



WHERE PLANTS COME FROM

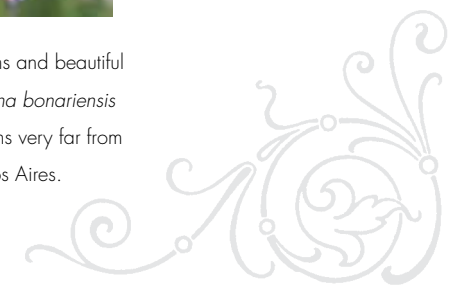
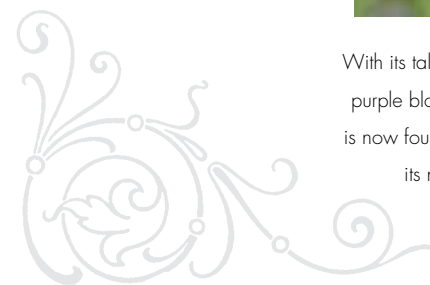


One of the most useful group of species names is that which gives some indication of where a plant originally came from. Once a gardener has a clue or two about the geographical region to which a plant is native, he or she can begin to assess whether it might thrive or flounder when transplanted to their own plot. However, the level of detail that such names provide varies tremendously. It can be as

broad as a continent (*europaeus*, European) or a country (*hispanicus*, Spanish), or may be more specific, such as a state (*pennsylvanicus*, from Pennsylvania) or even a town (*albanensis*, from the English town of St. Albans). In rare cases, the name might be so detailed as to refer to the house or estate where a plant was bred, such as the holly *Ilex x altaclerensis*, from Highclere Castle, England.



With its tall stately stems and beautiful purple blooms, *Verbena bonariensis* is now found in gardens very far from its native Buenos Aires.





abyssinicus *a-biss-IN-ee-kus*
abyssinica, abyssinicum
Abyssinian.

acadiensis *ah-kay-dee-EN-sis*
acadiensis, acadiense
From Nova Scotia, Canada.

accolus *ak-COHLus*
accola, accolum
From nearby, neighboring.

aegeus *EE-gee-us*
aegea, aegeum
From the shores of the Aegean
Sea, Greece.

aegyptiacus *ee-jip-TEE-ah-kus*
aegyptiaca, aegypticum
Egyptian.

aethiopicus *ee-thee-OH-pik-us*
aethiopa, aethiopicum
Ethiopian.

aetolicus *ee-TOH-lee-kus*
aetolica, aetolium
From Aetolia, Greece.

affer *A-fer*
afra, afrum
Specifically from the North African
coastal countries such as Algeria
and Tunisia.

* **africanus** *af-ri-KAHN-us*
africana, africanum
African.

agrarius *ag-RA-ree-us*
agraria, agrarium
From fields and cultivated land.

alabamensis *al-uh-bam-EN-sis*
alabamensis, alabamense
From Alabama, America.

albanensis *al-ban-EN-sis*
albanensis, albanense
From St. Albans, Herefordshire, England;
for example, *Primula albanensis*.

aldenhamensis *al-den-ham-EN-sis*
aldenhamensis, aldenhamense
From Aldenham House, Hertfordshire, England,
home of the Hon. Vicary Gibbs (see pages 32–3),
an avid plant collector. Examples include *Euonymus*
europaeus "Aldenhamensis."



* **AGAPANTHUS**
AFRICANUS,
African Lily

Agapanthus originate from
the Cape Province region,
although they are also
known as Lily of the Nile.

