**Persephone Plant Record Fields**

This resource draws from the glossary of the RHS Plant Finder and the International Code for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants, 9th Edition, where much more detail can be found.

<https://www.ishs.org/sites/default/files/static/ScriptaHorticulturae_18.pdf>

The list of fields contained on Persephone is not an exhaustive list of ranks or other groupings used by taxonomists but contains some of the most used and widely applicable for our purposes.

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| **Plant Record** | |
| **Field** | **Definition** |
| Family | Genera are grouped into larger groups of related plants called families. Most plant family names end with the same group of letters, -*aceae* and are based on the name of a genus within the family.  There are eight long-standing family names which don’t follow this rule, which are accepted in use but are preferably referred to by newer names which do use the -*aceae* ending:   * *Compositae (Asteraceae)* * *Cruciferae (Brassicaceae)* * *Gramineae (Poaceae)* * *Guttiferae (Clusiaceae)* * *Labiatae (Lamiaceae)* * *Leguminosae (*split into *Caesalpiniaceae, Mimosaceae and Papilionaceae)* * *Palmae (Arecaceae)* * *Umbelliferae (Apiaceae)* |
| Genus | Genus is one taxonomic rank higher than species. Species that share common characteristics and close common ancestry are grouped into genera.  A genus name should always be capitalised and in italics. Older documents, for example handwritten or typewritten documents, may instead use underlining where italics were not possible to produce. Persephone will auto-format all names so that they are displayed correctly.  For example:  *Taraxacum* |
| Species | A species is the most used basic unit when describing individual kinds of living things. A full species name is a binomial, made up of two parts. The name of the genus comes first, for example *Taraxacum*, followed by the species epithet, for example *officinale*. This gives us the species name, *Taraxacum officinale* (common name: dandelion).    In the Persephone fields, we only want the species epithet recorded in this field as it will automatically configure the full name. |
| Subspecies | A subspecies is one taxonomic rank below species.  Naturally occurring variation within a species of plants is sometimes reflected in its taxonomy. Where distinctions in the plants arise because of geographic separation between populations, the plants tend to be divided into subspecies (abbreviated to subsp.).  For example:  *Beta vulgaris* subsp*. adanensis*  A subspecies of *Beta vulgaris* (beetroot) that is native to the western Mediterranean. |
| Variety | Variety (abbreviated to var.) is a taxonomic rank below species and subspecies.  It is a means of portraying naturally occurring variation within a species. A variety is a subsection of plants within a species which have shared observable characteristics that differ from the taxonomic rank above (the species or subspecies).  Persephone will auto-format the var. preceding the variety text, within the plant name.  For example:  *Adromischus cristatus* var. *mzimvubuensis*  A variety of *Adromischus cristatus* which is distinct from the species by having paler green, flat leaves and an absence of the characteristic hairs found on the stem. |
| Subvariety | Subvariety (abbreviated to subvar.) is a taxonomic rank below variety. |
| Forma | Forma (abbreviated to f.) is a taxonomic rank below variety/subvariety. It is another means of portraying variation within a species.  Generally, forma is used to convey relatively minor differences from the taxonomic rank above – though there is a lot of variation in how variety, forma and even subspecies are used.  For example:  *Veronica amplexicaulis* f. *hirta*  A form of *Veronica amplexicaulis* with hairy leaves. |
| Subforma | Subforma (abbreviated to subf.) is a taxonomic rank below forma. |
| Cultivar name | Short for "cultivated variety", cultivars are plants within a species which have been selected by growers for one or more of their characteristics. Cultivar names should be in standard text, surrounded by a single apostrophe. Persephone will automatically add the apostrophes.  For example:  *Malus domestica* ‘Granny Smith’  Sometimes, where the parentage of a cultivar is uncertain, or if the cultivar comes from a line of complex hybrids (hybrids crossed with hybrids) which would create an overly long name, the name will not contain a species epithet and instead will just be a genus and cultivar name. It is acceptable to do this for all cultivars, not just those with complex parentage.  For example:  *Aloe* ‘DZ’  An aloe cultivar with a complex parentage. |
| Trade designation | Trade designations are names officially used for the sale of plants, often where the registered cultivar or PBR name is not marketable (for example a code that was given to a plant in the lab or nursery).  Trade designations should not be cited as synonyms and are formatted in a different font from the rest of the name – Persephone will do this automatically.  For example: |
| Group | A group name may be given to a selection of cultivars or plants within a genus or species, if they all possess similar characteristics. The characteristics defining the group may vary depending on the group. It may, for example, be a grouping based on their cultural requirements, flowering period, ploidy, etc.  Sometimes, where plants were assigned to a given species but are now understood to contain a greater degree of variation than a single species name conveys will be given a group name instead, if this is deemed useful.  Further details on groups can be found in the ISHS Scripta Hort 18, page 10 onwards: <https://www.ishs.org/sites/default/files/static/ScriptaHorticulturae_18.pdf> |
