

Potentially Problematic Common Names in North American Public Gardens

Plant Nomenclature & Taxonomy Community of the American Public Gardens Association 2021
Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries 2021

Acknowledgements

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¹ NOTE: THERE ARE FULLY WRITTEN, LEGIBLE SLURS IN THIS SECTION OF THE REPORT. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRIGGERING LANGUAGE, PLEASE SKIP THIS SECTION

Introduction

Botany, as a field, is deeply intertwined with the histories of colonialism, racism, and imperialism. Both vernacular and botanical nomenclatures have been used over time with little consideration as to how they might perpetuate past harms and amplify present biases. They are well overdue for review.

The Plant Nomenclature & Taxonomy (PNT) Community of the American Public Gardens Association, in conjunction with the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (CBHL), set forth to create a resource contextualizing plant common names in use today that hold the potential to be considered derogatory, insensitive, or othering to individuals or groups of peoples. The intention of this project is to provide history, research, and resources for certain words or phrases found in common names, but not to dictate how any given institution should address such language. Nuance, regionality, and a lack of documented histories in the creation of these names mean that professionals will need to research and discuss these words and their significance within their own institutions to enact meaningful changes.

This work yielded three documents. The Report includes descriptions of methodology, volunteer efforts, context, and additional discussion surrounding the research. The Cultural Context Resource Document (Appendix E) lists the words highlighted through the project's methods and offers brief summaries of their origins or uses. The Data Resource Spreadsheet (Appendix D) includes the potentially problematic common names, their associated botanical names, and sources, as well as a formatted sheet to check common names against using the same formulas and methodology outlined in the Report Document.

It is strongly suggested that the entire Project Report Document be read through prior to any work being done to gain a deeper understanding of the project and its intentions. This project covers quite a bit of sensitive information and should be utilized in an intentional, thoughtful way and shared accordingly.

Context for Project

A PNT Community discussion post by Sarah Pingel of Green Bay Botanical Garden in January 2020 sparked a vibrant conversation surrounding offensive language used in plant common names, spurring the community to delve deeper into it as an annual project. An August-September 2020 poll of members regarding the desire to address this issue resulted in a strong 90 percent agreeing to proceed with an equal number of participants that would either donate or analyze the data or both.

As this project developed over its first months there were many lengthy conversations among project leaders and advisors about its scope and purpose. Most clear was what this project was not: a method of defining what is or is not “bad,” a document deeming words or names acceptable or not, or a suggestion of any sort of authority on offense. The project leadership group (led by five white women) has no desire to make sweeping judgements on any given word when there is so much nuance and cultural significance beyond our own experiences. Ultimately, for the scope of this project – being slated as a single year, voluntary endeavor – we felt our efforts were best exerted in creating a methodology that considers a wide range of English words, highlighting potential harms and contextualizing their usage as best we can.

A few guiding principles surfaced in group conversations. One, a need to keep from claiming colorblindness or erasing cultural connections. We seek to acknowledge and celebrate differences or, in the context of this project, keep them in our minds as we evaluate the historical and colloquial uses of words. Another was to recognize the long-entrenched history of colonialism and Eurocentrism in botany (though evaluating single words against known slurs or offensive phrases lacks much of the context that would allow us to do proficient work in this realm). Finally, we wanted to create a methodology that decentralized our own cultural biases and relied on established resources to launch an investigation into what has the potential to cause harm (see Methodology Section).

This body of work can be used by any professional that uses, writes with, or publishes plant names (botanical or common). This includes herbaria employees, librarians, plant recorders, curators, interpretation specialists, educators, volunteers, and docents – anyone that interacts with guests, colleagues, or other professionals. Thinking more about the words used within the botanical profession and its history can create a more rich, inclusive environment for everyone involved in botany and public horticulture.

There is an infinite amount of research and work to be done surrounding these topics. This one project barely scratches the surface. Ideally, it will inspire conversations about the inclusiveness of the language we use, the perspectives that are reflected in our databases, and the unjust practices of the past perpetuated in our present.

Methods

Project Timeline

2020

| | |
|-----------|--|
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Pingel posted the following question in the APGA PNT discussion forum: "I have been doing some research, based on articles received, trying to formulate a list of common names in plants that may be perceived as derogatory. I thought I would post to this group to see if anyone has run in to this, how it is being handled, to what extent do we take this and if anyone has any common names that should be on the list." |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested as a potential future group project |
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey sent out (8/24/2020) to gauge interest in the PNT Community |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement survey closed (9/11/2020) and data was compiled (see research protocols for results) |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNT Town Hall Meeting detailed goals for the project |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call for data was sent out (11/30/2020) to CBHL, APGA PNT, Plant Collections, Interpretation, IDEA, Emerging Professionals, Technology and Innovation, and Education communities, and the members of the Michigan State University AABGACOL listserv |

2021

| | |
|-----------|---|
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data submission portal closed (1/5/2021) Analysis brainstorming began Data sets aggregated |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance received from reddit user, mh_mike to create Excel formula for comparing list of potentially problematic terms to collected common names data Potentially problematic common names isolated Call for research volunteers sent out (2/11/2021) to CBHL, APGA PNT, Plant Collections, Interpretation, IDEA, Emerging Professionals, Technology and Innovation, and Education communities, and the members of the Michigan State University AABGACOL listserv Volunteer orientations held and recorded (2/10/2021) Volunteer signups closed (2/16/2021) Volunteers split between 5 leadership groups and sent welcome communications (2/18/2021) Volunteer work began on analyzing data |
| April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All volunteer work due (4/2/2021) Began aggregating completed work Began work on incomplete datasets |
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued work on incomplete volunteer datasets Remove dismissed words to create potentially problematic list |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorization of problematic list into potentially offensive word and generalized category |
| July | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report writing began |
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed categorization of problematic list into potentially offensive words and generalized category |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final data cleanup Research and creation of cultural context for PDF resource document Completion of PDF and Excel resources Report completion |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editing and publication of Report and resources |

Terminology and Definitions

American Public Gardens Association (APGA) – Professional organization for the field of public horticulture that aims to advance the field by encouraging best practices, offering educational and networking opportunities, and advocating on behalf of its members, its programs, and public gardens worldwide. (publicgardens.org)

Common Name – An English vernacular name for a plant that does not act as the scientifically accepted, binomial, Latinized name.

Community (in reference to APGA) – Sub-groups of APGA members organized around areas of interest. Each community has its own governance, APGA staff liaison, and specific membership.

Dismissed – Common names initially highlighted for containing part or all of a word on our list of potentially problematic words, but ultimately deemed benign due to its nature as a partial word pull, accurate geographic description, accurate physical description, etc.

Flagged – Common names highlighted or identified as requiring further research based on our combined lists of potentially problematic words.

Offensive – Words or language with an identifiable history of aggression or mal-intent towards a particular group of people or peoples.

Plant Nomenclature & Taxonomy Community (PNT) of APGA – “Provides a resource for education, information dissemination, research, discussion, advocacy, and best practices about plant names. The section will primarily benefit curators and plant records professionals as well other members who write about plants, promote horticulture, and offer educational opportunities to the public.” (publicgardens.org)

The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (CBHL) – International organization of individuals, organizations, and institutions concerned with the development, maintenance and use of libraries of botanical and horticultural literature. (cbhl.net)

Un-inclusive – Words or language that can be “othering” to individuals, not always with mal-intent, that have no identifiable history of aggression or malice in their usage.

Data Management Steps

The first phase of the project involved collection of common name datasets from 25 participating institutions and comparison of the aggregated list of common names against a dataset of 1700 potentially problematic words. This list of potentially problematic words was itself compiled using two primary resources – the Wikipedia List of Ethnic Slurs (February 2021) and the Carnegie Mellon School of Computer Science Louis von Ahn Offensive/Profane Word List.

The resulting list of 60,422 potentially problematic common names was then divided into sections, with individual sections assigned to volunteers for research. Volunteers were asked to find the origins of flagged common names in order to elucidate connections to anything potentially derogatory, insensitive, or the result of biases.

Volunteer research findings were compiled, and names were sorted based on volunteer evaluation of whether each name should remain flagged as potentially problematic or be dismissed due to no meaningful association with the problematic word.

The project's full data management protocol is presented below.

1. Collected individual institution's common name datasets (**Appendix A**) in Microsoft Excel format from databases
2. Brought all data into OpenRefine to combine and condense data to unique common names
3. Distilled data transferred back to one Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and run against another containing the list of potentially problematic words (**Appendix C**) using formula:

```
=SUMPRODUCT(--ISNUMBER(SEARCH('sheet_with_potential_problematic_words!problematic_word_range, cell_with_common_name'))>0
```

Example: =SUMPRODUCT(--ISNUMBER(SEARCH('Offensive'!\$A1:\$A1772,A1)))>0

Results will return a true or false, true if the cell with the common name (A1 in example above) contains any of the words on the potentially problematic word list within the cell, including within another word

4. Added additional columns run against potentially problematic word list to isolate for leading matches (those where the beginning of a given word within the common name matches something on the potentially problematic word list) and full word matches (an entire word within the common name matches something on the potentially problematic word list)

Leading: created a column B on the potentially problematic pull list using a concatenate formula to add a space at the beginning of the cells in column A (=&" "&A1) and then running the formula as above with the problematic word range changed to correspond appropriately (\$B1:\$B1772)

Full Word: created a column C on the potentially problematic pull list using a concatenate formula to add a space at the beginning and the end of the cells in column A (=&" "&A1&" ")

and then running the formula as above with the problematic word range changed to correspond appropriately (\$C1:\$C1772)

5. Copied all "True" (matched) data lines to a new Excel document as content to eliminate all formulas.
6. Split "True" dataset into five (5) sections to be distributed across the leadership teams' volunteer groups.
7. Leadership team split subsections (step 6) further to accommodate the size of the volunteer groups, added columns (dismissed, dismissal reason, sources, alternatives, context) and distributed individual Excel documents to each volunteer.
8. Volunteers filled out individual Excel documents with research.
9. Uploaded all completed volunteer data into OpenRefine.
10. Removed dismissed data to establish a potentially problematic dataset.
11. Created a new Excel spreadsheet for the potentially problematic dataset.
12. Added additional columns for potentially problematic word the common name was pulled for and a general category that the name falls under (religion, race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, etc.)

Tools

Google Forms – collected data from individual institutions

Individual Institutional Databases – made templates for IrisBG and BG-Base and provided suggestions for other database systems (Microsoft Access, FilemakerPro, etc.)

List of Potentially Problematic Words – developed by combining [Wikipedia List of Ethnic Slurs](#) (February 2021) and the [Carnegie Mellon School of Computer Science Luis von Ahn Offensive/Profane Word List](#) (February 2021)

Microsoft Excel – collected data, performed initial data analysis, provided platform for volunteer work and format for completed Report

Microsoft TEAMS – used as file sharing and meeting platform among leadership group and volunteers

OpenRefine – combined and organized data from individual institutions and data volunteers

Volunteerism

Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers were sourced through the same channels on which the requests for data focused (CBHL, APGA PNT, Plant Collections, Interpretation, IDEA, Emerging Professionals, Technology and Innovation, and Education communities, and the members of the Michigan State University AABGACOL listserv in 2020) with a written request using similar language to the introduction of this Report and a request to join a digital orientation session held February 11, 2021. Sessions were held both during and after work hours. Twenty-nine individuals, not including leadership team members, attended orientation sessions.

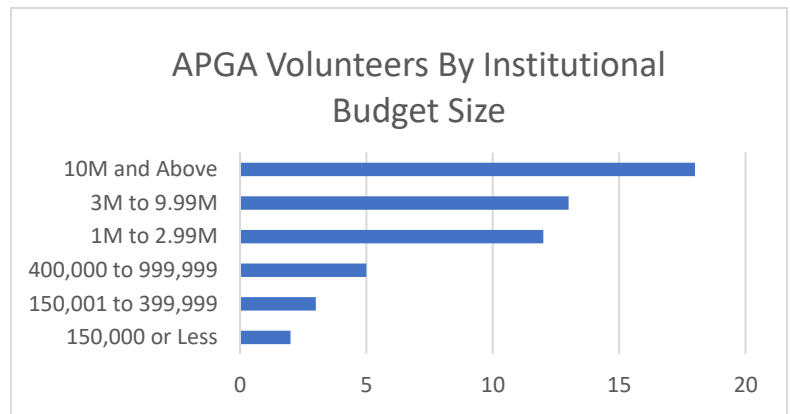
A follow-up post was submitted to all groups listed above linking to the orientation video and containing a link to sign up using Google Forms. The volunteer sign-up link was open from February 11 through February 16, 2021.

Some volunteer submissions were not recorded appropriately by the Google form; as results were being tallied at least three community members (APGA and CBHL) mentioned they had interest in the project but were never contacted after applying. No reason for this has been uncovered. In all likelihood, it was an unfortunate technical error, or a failure of the Microsoft Form used.