ACANTHUS

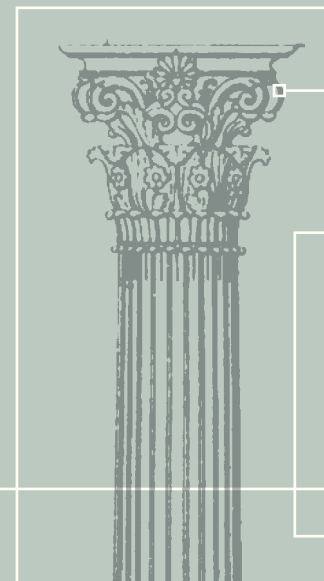
The lush foliage and tall architectural flower spikes of the acanthus plant strikes a dramatic note in any garden. Belonging to the family Acanthaceae, the name for this genus of herbaceous perennials derives from *akanthos*, the Greek for thorn. Where you see that *acanth* forms part of the name of a plant, watch out, as it indicates that in some part it is spiny, spiky, or thorny. For instance *acanthocomus* (*acanthocoma*, *acanthocomum*) tells us the plant has spiny hairs on its leaves, while *acanthifolius* (*acanthifolia*, *acanthifolium*) means the leaves resemble that of the acanthus plant. In Greek mythology, the nymph Acantha was much desired by the god Apollo. In an attempt to fight off his unwanted amorous advances, Acantha scratched Apollo's face. Thus rejected, his revenge was to turn her into a spiky plant.



Thwarted love apart, the spikiness associated with the acanthus actually refers to the plant's flowers, which are formed from mauve and white overlapping bracts and tubular petals. These are born on tall spikes that rise up gracefully from a mat of large leaves. Among the most commonly grown is *Acanthus spinosus*, which has pointed, spiny leaves, produces an abundance of flowers and can easily reach a stately 1.2 m (4 feet). *Spinosus* (*spinosa*, *spinosum*) means

spiny. *A. mollis* has softer leaves and it is probably from this species that the common American name for acanthus, Bear's Breech, or Bear's Breeches, originates as, just like a bear, the acanthus leaf is big, broad, and hairy! (*Mollis*, *mollis*, *molle* means soft or flexible)

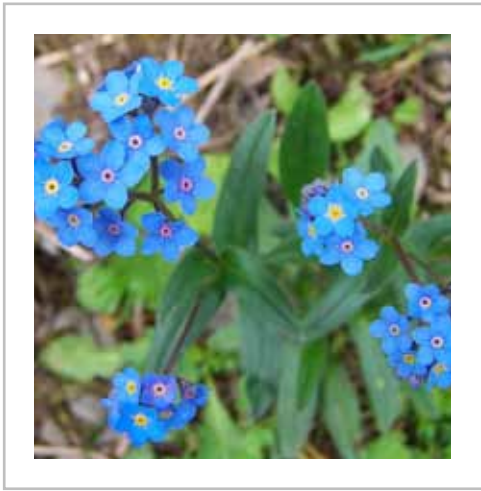
Acanthus plants thrive in dry, sunny spots in the garden, but beware where you plant them, as they form a long taproot that makes it very difficult to remove them from unsuitable locations. They are generally hardy, but it is advisable to apply a generous mulch to cover the cut-down stems over the first couple of winters after planting.



Curled leaves of acanthus
feature in classical
Corinthian capitals.



According to the writer Virgil, Helen of
Troy wore a dress embroidered with a
highly decorative form of the acanthus.



* MYOSOTIS ALPESTRIS, *Forget-Me-Not*

Although happy in most conditions *Myosotis alpestris* thrives best given the light shade and moist soil associated with woodland habitats.

aleppicus *a-LEP-ee-kus*
aleppica, aleppicum
From Aleppo, Syria.

aleuticus *a-LEW-tih-kus*
aleutica, aleuticum
From the Aleutian Islands, Alaska.

alexandrinus *al-ex-an-DRY-nus*
alexandrina, alexandrenum
From Alexandria, Egypt.

algeriensis *al-jir-ee-EN-sis*
algeriensis, algeriense
Algerian.

alienus *a-LY-en-us*
aliena, alienum
A plant of foreign origin.

