascendens: ascending
asper: rough
asperifolia: rough-leaved
atropurpureus: dark purple
atrorubens: dark red
atrovirens: dark green
aureus: golden
australis: southern
autumnalis: autumnal
axillaris: axillary, borne in the axils
azureus: sky-blue

baccatus: berried
barbatus: barbed, bearded
barbinodes: barbed at the nodes
betuloides: birch-like
bicolor: two-colored
bidentatus: two-toothed
biennis: biennial, two years
bifidus: twice cut, in two parts
biflorus: two-flowered
borealis: northern
bracteatus: bearing bracts

brevicaulis: short-stemmed
brevis: short
bulbifera: bulb-bearing
bulbosus: bulbous

caeruleus: dark blue
caespitosus: tufted, in low dense clumps
campanulatus: bell-shaped
campestris: of the fields or plains
canadensis: Canadian
candidus: white, white-hairy, shining
canescens: gray-pubescent
capillaris: hair-like
carinatus: keeled
carneus: flesh-colored
caudatus: tailed
caulescens: having a stem or stems
chrysanthus: golden-flowered
chrysocarpus: golden-fruited
ciliatus: hairy fringed
cilianensis: hairy
cinereus: ash-colored
circularis: round
coccineus: scarlet
comatus: with coma or hair
communis: common
commutatus: changed or changing
comosus: long hair
compressus: compressed
concolor: colored similarly
condensus: condensed, crowded
contortus: contorted, twisted
contractus: contracted
cordatus: heart-shaped
cordifolius: heart-shaped leaves
corniculatus: horned
corrugatus: corrugated, wrinkled
corymbosus: corymbose
crassicaulis: thick-stemmed
crassifolius: thick-leaved
crispus: crisped, curled
cristatus: crested, cristate
croceus: saffron-colored, yellow
crucifera: cross-bearing
crus-galli: cockspur
cryptandrus: hidden stamens

cucullatus: hooded
cuneatus: cuneate, wedge-shaped
curtipedicellata: short-pedicel
curtipendula: short-pendula
cuspidata: sharp stiff point

dactyloides: like fingers
dactylon: finger
debilis: weak, frail
decapetalus: ten-petaled
decorus: elegant, comely
decumbens: reclining at the base but

the top or tips upright

deflexus: bent abruptly downward
deformis: misshapen
deltoides: triangular
dentatus: toothed
denticulatus: slightly toothed
depauperatus: stunted, starved
depressus: depressed
diandrus: two stamens
dichotoma: forked in pairs
didymus: in a pair
diffusus: spreading
digitatus: compound, like fingers
discolor: of different colors
distans: separate, distant
distichus: two-ranked
divaricatus: spreading
dubius: dubious, doubtful
dulcis: sweet
dumosus: bushy
duplex: double

echinatus: bristly, prickly

edulis: edible

elatior: taller

elatus: tall

elegans: elegant

elongatum: lengthened

emarginatus: with a shallow notch
at the apex

enneandrus: nine stamens -*ensis*: be-
longing to, citizen of

erectus: upright

erianthus: woolly-flowered

ericoides: heath-like

eriopada: having hairs at the base

erosus: jagged, as if gnawed

esculentus: edible

everta: expelled, turned out

excisus: cut away

exiguus: little, small, poor

eximius: distinguished, out of
the ordinary

expansa: expanded

exsertus: exerted

exurgens: standing up

extensa: spread out

falcatus: sickle-shaped

fasciatus: abnormally flattened

fascicularis: clustered together

fasciculatus: fascicled

filicoides: fern-like

filifolius: thread-leaved

filiformis: thread-like

fimbriatus: fringed

fistulosus: hollow-cylindrical

flabellatus: fan-like parts

flaccidus: flaccid, soft

flagellaris: whip-like

flavescens: yellowish

flavus: yellow

flexilis: flexible, pliant

flexuosus: tortuous, zig-zig

floccosus: woolly

floribunda: free-flowering

floridus: full of flowers

foetidus: fetid, bad-smelling

foliosus: full of leaves

fragilis: brittle, fragile

frigidus: of cold regions

fruticosus: shrubby, bushy

fulgens: shining, glistening

furcatus: forked

fuscus: brown

germinatus: twins, double

geniculatus: jointed, kneed

geoides: of the earth

giganteus: very large

glaber: smooth

glaberrimus: most smooth

glabratus: somewhat smooth

glandulosus: glandular

glaucus: with a bloom, grayish
glomeratus: glomerate, clustered
gracilis: graceful, slender
gramineus: grass-like
graminifolius: grass-leaved
grandidentatus: big-toothed
grandiflorus: large-flowered
grandis: large, big
graveolens: heavy-scented
guttatus: spotted, speckled
gymnocarpus: naked-fruited