Volunteer Demographics

The volunteer sign-up yielded 58 data volunteers (including leadership team members) across 43 APGA institutions, 3 academic libraries, and 1 botanical club (**Appendix B**). As seen in other PNT projects volunteer participation seemed to correlate with institution size with 43 volunteers coming from institutions with an operating budget of more than \$1,000,000 (currency not specified), 10 volunteers coming from institutions with an operating budget of less than \$1,000,000 and 5 volunteers who did not provide that information (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1



The largest segment of volunteers (25) came from the PNT community membership, followed by CBHL (11), Plant Collections (7), other communities (10), and the AABGACOL listserv (5) (**Figure 2**). Data volunteers identified themselves among ten (10) professional sectors (**Figure 3**) and represented 28 US states and Canadian provinces (**Figure 4**), and

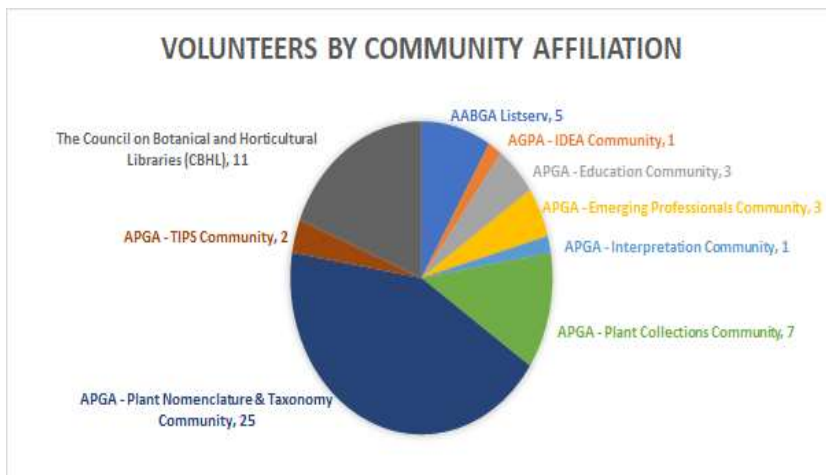


Figure 2

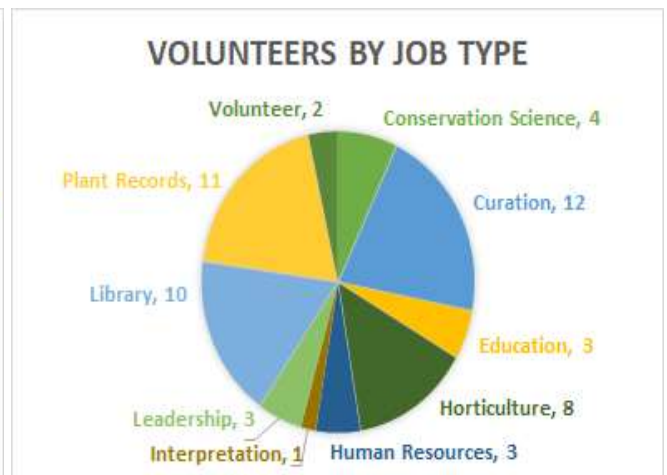


Figure 3

Figure 2

Analysis Paralysis

This project could not have been completed without the help of the volunteer force and their diligent work.

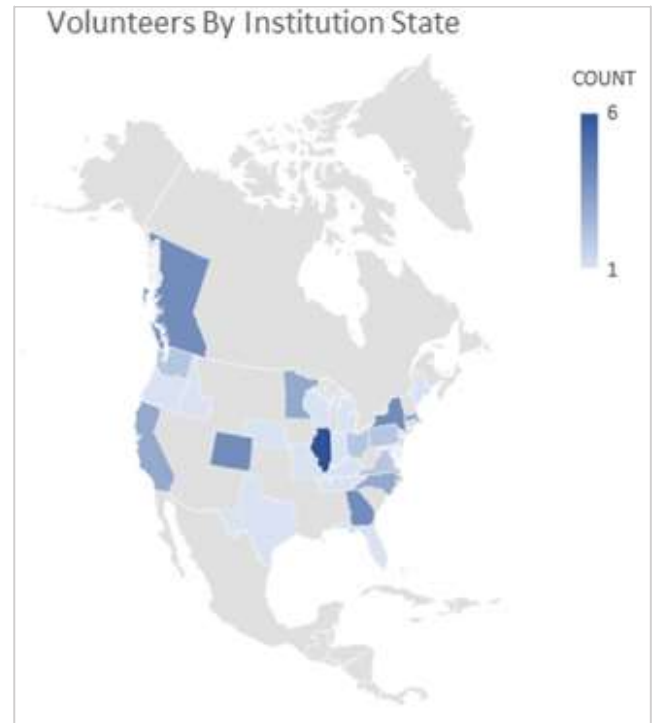
It was an exceedingly difficult task and a big ask for a group of uncompensated volunteers. When the project leadership team reviewed the data submitted by volunteers, it became clear that each volunteer interpreted the assignment slightly differently. Some took it upon themselves to check the botanical nomenclature in their dataset and flag out-of-date names. Some dismissed or flagged terms based on their own cultural knowledge or judgements, something this project had hoped to avoid. All the non-dismissed, flagged terms received a secondary review from the leadership team to consolidate and correct any inconsistencies, but some terms that should not have been dismissed surely slipped through unnoticed.

At the end of the volunteer period 13 participants left 15,359 (of 60,422) lines of incomplete data that the leadership team then completed. This added roughly 2 weeks of data analysis to the project timeline. Upon completing the initial analysis, members of the team then began reviewing the sum work of the volunteers, pulling each flagged term and categorizing it into larger categories. This took a tremendous amount of additional research and source-checking to accomplish, leading to project delays. Due to the volume of dismissed terms, the group was not able to verify the accuracy of the dismissals and therefore did not include this data in the final Data Resource Spreadsheet (**Appendix D**). The total span of research time needed was roughly 6 months, March through September 2021.

For those volunteers who did complete their research tasks, the effort took on average slightly longer than our anticipated 6 hours of work. The average time to complete a dataset was 8.5 hours, with a maximum research time of 20 hours and a minimum of 2 (Figure 5). The datasets were not created equally. Some sets included long swaths of plants with the same or similar common names that led to large, easy dismissals. For example, "crabapple" or "apple" was flagged in the original data pull for containing "apple," which can be used as a derogatory slang word. All uses of "apple" to describe a plant in the genus *Malus* were dismissed, and quick and easy 995 records cleared.

The Final Tally

The amount of work achieved by the engaged communities is commendable and made up a crucial component of the resource development. In the timeframe of this project, more than 500 volunteer hours were donated amounting to over \$14,000.00¹ (USD) worth of research to be compiled and used to better public horticulture.



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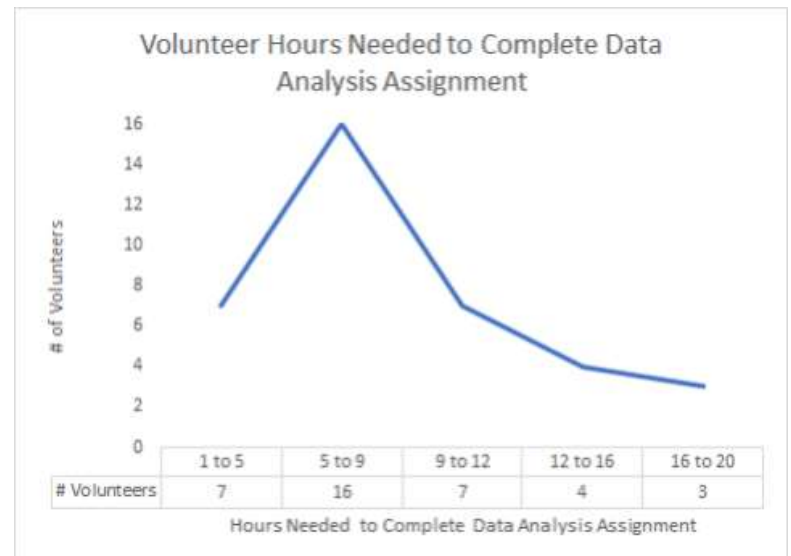


Figure 3

¹ Estimated labor at \$28.54/hour (USD) based on [Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time 2021](#)

Discussion

NOTE: THERE ARE FULLY WRITTEN, LEGIBLE SLURS IN THIS SECTION OF THE REPORT. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRIGGERING LANGUAGE, PLEASE SKIP TO CONCLUSION.

Process of Changing Plant Names: Botanical and Common¹

For the sake of this project a common name is defined as an English-language name for a plant that does not use binomial nomenclature as its basis. Sometimes common names and botanical names overlap, usually among genera (ex: a common name for the genus *Delphinium* is delphinium), but often the common names reflect regional dialects, folklore, medicinal properties, or the physical attributes of the plants that they name. Each language will have its own common names for plants. Sometimes these names can even be downright botanically misleading. For example, a daylily (*Hemerocallis*) is not a lily (*Lilium*) at all. It isn't even in the same family (Liliaceae).

This might not matter to the common gardener, plant enthusiast, or casual garden guest. They do not do too much harm – except when they do. Pretending that words are not important minimizes the thousands of years of human history in which peoples were othered by dominant cultures in numerous ways. Some plant names (both botanical and common) were purposefully chosen using downright racist language (Hunter 1991). Others are more subtle or perhaps completely unintentional. However, that should not diminish our drive to create safe, inclusive spaces for our guests and colleagues by questioning how our plants got their nicknames and whether they could cause harm when encountered in our collections.

Public garden professionals often have difficulty assigning, or simply ignore, common names. For the botanist, scholar, propagator, curator, or plant records specialist these monikers lack the specificity and accuracy needed to achieve their work. This ambiguity leads to common name research and designation often being an afterthought added to a record just before it is closed, then left until it is hastily printed on a label and sent out into the garden. For the sake of those enjoying their plants in public spaces, however, these simplified designations may be the only familiar connection to the subject matter passed down from generations of plant hobbyists.

The first step to understanding the importance of this work is remembering that language is regionally specific. Words that may seem benign to a white, east-coast dweller may be a severe racial slur to Indigenous peoples in California (see Discussion). A name for a hybridized yew may be easily recognized by a plant professional as an amalgam of its two parents (anglojap yew), but for those aware of the World War II Japanese internment camps in North America the word could be construed as biting slur symbolizing a country that was quick to make people “other.” A little cultural humility goes a long way, as it is impossible for any one person to be competent in understanding the infinite regionalities and cultural histories found across the globe. When looking at these names, then, it is important to decentralize personal narratives and reference cross-cultural lists of words, slurs, and offensive phrases.

There may be ways to increase the inclusiveness of our common names. Questioning and researching the individual words of a common name is one way to start. Asking, “Is there an unrecognized word within the name?” provides a great opportunity to learn a new bit of vocabulary while ensuring that word does not come with any hurtful historical definitions. Other useful discussion questions include, “Does a commonly published name refer to the correct geographic distribution of a plant?” or, “Does it reflect the

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culture, use, and/or naming by its corresponding Indigenous peoples?" These questions can be asked to create relevant, culturally significant common names that stick. There is no international authority on plant common names the way there is for their botanical counterparts, so there is no singular place to review, question, and revise common names. Therefore, it is up to us as professionals to do the work in a way that honors our guests and our communities. Garden professionals have been given the platforms necessary to make and maintain these powerful names.

Within the global community, the International Association for Plant Taxonomy consists of over 1,000 members worldwide to promote and support taxonomic, systemic, and nomenclatural research. This group acts as the international authority on botanical plant names, maintaining and publishing updated versions of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi, and Plants*. Every six 6 years an International Botanical Congress is held to amend the current code, the most recent meeting at the time of this writing being in Shenzhen in July 2017. Similarly, the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants added an article recommending that "a cultivar group (or grex) name should not be published if its epithet might cause offense"; if an epithet is deemed so, then another article states that "an application may be made to the IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences) International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants to rule on whether that epithet is to be rejected" (Shaw 2011, 164). Len Norman Gillman and Shane Donald Wright propose in their 2020 paper, "Restoring Indigenous Names in Taxonomy," that another accommodation to *The Code* be made so that "Indigenous names can replace previously legitimate names on the basis of their actual chronological precedence." This model works particularly well for plant communities with ties to single languages among a plant's distribution range, New Zealand for example. Scientists are more frequently working in conjunction with local *iwi* (Māori tribes) when naming new-to-science species, an earnest first step towards decolonizing modern botany (Evans 2020).

Change is needed but requires a given institution's desire to participate in these discussions and an ability to do the work. An institution's financial commitment to decolonization initiatives will be a significant factor. Staff time is a finite resource, whether that be for research, education, or physical adjustments to signage. Change will vary based on regionality, local languages, and the communities in which each garden resides. Guest awareness also impacts interpretive efforts on the subject. A visitorship with high levels of label awareness will need context for any major changes made, while a guest population that more casually peruses labels may only need an interpretive panel highlighting the institution's efforts. Planning and intention are imperative regardless of an institution's ability to initiate and follow through with changes in the upcoming years.

Interesting Cases Worthy of Discussion¹

Banana & Apple

Both terms were included in our initial list of offensive and un-inclusive words, leading to several plants from the project list being flagged as needing research. Their use as racial slurs does not, however, originate with the plants' names but rather from the plants' widely known physical features that are then used inappropriately to refer to a person of Asian ("Banana," n.d.) or Native American ("Apple," n.d.) descent who acts, for lack of a better phrase, "like a white person."