* **alpestris** *al-PES-triss*
alpestris, alpestre
From lower, usually wooded, mountain habitats.

alpicolus *al-PEE-kol-us*
alpicola, alpicolum
From high mountain habitats.

alpigenus *al-PEE-gen-us*
alpigena, alpigenum
From a mountainous region.

alpinus *Al-pin-us*
alpina, alpinum
From high alpine regions, often rocky.

altaclerensis *al-ta-cle-REN-sis*
altaclerensis, altaclerene
From Highclere Castle, Hampshire, England.

altaicus *al-TAY-ik-us*
altaica, altaicum
From the Altai mountains, Mongolia.

amazonicus *am-uh-ZOH-nik-us*
amazonica, amazonicum
From the Amazon River, South America.

amboinensis *am-boy-NEN-sis*
amboinensis, amboinense
From Amboina Island, Indonesia.

americanus *a-mer-ih-KAH-nus*
americana, americanum
From North or South America.

ammophilus *am-oh-FY-lus*
ammophila, ammophilum
From sandy places.

amurensis *am-or-EN-sis*
amurensis, amurense
From the Amur River region, Asia.

anatolicus *an-ah-TOH-lee-kus*
anatolica, alitolicum
From Anatolia, Turkey.

ancyrensis *an-syr-EN-sis*
ancyrensis, ancyrense
From Ankara, Turkey.

L A T I N I N A C T I O N

As its name suggests the rock rose *Helianthemum apenninum* originates from the Italian Apennine Mountains and thrives in dry and rocky places. With its evergreen silver foliage topped by masses of white flowers, this tough plant provides excellent ground cover and is extremely drought resistant.



* HELIANTHEMUM APENNINUM
White rock-rose

andicolus *an-dee-KO-lus*
anticola, anticolum
Native of the Andes, South America.

andinus *an-DEE-nus*
andina, andinum
Andine, from the Andes, South America.

anglicus *AN-glee-kus*
anglica, anglicum
English.

annamensis *an-na-MEN-sis*
annamensis, annamense
From Annam, Asia.

antarcticus *ant-ARK-tee-kus*
antarctica, antarcticum
From the South Pole.

antillanus *ant-il-LAN-nus*
antillana, antillanum, antillanensis,
antilleris, antillere
From the Antilles Islands, West Indies.

antipodus *an-te-PO-dus*
antipoda, antipoum
From the Antipodes.

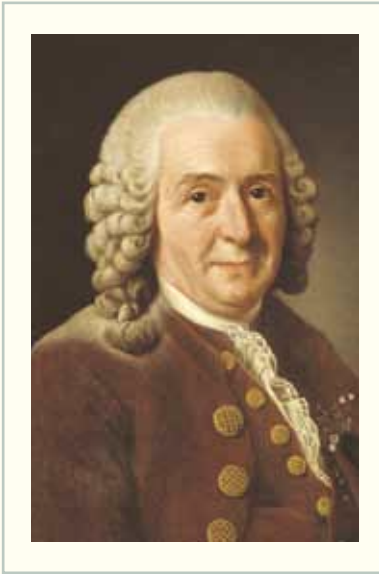
* **apenninus** *ap-en-NEE-nus*
apennina, appenninum
From the Apennine Mountains, Italy.

CARL LINNAEUS

(1707–78)

If gardeners ever despair at the prospect of remembering the Latin name of a plant, they should pause and give thanks to the eighteenth-century botanist, physician, and zoologist Carl Linnaeus. It is due to his rigorous rationalization of plant names that they now need only recall two words, rather than the dozen or so that were commonly used in previous eras.

Born in the southern province of Småland, Sweden, the son of a country parson, Linnaeus was raised in a family in which Latin was spoken daily. After showing an early interest in plants and botany, he studied medicine at Uppsala University, a subject closely allied to herbalism at that time. Linnaeus possessed an insatiable curiosity about all aspects of the world around him. After classifying the plants, animals, and minerals of his native country, he travelled widely, including trips to England, Holland, and Lapland. Returning to Uppsala as Professor of Botany, he was regarded as an inspiring teacher and many of his students, known as Apostles, went on to make important scientific discoveries all over the world.



