

# DERIVATION OF SOME SCIENTIFIC NAMES

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[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [Z](#)

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## A

- abies** The ancient Latin name for the European fir.
- acacia** From the Greek *akakia*, the Egyptian thorn-tree; *akis*, a thorn.
- acer** From the Celtic *ac*, hard; a quality of maple wood.
- aesculus** The ancient name for some European nut-bearing tree.
- alba** From the Latin *alba*, white.
- albicaulis** From the Latin *alba*, white, and *caulis*, stem (i.e., white-bark).
- alnus** From the old Latin name for the alder.
- alternifolia** Referring to the alternate leaves (Greek *phullon*, leaf) of *Cornus alternifolia*
- altissima** From the Latin *altus*, high, referring to height.
- amabilis** From the Latin *amare* to love, or lovely.
- aristata** From the Latin *arista*, bristle or thorn.
- aucuparia** From the Latin *aucupari*, to catch birds. In Europe, mountain ash fruits were used as bait in catching birds.
- avium** From the Latin *avis*, bird.
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## B

- banksiana** From the surname Banks.
- betula** The common Latin name of the birch; from the sanskrit *bhurja*, to shine, referring to the bark of the birch.
- bicolor** From the Latin, meaning two-colored, in reference to the leaves of swamp white oak which are green above and pale below.
- borealis** From Boreas, the Greek god of the north wind.
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## C

<b>carpinus</b>	The Latin common name for the European hornbeam.
<b>carya</b>	From the Greek <i>karua</i> , the name applied to the walnut tree.
<b>castanea</b>	From the Greek <i>kastanea</i> , or chestnut.
<b>castanopsis</b>	Meaning chestnut-like.
<b>catalpa</b>	From the Cherokee Indian name <i>catawba</i> , applied to this tree.
<b>celtis</b>	The name which Pliny gave to the African lotus, and later applied to the hackberry genus because of the sweet fruit of the European hackberry.
<b>cembroides</b>	Cembra-like (resembles <i>Pinus cembra</i> of Europe).
<b>chamaecyparis</b>	From the Greek <i>chamai</i> , on the ground, and <i>kyparissos</i> , the cypress, meaning low-growing.
<b>chrysophylla</b>	From the Greek <i>chrysos</i> , golden, and <i>phyllon</i> , leaf.
<b>cinerea</b>	From the Latin <i>cineris</i> , dust, or ashes, in reference to the pale gray color of the bark of butternut.
<b>cladrastus</b>	From the Greek <i>clados</i> , branch, and <i>thraustos</i> , brittle.
<b>coccinea</b>	From the Greek <i>kakkos</i> , in an obscure reference to the red fall color of scarlet oak.
<b>communis</b>	From the Latin, meaning common, or as applied to <i>Juniperus communis</i> , in reference to its wide distribution.
<b>concolor</b>	A combination of the Latin <i>con</i> , together, and <i>color</i> , meaning one color.
<b>contorta</b>	From the Latin <i>con</i> and <i>torquere</i> , to twist.
<b>cordiformis</b>	From the Latin <i>cor</i> , <i>cordis</i> , heart, and <i>forma</i> , shaped, in reference perhaps to the shape of fruit of bitternut hickory.
<b>cornus</b>	The Latin name for the dogwood, from <i>cornu</i> , horn, in reference to the hard wood of this genus.
<b>crataegus</b>	From the Latin name for the hawthorn, through the Greek <i>krataigos</i> , thorn-tree, and <i>kratos</i> , strength, because of the strong hard wood.

## D

<b>decidua</b>	From the Latin <i>de</i> , down, and <i>cadere</i> , to fall.
<b>dioicus</b>	Meaning two houses, in reference to dioecious.
<b>distichum</b>	From the Greek <i>di</i> , two, and <i>stichos</i> , rank, meaning two-ranked.

## E

**echinata** Meaning prickly, referring to the cone.

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## F

**fagus** From the Greek *fagein*, to eat, in reference to the edible fruit.

**florida** From the Latin *flos*, flower.

**fraxinus** The Latin common name of the ash.

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## G

**gleditsia** Named after J. G. Gleditsch, a German botanist of the time of Linnaeus.

**gymnocladus** From the Greek *gymnos*, naked, and *klados*, branch.

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## H

**hamamelis** From the Greek name for the medlar, or some similar tree.

**heterophylla** From the Greek *heteros*, different, and *phyllon*, leaf, meaning varied leaves.

**hippocastanum** The Latin common name for the horsechestnut tree, from the Greek *hippos*, horse, and *kastanon*, chestnut.

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## I

**ilex** The Latin name for the holly oak.

**ilicifolia** Meaning holly-like leaf.

**imbricaria** Meaning covered with overlapping plates or scales.

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# J

- juglans** From the two Latin words *Jovis*, Jupiter, and *glans*, nut.
- juniperus** The Latin common name for the cedar, from *junio*, young, and *parere*, to produce, hence youth producing, or evergreen.
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# L

- laciniosa** From the Latin *lacinia*, shred.
- laricina** Pertaining to the larch.
- larix** The Latin common name for the larch.
- lenta** From the Latin *lentis*, soft or smooth, pliable; in reference perhaps to the supple branchlets of the black birch.
- liquidamber** In reference to the resinous juice that flows from wounds to the sweetgum.
- liriodendron** From the Greek *lerion*, lily, and *dendron*, tree, in reference to showy flowers.
- lithocarpus** From the Greek *lithos*, stone, and *karpos*, seed.
- lyrata** From the Greek *lyra*, lyre or lute.
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# M

- macrocarpa** From the Greek *makros*, large, and *karpos*, seed, in reference to the large acorn of bur oak.
- malus** From the Latin name for the apple, from the Greek *melon*, through the Doric *malon*.
- mariana** From the Latin for the state of Maryland.
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# N

- negundo** The Latinized form of the Malayan name for *Vitex negundo*; presumably applied to the boxelder because of the similarity of the leaves of the two species.
- nigra** The Latin for dark or black.