Citations are provided in the References section of this document for more information about how the terms have been used pejoratively, but the research conducted through this project found no reason that these common names for *Musa* or *Malus* plants should be offensive in the context of a garden. They were, however, an interesting discussion point among the project's volunteer researchers for the importance of individual review – formulas searching lists alone cannot substitute for a comprehensive review of these names and their associated cultural significances.

Black-Eyed Susan

To the modern garden visitor this plant's common name has the potential to invoke thoughts of domestic violence, hence its presence in this project. While there is no definitive source for the actual origin of this common name, historical research can provide context from which a likely picture of the name's origin might emerge.

Although the plant is native to North America and records indicate its use by Indigenous peoples in the US and Canada (Botanical Research Institute of Texas, n.d.), its common name was almost certainly given by European settlers who would have encountered the plant upon arriving in America. The dark cone in the center of the flower head likely invoked the character from John Gay's 1719 poem, "Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Ey'd Susan." Other accounts suggest the flower is so named for its tendency to bloom at the same time as the plant Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*). In either scenario, Gay's ballad seems to be credited with the origin of *Rudbeckia hirta*'s common name.

The ballad itself describes a farewell between William, a sailor setting off for sea, and his lover, Susan. Susan's epithet is likely a mark of her beauty, as "black-eyed" originates from the late 16th century meaning "having black eyes (often regarded as a mark of beauty)" ("Definition of black-eyed", 2021). This ballad was initially included in a collection of poetry, but its incredible popularity saw it set to music and continually published as a broadside throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (Gustar 2014, 433-42). The song was likely brought to the Americas by British sailors, with part of its popularity emerging from the nautical setting that "tapped into the importance of seamen to the growth and prosperity of Britain and its empire" (Gustar 2014, 442-46). While the 18th century saw the publication of many songs and poems, few can claim the "unusual longevity" of Gay's ballad (Gustar 2014, 445). Again, there is no source directly claiming that the plant common name "black-eyed Susan" is associated with the poem, but the significance of the song in popular culture –timed with the increased number of British settlers in the Americas – suggests a stronger connection

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between the plant's name and the ballad than between the plant's name and a story of domestic violence.

The probable origin of the common name "black-eyed Susan" is an interesting study in how language and phrases evolve and change – in this case, the meaning behind "black-eyed" – but does not necessarily change that today's visitors could easily associate the common name with the potentially-triggering topic of domestic abuse. According to the guidelines of this project, research into the name would have resulted in its dismissal from our final list of problematic common names; Susan is not a victim of abuse but rather a woman participating in a tearful farewell to her lover. Even though the common name was ultimately dismissed, the project leadership's decision to include the name and its history in this section of the Report is to remind users of the nuances involved in the intersection of nature and cultures, nuances that require thought and discussion beyond the abilities of volunteers participating in a single-year project. Names like this one are worthy of continued discussion.

Caucasian Spruce

The origin of this common name is relatively straightforward to discern: a spruce native to the Caucasus, the geographical region between Asia and Europe. As is seen in the previous example of black-eyed Susan, however, the origin of a plant's common name has the potential to be overshadowed by the cultural evolution of terminologies that may be included in it. For this common name, the term "Caucasian" is one such example.

Currently a term commonly used to describe "white" in terms of race, "Caucasian" has a history inextricably linked to 18th-century ideas of racial science. The term was popularized by Johann Blumenbach in his third edition of *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, who designated it to represent the most beautiful form of humankind (Painter 2003, 19-23). While it has been debated as to whether Blumenbach's decision to label Caucasians as the most beautiful should be indicative of his own belief in a racial hierarchy (Binden et al 2019), Blumenbach's work was nonetheless used by 19th- and 20th-century American scientists to justify the use of slavery and, later, racial discrimination (Mukhopadhyay 2008, 13).

Today, popular understanding of the term "Caucasian" as a geographical descriptor is almost completely overshadowed by its designation as a race and, indirectly, its link to the concept of a racial hierarchy (Mukhopadhyay 2008, 14). The term was initially brought to the project's attention through a label change request over concerns of appearing racist, further cementing the belief that the term "Caucasian" is a poor common name descriptor for a plant whose native range is the Caucasus; a better name would relay the plant's native range more explicitly. Discussion of the current common name in this section of the Report is yet another example of how terminologies evolve and thus require constant re-assessment by those wishing to employ them.

Digger Pine¹

This common name was one of the first mentioned in the PNT discussion forum thread that spurred this project. The sentiment that derogatory names are regional was brought to the surface by one

¹ THERE ARE FULLY WRITTEN, LEGIBLE SLURS IN THIS SECTION OF THE PAPER. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRIGGERING LANGUAGE, PLEASE SKIP TO CONCLUSION

member citing the common name “digger pine” for the plant *Pinus sabiniana* being a particular problem in the western United States. This was questioned by an east coast professional, unaware of the word’s historical context.

While the word “digger” may seem like a benign adjective to some, it was popularly used by white colonial settlers in western North America as a catch-all stereotype of the numerous tribes within California specifically. A simplification or stereotype spanning complex racial or ethnic groups is something worth avoiding on its own. The term “digger” also served as a derogatory term, implying inferiority and primitiveness, and encompassing negative feelings towards the Indigenous populations by Californian settlers as they murdered thousands of people for their land (Lönnberg 1981).

A suggestion to cull the term “digger” from common names may be warranted, but there is some regional nuance that should not be ignored. *Veronica perfoliata*, an Australian native plant commonly called “digger’s speedwell” is far removed from the cultural context of western California. In Australia and New Zealand English, “digger” is used as a self-enacted slang term for soldiers, possibly as early as the nineteen-teens, that is still in use today (Smith n.d.) – a far cry from the racial connotations used in California. Consider what someone should do in a North American garden when naming an Australian plant. Ask, “Who is the audience, and what is your likelihood of causing offense or a feeling of un-inclusiveness?”

The oversight of regionally specific derogatory terms and ethnic slurs like the example laid out in this segment was the crowning argument for two principles used by the leaders of this project. The first was the desire to seek out lists of potentially offensive words and phrases that would be wide-ranging in their regionality like Wikipedia, which can be added to globally. The other was the inclusion of the word “potentially” in our project’s name. A Californian who is offended by the common name for *Pinus sabiniana* used in their hometown may be equally offended seeing the term while visiting Australia, but an Australian English speaker unfamiliar with the alternate usage of the word may not take notice in seeing the word among their travels. Words may carry a wide range of regional meanings but recognizing their potential for harm and insisting that institutions make their own judgement calls based on regionality and cultural proximity is imperative.

Hottentot Fig¹

The *Carpobrotus edulis* plant is native to South Africa where its most popular English common name is a well-known and highly condemned racial slur, with similar connotations to those of the “N-word” in the United States. While the exact origin of the term “Hottentot” has been debated, it was one invented by white Europeans to refer to the Khoikhoi peoples that the former encountered upon arrival in South Africa in the 17th century (“Definition of Hottentot” 2021). As European influences grew in the area, so did the dispossession, enslavement, and even outright extermination of the Khoikhoi (South African History Online, n.d.). The passing of the so-called Hottentot Code in the early 19th century by Dutch colonizers “marked the final step in the transformation from independent peoples to ‘Hottentots’, that is, subjugated Khoikhoi in the permanent and servile employ of white settlers” (Dooling 2005, 53). “Hottentot” eventually evolved into a pejorative term for Black people

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more generally; a derivative of it, "hotnot," has been specifically condemned by South Africa in a statement issued by its Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Government Communication and Information System, Republic of South Africa 2008). The label is undoubtedly steeped in both colonialism and racism.

The term "Hottentot"¹ is still used in a variety of names for both plants and animals, but there seems to be no use of it (aside from the names) that does not have a direct tie to the history described above. While this project is careful not to make decisions for the institutions utilizing its Report, the highly offensive nature of this common name should not be overlooked once its history is known and understood.

Indian

The term "Indian" as used in plant common names references a variety of meanings, including Indigenous peoples of North America, the country of India as a geographical location, and people from or descended from the country of India. Not all these uses, however, are created equal. The only way to distinguish among them is to review individually each common name employing the term.

Use of the label "Indian" as a way of referring to Indigenous peoples of North America has long been under scrutiny (Yellow Bird 1999), and it is specifically this version of the term that the project believes requires review. "Indian" in referring to Indigenous peoples in the US and Canada homogenizes an incredibly diverse group under a label imposed by colonizers, a label that has ties to unfounded claims of racial science which have historically underpinned justifications for discrimination (Yellow Bird 1999, 2-4). Simply removing the term from a plant name is not recommended, as often its presence stems from a connection between one or more Indigenous peoples and the plant – institutions should not risk severing those ties (Heather Summer in conversation with staff of the UNC American Indian Center, email to Jaime Frye, December 18, 2020).

It is outside the scope of this project to decide which labels are more appropriate alternatives to the term "Indian," as ongoing discussions suggest there are different preferences among different peoples (ICT Staff 2018). The question remains, then, how can names employing this terminology be rectified adequately and what pathways exist for input from the Indigenous peoples and cultures that have connections to these plants? This project – a national endeavor – cannot make these decisions for gardens that exist in such geographically diverse locations, each with their own cultural histories. Instead, the project's recommendation is that institutions looking to make changes work closely with local organizations and networks that can provide input based on individual criteria and preferences, and through this work develop meaningful partnerships that are both ongoing and mutually beneficial.

Niger (sometimes nyjer or Nigerian thistle)

Niger is the common name for *Guizotia abyssinica*, a plant whose seeds are popular for oils and commonly used in birdfeed. It is another example of a common name with unclear origins. The seeds

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for which the plant is known are dark brown to black, meaning its English common name has the potential to stem from the Latin word for the color black, *niger*.

In an attempt to avoid a mispronunciation of the common name that would share the same sound as the incredibly derogatory slur against Black people,¹ it is sometimes spelled “nyjer” or simply called “Nigerian thistle” – although the latter is not widespread in its use.

The name “niger” and especially “Nigerian thistle” can be problematic as a common name due to the potential for modern visitors to associate it with the Niger River or Nigeria (the plant also holds no relation to thistles). *Guizotia abyssinica* has a long history of cultivation and use in the highlands of Ethiopia in eastern Africa, while Nigeria and the Niger River sit in West Africa; needless to say, the two regions have vastly different cultural histories. As “niger” is more likely to be associated with the aforementioned slur or an inaccurate geographical region of Africa than it is to be with the Latin word for the color black (especially as the flower’s color is a bright yellow), it would be more representative of the plant’s origins and cultural significance to use the common name prevalent in Ethiopia: noug (Dempewolf et al 2015) or noog (Getinet and Sharma 1996, 8).

This case study also provides an example of how changes resulting from the best of intentions – such as wanting to avoid associations with an incredibly offensive word – can sometimes introduce additional problems.

Geographic Misattribution

While not offensive or un-inclusive per se, geographic misattributions in plant common names occur at a surprising frequency and warrant further discussion. There are not clear reasons as to why many of these plants are attributed to the wrong geographic region – research done through the course of this project cannot confirm for most examples that their misattributions were generated from any sort of malice – but making a case study of rice plants can help readers of this Report understand why the misattributions were flagged in the first place, and the importance of more accurate representation.²

Through the 18th to 20th centuries, rice was believed to be only of Asian origin; it was not until the 1970s that rice of African origin was accepted by the scientific community, despite a reasonable amount of evidence suggesting a longstanding tradition of its cultivation in Africa (Carney 2001, 32-38). It is no coincidence that the first misattribution of African rice to Asia occurred alongside the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The original explanation for the presence of rice in Africa was that the Portuguese introduced it and taught West Africans how to cultivate it (Carney 2001, 32-33, 37). Unfounded justifications for the enslavement of West Africans had contributed to the belief that such complex systems of agriculture as required for rice cultivation could not have been developed by West African peoples without European aid (Carney 2001, 32). As a result, scholars today know considerably less about the origins and prehistory of African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) as compared to Asian rice (*Oryza sativa*). Recognition and acceptance of the two distinct species of rice, each with

¹ Coincidentally, the slur also traces its origins from the Latin *niger*.

² As is explained in the “Judgement Calls” tab of the resource spreadsheet, if a plant’s native range overlaps with (even if not limited to) the geographic descriptor in the plant’s common name, it was dismissed from our final list. Those left in the list of problematic names are ones that, according to Kew’s Plants of the World Online, had no nativity to the geographic area used in the name.

their own histories of rice cultivation, were a necessary step towards encouraging scientists to investigate the origins, growth, and spread of this plant that had such a resounding effect on human history.

The case of rice plants is a rather profound example of how Eurocentric views have hindered science and research. While mis-labeling of African and Asian rice does not seem apparent anymore – at least, it did not appear in this project's data set – lessons from the history of their misattributions are reasonable grounds for further investigations into those that do seem to occur in today's common names, especially noticeable among Chinese and Japanese plants.

References to the Names of Historical Figures Entrenched in Colonialism

One of the principal topics of discussion among the researchers in this project revolved around the long history of colonization and Eurocentrism in botany. Many writings about early botanical history include tales of British colonizers "discovering" plants and returning to Europe with them as either a curiosity or in the name of economic botany.

