



WHAT'S IN A NAME? READING PLANT LABELS

Learn how to identify a few common plant types sold at nurseries and garden stores.

Achillea millefolium



Yarrow

Plant type:
Straight Species

How to tell:
The plant's scientific name (genus & specific epithet) is listed, without any other names in single quotation marks.

Achillea millefolium
'Calistoga'



Yarrow

Plant type:
Cultivar

How to tell:
The plant's scientific name (genus & specific epithet) is followed by a name in single quotation marks ('Calistoga').

Achillea
'Moonshine'



Yarrow

Plant type:
Hybrid Cultivar

How to tell:
Only the plant's genus is listed, followed by a name in single quotation marks ('Moonshine').

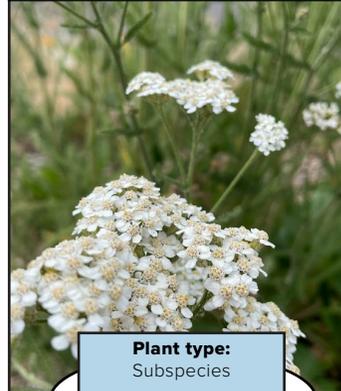
WESTERN YARROW
Achillea millefolium var. *occidentalis*
OPEN POLLINATED SEED



Plant type:
Variety

How to tell:
The plant's scientific name is followed by "var." and a variety name listed in italics.

YARROW
Achillea millefolium ssp. *lanulosa*
OPEN POLLINATED SEED



Plant type:
Subspecies

How to tell:
The plant's scientific name is followed by "ssp." and a subspecies name listed in italics.



WHAT'S IN A NAME? USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Learn some vocabulary to help you read plant labels.

Components of a scientific name

Achillea millefolium

Genus name

Specific epithet

Straight Species

Example: *Achillea millefolium*
A plant species that has not been bred or modified in any way. These plants should look exactly like a plant of the same species growing in the wild (i.e., a wild-type). A straight species is not necessarily a native plant, or harvested from a local population.

Subspecies

Example: *Achillea millefolium* ssp. *lanulosa*
A plant population geographically isolated from others of the same species. Denoted with 'ssp.' between the species and subspecies name.

Variety

Example: *Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*
A variety is a naturally occurring form of a plant population within a species, such as a white-flowered form of a normally pink-flowered plant. Varieties are denoted with 'var.' between the species and variety name.

Cultivar

Example: *Achillea millefolium* 'Calistoga'
Cultivar = cultivated variety. Many cultivars are plant forms that were developed through plant breeding, although some may be from naturally occurring variations in wild plant populations. Cultivars are bred to be distinct, uniform, and stable, and they are also named. A cultivar name is listed in single quotation marks following the scientific name of a plant.

Hybrid Cultivar

Example: *Achillea* 'Moonshine'
Hybrids are plants with parents from 2+ different species or genera. Like cultivars, hybrid cultivars have a name listed in single quotation marks, but they typically only have the genus listed before the cultivar name. Some hybrid cultivars have an 'x' in their name, between the genus and cultivar name.

Ecotype

A plant that is adapted to grow in a specific ecological region. Its form, function, and growth habits are well adapted to the place where it grows. For example, if you're planting in eastern Oregon, you might seek out an eastern yarrow ecotype, as it will be better adapted to the climate, compared to one grown on the Oregon coast.

Want more information on how to
identify and buy native plants?

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