

Summary of ICNCP rules and guidelines for grex and cultivar epithets

The names of cultivated plants are governed by the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (9th ed., Brickell *et al.*, 2016). A summary of the main points is included below to assist those who need to create new names for registration or publication. Note that the ICNCP now supersedes the 4th edition (1993) of the *Handbook on Orchid Nomenclature and Registration*.

Basic rules

Epithets must:

- always start with a capital letter, unless linguistic custom demands otherwise or the epithet begins with a numeral, e.g. 100th Battalion.
- not exceed 30 characters. There is no maximum number of words or syllables.
- not consist solely of a single letter or solely of numbers, but may include a number, e.g. Super 5 is acceptable.
- not be solely a Latin word or words unless in common usage, e.g. Aurora Borealis, T. Rex or Lignum Vitae are acceptable.
- not repeat the genus, e.g. a hybrid *Disa* named for a person called Penelope Disa Krige was registered as *Disa* Penelope D. Krige in order to avoid repetition of *Disa*.
- not exaggerate the merits of the plant, e.g. Best of All or Longest Possible would not be permitted.

Epithets may:

- include initials when derived from a person's name, e.g. H.P. Norton.
- be based on the name of a living person, if used with their consent.
- include the apostrophe ('), the comma (,), up to two non-adjacent exclamation marks (!), the period or full stop (.), or the hyphen (-), forward slash (/) or backslash (\) symbols, but may not include other punctuation marks, symbols or fractions. For example, Million Dollars is acceptable, but \$1,000,000 or \$Million is not. Similarly, Half Pint is acceptable but ½ Pint is not.
- be a novel invention, e.g. Taisuco, and do not have to consist of existing words.
- not contain the words cultivar, form, grex, group, hybrid, maintenance, mixture, selection, sport, series, strain, variety, improved or transformed.

Recommendations, in addition to above rules

It is recommended that epithets should:

- be as short as is practical.
- not be broad descriptive terms such as Yellow or Large White.
- not be misleading, e.g. Richard's Orange for a blue-flowered plant raised by someone called June.
- not cause offence.

Repetition of epithets

An epithet should not be repeated within a denomination class. For grexes this means they must not be repeated within a genus.

For orchid cultivars, the epithet must not be repeated within a species or grex. This contrasts with cultivars in non-orchid families which should not be repeated in a genus.

Where a cultivar epithet is unavoidably repeated within a genus, the grex or species epithet must be cited with the cultivar epithet as part of the name. For example, the two different cultivars named 'L. Sander' in *Odontoglossum* should be cited as *Odontoglossum crispum* 'L. Sander' and *Odontoglossum Ardentissimum* 'L. Sander', not *Odontoglossum* 'L. Sander', which is ambiguous.

Where a cultivar epithet is unavoidably repeated within a grex or species, or a grex epithet is repeated within a genus or selected breeding group, then the duplicated epithets may be distinguished by adding the year of establishment or name of the originator or registrant in parentheses. For example, the two different cultivars named 'Purpurea' in *Miltoniopsis vexillaria* should be cited as *Miltoniopsis vexillaria* 'Purpurea' (1885) and *Miltoniopsis vexillaria* 'Purpurea' (1889). Interestingly, the 1889 epithet was originally published as 'Purpureum', possibly to avoid confusion. However, the cultivar epithet must agree

with the gender of the genus and has to be changed to 'Purpurea'. The two different grexes named Amoena in *Cattleya*, which are *Cattleya loddigesii* × *Cattleya perrinii* and *Cattleya wallisii* × *Cattleya harpophylla*, should be cited as *Cattleya Amoena* (1887) and *Cattleya Amoena* (1902).

The use and establishment of Groups within a grex

A Group may be established within an existing grex to provide a name for a remake of a grex. This would be where the parents of the hybrid are insufficiently different to qualify for registration as a new grex, such as a remake of a *Paphiopedilum glanduliferum* hybrid using *Paphiopedilum glanduliferum* var. *praestans* instead of var. *glanduliferum*. For example, *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Marie Lemon Stick was established for the progeny of *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Young Kong 'Sun' × *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Erin Kobayashi 'Lahaina Gold'. Some time later the grex was remake using an unnamed clone of *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Young Kong grex and *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Erin Kobayashi 'Amy Chen' as pollen parent. The resultant seedlings produced dark green flowers with a red and lavender lip and were named Francis Suzuki Group to distinguish them from the original version of Marie Lemon Stick grex. The name of this resulting Group population or segregate within the grex should be written *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Marie Lemon Stick gx (or grex) Francis Suzuki Gp (or Group) and a cultivar or clonal epithet may be added to distinguish an individual within the population.

A grex may contain any number of Groups, but these Groups must be defined by description, and not just parentage as for a grex.

A Group name may be established for a reciprocal cross where it is desirable for it to be distinguished by name.

A Group may also be established for any assemblage of individuals within a grex with characters in common, e.g. flower colour, variegation or flowering time.

Reference

Brickell, C.D. *et al.* (2016) International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants. 9th edition. *Scripta Horticulturae* 18. International Society for Horticultural Science, Belgium.