As Linnaeus worked to categorize the world, creating binomial nomenclature and the system by which plants are scientifically classified and named based on publication in literature, he also laid the foundation for scientific racism (Charmantier 2020). The eventual acceptance of his system thrust upon the world a Eurocentric standard that purposefully lacked space for contributions from anyone outside the institutions dominated by European men. Thus, there are untold numbers of accepted, botanical names that do not describe the plants themselves, but instead glorify the colonizers observing plants at that time – many of whom abused their power and contributed to entire economies built on oppression and the pillaging of land.

One example is the legacy of William Jackson Hooker – botanist, friend of Charles Darwin, and director of Kew Gardens from 1841-1865. Under Hooker's leadership Kew sent plant collectors around the world to bring plants to England where they would then be hybridized and sent back to other (often tropical) parts of the world as part of the plantation system, destroying forests and ecosystems for their creation (Gray and Sheikh, 2020). Over 30 species of plants hold a Latinized moniker in his or his son's honor. These botanical names then often translate over to common names, for example *Allium hookeri* is often called Hooker chives. This plant is native to forest margins and moist meadows in Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka ("*Allium hookeri*," n.d.) having the Manipuri common name maroi-napakpi ("*Hooker Chives*," n.d.).

Unfortunately, it was outside the scope of this project and the reference lists at hand to evaluate these names. Further research around this topic needs to be completed.

Cultivar Names Within Common Names

Institutions treat and create common names differently based on their staff size, training, and traditions. There are plenty of sources to choose from and a variety of standards for creating names when one just can't be found. Institutions range in the stringency of their policies surrounding the choice and/or creation of their common names.

A few public gardens have fully fleshed out protocols that outline sources in order of preference and a way to create new names if necessary. For many institutions, creating common names is likely the work of a single professional and is relatively low priority in the hierarchy of work to be completed. Organizations in the middle have general structures that their common names follow – a frequent one is the composition of the cultivar or a trade name (designations to plants propagated and sold for specific features which were therefore outside the scope of this project) followed by the common name for the genus or species.

This project specifically avoided tackling any of the pieces of the botanical names (cultivars included) because they are more difficult to change (see Discussion). Cultivated plants have registration authorities within the International Society for Horticultural Science and operate under the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants*, requiring an application and review process for the rejection of a name. The goal of our research was to evaluate existing data and create suggestions for something easily adjusted by public gardens – simply the common name. This group did not have the time or working resources to investigate the history behind each cultivar name. That is another project worth undertaking.

Interestingly, of our final list of flagged words nearly half (46%) were represented in a cultivar name. Removing the cultivar name from the common name created a simple fix, leaving behind the generic plant name.

Alternative Common Names

As we set out at the beginning of this project, the goal was to create a list of potentially problematic common names and simple alternatives so that public garden data managers could pull the so-called low hanging fruit from their databases.

We often rely on these databases for a quick, consistent answer as labels are made or copy is edited, and the project team hoped to gift that to its recipients.

However, as the leadership group got to work compiling resources, attending seminars, and reaching out to peers that had connections to the topic of language use, we found our feelings about creating “quick fixes” evolving.

As has been mentioned numerous times throughout the discussion section of this Report, common names do not have a central registry or authority. Unlike Latinized, botanical nomenclature, there is not an author or a known publication where they first appear in cultural record. This Report does not intend to fill that space by acting as any sort of authority for plant common names.

The research on this project kept turning up more gray areas and nuances as it delved further into plant names and their origins. Often it was impossible to determine who gave a plant its moniker or to tease out the intentions behind the language use. It was difficult to know with any certainty if stripping a potentially problematic name could sever a positive cultural tie to a plant (see Discussion). Offering name changes could run the risk of contributing to colorblindness or cultural minimization by changing names with uncertain history. The Report authors, therefore, decided against providing alternatives that might result in quick changes not backed by meaningful reflection and consideration.

The *Cultural Context Resource Document* (**Appendix E**) breaks down the words and terms that were not able to be dismissed in a few broad categories: Derogatory, Un-Inclusive, Misleading, or Potentially Inappropriate, Unknown Origins, Geographic Misattributions, Un-Tackled Cultivars, and Judgment Calls. The easiest of these to remedy are likely the Derogatory and Geographic Misattributions. These names are either extremely likely to be problematic or were found to be incorrect geographically according to Kew's Plants of the World Online. The remaining categories will need much more thought, discussion, and evaluation from individual institutions and their communities.

Due to most of this project's research falling into the gray area of un-inclusiveness, possible potential to offend, or unknown origins it didn't seem appropriate to wholesale strip away words that could have positive meaning or association to specific communities. It is recommended that these terms be flagged within databases and discussed within the regional and community context of individual institutions while avoiding the use of information within this Report as an authoritative instruction to cleaning up data. More research must be done in order to make the appropriate adjustments to some of this language.

If it is determined that changing or adjusting the common name is in order, there are some simple ways to achieve this. If the genus name is not problematic, many plants can simply go by that moniker. Celebrate a geographical, cultural, or physical feature of the plant species without turning to the use of stereotypes. Consult with a community that has a strong cultural tie with that plant and use that community's name for it. When all else fails consult the internet while wearing critical-thinking goggles and scanning any resources for potential missteps or harm.

Conclusion

Reading and Understanding the Resources

The leadership team of this project wishes to present the final resource documents (**Appendix D & E**) but with the understanding of a few basic principles about the limitations and scope of this endeavor. These are not final decisions or necessarily, even, suggestions. The information provided is so regionally and culturally specific that the authors did not feel that sweeping recommendations were appropriate. It is our hope that each individual will use this information as a basis for their own research and decision-making process for adjusting language based on specific geographic and contextual variables.

These resources are to guide future institutional discussion, research, and thought. Though we present a “final” resource, this process is nowhere near completed nor will it ever be. As a single calendar year, completely voluntary professional project, there are words and phrases that were not thoroughly researched or considered. For example, names with sexist overtones were not screened for in the process if they did not have overt offensive words from our combined list in them. As mentioned previously, names associated with historical figures were also not included. Catching every word or historical context would be unreasonable within the scope of this endeavor, but the resources provided will give visibility and a process through which institutions and individuals can continue with this work.

It is also important to note that none of the authors or leadership team members have a background or specific expertise in racial, cultural, religion or gender studies nor is any member of the group representative of a Black, Indigenous, or person of color (BIPOC) perspective.

This is a large, complex topic. Some words or phrases within the document could be troubling or triggering to individuals. Please take caution when exploring or sharing these topics. The *Data Resource Spreadsheet* (**Appendix D**) has been altered to hide, but allow access to, the potentially problematic words, but the *Cultural Context Resource Document* (**Appendix E**) uses the words in their entirety for research and contextual purposes. The list of potentially offensive words and phrases laid out in **Appendix C** has condensed all 1,700 words onto one sheet making it illegible unless copied and pasted into a separate document for further examination.

The problematic nature of these words often relies on the context of their use. Certain words may seem completely benign to one group, culture, or language while holding offensive and egregious connotations for another (See Discussion Section). In the resources (**Appendix D & E**) the researchers sought to gather as much context and different use cases as feasible given the scope of the project.

This is important work, but unfortunately is not an isolated project. Common names were chosen as the specific focus of this project because changes can be addressed by individual institutions in an immediate, decisive fashion without much impact on a scientific or botanical scale. However, specific epithets or Latinized names, cultivars, and other modes of scientific communication have deep histories embedded with the notion of “discovery” and, thus, a right to name and are antiquated in a way that is not inclusive or equitable.

Appendices

Appendix A - Institutional Data Contributors

Bok Tower Gardens
Chicago Botanic Garden
Dawes Arboretum
Denver Botanic Gardens
Green Bay Botanical Garden
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Lincoln Park Zoo
Longwood Gardens
Naples Botanical Garden
NatureServe
New York Botanical Garden
Newfields
North Carolina Botanical Garden
Polly Hill Arboretum
San Francisco Botanical Garden
The Arboretum at Penn State
The Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky
The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University
The Huntington
The Rogerson Clematis Garden
The University of British Columbia Botanical Garden
U.S. National Arboretum
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory
Wellesley College Botanic Gardens

Appendix B - Volunteer Data Analysis Contributors

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Abby Lorenz | Kayleigh Walters |
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| Carrie Whitacre | Laurel Matthew |
| Chelsea Mahaffey | Liz Miller |
| Colleen Keyes | Margeaux Apple |
| Cynthia Welte | Mary Meyer |
| Daniel Murphy | Mimi Jorling |
| Danielle Nowak | Nick Kreevich |
| Emily Ellingson | Patrick Deja |
| Gayle Bradbeer | Rita Hassert |
| Geoffrey Neal | Rosemary Bathurst |
| Jaime Frye | Sam Sivertz |
| Jared Rubinstein | Sara Helm-Wallace |
| Jennie Oldfield | Sarah McNaull |
| Jessica Goehler | Sarah Pingel |
| Jessica Moskowitz | Sylvan Kaufman |
| Julia Zoltowsky | Trent Erickson |
| Katelin Gaeth | Trish Lindemann |
| Katherine Freeman | Valerie Pence |
| Kathryn Downing | Zinnia Cheetham |
| Kathy Musial | |

Appendix D - Document Links

[Full Report](#)

[Spreadsheet Resource
Document](#)

[Cultural Context
Resource Document](#)

Appendix E – Cultural Context Resource Document

This document is meant to be used in conjunction with the *Data Resource Spreadsheet (Report Appendix D)*. Brief summaries of the contexts detailed below are found in the former's "Context" column. In this *Cultural Context Resource Document*, some sources have been provided via footnotes in order to facilitate reading. They are not listed in this Report's final list of references, but can be found – alongside additional resources – in the "Sources" column of the *Data Resource Spreadsheet*.

Both resources have potentially-triggering language in full display as a way to facilitate research and use.

The information below has been sectioned into categories, with more information about each one provided alongside the category header. Flagged terms (which correspond to the *Data Resource Spreadsheet's* "Problematic Word" column) are listed alphabetically within each category, alongside the plant name in which the term appears. In cases where the term is used in names referring to specific plants, both common and scientific names are provided. In cases where the term appears in multiple common names, one common name example is listed and the use of the term is summarized.

Please keep in mind that the list of terms, for the most part, was not curated by the project leadership team but instead taken from external sources in an attempt to remain as objective as possible. This list is neither comprehensive nor an authority on what should be considered problematic if displayed in a public garden. Please consult the Report for more details concerning our methods, including information about where you can find the terms included in our list.

DEROGATORY

This section includes terms that were flagged as having a recorded history of derogatory use, most often grounded in racism. These terms have the potential to be construed as highly offensive, regardless of the context in which they appear.

Blackboy (specifically *Xanthorrhoea preisii*)

This Australian plant's common name comes from a derogatory comparison to Aboriginal peoples.¹² The stalk of these grass trees was used to make spears, and the comparison comes from the plant's apparent similarity to an Aboriginal man standing next to his spear. The use of the term "boy" relegates the person being compared to the plant into a servile or inferior position.

Black face (specifically black face general, *Strobilanthes phyllostachyus*)

This project was unable to determine the exact origin of this common name. The only use of the term "Black face" that research uncovered was in reference to the practice started by American minstrel shows in which white actors wore dark make-up and acted out inaccurate, harmful, and caricature-like stereotypes of Black peoples.¹³

Black gin (specifically *Kingia australis*)

This project was unable to confirm the exact origin of this common name. Because the plant is native to Australia, it is very possible that the common name is related to the incredibly derogatory reference to Black Aboriginal women ("gin" being a derivative of an Aboriginal word for woman or wife and related to their sexual exploitation by white settlers¹⁴).

Bluegum (specifically *Eucalyptus globulus*)

The common name for *Eucalyptus globulus* is "Tasmanian blue gum," which stems from the blue-gray waxy bloom on the plant's leaves.¹⁵ This plant name is not derogatory, but when "blue gum" is written as "bluegum" (no spaces), it has the potential to reference the racial slur used against Africans and African Americans with darker skin colors.

Bolivian Jew (aka Bolivian Wandering Jew, specifically *Callisia repens*)

See "*Wandering Jew*" – plant name is adjusted for species native range, which includes Bolivia among other South American countries.

Bushman/Bushmen (specifically plants from Southern Africa)

This term refers to a diverse group of peoples who are the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa. The term "bushman" came from a Dutch word for "outlaw" (*bossiesman*) and they were deemed such in the fight against colonization.¹⁶ It is considered derogatory, and the term "San" was adopted instead in the 1990s. Both terms, however, have racist connotations

¹² "Dirt on our hands: overcoming botany's hidden legacy of inequality" (Unearthed: Mysteries from an Unseen World, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), <https://omny.fm/shows/unearthed-mysteries-from-an-unseen-world/dirt-on-our-hands-overcoming-botany-s-hidden-legac>

¹³ "How the history of blackface is rooted in racism" (History.com), <https://www.history.com/news/blackface-history-racism-origins>

¹⁴ "Gin" (Australian Expressions glossary for the novel *No Sunlight Singing*), <https://www.nosunlightsinging.com/glossary.html>. See also, "Native title holders confident Queensland creek will be stripped of its racist name" (ABC News), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-11/elders-push-to-rename-creek-with-racist-connotations/12344864>

¹⁵ "Tasmanian blue gum" (Floral Emblems of Australia, Australian National Botanic Gardens), <https://www.anbg.gov.au/emblems/tas.emblem.html>.