Among his contemporaries, Linnaeus was famed for his insatiable curiosity about the natural world and for the accuracy of his visual memory.

Today Linnaeus is most remembered for the binomial, or two word, system of naming plants that he developed and refined from the earlier work of Caspar Bauhin (1560–1624). Using the binomial method of nomenclature, a plant is first attributed to a particular genus then given its specific species name. The species may then be subdivided into subspecies, variety, and form for greater clarity of identification. Linnaeus based his classification of plants on their sexual characteristics, dividing plants into groups depending on the number of stamens and pistils (the sexual organs of plants). He was aware that this was an artificial structure and it was later superseded by a natural botanical system after his death. This emphasis on the reproductive aspects of plants led Linnaeus to use some rather fanciful language, describing plants in terms such as “brides,” “bridegrooms,” and “bridal beds.”

Linnaeus published numerous works throughout his career. Among his most influential is *Systema naturae* (1735), this was originally produced as a pamphlet outlining his new system of

“LINNAEUS WAS IN REALITY A POET WHO HAPPENED TO BECOME A NATURALIST.”

August Strindberg (1849–1912), Swedish writer

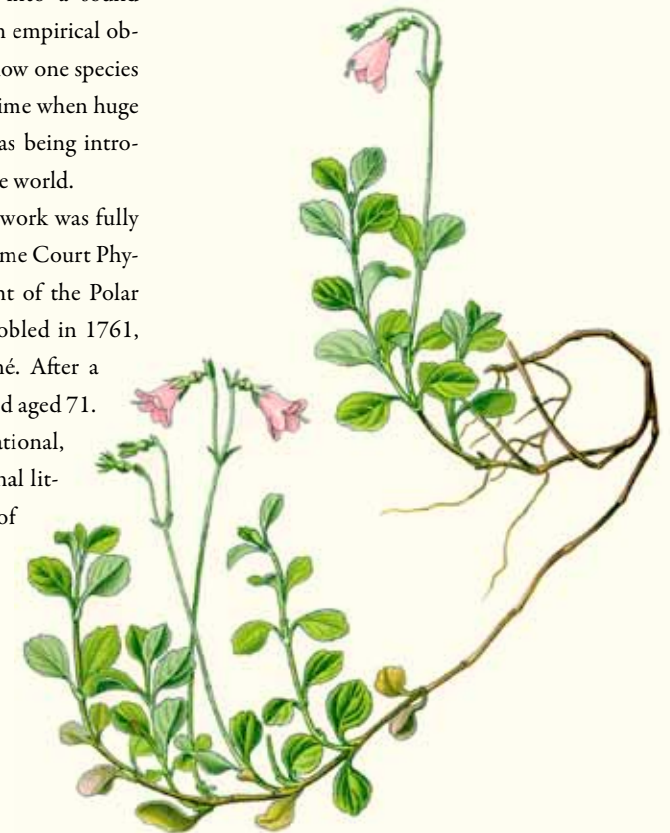
classifying the natural world. He continued to extend the work over the following decades, until it became a two-volume publication in 1758. His *Genera plantarum* (1737) describes in detail all the 935 plant genera that were then known. This was followed in 1753 by *Species plantarum*. Describing thousands of plant species, it became the basis for modern nomenclature. Linnaeus’s system of classification enabled scientists to fit previously unidentified plants and animals into a sound framework of knowledge, based on empirical observation. Thus they began to see how one species related to another. This came at a time when huge amounts of new plant material was being introduced into Europe from all over the world.

The importance of Linnaeus’s work was fully recognized in his lifetime. He became Court Physician in 1747, was made a Knight of the Polar Star in 1758, and was finally ennobled in 1761, taking the title of Carl von Linné. After a series of debilitating strokes, he died aged 71.

