



# A Gardener's Latin: The language of plants explained

*Richard Bird*

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Every gardener needs to know their Latin names. They may look confusing at first, but once you understand what certain key words mean, impenetrable-sounding and hard-to-pronounce species names are suddenly demystified. Many Latin names hide the secrets of where the plant is found, its colour, flowering times, leaf pattern, natural habitat and all sorts of other information that's extremely useful to the gardener: if you want a plant for a shady place, choose one with a name ending in *sylvestris* ('of woods'), while if your garden is dry, look out for the suffix *epigeios* ('of dry places'). More than just a dictionary of plant names, this fascinating book explains the meaning of hundreds of Latin plant terms, grouped into handily themed sections such as plants that are named after famous women, plants that are named after the shape of their leaves, plants that are named after their fragrance or the time of year that they flower. Within these pages you'll learn that *Digitalis purpurea* (the common foxglove) is purple, that the *sanguineum* in *Geranium sanguineum* means 'bloody' (its common name is the bloody cranesbill), and to steer clear of any plant whose Latin name ends in *infestus*.



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