¹⁶ "San" (Kruger Park, Siyabona Africa), https://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_bushmen.html.

THERE ARE FULLY WRITTEN, LEGIBLE SLURS IN THIS SECTION OF THE PAPER.

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRIGGERING LANGUAGE, PLEASE SKIP THIS SEGMENT.

and the term “Kwe” (simply meaning “people”) may be more appropriate but has not entered widespread use.¹⁷ - See also, “Bushman’s toilet paper”

China doll (specifically *Radermachera sinica*)

Part of this plant’s native range is, in fact, China, but “China doll” as a whole is a derogatory stereotype that contributes to the fetishization of Chinese women as fragile and submissive. This fetishization has in turn helped perpetuate racism, sexism, and even violence against Asian women more generally.¹⁸

Digger (specifically Digger pine, *Pinus sabbiana*)

See Discussion section of Project Report

Dumb (specifically dumb cane, *Dieffenbachia genus*)

The term has been used historically – and inappropriately – to refer to a person unable to speak. It lends its name to this plant due to a poison from chewing it that makes a person incapable of speech.¹⁹

Dyke (specifically dyke aloe, *Aloe ortholopha*)

This common name is referencing the Great Dyke in Zimbabwe, where the plant is native.²⁰ Without this full context in the name, however, there is the potential for it to be associated with the offensive slang for a lesbian and not the geological feature.

Eskimo (as in Eskimo’s potatoes, *Fritillaria camschatcensis*; also appears in cultivars)

This term is unacceptable language, a colonial name referring to Inuit and Yupik peoples.²¹

Gyp (specifically gyp grama, *Bouteloua breviseta*)

This term is a shortened version of “gypsy,” an offensive exonym for Romani people (see below). It has come to refer to being swindled due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes of Romani people.²²

Gypsy (as in gypsy rose, among others; also appears in cultivars)

This term is a pejorative exonym for Romani (or Roma) people. It stems from a mis-labeling of Romani people as Egyptian because of their features and dark skin when they migrated

¹⁷ “How to name the ‘Bushman’?” (Survival International), <https://www.survivalinternational.org/material/1156>.

¹⁸ “For an Asian American woman the spa shootings reignited the trauma of everyday racism and misogyny” (The Lily), <https://www.thelily.com/for-an-asian-american-woman-the-spa-shootings-reignited-the-trauma-of-everyday-racism-and-misogyny/>

¹⁹ “Dumb cane” (Encyclopedia Britannica), <https://www.britannica.com/plant/dumb-cane>.

²⁰ “*Aloe ortholopha*” (Wikipedia), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe_ortholopha.

²¹ “Inuit or Eskima: which name to use?” (Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks), https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/resources/inuit_or_eskimo.php

²² “Why being ‘gypped’ hurts the Roma more than it hurts you” (Code Switch, NPR),

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/12/30/242429836/why-being-gypped-hurts-the-roma-more-than-it-hurts-you>

THERE ARE FULLY WRITTEN, LEGIBLE SLURS IN THIS SECTION OF THE PAPER.

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRIGGERING LANGUAGE, PLEASE SKIP THIS SEGMENT.

towards Europe from northern India. The term has also become associated with an impoverished and hypersexualized stereotype of Romani women.²³

Hebe (specifically plants in the *Veronica* genus)

Originally included in the genus *Veronica*, these plants were later established as their own genus named after the Greek goddess of youth, Hebe. Work is ongoing, but the plants seem to be re-allocated back to *Veronica*.²⁴ The use of "hebe" as a common name likely stems from this history, but the term is also a slur used against Jewish people (being short for "Hebrew"). Its use without context in botanical nomenclature has the potential to come across as derogatory.

Hottentot (as in Hottentot fig, among others)

See Discussion section of Project Report

Hunchback (specifically hunchback cardoon, *Cynara cardunculus*)

This is an offensive term historically used to refer to someone with a medical condition that causes an abnormally curved spine.²⁵

Indian (as in Indian paintbrush, among others; also appears in cultivars)

See Discussion section of Project Report. Specific to plants that have a history of use(s) by various Indigenous peoples of the Americas. While "Indian" is listed as a flagged term, individual Tribes and Nations were not – this project did not investigate their appearance or whether they were used correctly or appropriately.

Jap (specifically japgarden juniper, *Juniperus procumbens*)

This term appears in plant names that have been shortened from "Japanese garden." This shortened form, however, has the potential to be identified with the ethnic slur common during World War II and associated with the US's history of Japanese internment camps. This association can be avoided if the name is spelled out in full ("Japanese" garden).

Kaffir/Kafir (as in kaffir lily, among others)

This term is an extremely offensive, derogatory word for a Black person in Africa, especially South Africa and southern Africa.²⁶ It is similar to the "N-word" in the United States and use of it is considered hate speech in the Republic of South Africa.²⁷

²³ "The 'G' word isn't for you: how "gypsy" erases Romani women" (National Organization for Women), <https://now.org/blog/the-g-word-isnt-for-you-how-gypsy-erases-romani-women/>

²⁴ "Hebe or Veronica?" (Catalogue of Organisms website/blog), http://coo.fieldofscience.com/2008/11/hebe-or-veronica_10.html

²⁵ "Offensive words for people who have specific medical conditions" (Macmillan Dictionary), <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/thesaurus-category/american/offensive-words-for-people-who-have-specific-medical-conditions>.

²⁶ "Kaffir" (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/kaffir>.

²⁷ "The 'K-word' in South Africa and proposed new penalties against hate speech" (Council on Foreign Relations), <https://www.cfr.org/blog/k-word-south-africa-and-proposed-new-penalties-against-hate-speech>

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Redneck (as in redneck palm, among others)

This term is a derogatory way to refer to a working-class white person, especially one from a rural area.²⁸ In the case of the redneck palm, it references the reddish color of the palm's trunk, borrowing from the derogatory term.²⁹ The project was unable to determine the origin of the common name "redneck lupine."

Squaw (as in squawroot, among others; used in cultivars)

This term comes from an Algonquian word for "woman," historically used to refer to a Native American woman.³⁰ The term is now considered highly offensive if used as a loan word by a non-Algonquian speaker or outside of an Algonquian-language sentence.³¹

Wandering Jew (as in *Tradescantia* genus)

This plant name likely stems from the legend of the Wandering Jew, a figure who supposedly taunted Jesus of Nazareth on the way to the latter's crucifixion and, as a result, was cursed to wander the earth. The figure of the Wandering Jew has been used historically in anti-Semitism.³² As a plant name, it is likely referencing the way *Tradescantia* grows and spreads.

Yellow lady (specifically yellow lady tulip, *Tulipa clusiana* var. *chrysantha*)

This term is actually describing the yellow color of the flower, but when combined with the gendered language of the rest of its name, "lady tulip," it has potential to be misconstrued as "yellow lady" tulip (which has potential for offense) and not a yellow "lady tulip."

²⁸ "Redneck" (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/redneck>

²⁹ "Teddy Bear palm tree" (All About Palm Trees website/blog), <https://www.allaboutpalmtrees.com/teddy-bear-palm-tree>

³⁰ "Squaw" (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/squaw>

³¹ "The word squaw: offensive or not?" (Indian Country Today), <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/the-word-squaw-offensive-or-not>

³² "Opinion: a grassroots effort is needed to rename this plant" (Cincinnati.com),

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/2021/04/21/opinion-grassroots-effort-needed-rename-plant/7277052002/>. See also,

"Wandering Jew" (Wikipedia), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wandering_Jew

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UN-INCLUSIVE, MISLEADING, or POTENTIALLY INAPPROPRIATE

This section includes the remainder of the terms that were flagged using existing lists selected by the project leadership team. In certain cases, the project leaders flagged words outside of the initial list after uncovering their histories. (There were also certain words dismissed by project leaders as unproblematic in certain contexts – see “Judgment Calls” for more details.)

The terms and names in this section reflect a variety of histories and cultures, and the potential for offense exists in varying degrees, if at all. This project strived to place the terms and names in their contexts as accurately as possible, but the nature of common names – often having ambiguous origins or being grounded in folk knowledge – means that the contexts provided below should not be taken as a final authority on the matter.

African mask (specifically *Alocasia × amazonica*)

This plant is not native to Africa, but likely named due to its resemblance to certain types of masks used for ceremonies and rituals in African cultures. Masks in Africa have a strong and lengthy history, but their looks vary widely as there are incredibly diverse cultures on the continent that each have their own traditions. Even within those traditions, artistry may vary depending on the type of mask and its purpose, so they may or may not resemble the leaf-shape of this plant.

African hemp (specifically *Sparrmannia africana*)

While this plant is native to Africa (specifically the Cape Province), the common name “African hemp” appears to have resulted from a brief capitalistic endeavor by the Kama Fibre Syndicate in the late 19th century. The plant is not actually a hemp but seems to have been named such when introduced to Europe as an alternative fiber material. In the early 20th century, the Imperial Institute in London deemed it inferior to other fibers that were better for manufacturing, but the name remained.³³

Arabic (as in gum arabic)

This plant’s name stems from the historical involvement of Arabs in its trade.³⁴ Arabic, however, is a language and *not* an adjective for Arab people, the Arabian Peninsula, or any other aspect of the Arab world. If the name “gum arabic” is to be retained, then sources indicate that “arabic” should not be capitalized so as to distinguish it from the language.³⁵

Bastard (as in bastard sandalwood, among others)

Sometimes – but not always – this descriptor is used to describe a so-called false plant, likely due to the historical concept that a child born out of wedlock (a bastard) was illegitimate. This descriptor appears when a plant physically resembles or has similar qualities to another plant

³³ “*Sparrmannia africana*” (South African National Biodiversity Institute), <http://pza.sanbi.org/sparrmannia-africana>

³⁴ “Tears of gold: how gum arabic conquered the world” (Mare: Leiden University Weekly),

<https://www.mareonline.nl/en/science/tears-of-gold-how-gum-arabic-conquered-the-world/>. See also, *Gum Arabic: The Golden Tears of the Acacia Tree* by Dorrit van Dalen (Leiden University Press 2019).

³⁵ “Arab / Arabic / Arabian” (Washington State University), <https://brians.wsu.edu/2016/05/17/arab-arabic-arabian/>

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(sometimes referred to as the “true” plant).³⁶ There are additional appearances of the term in various plant names with unclear origins, and these are marked as having “No Valid Information” and require further research to uncover their meanings.

Beggar (as in beggarticks, among others)

This term is a rather outdated one used to refer to a person who is forced to ask people on the street for extra income to feed, clothe, and/or house themselves or their families. There are many alternatives for referring to an irritant that clings to fur or clothing.

Black-eyed (as in Black-eyed Susan)

See Discussion section of Project Report

Bible (specifically Bible hyssop, *Origanum syriacum*)

Majorana syriaca (synonym for *Origanum syriacum*) has been chemically analyzed to confirm that it is likely the hyssop plant mentioned in the Bible, hence this common name. The plant’s appearance in the Bible stems from much older traditions in Jewish and Arab cultures (including in religion and cuisine).³⁷

Black Belt (specifically Black belt rosinweed, *Silphium confertifolium* or *Silphium asteriscus* var. *latifolium*)

This project was unable to confirm the exact origin of the plant’s common name, but it is likely associated with the plant’s native range in the southern United States. The following quote from chapter 7 of Booker T. Washington’s *Up From Slavery* (originally published 1901) encapsulates the term’s meaning:

“So far as I can learn, the term was first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark, and naturally rich soil was, of course, the part of the South where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently they were taken there in the largest numbers. Later, and especially since the war, the term seems to be used wholly in a political sense—that is, to designate the counties where the black people outnumber the white.” (p. 108)³⁸

Blue balls (specifically *Nama rothrockii*)

While this plant’s name is reflective of its physical appearance (blue-purple foliage in the shape of a ball), it is possible that the name “blue balls” was chosen over “purple balls” due to the former’s familiarity as a phrase used to describe the medical condition of a male’s swollen testicles.

³⁶ See as one example: “Naio (*Myoporum sandwicense*)” (Maui Nui Botanical Gardens), <http://mnbg.org/hawaiian-native-plant-collection/naio-myoporum-sandwicense/>. Additional sources for other plant names that include the term “bastard” are listed in the Data Resource Spreadsheet’s Sources column.

³⁷ “Identification of Biblical Hyssop and Origin of the Traditional Use of Oregano-group Herbs in the Mediterranean Region” (*Economic Botany* vol. 42, no. 2), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4255069>

³⁸ A copy of this work can be found online from UNC Chapel Hill’s initiative, Documenting the American South, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/washington/washing.html#washing108>

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Blow wives (specifically *Achyrachaena mollis*)

This common name has unconfirmed origins. It has been suggested the name is a reference to the game in which a person blows the seeds to determine if they will find a lover.³⁹ It could also be referencing the plant's ability to re-sow itself easily after its seed are blown by the wind.

