

Registering a Gesneriad Hybrid

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I have read through the official codes and have tried to summarize below the most important issues to be considered when registering a hybrid. The really most important thing is that too few of the plants submitted for registration have been grown long enough to meet the requirements of Article 2 below, which may be why so many of them seem to disappear from cultivation sometimes by the time their registration has been published.

From the 7th (2002) edition of The International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants: "Acceptance of a name by an International Cultivar Registration Authority does not imply judgement on the distinctiveness of a cultivar nor on its agricultural, horticultural or silvicultural merit".

From the 1995 and 2002 editions: Article 2:

A cultivar is the basic taxon of cultivated plants. It has been selected for a particular attribute, or combination of attributes, that is clearly distinct, uniform and stable in its characteristics and that, when propagated by appropriate means, retains those characteristics. Be sure that your plant is uniform and stable and that it is really worth naming. There is not much point in naming a cultivar if it doesn't offer some improvement over existing cultivars.

1. Make sure your proposed epithet is unique.
2. Make sure that your epithet cannot be confused either in spelling or pronunciation with another existing one, like 'Susanna' could be confused with 'Suzanna'.
3. Make sure your epithet could not be interpreted as being likely to exaggerate the merits of the cultivar ('Best Ever', 'The Greatest' or 'Tastiest of All' are not acceptable for obvious reasons.
4. A cultivar name should be as short as practical and should not consist of or contain excessively long words that may be difficult to write or pronounce. Names should consist of no more than 10 syllables and no more than 30 characters, excluding spaces and the single quotation marks.
5. Names should not consist solely of simple descriptive words like 'Red', 'Giant White' or 'Small'.
6. Cultivar epithet may not contain the words "form", "variety", "cultivar", "grex", "group", "hybrid", "sport", "series", "selection", or "strain", or the words "improved" or "transformed" or their equivalents in any language.
7. Cultivar names may only use the following punctuation marks: the apostrophe ('), the comma (,), a single exclamation mark (!), the period (.), the hyphen (-), the forward slash (/) or the backward slash (\) symbols. The epithets 'Jeanne d'Arc', 'Oh Boy!' and 'Go-go Dancer' are acceptable, but 'Help!!!' and 'Simon Who?' are not.
8. If your epithet is a single word, make sure that the word is not the same as a genus whether in botanical Latin or in a modern language. Erica, Iris, Daphne, Veronica are names of genera, and not permitted even though they are also feminine names. They may be used if they are not the last word of the epithet. 'Erica Smith' or 'Rose Queen' are acceptable.

