

GARDEN CLUB OF PALO ALTO

HORTICULTURE

2009-2010

“KINGDOM, PHYLUM, CLASS, ORDER, FAMILY, GENUS, SPECIES”

Or

Kids Prefer Cheese Over Fried Green Spinach

PLANT DIVISIONS

The plant kingdom has numerous divisions and subdivisions, but for us, the average, but dedicated gardener, we begin at the level of the plant family, of which there are about 300 members.

FAMILY: The plant family is composed of one or more genera having a number of characteristics, especially in their reproductive structures. Plants within a family share some general characteristics but differ enough that they can be further categorized into genera.

BOTANICAL NAME: A plant's botanical name is composed of two parts, the genus and species. This is the binomial system of plant nomenclature devised by Carolus Linnaeus in the 18th century, when he classified and named the whole known plant and animal kingdoms.

GENUS: Plants consisting of one or more species sharing many characteristics, usually similar flowers and fruit. Genus is a group or category of plants more like each other botanically than any other group. The genus is always capitalized

SPECIES: Species is a specific division of a genus and includes plants with certain discernible differences from other plants within the same genus. The species is always written with a small initial.

The botanical name of a plant (genus and species) is always printed in italics or underlined. Example: *Magnolia grandiflora*

SUBDIVISIONS OF SPECIES: Variety is a subdivision of a species, but is not a part of the botanical name. There is a wild variety and a cultivated variety.

A wild variety or botanical variety is a plant which comes true to its characteristics from seed in nature and its name is always in Latin form and written with a small initial and in italics. Example: *Cedrus atlantica glauca* or *Cedrus atlantica* var *glauca*.

A “cultivar” derived from cultivated variety, is a plant which has been cultivated in the greenhouse, nursery, or garden for a particular characteristic or set of characteristics. The word cultivar comes from the combination of the words “cultivated” and variety”.The “cultivar” name is spelled with a capital initial and is set apart by single quotation marks.

Example: *Acacia redolens* ‘Desert Carpet’

HYBRID: A hybrid is a plant resulting from a cross between two different species or well-marked varieties within a species. Such hybrids are usually given a collective name in Latin form and are preceded by a multiplication sign. Example: *Clematis x jackmanii* is a hybrid resulting from the crossing of *Clematis lanuginosa* and *C. viticella*