Buddha (as in Buddha-belly bamboo)

This plant is likely named for the tendency of the bamboo plant's culms to swell, which resemble what is known in the Western world as the Laughing Buddha. This image, however, is not actually depicting Siddhartha Gautama – the Enlightened One of Buddhism most commonly referred to as "Buddha" – but a tenth-century Chinese monk named Budai, so-called for the cloth sack with which he is depicted.⁴⁰ In either case, it remains to be determined whether the use of his name to describe this plant gives due respect to the religion of Buddhism and its figures.

Bushman's toilet paper (specifically *Brachyglottis repanda*)

"Bush" in New Zealand (where this plant is native) is a settler term for the forest,⁴¹ and the term "Bushmen" supposedly referred to New Zealand loggers in the 19th century.⁴² "Bushman's toilet paper" and "bushman's friend" come from the soft and fuzzy leaves of the plant used as toilet paper by earlier settlers there.⁴³ It has a much longer history of medicinal uses by the Māori, and their name "rangiora" translates into words like "sky" and "vitality" or "health."⁴⁴

See also, "Bushman/Bushmen" regarding plants from Southern Africa

Cancer (as in cancer-root)

Cancer-root plants (*Orobanche uniflora* and *Conopholis americana*) do not seem to be involved in the prevention, cause, or treatment of cancer. They are likely named for the plant's parasitic nature.⁴⁵ Cancer, however, is a complex disease and parasites are likely just one of its various causes.

Cannibal's tomato (specifically *Solanum viride*)

This plant's common name does in fact refer to its alleged use by certain tribes in Fiji for the roasting and eating of human flesh.⁴⁶ Today, however, accusations of cannibalism carry racist

³⁹ "Achyrachaena mollis" (Annie's nursery website/blog), <https://www.anniesannuals.com/plants/view/?id=4615>

⁴⁰ "Budai" (*The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, Princeton University Press 2014, p. 148), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n41q.18>

⁴¹ "What is the bush?" (Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand), <https://teara.govt.nz/en/the-new-zealand-bush/page-1>

⁴² "Logging native forests" (Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand), <https://teara.govt.nz/en/logging-native-forests/page-4>

⁴³ "Rangiora leaves" (Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand), <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/13866/rangiora-leaves>

⁴⁴ "Rangiora" (Trees that Count, Project Crimson), <https://www.treesthatcount.co.nz/native-trees/rangiora/>

⁴⁵ "Plant of the Week: American cancer-root" (U.S. Forest Service), https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/conopholis_americanana.shtml. See also, "Cancer-Root: The Case of the Mysterious Parasitic Plant" (My Woodlot website/blog), <https://mywoodlot.com/item/cancer-root-the-case-of-the-mysterious-parasitic-plant>

⁴⁶ "*Solanum viride*" (Solanaceae Source), <https://solanaceaesource.myspecies.info/taxonomy/term/98211/descriptions>

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connotations implying the so-called savagery of tribal peoples.⁴⁷ The plant has uses beyond the implications of its common name as both food and medicine.

Caucasian (as in Caucasian Spruce)

See Discussion section of Project Report

Chinese hat (specifically Chinese hat plant, *Holmskioldia sanguinea* and *Karomia tettensis*)

Neither of the plants having this common name are native to China.⁴⁸ It is likely they are named thus for the shape of the flower on the plant. The Asian conical hat, or rice hat, is not exclusive to China and therefore does not seem to be the best way to describe this plant – especially since the plants are not associated with China in another way.

Christ Plant or Crown of thorns (specifically *Euphorbia milii*)

This common name references a legend that the plant was made into the infamous crown of thorns worn by the religious figure, Jesus, during his crucifixion. This legend is unconfirmed, some sources deeming it even unlikely.⁴⁹

Confederate (as in confederate rose, among others)

The use of this term in plant names has the potential to glorify the Confederacy of the American Civil War.

Crack (specifically kitty crack, *Teucrium marum*)

This term appears in a plant that is attractive to cats,⁵⁰ implying a drug-like desire for it (crack being an addictive substance), or possibly having a drug-like effect on them (crack in this sense being a stand-in for any controlled substance).

Czechoslovakian (specifically Czechoslovakian daphne, *Daphne arbuscula*)

This plant is native to Slovakia. Czechoslovakia is no longer a country.

Devil (as in devil's backbone, among others including cultivars)

This term appears in a variety of names. Sometimes it is referencing the twin-horn shape of a plant or plant part, or another feature that is related to the various looks with which a devil is associated. Sometimes it is related to folklore. Often its use seems related to invasive species, drawing on the universal concept of the devil as a being that causes harm or despair (most cultures associate a devil with something negative, though there are some religions that do not).

⁴⁷ "Survival and tribal people denounce 'ludicrous' cannibal claims" (Survivor International news), <https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/7807>

⁴⁸ "*Holmskioldia sanguinea*" (Kew's Plants of the World),

<http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:863073-1>

⁴⁹ "Crown of Thorns, *Euphorbia milii*" (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension), <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/crown-of-thorns-euphorbia-milii/>

⁵⁰ "Cat thyme" (Advice From the Herb Lady website/blog), <https://advicefromtheherblady.com/plant-profiles/trees-shrubs/cat-thyme/>

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Dixie (as in dixie rosemallow, among others)

This term appears in numerous common names of plants that have native ranges in the southeastern United States (it also appears in many cultivars of unknown origin, likely referring to the southern/southeastern United States). The term often serves as a romanticization of pre-Civil War (i.e., slave-owning) South and its continued use has the potential to glorify the Confederacy of the American Civil War.

Drunkard (specifically drunkard's dream, *Hatiora salicornioides*)

This common name comes from the shape of the leaves on the spineless cactus, which resemble little bottles.

Drunken (specifically drunken tree, *Ceiba insignis*)

This common name comes from the shape of the tree's trunk, which resembles a bottle. The common name is similar to a Spanish name for the plant, which translates to "drunken stick."

East Indian (as in East Indian holly fern, among others)

"East Indies" is an archaic descriptor for southeastern Asian countries that is entrenched in colonialism.

See also, "West Indian"

Hellvine (specifically *Campsis radicans*)

This common name comes from the plant's vigorous growth and trailing habit. These have been described as invasive qualities.⁵¹

See also, "Devil" – this plant is also known as "devil's shoestring"

Horny (specifically horny goat weed, *Epimedium* genus)

This common name likely stems from its use to treat erectile dysfunction or low sexual desire, although there is insufficient scientific evidence to support or deny these claims.⁵²

Indian shot (specifically *Canna indica*)

This common name comes from the supposed use of the plant's seeds as bullets in the 19th c. Indian Mutiny (the First War of Independence in India), an unsuccessful uprising against colonial British rule.⁵³ This project was unable to find more information about this story to verify it. More research is needed to confirm. Although the botanical name's specific epithet is botanical Latin for "of or from India," the species was introduced and is not native in India.⁵⁴

⁵¹ "Campsis radicans" (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center), https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=cara2

⁵² "Horny Goat Weed" (Medline Plus, U.S. National Library of Medicine), <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/natural/699.html>

⁵³ "Seeds fired from a shotgun" (BBC Two), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00p14q0>

⁵⁴ "Canna indica" (Kew's Plants of the World), <http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:319130-2>

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Jew's beard (specifically *Tacca chantrieri*)

The common name "Jew's beard" comes from the plant's long bracteoles that apparently resemble a beard in the style commonly worn by an Orthodox Jew.⁵⁵

King Billy (specifically King Billy pine, *Athrotaxis selaginoides*)

This common name seems to come from the colonial period in Tasmania when *Athrotaxis selaginoides* was considered an inferior pine for logging to *Lagarostrobos franklinii*, but would occur in the forests of the latter. The name was possibly applied to *A. selaginoides* as an expression of contempt by settlers in Tasmania, most of whom were convicts from Britain due to their support for Irish independence (and referred to the Protestant king as "King Billy" as a sign of disrespect). These settlers were also primarily responsible for genocide of the Tasmanian natives, one of the last of whom, William Lanne, was also referred to as King Billy. The term, therefore, seems to result from an association with inferiority by those who gave it.⁵⁶

Latin American (specifically Latin American lady orchid; *Stenorrhynchos speciosum*)

The usefulness of the term "Latin America" is the subject of ongoing debate.⁵⁷ The term itself stems from an idea of a "Latin race," initially employed to justify European imperialism in Central and South America; its continued use has been seen as a result of colonialism. Others suggest that the true adoption of the term came from anti-US imperialism. This plant is native to Central America and north/northwestern areas of South America.

Little-people (specifically *Lepuropetalon spathulatum*)

Research indicates that this term is actually preferred by some people who have dwarfism, but it is unclear as to whether it is the appropriate name to describe a small plant.⁵⁸

Mad (as in mad-apple, among others)

This term has historically been used to refer to those who have suffered from mental illnesses, and its use continues to stigmatize mental health issues.⁵⁹ It is especially problematic when coupled with "woman" – as in madwoman's milk – because females have historically been deemed mentally unfit, or "mad," when they fail to conform to the stereotypes of patriarchal societies.

Mexican hat (specifically *Ratibida* genus)

This plant is native to the US and Mexico and its common name comes from the shape of the plant's flowers, which is similar to a sombrero or charro hat. While the sombrero is an

⁵⁵ "Racist relics: an ugly blight on our botanical nomenclature" (The Scientist), <https://www.the-scientist.com/opinion-old/racist-relics-an-ugly-blight-on-our-botanical-nomenclature-60358>

⁵⁶ "*Athrotaxis selaginoides*" (The Gymnosperm Database), https://www.conifers.org/cu/Athrotaxis_selaginoides.php

⁵⁷ "The Invention of Latin America: A Transnational History of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Race" (*The American Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 5), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/118.5.1345>. See also, Walter Mignolo's work on the concept of "coloniality"

⁵⁸ "How are the terms 'dwarf,' 'little person,' and 'person of short stature' commonly used?" (DO-IT Center, University of Washington), <https://www.washington.edu/doit/how-are-terms-dwarf-little-person-and-person-short-stature-commonly-used>

⁵⁹ "Crazy mad nutters: the language of mental health" (*Proceedings of the 3rd Workshop on Computational Linguistics and Clinical Psychology*), <https://aclanthology.org/W16-0306.pdf>

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important part of Mexican culture – and, unfortunately, often appropriated without recognition of its significance – it is not the only type of hat in Mexico.

Mormon (as in Mormon tea, among others)

“Mormon” is no longer an acceptable way to refer to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁶⁰

Naked lady/ladies (genus *Colchicum*, among others)

“Naked” is often a term used to describe a stem without leaves, but when paired with “ladies” the name becomes unnecessarily gendered. *Colchicums* specifically were originally called “naked boys,” but their name was changed to “naked ladies” sometime during the Victorian era – one can speculate this change was because the sexual exploitation of women was, unfortunately, thought to be more palatable.⁶¹

Orient or Oriental (as in oriental arborvitae, among others)

The “Orient” is an invention of European colonial and imperial discourse that situates Europe in the center of the world, east of which (the Orient) is presented as in opposition to the west (the Occident). Therefore, it exists only through the Western gaze and not in reality.⁶² The term “oriental” has been banned from use in federal law, and at least one state has banned its use in state documents as well.⁶³

Otaheite (specifically Otaheite apple, *Syzygium malaccense*)

This term is the former English name of the Pacific island of Tahiti, first recorded by James Cook as a misinterpretation of a focus marker and the actual island’s name.⁶⁴ The plant is so-called for its fruit’s resemblance to an apple and because it was introduced to the Neotropics and Caribbean from Tahiti in the late 18th century.⁶⁵

Pissabed (as for *Chiococca alba*, among others)

Historically this common name has been used for dandelions to refer to their diuretic properties.⁶⁶ It has since been applied to other plants that are used as a diuretic.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ “Stop call the Mormon Church ‘Mormon,’ says church leader. LDS is out, too” (Washington Post), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/08/17/stop-calling-the-mormon-church-mormon-says-church-leader-lds-is-out-too/>

⁶¹ “*Colchicum speciosum*” (Birmingham Botanical Gardens), <https://www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/colchicum-speciosum-naked-ladies/>

⁶² “Orientalism: The Making of the Other” (*Pedagogy of the Other: Edward Said, Postcolonial Theory, and Strategies for Critique* by Shehla Burney, Peter Lang 2012) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42981698>. See also, Edward Said’s concept of “Orientalism”

⁶³ “Why do we say ‘Asian American’ not ‘Oriental’?” (Origin of Everything, PBS), <https://www.pbs.org/video/why-do-we-say-asian-american-not-oriental-4mohsx/>

⁶⁴ “Otaheite” (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/otaheite>

⁶⁵ “*Syzygium malaccense*” (Invasive Species Compendium, CABI), <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/52448#tohistoryOfIntroductionAndSpread>

⁶⁶ “Pissabed” (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/definition/pissabed>

⁶⁷ “*Chiococca alba*” (Plants For A Future), <https://pfaf.org/User/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Chiococca+alba>

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Piss off (specifically piss off plant, *Plectranthus caninus*)

This plant's common name comes from it being marketed as a pet repellent (although this claim has not been scientifically proven).⁶⁸ "Piss off" is vulgar slang similar to "eff off."