| Series | The ISHS does not officially recognise Series as a category, but we include it in Persephone as it is frequently referred to in horticulture. Plant breeders may assign cultivars to a given series if they seem to have shared characteristics or are otherwise linked for marketing purposes.  For example:  *Digitalis* *purpurea* 'Dalmatian Crème' (Dalmatian Series)  *Digitalis* *purpurea* 'Dalmatian Peach' (Dalmatian Series)  *Digitalis purpurea* 'Dalmatian Purple' (Dalmatian Series)  *Digitalis purpurea* 'Dalmatian Rose' (Dalmatian Series)  *Digitalis* *purpurea* 'Dalmatian White' (Dalmatian Series)  A series of foxgloves which were bred with the intention that they all bloom in the first year, unlike most foxgloves, which are biennials. |
| Section | A section is a subdivision of a genus (abbreviated to sect.) which contains multiple species deemed to be closely associated. This is most often applied in large genera with many species.  In some cases, there may be larger groups within the genus (subgenera, abbreviated to subg.). Not all genera have been split into sections or subgenera.  For example:  The genus *Euphorbia* (spurges) is one of the largest genera of plants (over 2000 species), and has been split into multiple subgenera, which are themselves divided into sections. |
| Grex | Grex is a designation used specifically with orchids (*Orchidaeceae*) to describe their parentage (abbreviated to gx).  Hybrid plants with the same parents are given a grex name. Individual plants within the grex may then be picked out and given a cultivar name. |
| Classification | A classification is sometimes used informally for plants in cultivation to describe a grouping – such as *Rosa* (HT) for Hybrid Tea roses or *Iris* (Sib) for Siberian irises. |
| Descriptor | This field within Persephone is used for other information which may have been included within the plant name, which helps to distinguish it as a plant, but that should not be formatted as part of its name.  Depending on the kind of plant, this can include things like flower colour, the geographic region the plant is from (frequently used for plants which have not yet been described/published), codes which identify which clone it is, etc.  For example:  *Heliamphora elongata* Ilu Tepui  A pitcher plant *Heliamphora elongata* from the population at Ilu Tepui. |
| Plant sex | On the Plant name record, this field is to record the sex of cultivars which only occur as a single sex (because they have been propagated vegetatively or through cloning). |
| Version | Use this where you have more than one plant with the same cultivar name but different characteristics, and you do not know which is correct. |
| Authority | The (sur)name of the person that coined the accepted name for this species.  Rarely, the accepted name for a species may be one other than the oldest correctly published name. This is called a “conserved name”. |
| Freehand | In case the proper plant name cannot be constructed via the fields above, it can be written freehand in here using HTML tags to do the italics (this is rarely used). |
| AGM | An acronym for the Award of Garden Merit. Awarded as a “seal of approval” by the RHS for plants that perform reliably following plant trials. These awards are reassessed on a rolling basis. |
| PBR | An acronym for Plant Breeders’ Rights. This is a form of legal protection (along the lines of a patent) that grants exclusive rights to the breeder (or breeder’s named successor) of a plant.  From Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plant-breeders-rights>  PBR means that nobody can, without your permission, use your plant species for:   * production or reproduction * selling or offering for sale * altering so it can be propagated * exporting or importing * keeping stock of your plant species for any reason   Your rights last for:   * 25 years for plants * 30 years for trees, vines and potato varieties |
| Taxonomic notes | A field for notes about the taxonomy of a given plant. |
| Name comment | A field for any other comment about the plant name, for example:  Astrophytum ‘Fictitious’  Name comment: named in honour of Mr Fictitious. |
| Out of scope | A plant marked “out of scope” in Persephone is something owned by the holder but that is not part of a National Plant Collection. Plants checked as “out of scope” display in purple text.  For example:  Elliot holds a National Collection of apple trees (*Malus*) but also has some pear trees (*Pyrus*) in the orchard that are listed on Persephone. The pear trees are checked as “out of scope”. |
| Not in collection | A plant marked “not in collection” in Persephone is something that is not owned by the holder, but they wanted to record on the system. This can, for example, be a plant they intend to get or are seeking, or a parent of a hybrid plant set up within the wider collection record. Plants checked as “not in collection” display in blue text. |
| Introducer | The introducer is the person or the nursery that first made this plant available. The Cultivar Registrar (if the genus has one) often has details about the introducer.  The introducer can be different from the breeder (who creates the plant) – the introducer is the agent that brings the plant to market. |
| Year of introduction | When the plant was first made available. |
| Synonyms | Synonyms are names of a plant which are not the currently accepted name but may have been at points in the past or are otherwise known to have been used for this plant. They are useful to know for identification purposes as the names may still be in wide circulation. |
| Common name | Common names are names for plants as used in their local languages. They are not particularly useful for identification purposes.  There are often multiple common names per plant, they don’t always translate, many are misleading (for example, the “voodoo lily” is not a lily), some common names are discriminatory or offensive, and distinct species can frequently share the same or very similar common names (for example the common name carrion plant can be used for several different species in the genus *Stapelia*).  Common names can still be useful to know for interpretive purposes or with some historic research, as the people may generally be more familiar with a plant by its common name than its scientific name. |

This work was made possible through National Lottery Heritage Fund, with thanks to National Lottery players.

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