

BOTANICAL NOMENCLATURE

To correctly identify your plant for exhibition you need to know its botanical name. The use of the common name may cause confusion because it can vary by geographic location. For example, *Liriodendron tulipifera* is commonly called Tulip Magnolia, Tulip Poplar, Yellow Poplar or Canary Whitewood depending on where you live. In addition, many plants don't have common names. Here is how to write botanical name correctly.

Capitalize	lower case	Capitalize, single quotes	Capitalize
↓	↓	↓	↓
<i>Quercus</i>	<i>palustris</i>	'Sovereign'	Pin Oak
If unable to italicize, i.e. you are hand printing, <u>underline</u> the Genus, Species and specific epithet:			
<u>Quercus</u>	<u>palustris</u>	'Sovereign'	Pin Oak
Genus	specific epithet	'Cultivar'	Common name
Species			

Botanical names are identified by two words, a genus and a species. A genus unites members within a family which share certain characteristics. Within a genus, individuals of a species share related characteristics. The species name (the epithet) is useful because it may describe some significant aspect of the plant, such as where the species came from, its growing habit, its type of leaf or flower color, etc... The genus and species words are derived from Greek, Latin or other sources (such as the name of the discoverer). The specific epithet *palustris* in *Quercus palustris*, for example, means "growing in the marsh," apt epithet for an oak that grows naturally in marshy or swampy conditions. If you are not certain of the specific epithet of your plant, write sp. for the species.