Rape (as in rapeseed, among others)

Botanically, the term comes from a Middle English word for turnip, which itself stems from the Latin word for tuber.⁶⁹ Without this context, however, the term "rape" alone could be triggering for victims of severe sexual assault.⁷⁰

Rhodesian (specifically Rhodesian cycad, *Encephalartos manikensis*)

This term is referencing Rhodesia, a British colony and then unrecognized state named after Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) – an imperialist who believed the English were a superior race and who was instrumental in the colonization of Southern Africa and the subjugation of its peoples.⁷¹ By 1980 the area formerly known as Rhodesia had officially gained independence; it is now two countries known as Zimbabwe and Zambia. More recently, the concept of a "Rhodesia" has been romanticized online by white supremacists.⁷² The so-called Rhodesian cycad is native to Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Tongue (as in mother-in-law's tongue, among others)

This term is often used to describe tongue-shaped plants. When paired with terms referring to a person or gendered language – like "mother-in-law" – it is usually referencing negative stereotypes associated with excessive or sharp talking.

Turk's cap (as in turk's cap lily, among others)

This common name refers to the flowers of a few different plants that resemble in appearance what seem to be two different headpieces from the Ottoman Empire: the royal turban and the fez. The royal turban was an older headpiece worn by the Sultan made from layers of linen wrapped over a wooden frame. The fez replaced the use of turbans in the early nineteenth century and became a well-known symbol of the Ottoman Empire.⁷³ It was later outlawed as a part of Atatürk's Reforms in the 20th century in an attempt to Westernize Turkey. Few, if any, "turk's cap" plants are native in Turkey.

Turk's head (as in turk's head cactus, among others)

See "Turk's cap"

⁶⁸ "Scaredy Cat Plant" (Flowers of India), <https://www.flowersofindia.net/catalog/slides/Scaredy%20Cat%20Plant.html>

⁶⁹ "Rape" (Lexico.com), <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/rape#h69945539864820>

⁷⁰ "Why you should stop using the word 'rape' so casually" (Women's Republic), <https://www.womensrepublic.net/why-you-should-stop-using-the-word-rape-so-casually/>

⁷¹ "Cecil John Rhodes" (South African History Online), <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes>

⁷² "Rhodesia's dead – but white supremacists have given it new life online" (New York Times Magazine),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/10/magazine/rhodesia-zimbabwe-white-supremacists.html>

⁷³ "The Coverings of an Empire: An Examination of Ottoman Headgear from 1500 to 1829" (The Cupola, Gettysburg College), https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1182&context=student_scholarship

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Turk's turban (as in *Clerodendrum indicum*, among others)
See "Turk's cap"

Virgin (specifically virgin's bower, *Clematis* genus)
Like most common names, "virgin's bower" has no definitive origin. It is possible that it was named for Queen Elizabeth I of England ("the Virgin Queen") but it is more likely the name stems from a legend in which the plant sheltered the Virgin Mary and her son, Jesus, when the fled to Egypt.⁷⁴

Voodoo (specifically Voodoo lilies, *Amorphophallus* genus)
The common name "voodoo lily" is likely applied to this genus due to the flower's tendency to emit the smell of rotting flesh to attract its pollinators. This stereotype associating Voodoo religions (Haitian Voodoo and New Orleans Voodoo, among others) with human sacrifice or cannibalism is incredibly harmful and not based in real religious practices. It has been suggested that this negative association arises from racial discrimination and the criminalization of cultural traditions associated with Africa.⁷⁵

West Indian (as in West Indian gherkin, among others)
This term is used in describing plants from the so-called West Indies, a name that stems from the mis-identification of the region as India by Europeans upon their arrival in the fifteenth century. Moreover, some plants labeled as West Indian are in fact native to Africa, likely arriving in the Caribbean through the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁷⁶ Geographically, the "West Indies" consists of three archipelagos – Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles, and Lucayan Archipelago – that themselves contain diverse countries and territories.
See also, "East Indian"

Whiteman (specifically whiteman's foot, *Plantago major*)
This common name comes from the plant's migration to the Americas alongside Europeans and its tendency to grow in areas disturbed or damaged by European settlement – as in, following in the steps of white men.⁷⁷

Willie (specifically stinking Willie, *Trillium erectum*)
This "stinking" part of this common name stems from the smell of rotting that the flower emits to attract pollinators, but "stinking Willie" as a whole seemed more common in referring to ragwort. In the latter case, "Willie" is a reference to William Duke of Cumberland, who

⁷⁴ "The Origin of the Name Virgin's Bower" (Clematis Queen website/blog), <http://www.clematisqueen.com/content/origin-name-virgin%E2%80%99s-bower-0>

⁷⁵ "Dividing Stereotype and Religion: The Legal Implications of the Ambiguous References to Voodoo in U.S. Court Proceedings" (*The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Race and Social Justice* vol. 14, no. 251), <https://core.ac.uk/reader/47209816>. See also, "On Halloween, insensitivity goes beyond kimonos and Black face" (Code Switch, NPR), <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/10/13/554251889/on-halloween-remember-voodoo-isnt-black-magic>

⁷⁶ "*Cucumis anguria*" (Invasive Species Compendium, CABI), <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/16964>

⁷⁷ "*Plantago major*" (*Handbook of Edible Weeds*, CRC Press 2001, p.150), <https://books.google.com/books?id=rVrteo-8c10C&pg=PA150#v=onepage&q&f=false>

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participated in the massacre of Highlanders after the Battle of Culloden in the 18th century. Ragwort is said to have sprung up in the north of Scotland where the duke went.⁷⁸

Witch (as in witchgrass, among others)

Historically, the idea of a "witch" has been associated overwhelmingly with women and, more often than not, a question of societal power and control. Some women have taken the term on as a symbol of female empowerment, but those who have been harmed by being labeled a "witch" tended to be those who did not choose to label themselves as such. Accusations of being a witch are still widespread today and can result in varying degrees of harm.⁷⁹

Yugoslav (specifically Yugoslav globe thistle, *Echinops bannaticus*)

This term is referring to Yugoslavia, a federation that no longer exists. It included Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (including the regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Slovenia.

⁷⁸ "Ragwort" (Plant-Lore website/blog), <https://www.plant-lore.com/ragwort/>

⁷⁹ "Women as witches: past, present and future" (Small Change blog, University of Queensland), <https://shorthand.uq.edu.au/small-change/women-as-witches/>. See also, "Most witches are women, because witch hunts were all about persecuting the powerless" (The Conversation), <https://theconversation.com/most-witches-are-women-because-witch-hunts-were-all-about-persecuting-the-powerless-125427>

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UNKNOWN ORIGINS

This section includes terms that had no clear information about the source of a common name. The lack of information means the project was unable to determine if the common name is problematic. As much information as could be gleaned is provided below. These names, for the most part, are designated a "?" under the "Issue" column of the corresponding *Data Resource Spreadsheet* and/or a "No Valid Information" under "Dismissal Reason" on the same document.

Black (as in black mimosa, among others)

This project could not determine a reason why "black" should be included in certain common names, most often due to lack of any black coloration on the plant.

Black Samson/Sampson (specifically *Echinacea angustifolia*)

This project was unable to identify the origins of this common name. The earliest reference to it (listed as *Echinacea purpurea*) in the Biodiversity Heritage Library (as of August 2021) is in an 1852 work describing medicinal plants of the United States, but the name is listed without an indication as to why it would be called such.⁸⁰ The mid-nineteenth century also saw visual depictions of a Black Samson, a un-white-washing of the biblical character that Dr. Nyasha Junior and Dr. Jeremy Schipper argue became an icon for race relations in the United States.⁸¹ More research is needed to discover what the connection is, if any, between the biblical character and this plant's common name.

Black titi (*Cyrillaceae* family)

This project was unable to identify to what the "black" in black titi (pronounced "tie-tie") is referring. It is possible that the "black" refers to the dark-colored honey that bees can make from *Cyrilla racemiflora*.⁸² More research is needed to confirm.

Blackfoot (specifically blackfoot sandmat, *Chamaesyce angusta*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. The plant's native range does not seem to overlap with the territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, and BRIT's Native American Ethnobotany Database does not have existing records of the plant's use. More research is needed to understand what this name means.

Blindeyes (specifically *Papaver dubium*)

This project was unable to determine the meaning of this common name.

⁸⁰ "*Echinacea purpurea*" (*A Synopsis; or, Systematic Catalogue of the Medicinal Plants of the United States* by A. Clapp 1852, p.114), <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/39087190>

⁸¹ "Black Samson: Dr. Nyasha Junior and Dr. Jeremy Schipper reflect on an overlooked icon" (The Dartmouth Review, Dartmouth College), <https://dartreview.com/black-samson-dr-junior-and-dr-schipper-reflect-on-an-overlooked-icon/>

⁸² "*Cyrilla racemiflora*" (North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox, NC State), <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/cyrilla-racemiflora/>

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Blow (specifically coral blow, *Russelia sarmentosa*)

This project was unable to determine the meaning of this common name. It is possible the term “blow” is a reference to the trumpet-shaped flowers of the plant.

Bullsuckers (specifically *Opuntia ochrocentra*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

Bushkiller (specifically *Causonis japonica*)

This project was unable to confirm the origins of this common name, but it likely comes from the invasive nature of the species in areas where it has been introduced to the US.⁸³

Cemetery (as in cemetery tree, cemetery plant)

This project was unable to determine the origin of these common names. The names are likely to be influenced by cultural beliefs and traditions associated with death, religion, and/or memorializing the passing of loved ones – which are not necessarily problematic topics.

Churchmouse (specifically churchmouse three-awm, *Aristida dichotoma*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. Churchmouse was flagged for its use as a way to refer to a poor person who allegedly has the proverbial qualities of a mouse.⁸⁴

Cocky (specifically cocky apple, *Planchonia careya*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is very possible that “cocky apple” is simply a shortened version of another of its common names, “cockatoo apple.” If so, then the name would be unrelated to the slang word for a male penis.

Coconut (as in upright coconut-scented geranium, *Pelargonium elongatum*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. *Pelargonium grossularioides*'s common name is coconut-scented geranium (named for its aroma), so one could speculate that this plant's common name comes from a combination of its relation to that plant and its own specific epithet.

Cracker (specifically cracker rose, *Rosa`Louis-Phillipe`)*

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. The rose cultivar was introduced in 1834 seems to be associated with south Florida.⁸⁵ It is unknown as to whether “cracker” is a reference to an impoverished white person.

Crow (crow-dipper, *Pinellia ternata*; crow barberry, *Berberis empetrifolia*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of these common names, and whether the use of ‘crow’ has any relation to Jim Crow or is being used to refer to Black people in a negative

⁸³ “Bushkiller” (University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture), <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W230.pdf>

⁸⁴ “Churchmouse” (Lexico.com), https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/church_mouse

⁸⁵ “‘Louise-Phillipe,’ Florida Cracker Rose” (Port St Lucie Botanical Gardens), <https://www.pslbg.org/florida-cracker-rose.html#:~:text=Introduced%20in%201834%2C%20Louis%2D,of%20the%20few%20crimson%20roses.>

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way. *Pinellia ternata's* native range being in Asia and *Berberis empetrifolia's* being in South America makes that use unlikely, but this is unconfirmed and more research is needed.

Death-angel (specifically *Justicia pectoralis*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is possible that it has to do with the name that local shamans have given to the plant, "leaves of the Angel of Death," but more research is needed to confirm.

Damned (specifically pull-and-be-damned, *Paspalum denticulatum*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of the common name "pull-and-be-damned." More research is needed as to why *Paspalum denticulatum* is called such.

Demon (as in demon pepper, *Capsicum chinense* 'Bhut Jolokia')

This project was unable to confirm the origins of this common name, but there are a few likely possibilities. The Assamese name, which translates to "poison chili," lends its name to the "poison pepper" common name; it is not a far stretch from there to "demon pepper," demon being a relatively widespread concept associated with harm and poison being something that causes it. The better-known common name for this plant is "ghost pepper," which comes from a mis-translation of "bhüt jolokia". Nonetheless, the association of "ghost" with "demon" is likewise not a far stretch. More research is needed to confirm exactly why "demon pepper" is one of the plant's common names.

Dingleberry (specifically *Vaccinium erythrocarpum*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is possible it stems from "dangleberry," as the plant's flowers do dangle and it produces berries. More research is needed to confirm that it is unrelated to the slang term for someone who is inept.

Drug (specifically drug snowbell, *Styrax redivides*)

This project could not identify any obvious medicinal uses for this plant.⁸⁶

Finger of God (specifically finger of God, *Aechmea orlandiana*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. The plant is native to the Brazilian state Espírito Santo, which translates to Holy Spirit – there could be a connection between the common name and the location that references another aspect of the Christian Holy Trinity. More research is needed to confirm.

Fire (specifically fire reedgrass, *Calamagrostis koelerioides*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

Gun (specifically pop-a-gun, *Cecropia peltate*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

⁸⁶ "Styrax" (*Pacific Horticulture* magazine), <https://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/styrax/>

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Heart of Jesus (specifically *Caladium* genus)

This project was unable to confirm the origin of this common name. "Heart" is describing the shape and coloration of the leaves, but there is no information on why it is called "heart of Jesus" specifically. More research is needed to understand the full common name of this plant.

