

Latin for Gardeners

Some basics:

Vowels are long in a stressed syllable, i.e., Acer – AY-ser; Pinus – PIE-nus; Verbena – ver-BEE-nuh. Otherwise they are short. Diphthongs (two vowels sounded as one) are pronounced as follows: ae sounds like ee (sometimes ay), au as aw in shawl, eu as u in hue, and oi as oy in boy.

All syllables are pronounced. End each syllable in a vowel unless there are two consonants together after the vowel. In this case, split the consonants up.

Eg: Rudbeckia > rud-**bec**-ki-a, pronounced rood-BEK-ee-uh; or, Miscanthus sinensis > mis-can-thus si-nen-sis, pronounced miss-CAN-thus seye-NEN-siss.

In 2-syllable words it is always the first syllable, i.e., Cornus = KOR-nus. In most other words stress the syllable BEFORE the last syllable, i.e., Clerodendrum quadriloculare = klay-ro-DEN-drum kwad-rih-lo-cue-LAR-ee. If the last syllable consists of two vowels or seems naturally short, stress the THIRD to last syllable, i.e., Buddleia = BUD-lee-uh, Campanula = kam-PA-nu-la.

The capitalized syllable is always stressed. If there is no capitalized syllable, the stress falls on the syllable BEFORE the ending:

- acea, acia = AY-shee-uh;
- Echinacea = ek-in- AY-shee-uh;
- purpurea = pur-PUR-ee-uh
- are = AR-ee
- vulgare = vul-GAR-ee
- atum, -iatum, -ata = AY-tum, ee-AY-tum, -AY-tuh
- perfoliatum = purr-fo-lee-AY-tum
- ensis = EN-sis; pratensis = pruh-TEN-sis
- ii, ei, yi = ee-eye
- Buddleia davidii = BUD-lee-uh duh-VID-ee-eye
- ianus = ee-AY-nus
- virginianus = ver-gin-ee-AY-nus
- iana = ee-AN-uh; virginiana = ver-gin-ee-AN-uh
- icus = ih-kus; japonicus = jap-ON-ih-kus
- iosum, -iosa – ee-OH-sum, ee-OH-suh; tormentosum = tor-men- TOH-sum
- ius = ee-us; angustifolius = ahn-gus-tih-FOL-ee-us
- oides = OY-deez; asteroides = as-ter-OY-deez
- ua = yew-uh; decidua = dih-SID-yew-uh
- uum = yew-um
- annum = ANN-yew-um

Some Latin botanical terms:

- **Acuminatus** - having a sharply-pointed feature.
- **Alba** - white.
- **Albo maculata** - white spots.
- **Albo marginata** - white edged.
- **Albo striata** - white striped.
- **Alpinus** - dwarf plant.
- **Alt** - old.
- **Altissimus** - tall compared to other species.
- **Atro-** - dark-colored.
- **Atrosanguinea** - dark or bloodish-red.
- **Atrovirens** - dark or blackish-green.
- **Aurantiaca** - orange.
- **Aurea** - gold.
- **Azurea** - blue.
- **Basilicum** - royal or princely.
- **Caerulea** - deep blue.
- **Canadensus** - Canada.
- **Chinensis** - China.
- **Communis** - common.
- **Confertiflorus** - crowded flowers.
- **Confuscus** - easily mistaken.
- **Coreanus** - Korea.
- **Etruscus** - Tuscany.
- **Geminiflorus** - flowers arranged in pairs.
- **Griseum** - gray.
- **Hererifolius** - ivy-shaped leaves.
- **Humilis** - low growing.
- **Japonica** - Japan
- **Lateriflorus** - flowering on the side.
- **Longifolia** - long leaves.
- **Lutea** - yellow.
- **Maculata** - spotted.
- **Millefolium** - thousand leaves
- **Mollis** - soft.
- **Montana** - from the mountains.
- **Nana** - dwarf.
- **Nigra** - black.
- **Nudiflorus** - leaves come out after the flowers.
- **Officinalis** - the plant was originally used medicinally.
- **Palustris** - from the marshes.
- **Parvifolia** - small leaves.
- **Pictum** - painted.
- **Pudicus** - bashful.
- **Punctata** - spotted.
- **Purpurea** - purple.
- **Repens** - creeping.
- **Rotundifolia** - round leaves.
- **Rubra** - red.
- **Sanquinea** - blood red.
- **Scandens** - climbing.
- **Semperflorens** - ever blooming.
- **Sempervirens** - evergreen.
- **Vulgaris** - common.