**nyssa** From the Greek *nysa*, water nymph.

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## O

**occidentalis** The Latin for west, from *occidere*, to set as the sun; the name given by Linnaeus to several species of the western world.

**octandra** The latin for eight stamened.

**opaca** The Latin for dark, dull, or shady

**ostrya** From the Greek *ostrua*, the common name of some tree with hard wood.

**ovata** From the Latin *ovum*, egg, hence egg-shaped.

**oxydendron** From the Greek *oxys*, sour, and *dendron*, tree.

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## P

**plaustris** The Latin meaning "of the swamp," from *palus*, swamp.

**papyrifera** From the Egyptian name for the reed from which paper was made, through the Greek *papuros*, or *papyros*, and the Latin *ferre*, to bear.

**phellos** The Greek word for cork.

**picea** The Latin common name for the pine, spruce, or fir, from the Greek *pissa*, pitch, or *peuke*, the name for the fir.

**pinus** The Latin name for the pine, from the Sanskrit *pitu*, through the Greek *pitus*.

**platanus** The Latin common name for the sycamore, or plantetree, from the Greek *platanos*, broad.

**plicata** From the Latin *plicare*, to fold, referring perhaps to overlapping foliage.

**pomifera** The Latin for apple-bearing.

**ponderosa** From the Latin *pondus*, weight.

**populas** The Latin common name for this group of trees.

**prinus** From the Greek for evergreen.

**procera** The Latin for tall, or high.

**prunus** From the Greek *prunos*, plum or cherry.

**pseudoacacia** From the Greek *pseudo*, false, and acacia.

**pseudotsuga** Meaning false hemlock.

**pungens** From the Latin *pungere*, to stick or prick, hence either prickly or pungent; in reference to the needles of blue spruce which are sharp-pointed and have a pungent taste.

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## Q

**quercus** The Latin common name of the oak.

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## R

**rhamnus** From the Greek *rhamnos*, the common name of the buckthorn.

**rhododendron** From the Greek *rodon*, rose, and *dendron*, tree.

**rhus** From *rhous*, the Greek common name of the sumac through the Greek *reo*, to flow.

**robinia** Named after Jean and Vespasien Robin, herbalists for King Henry IV of France.

**rubens** From the Latin *rubere*, to be red.

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## S

**saccharinum** Considered by some to be a misspelling of *saccharum*.

**saccharum** The Latin word for sweet or sugar, through the Sanskrit *sarkara*, and the Greek *sakcharon*.

**salix** The ancient Latin common name of the willow.

**sempervivons** From the Latin *semper*, always, and *vivere*, living.

**serotina** From the Latin *serus*, late, in reference to the tardily opening cones of pond pine, the autumn flowering of the red elm, and the late appearance of flowers and fruit in black cherry.

**sitchensis** The Latin form of Sitka, and island in Alaska.

**sorbus** The Latin common name for this genus.

**speciosa** From the Latin *species*, form, or appearance, and *osus*, full of, in reference to the showy flowers of the catalpa.

**spicatum** From the Latin *spica*, a spike or ear of grain, in reference to the pointed

	inflorescence of mountain maple.
<b>stellata</b>	The Latin for covered with stars.
<b>strobus</b>	From the Greek <i>strobos</i> , or <i>strobilos</i> , cone.
<b>styraciflua</b>	The Latin for styrax-flowering.
<b>sylvestris</b>	(Also <i>sylvatica</i> ) from the Latin <i>silva</i> , forest, hence "of the forest."

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## T

<b>teada</b>	The Latin word meaning a torch of pine wood.
<b>taxus</b>	From the Greek <i>taxos</i> , common name of the yew.
<b>thuja</b>	From the Greek <i>thuia</i> , the common name of some aromatic African tree; from <i>thuo</i> , perfume.
<b>tilia</b>	The Latin common name of the linden (basswood).
<b>toxicodendron</b>	From the Greek <i>toxikon</i> , poison, and <i>dendron</i> , tree.
<b>tricanthos</b>	From the Greek <i>treis</i> , three, and <i>akantha</i> , a spine, in reference to the three-branched thorns of honeylocust.
<b>trichocarpa</b>	From the Greek <i>thrix</i> , a hair, and <i>karpos</i> , fruit (hairy fruit).
<b>tsuga</b>	The Latinized form of the Japanese common name of a hemlock.
<b>tulipifera</b>	Meaning tulip-bearing.
<b>typhina</b>	Meaning "cat-tail-like," in reference perhaps to the hairy branchlets of staghorn sumac.

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## U

<b>ulmus</b>	The ancient Latin name of the elm.
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## V

<b>velutina</b>	From the Latin <i>velutum</i> , velvety, and <i>velus</i> , a fleece.
<b>vernix</b>	The Latin for varnish.

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# Z

**zanthoxylum** From the Greek *zanthos*, yellow, and *xulon*, wood.