Methodical, practical, and rational, Linnaeus was, despite the occasional literary flight of fancy, a master of precise and accurate simplification. In tribute, the later Swedish writer August Strindberg (1849–1912) said “Linnaeus was in reality a poet who happened to become a naturalist.”

 LINNAEA BOREALIS, *Twinflower*

Linnaea borealis (*borealis* meaning “northern”) is one of the few plants named after Carl Linnaeus. It was one of his favorite plants and has pretty bell-shaped flowers, which hang in pairs from a single stem. Commonly known as the “twinflower,” it is at home growing in cool forest habitats and its appearance is often an indicator of ancient woodland.



F

ferrugineus *fer-oo-JIN-ee-us*
ferruginea, ferrugineum
Rust-colored.

* **flammeus** *FLAM-mee-us*
flammea, flammeum
Flame-colored or flame-like.

flavens, flaveolus *FLA-vens*
flaveola, flaveolum, flavescens,
flavidus (flavida, flavidum)
All these terms mean yellowish in color.

flavicomus *flav-ih-KOH-mus*
flavicoma, flavicomum
Yellow-haired.

flavispinus *flav-ih-SPIN-us*
flavispina, flavispinum
Yellow-spined.

flavissimus *flav-ISS-ih-mus*
flavissima, flavissimum
Deepest yellow.

flavovirens *flav-oh-VY-rens*
Greenish yellow.

* **flavus** *FLA-vus*
flava, flavum
Pure yellow.

flore-albo *FLOR-ee AL-bo*
With white flowers.

fucatus *few-KAY-tus*
fucata, fucatum
Painted or dyed.

fuliginosus *few-lih-gin-OH-sus*
fuliginosa, fuliginosum
A dirty brown or sooty color.

fulvidus *FUL-vee-dus*
fulvida, fulvidum
Slightly tawny in color.

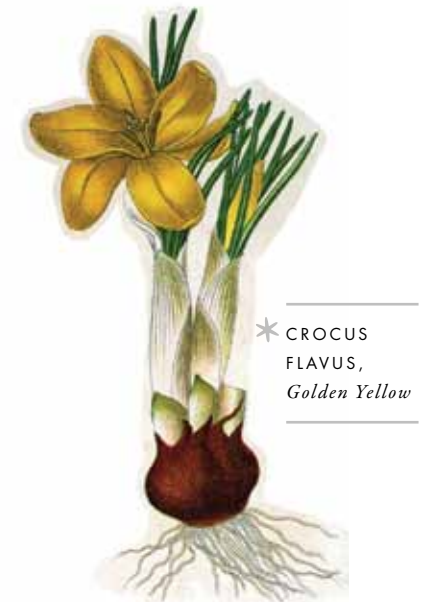
fulvescens, fulvus *ful-VES-enz*
fulva, fluvum
All these terms mean tawny-orange
in color.

fumidus *FEW-mee-dus*
fumida, fumidum
Smoky grey.

fuscatus *FUS-kah-tus*
fuscata, fuscatum
Brownish.

LATIN IN ACTION

The appearance of the bright yellow flowers of *Crocus flavus* "Golden Yellow" (syn. "Dutch Yellow" and "Yellow Mammoth") are always a welcome sight in the grey days of late winter. This delightful plant is hardy and, given well-drained soil and a sunny position, will self-seed and spread quickly. An old variety, "Golden Yellow" is both free flowering and fragrant.



* **CROCUS
FLAVUS,
Golden Yellow**



* **ALLOXYLON FLAMMEUM,
Red silky oak**

Bearing bright orange flowers in late spring and early summer, this native of the Australian rainforest is often called the Queensland Tree Waratah.

fuscifolius *few-ski-FOH-lee-us*
fuscifolia, fuscifolium
With dusky-brown leaves.

fusco-rubra *FUS-koh ROO-bra*
Brownish red.

fuscus *FUS-kus*
fusca, fuscum
A dusky or swarthy brown.