Idiot (specifically idiot grass, *Oplismenus africanus*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name, or find a definition of "idiot" that is not offensive.

Jew's apple (specifically *Solanum melongena*)

This project was unable to confirm the origins of this common name. It is possible it stems from use by Sephardic Jews in the 17th or 18th century, or the fact that the eggplant familiar today may have brought to England by them.⁸⁷ More research is needed to confirm.

Jew's mallow (specifically *Corchorus olitorius* or *Kerria japonica*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is possible that *C. olitorius* is so named because of a morphing of "jute" mallow, or from its use in Jewish foods. More research is needed.

Joint (specifically jointhead grass, *Arthraxon hispidus*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It may have to do with the plant's physical appearance, and not a reference to any drug. More research is needed to confirm.

Lady's/woman's tobacco (specifically *Antennaria plantaginifolia*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is possible that the gendered language is referring to the unusual flowers (implying flowers are feminine enough to designate this so-called "tobacco" for women), or perhaps the tendency of the flowers to be showier on female plants. More research is needed.

Loveyanus (specifically loveyanus thyme, *Thymus glabrescens*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

Marijuana (specifically *Cannabis* genus)

This project was unable to confirm the origin of this common name. It seems that the term "marijuana" (including alternate spellings like "marihuana") was not recorded as referencing a *Cannabis* plant until around 1900. It is possible the word came from a Chinese term for hemp and arrived in Mexico alongside Chinese laborers. It is also possible that the term was a loan word from a native South American language into Mexican Spanish, or came from a Bantu word that arrived in Brazil with enslaved Africans. There is speculation that the term was later

⁸⁷ "How Israel Became the Promised Land of Eggplant" (Forward), <https://forward.com/culture/140510/how-israel-became-the-promised-land-of-eggplant/>

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used in the US post-1900 to emphasize an association of the drug with Mexican or Indian immigrants (along the lines of "reefer madness").⁸⁸ More research is needed to confirm.

Old Maid (specifically *Catharanthus roseus*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. The term "old maid" in general is offensive and gendered language.

Pussyleaf (specifically *Nelsonia canescens*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is potentially referencing the plant's leaves, which are soft and velvety like a cat.

Robber (specifically robber fern, *Pyrrosia confluens*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of the common name "robber fern." The plant was named by a man named Robert, so it is possible that the term "robber" here is related to the name "Robert." More research is needed.

Sleepydick (specifically *Ornithogalum umbellatum*)

This project was unable to determine the origins of this common name. An alternative common name is "nap-at-noon" which may have informed "sleepy," but there is no obvious reason for the slang reference to the male sexual organ. Furthermore, the name "nap-at-noon" more likely refers to the flowers that open around noon and close before sunset, and less likely refers to an association with naps or sleeping.

Suicide (specifically suicide palm, *Tahina spectabilis*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of the common name "suicide palm." It could possibly stem from the palm's glorious flowering that occurs all at once just prior to the plant dying.⁸⁹ More research is needed.

Teat (specifically sow-teat blackberry)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

Toadshade (specifically *Trillium* genus)

This project was unable to confirm this common name's origins. One could reasonably speculate, however, that the name comes from the umbrella-like physical appearance and the plant's presence in moist soils – in theory, where it could shade an actual toad. It is unlikely, but not confirmed, that the presence of "toad" in this common name is being used in a derogatory manner as described in our sources.

⁸⁸ "The Mysterious History of 'Marijuana'" (Code Switch, NPR),

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/07/14/201981025/the-mysterious-history-of-marijuana>. See also, "The Mysterious Origins of the Word 'Marihuana'" (*Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 153), http://www.sino-platonic.org/complete/spp153_marijuana.pdf

⁸⁹ "Featured Palm: *Tahina spectabilis*" (The Merwin Conservancy), <https://merwinconservancy.org/2015/11/featured-palm-tahina-spectabilis/>

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Virginal (specifically virginal lily, *Lilium speciosum* var. *album*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It might be related to the white color of the lily, as white is often associated with virginity.

Vomit (specifically vomitbush, *Atamisquea emarginata*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name.

Yellowdicks (specifically *Helenium amarum*)

This project was unable to determine the origin of this common name. It is almost certainly related to the yellow color of the plant's flowers.

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GEOGRAPHIC MISATTRIBUTIONS

The list of geographic descriptors listed below appear in plant names with native ranges un-related to the descriptor. Native ranges were determined using Kew's Plants of the World Online and cross-referenced with countries as they exist as of August 2021. Plants that had even the slightest overlap with their geographic descriptor were dismissed from consideration – only those descriptors unrelated to the native range of the plant are listed below. On the *Data Resource Spreadsheet (Appendix D)*, the "mis-attributed" plants can be filtered by selecting "Geographic" for the "Issue" column.

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| African | Indian River |
| Arabian ⁹⁰ | Indies |
| American | Japanese |
| Asian | Lebanon |
| Australia | Mexican |
| Boston | Nile |
| Brazilian | Pakistan |
| Canada | Persian |
| Caribbean | Scottish ⁹¹ |
| China | Spanish |
| Chinese | Swedish |
| Egyptian | Tahitian |
| European | Thai |
| German | Turkey/Turkish |
| Guinea | Virginia |
| India | West Africa |
| Indian | |

⁹⁰ as in, Arabian Peninsula

⁹¹ note that the term "Scotch" can be considered offensive when not referring specifically to the drink

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EXCLUSIVELY CULTIVAR or TRADEMARKED WORDS

Some common names were flagged because cultivar or trademarked names were included in the common name. Cultivars and trademarks are not considered common names and are thus outside the scope of this project. As such, these terms were not investigated further and their contexts, for the most part, are unknown. These names can be filtered by selecting "YES" for the "Cultivar" column on the *Data Resource Spreadsheet (Appendix D)*.

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Ann | Donger | Killer | Semieole |
| Asian garden | Escort | Kinky | Sexy |
| Babe | Exotic Emperor | Liberal | Shogun |
| Black jack | Fat | Limey | Skippy |
| Bomb | Gay | Lucifer | Spitfire |
| Bombshell | God | Mad Hatter | Spook |
| Boomer | Guido | Midget | Swallow |
| Boonies | Honky tonk | Momo | Taboo |
| Brownie | Hillbilly | Mulatto | Tecumseh |
| Bule | Homestead | Nightrider | Titty |
| Butt | Hopi | Nymph | Tonto |
| Charlie | Hot blonde | Tongue- lashing | Uncle Tom |
| Cheesehead | Hummer | Papoose | Whiskey Rebellion |
| Cherokee | Indian chief | Peeping Tom | X-rated |
| Chinatown | Itch | Pixie Vamp | Yankee |
| Choctaw | Jade | Pocahontas | Yankeedoodle |
| Church | Jimmy crack corn | Redskin | Yellow |
| Colonial | Kalia | Sacajawea | Zip |
| Disraeli | | Satan | |

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JUDGMENT CALLS

Below are details about when the project leaders overrode the presence of a flagged term as offensive. Additional information about the dismissal or retention of a flagged name from the final resource can be found in the *Data Resource Spreadsheet (Report Appendix D)*.

Blind: when some physical aspect of the plant can cause blindness, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: If a plant can lead to blindness in some way, then the term "blind" is a justifiable descriptor.

Cancer: when referring to plants involved in the treatment of cancer, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: If a plant is involved in the treatment of cancer then "cancer" is a justifiable descriptor.

Chain-shaped: when used to describe *Bulbophyllum*, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: The term is referencing the daisy-chain flower shape so is a justifiable descriptor.

Charlie: when referencing a plant that is neither native nor introduced to Vietnam, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: "Charlie" is offensive in the context of its use as military slang for the Viet Cong, but is otherwise a name used widely.

Chin: when a plant had no apparent connection to China or Chinese people but did resemble a person's chin, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: "Chin" is a derogatory shortening of "Chinese"; when not used in this sense then it is likely referring to a facial feature that most people will have.

Christ-thorn/Christ's thorn: when referring to a plant with a botanical name that included "spina-cristi" or "spina-christi," the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: It is outside the scope of this project to consider botanical names, and "spina-christi" and "spina-cristi" is botanical Latin meaning "Spines (thorns) of Christ."

Creamy: when referring to a plant that is NOT associated with Australian Aboriginal people and is referring to a plant's color, the flag was dismissed under "Coloration."

Justification: The term is a derogatory way to label someone of Australian Aboriginal and white descent, but is otherwise a common way to describe an off-white color that is not offensive when not applied to a person.

Crucifix: when referring to crucifix orchids (*Epidendrum radicans*), the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: the plant literally resembles a crucifix, and is therefore a justifiable descriptor.

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Dead: when used to describe the appearance of a plant, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: Death is a universal (albeit sad) concept, so its use was not deemed un-inclusive.

Death: when used to describe poisonous plants, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: Death is a universal (albeit sad) concept, and its use for poisonous plants is a justifiable descriptor.

Devil: when used to describe a plant that is poisonous or physically harmful, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description." AND when the botanical name had a word derived from a Latin term relating to "devil," the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: The idea of the devil is a rather universal concept associated with negativity or harm, so its use to describe deadly or harmful plants is therefore justifiable. AND it is outside the scope of this project to address botanical naming practices.

Dildo: when referencing a plant that physical resembles a dildo, the flag was dismissed under "Physical description."

Justification: Dildos are inanimate objects that are not illegal in the US or Canada, so the use of the term to describe plants that strongly resemble a dildo seems justifiable.

Drug: when referring to a medicinal plant or a plant with a history of use in herbalism, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: A drug can be medicine as well as a controlled substance, and use in the case of the former is justifiable.

Dwarf: when used to describe a plant's habit, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: The term "dwarf" is not a derogatory way to refer to someone with dwarfism, according to Respectability.org's inclusion toolkit on dwarfism.

Erect: when referencing an upright plant, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: The term is commonly used in botanical Latin and habit descriptions, and is unlikely referencing anything overtly sexual.

Fairy or pixie: These flags were dismissed under "Research."

Justification: Stories of fairies and pixies existed well before the term was applied to homosexuality in an offensive way.

Fight/Fighter: when referencing a plant that is strong, persists through poor growing conditions, or used to combat disease, the flag was dismissed under "Research" or "Physical Description."

Justification: Positive uses of the term – associated with resilience and not violence – were deemed un-problematic descriptors.

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Fire: when referring to a plant with red/yellow/orange/gold/bronze coloration, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: The colors associated with fire are well-known and were deemed un-problematic descriptors.

Gayfeather: when referring to the genus *Liatris*, the flag was dismissed under "Research" or "Physical Description."

Justification: the name's origin comes from a combination of "gay" and "feather" to describe the plant's flowers, and was named when the term "gay" meant "carefree" or "bright and showy," prior to its association with homosexuality.

Hooker: when referring to Joseph Dalton Hooker or his son, William Jackson Hook, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: the term is referencing a name, not a sex worker – see Discussion section of Project Report for details as to why it was deemed outside the scope of this project to take on botanical names stemming from historical figures

kraut: when used in lower-case and as a compound noun to refer to an herb, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: the capitalized version used to refer to a German person is offensive, but the term's use in lowercase in compound nouns is a common way of denoting an herb

Lady of the Night: when used to describe plants that are active in the evening (in some way, be it blooming or emitting fragrance), the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: The term is not listed as an offensive way to refer to a sex worker according to the Global Network of Sex Work Projects.

Mango: when referring to a plant with coloration similar to that of a mango AND no apparent relationship to Hawaii or the strain of Cannabis known as "Mango Tango," the flag was dismissed under "Coloration."

Justification: Mango is a well-known fruit with distinct coloration, and the term is only deemed offensive when used to describe a Hawaiian person.

Naked: when referring to flowers on leafless stems/trunks, or a species with fewer or no leaves as compared to other species in the genus, AND not associated with a specific gender, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: Naked is a common description for these cases and this project could find no derogatory use of the term.

Non-English names: when a flag came from a common name in a language other than English, it was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: It is outside the scope of this project to consider common names outside of the English language.

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Nymph: when referencing Greek mythology and/or the natural habitat of the plant and NOT referring to a hypersexualized being, the flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: Nymphs are significant actors in Greek mythology and known for their association with natural features.

Pansy: when referencing the flower, *Viola*, the flag was dismissed under "Research"

Justification: The name for the flower comes from a French word for "thought" and only later did it come to refer to homosexuality.

Pussytoes: when referencing the genus *Antennaria*, the flag was dismissed under "Physical Description."

Justification: "Pussy" in this case refers to a cat, as the plant resembles the pads and toes of a cat.

Sweetness: this flag was dismissed under "Research."

Justification: This project could find no inappropriate or negative connotation for the term, and is unsure how it made it onto the Carnegie-Mellon list.

Whiskey: when not used in conjunction with "tango" or "rebellion," the flag was dismissed under "Partial."

Justification: This project could find no inappropriate or negative connotation for the term on its own ("whiskey tango" has a history of being a racial slur), and is unsure how it made it onto the Carnegie-Mellon list.

Yellow: when referring to the color of a plant NOT associated with Asian peoples, the flag was dismissed under "Coloration."

Justification: the term is used offensively to refer to a stereotype for the skin color of Asian peoples, but is otherwise a common description for yellow and yellow-ish plants

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