

Rules for the Rendition of Genus, Species and Cultivar Names

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Common vernacular plant names are set in Roman and are lower case, except at the beginning of a sentence and when words are derived from surnames or other proper nouns:

Douglas fir, bigleaf maple, Japanese maple, African violet, black-eyed Susan, basket grass, and Dutchman's pipe.

When the plural indicator "s" is added to the genus *Hosta* it is then **always** considered a common, vernacular name and is rendered in lower case Roman:

hostas, dahlias, camellias; vernacular hellebore becomes hellebores;
I have lots of hostas in my garden.

Singular botanical genus names maybe used as common, vernacular names and are rendered in lower case Roman. When used in this manner, they must not be italicized but written in lower case Roman:

iris, rhododendron, hosta, dahlia, camellia
this is a beautiful hosta

Rules for rendering the genus name *Hosta* for species and Cultivars:

In articles it is preferred to add the genus name or the genus name abbreviation as follows:

Rule 1: At the beginning of an article (on first occurrence) the genus name should be spelled out, capitalized and italicized even if it is contained in the article's title. The species name is always lower case and italicized. The cultivar name is always capitalized and enclosed in single quotes:

Hosta 'Francee'
Hosta sieboldiana

Rule 2: At the beginning of a paragraph and after the genus has been established per Rule 1 above, the genus may be abbreviated but should be used on first occurrence:

H. 'Francee', *H.* 'Shade Fanfare'
H. sieboldiana, *H. venusta*

Rule 3: Within the body of text and after the genus has been established per Rule 1 all species names shall always be coupled with the abbreviated genus name, i.e., the species name should never be used without a genus indicator, either *Hosta* or *H.* as per Rule 1 and 2. Cultivar names may be listed without the genus name or abbreviation:

H. sieboldiana or *H. venusta* but 'Francee' or 'Shade Fanfare'

Rule 4: Once another and different genus name has been mentioned in the article, the genus name for *Hosta* must be rendered per Rule 1, i.e., it must be fully spelled out and italicized. Once the genus name (in this case *Hosta*) has been re-established in the article, Rule 2 applies, i.e.,

Example: “. . . *H. nigrescens* has an interesting scape. This makes *Miscanthus sinensis* a good companion plant for *Hosta nigrescens*. *H.* ‘Krossa Regal’ is also. . .”

Rule 5: Always use the genus name *Hosta* or the genus abbreviation *H.* with a hosta species name (species epithet). Never use a species epithet by itself. Do not write just *venusta* but *H. venusta* or *Hosta venusta* (per the above rules). It is incorrect to refer to *H. kikutii* as “a *kikutii*” or “a *kikutii* form” or “a *kikutii* hybrid” but write “a *H. kikutii* hybrid” or “a form of *H. kikutii*.” This is not required for cultivar names, but see Rules 1 and 2 for exceptions.

Rules for rendering the names of *Hosta* Cultivars:

In 1991, W. George Schmid reduced a number of former species to cultivar rank because such “species” were based on cultivated plants and do not exist in the wild (See *The Genus Hosta – Giboshi Zoku*; Timber Press 1991). This change was accepted internationally and was sanctioned by The American Hosta Society in 1993. The reclassification changed a number of former species names to cultivar names, for example, the former species *H. crispula* is now written as *H.* ‘Crispula’. As cultivars, all the species reclassified are no longer italicized, and have their former species epithet rendered in Roman type and enclosed in single quotes as shown in the sample above. For a complete list of reclassified former species names, refer to the following AHS publications: *List of Species, Botanical Varieties and Forms and Specioids** (The Tan Book) published by the AHS, Classification and Nomenclature Committee in 1993 and *The Genus Hosta – List of Registered Cultivars*, Second Printing, May 2000 (The Silver Book), pages S-1 through S-11 and pages IV through IX.

*) Note: The term “specioid” is no longer sanctioned by the AHS. “Specioid” was a designation coined by Hensen in 1963 to designate former species no longer considered true species. This term was not accepted by the IUBS Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants. Nomenclature and is no longer used by the AHS.

Optional Rule: If former reclassified species have intraspecific names (former varieties or forms) that **are unique** names within the genus *Hosta*, they may be used as unique cultivar names without the inclusion of the former species epithet, as follows:

Hosta ‘Fortunei Hyacinthina’ may be written *Hosta* ‘Hyacinthina’ and *H.* ‘Fortunei Aoki’ may be shortened to *H.* ‘Aoki’ or *H. sieboldiana* ‘Elegans’ may be rendered as *H.* ‘Elegans’. This is optional and either way the rendering of the name is correct.

However, if the former intraspecific names (varieties and forms) **are not unique** within the genus *Hosta*, they must always be used with inclusion of the former species epithet, as follows:

Hosta ‘Fortunei Aureomarginata’ must be written with inclusion of the former species epithet because several other species or former species have a yellow margined form, i.e. *H. montana* ‘Aureomarginata’ or *H. ventricosa* ‘Aureomarginata’. Similar rules apply to ‘Albomarginata’ where several former species have this same cultivar name, i.e., *H.* ‘Fortunei Albomarginata’, *H.* ‘Undulata Albomarginata’ and *H. sieboldii* ‘Albomarginata’.