hastatus: spear-shaped
heteranthus: various flowered
heterolepis: various scales
heterophyllus: various shaped leaves
hiemalis: winter
hirsutus: hairy
hispidulus: hispid, bristly
horizontalis: horizontal
horridus: with spines, barbs
hortensis: of the garden
humilis: low-growing dwarf
hyalinus: transparent, translucent
hybridus: hybrid, mixed
hyemalis: of the winter
hymenodes: membrane-like
hystrix: porcupine-like, bristly

igneus: fiery
imbricans: overlapping
incanus: hoary
incisus: incised, cut
indentatus: indented
indurata: hardened
intermis: unarmed, without thorns
inflatus: swollen
integerrimus: very entire
integrifolius: entire-leaved
intermedius: intermediate
interruptus: interrupted
intricatus: entangled
isopetalus: equal-petaled

jubatus: crested, with a mane
junceus: rush-like

labiatus: lipped
laciniatus: torn, cut into narrow lobes
lactatus: milky
lacteus: milk-white
lacunosus: with holes or pits
lacustris: pertaining to lakes
laetus: bright, vivid
laevis: smooth
lanatus: woolly
lanceolatus: lance-like
lanuginosus: wool-bearing
lasiocarpus: rough-fruited
lateriflorus: lateral-flowered
latifolius: broad-leaved
latiglumis: broad-glumes
latus: broad-wide
laxiflorus: loose-flowered
laxus: lax, open, loose
lenticularis: lens-shaped
leptocaulis: slender-stemmed
leptophyllus: thin-or slender-leaved
leucanthus: white-flowered
leucobotrys: with white clusters
leucotricha: white hairs
ligularis: strap-shaped
linearifolius: linear-leaved
linearis: linear
lithospermus: with seeds stone-like
littoralis: of the seashore
lobatus: lobed
longifolius: long-leaved
longipes: long-footed, long-stalked
longus: long
lucidus: bright, lucid, clear
ludovicianus: of Louisiana
lunatus: moon-shaped
lutescens: yellowish
luteus: yellow

macranthus: large-flowered
macrobotrys: large-clustered
macrocarpus: large-fruited
macrocephalus: large-headed
macrophyllus: large-leaved
macrostachyus: large-spiked
maculatus: spotted

majalis: of May, Maytime
major, majus: greater, larger
marginalis: marginal, marked on edges
marginatus: margined
maritimus: of the sea
mas: male
masculatus: masculine
maxillaris: of the jaw
maximus: largest
medius: medium, intermediate
medullaris: center or pith
megalanthus: large-flowered
megaphyllus: large-leaved
melanococcus: black-berried
melancarpus: black-fruited
melleus: pertaining to honey
micans: glittering, sparkling
micranthus: small-flowered
microcarpus: small-fruited
microdon: small-toothed
microlepis: small-scaled
microphyllus: small-leaved
micropterus: small-winged
microsepalus: small-sepaled
millefolius: thousand-leaved
mimus: mimic
minus: least, smallest
minor, minus: smaller
mirabilis: marvelous, extraordinary
mitis: mild, gentle
mitratus: turbaned
mollis: soft, soft-hairy
mollissimus: very soft-hairy
monadelphus: in one group, bundle
monocephalus: single-headed
monogynus: of one pistil
monophyllus: one-leaved
monopterus: one-winged
monospermus: one-seeded
monostachyus: single-spiked
montanus: pertaining to mountains
monticolus: native of mountains
mucronatus: mucronate, short sharp point
multicaulis: many-stemmed
multiceps: many-headed, branched
multifidus: many times parted
multiflorus: many flowered

multifurcatus: many times forked
multiplax: many-folded
mundulus: trim, neat
munitus: defended, fortified
mutabilis: changeable, variable
muticus: blunt, pointless
myriacanthus: very many-spined
myriocarpus: very many-fruited

nanus: dwarfed
natans: floating
nebulosus: clouded, indefinite
neglectus: neglected, overlooked
nemoralis: of woods or groves
nervosus: nerved
nevadensis: of the Sierra Nevadas
nidus: nest
niger: black
nigrescens: blackish, becoming black
nigricans: black
nitens: shining
nivalis: pertaining to snow
nobilis: noble, renowned
nodiflorus: flowers at nodes
nodosus: with nodes, jointed
notatus: marked
nubicolus: dwelling among clouds
nucifera: nut-bearing
nudatus: nude, stripped
nudicaulis: naked-stemmed
nudiflorus: naked-flowered
nutatans: nodding
nycticalus: night-blooming

obcordatus: inversely cordate
oblongifolius: oblong-leaved
obovatus: inverted ovate
obtusatus: obtuse, blunt
occidentalis: western
ochroleucus: yellowish white
octopetalus: eight-petaled
octoflora: eight flowers
odoratus: odorous, fragrant
officinalis: officinal, medicinal
officinarum: of the apothecaries
oliganthus: few-flowered
oligocarpus: few-fruited

orbicularis: round
orientalis: oriental, eastern
ornithopodus: like a bird's foot
ornatus: adorned, ornate
orthocarpus: straight-fruited
orthopterus: straight-winged
ovalis: oval
ovinus: pertaining to sheep
oxyacanthus: sharp-spined
oxygonus: sharp-angled

pachyanthus: thick-flowered
pachyneurus: thick-nerved
paleaceus: with palea, or palea-like
pallens: pale
pallescens: palish, becoming pale
pallidifolius: pale-leaved
pallidus: pale
palliiflavens: pale yellow
paludosus: of marshes
palustris: marsh-loving
panduratus: fiddle-shaped
paniculatus: paniculate
papilionaceus: butterfly-like
paradoxus: strange
partitus: parted
parviflorus: small-flowered
parvifolius: small-leaved
parvus: small
patens: spreading
pauciflorus: few-flowered
paucifolius: few-leaved
pectinatus: comb-like
pedatus: footed, of the foot
peduncularis: peduncled, stalked
pendulus: pendulous, hanging
pennatus: feathered, veins or lobes
at right angles; pinnate

pentaphyllus: five-leaved
perbellus: very beautiful
perennans: perennial
perfoliatus: w/leaves surrounding stem
perforatus: perforated, with holes
petiolaris: with a leaf-stalk
petraeus: rock-loving
phoeniceus: purple-red
pictus: painted

pilifera: bearing soft hairs
pilosus: shaggy, with soft hairs
pinnatifidus: pinnately cleft
platycarpus: broad-fruited
platyphyllus: broad-leaved
plicatus: folded lengthwise
plumarius: plumed
podocarpus: stalked-fruit
polyacanthus: many-spined
polyandrus: many stamens
polyanthus: many-flowered
polycephalus: many-headed
polymorphus: many forms, variable
porrifolius: leek-leaved
praealtus: very tall
praecox: premature, very early
pratensis: of meadows
princeps: princely, first
procerus: tall
procumbens: lying on the ground
procurrens: extended
profusus: profuse
propendens: hanging down
prostratus: lying flat, prostrate
pseudo: not true, not genuine
pubens: downy
pubescens: downy
puddicus: bashful, retiring
pulchellus: pretty, beautiful
pulcherrimus: very handsome
pullus: dark colored
pulverulentus: powdered
pumilus: dwarf
punctatus: punctate, dotted
pungens: piercing, sharp-pointed
purpuraceus: purple
pusillus: very small, insignificant
pycnanthus: densely flowered
pygmaeus: pigmy
pyramidalis: pyramidal
pyriiformis: pear-shaped

quadriifolius: four-leaved
quinatus: in fives

radicans: rooting
radicosus: many-rooted

radiosus: radiate, many rays
ramiflorus: branching inflorescence
ramosus: branched
rarus: rare
rectus: upright
redivivus: restored, brought to life
reflexus: bent back
refractus: broken
regalis: regal, royal
Regina: Queen
reniformis: kidney-shaped
repens: repent, creeping
resectus: cut off, curtailed
resinosus: resin-bearing
reticulatus: net-veined
retortus: twisted back
retroflexus: reflexed
rigidus: rigid, stiff
riparius: of river banks
rivularis: brook-loving
robustus: robust, stout
rosaceus: rose-like
roseus: rose, rosy
rostratus: beaked
rotatus: wheel-shaped
rotundifolius: round-leaved
rotundus: round
rubens: red
ruber: red, ruddy
ruberrimus: very red
rufus: red, reddish
rugosus: wrinkled
runcinatus: backwardly toothed
rupesstris: rock-loving
rupicolus: growing on cliffs

saccatus: bag-like
saccharatus: containing sugar
saccharum: sugar
saccifera: bag-bearing
sagittalis: of the arrow
sagittatus: arrow-shaped
salicinus: willow-like
salinus: salty
sanctus: holy
sanguineus: bloody, blood-red

sapidus: pleasing to taste
saponaceus: soapy
sativus: cultivated
saxicolus: growing among rocks
scaber: rough
scandens: climbing
scaposus: with scapes
schizophyllus: cut-leaved
sclerocarpus: hard-fruited
sclerophyllus: hard-leaved
scoparius: broom-like
sculptus: carved
scutellaris: dish-shaped
scutum: a shield
secundus: second, side-flowering
semi-: partially
semperflorens: ever flowering
sempervirens: ever green
sepium: of hedges or fences
sericeus: silky
serotinus: late, late-flowering
serratus: saw-toothed
sessiflorus: without pedicel
sessilis: stalkless
setaceus: bristle-like
setosus: full of bristles
sibiricus: of Siberia
silvaticus: pertaining to woods
silvestris: pertaining to woods
simplex: simple, unbranched
simulans: similar to, resembling
sinensis: of China
sinuatus: wavy-margined
sobolifera: with creeping rooting stems
solaris: of the sun
solidus: dense, not hollow
sordidus: unclean, dirty, foul
sparsiflorus: few-flowered
sparsus: sparse, few, scattered
speciosus: showy, good-looking
spectabilis: spectacular, showy
sphaericus: spherical
spicatus: spicate, with spikes
spinosus: full of spines
spinulosus: weakly spiny
splendens: splendid

- squamosus*: full of scales
squarrosus: parts spreading at the tips
stellaris: starry
stellatus: starry
stenocephalus: narrow-headed
stenopetalus: narrow-petaled
stenophyllus: narrow-leaved
stolonifera: bearing stolons
stramineus: straw-colored
striatus: striped, striated
strictus: strict, upright, erect
strigosus: covered with sharp, straight
 appressed hairs
stylosus: styles prominent
suaveolens: sweet-scented
subacaulis: nearly stemless
sub-: nearly
submersus: under water
subsessilis: nearly sessile
subalatus: awl-shaped
succulentus: succulent, fleshy
suffrutescens: slightly shrubby
suffruticosus: slightly shrubby
sulcatus: furrowed
sulphureus: sulfur-colored
superbus: superb, proud
superviliaris: eyebrow-like
sylvaticus: sylvan, forest-loving
sylvestris: of woods or forests
- tardiflorus*: late-flowered
taxifolius: yew-leaved
tectorum: of roofs or houses
temulentus: drunken
tenax: tenacious, strong
tenellus: slender, tender, soft
tenuiflorus: slender-flowered
tenuifolius: slender-leaved
tenuis: slender, thin
teres: circular in cross-section
ternatus: in threes
terrestris: of the earth
tetra: in fours
thermalis: warm, of warm springs
tigrinus: tiger-striped
tinctus: dyed
tomentosus: matted-pubescent
tortus: twisted
toxicus: poisonous
- toxiifera*: poison-producing
tremuloides: like Tremulus, trembling
tremulus: quivering, trembling
triacanthus: three-spined
triangularis: three-angled
trichophyllus: hairy-leaved
trichospermus: hairy-seeded
tridens: with three teeth
tridentatus: three-toothed
trifidus: three-parted
trilobatus: three-lobed
tripartitus: three-parted
tristis: sad, bitter, dull
trivialis: common, ordinary
truncatus: cut off square
tuberculatus: with small tubers
tubiflorus: trumpet-flowered
tubulosus: with tubes
tulipifera: tulip-bearing
tumidus: swollen
turbinatus: top-shaped
turgidus: turgid, full, inflated
typicus: typical
- uliginosus*: of wet or marshy places
umbellatus: with umbels
uncinatus: hooked at the point
undatus: waved
undulatus: wavy
unicolor: one-colored
uniflorus: one-flowered
unilateralis: one-sided
urens: burning, stinging
urentissimus: very stinging
utilis: useful
utriculatus: with small bladderly one-
 seeded fruit
- vagens*: wandering, vagabondish
vaginalis: sheathed
validus: strong
variatus: variable
variegatus: variegated
varius: various, diverse
velutinus: velvety
venenatus: poisonous
venosus: veiny
ventricosus: swelling or inflated on
 one side

vermiculatus: worm-like or like
worm tracks
vernalis: vernal, spring
vernus: of spring
verrucosus: warted
verticillatus: whorled
verus: true or genuine
vescus: weak, thin, feeble
vespertinus: of the evening, western
vestitus: covered, clothed
vexans: puzzling
villosus: soft-hairy
vinosus: full of wine
violaceus: violet
virens: green

virgatus: twiggy
viridiflorus: green-flowered
viridis: green
viscidus: sticky
vitellinus: dull yellow
vittatus: striped
volubilis: twining
vulgaris: vulgar, common

xanthinus: yellow
xanthocarpus: yellow-fruited
xanthophyllus: yellow-leaved

zonatus: zoned, banded