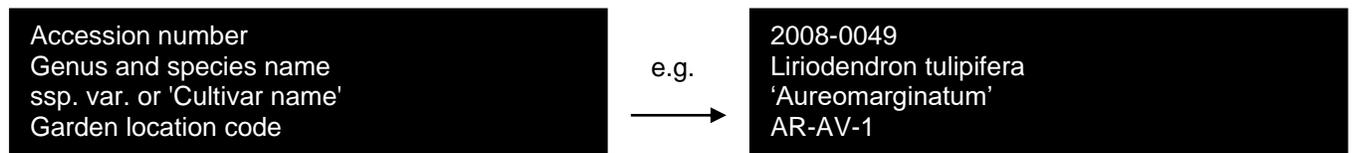


How to read Plant Tags and Labels

Plant tags and labels are the key component in linking the information held in the plant records to the actual living specimen located within the garden. As a result, most plants at RBG have a dual labelling system to ensure that if one label goes missing the second is still available for correctly identifying and locating plants within the collections. If a label does go missing it is replaced as soon as is possible.

Plant tags (or Primary Labels)

A plant tag is a small aluminium strip bearing the accession number* and botanical name (and sometimes garden location code). These are attached to woody plants using vinyl-coated wire. The tag remains fixed to the plant as it moves around the garden from propagation to various planting sites in our garden areas. With perennial plants a similar system is used but the tag is attached to a wire stake. Tags read as follows

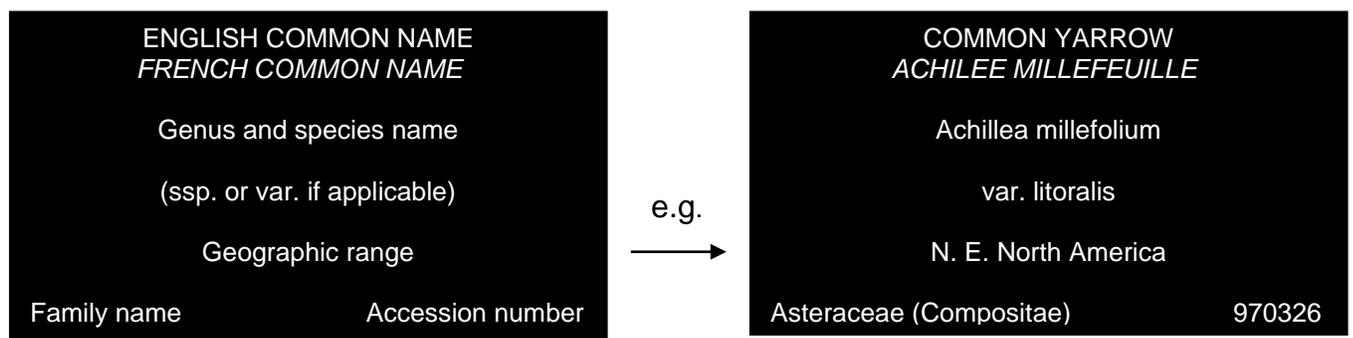


Plant Display Labels (or Secondary Labels)

These are the larger aluminium labels that are attached to stakes or larger plants such as trees and are the media by which plant information and identification are communicated to the public. They are designed to be visible to viewers but not to be overwhelming within the garden. It is important that the labels are uniform in the information they carry and in the way they are laid out. For this reason a number of templates have been created for RBG's plant display or secondary labels.

For example:

Plants of **wild origin**:



Plants of **cultivated origin:**

ENGLISH COMMON NAME
 FRENCH COMMON NAME

Genus and species name

'Cultivar Name'

Breeder - place of origin - date of introduction

Family name Accession number

e.g.
 →

PRESTON LILAC
 LILAC PRESTON

Syringa x prestoniae

'Isabella'

Preston – Ontario - 1927

Oleaceae 920027

Plants with an **economic or medicinal use:**

ENGLISH COMMON NAME
 FRENCH COMMON NAME

Genus and species name

ssp. var. or 'Cultivar' if applicable

Plant part of interest
Plant use

Family name Accession number

e.g.
 →

BAUMANN HORSECHESTNUT
 MARRONNIER DE BAUMANN

Aesculus hippocastanum

'Baumannii'

Part: leaves
 Use: headache cure

Hippocastanaceae 800563

Plants with a specific **ecological habitat:**

ENGLISH COMMON NAME
 FRENCH COMMON NAME

Genus and species name

ssp. var. or 'Cultivar' if applicable

Habitat type

Family name Accession number

e.g.
 →

PAWPAW
 ASIMINIER TRILOBÉ

Asimina triloba

Carolinian forest

Annonaceae 2008-0184

Plants **memorialising people or events:**

ENGLISH COMMON NAME
 FRENCH COMMON NAME

Genus and species name

ssp. var. or 'Cultivar' if applicable

Breeder - place of origin - date of introduction

Memorial Name

Family name Accession number

e.g.
 →

COMMON LILAC
 LILAS COMMUN

Syringa vulgaris

'Violet Delight'

Jones – Massachusetts - 1989

John Smith Memorial

Oleaceae 850342

As you can see, our labels contain some or all of the following information:

Common names in both English and French

Botanical names including Genus, species, subspecies, variety or cultivar names when applicable

Geographic range for plants of wild origin

Breeding information including the last name of the breeder, place of introduction and year of introduction

Plant part of interest and use for plants of economic or medicinal value

Habitat type for plants representing different ecological habitats

Family Name

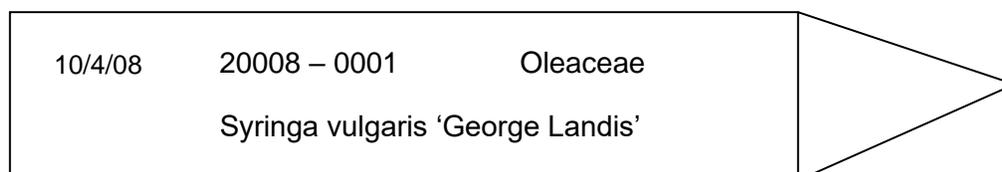
***Accession number**

An accession number serves the purpose of linking the living plant to its documentation within the plant records database. Not only does this unique number allow the plant to be located within the living collections but also links to a wide range of valuable information about each accession including the plants source, the date it arrived, if the plant has been propagated, if the name is correct or if any other horticultural, scientific, conservation or educational information of value has been attached to the plant. It's a similar principle to attaching a call number to books in a library which themselves are just another form of collection.

The accession number of a plant reads like this: 850342 = the 342nd plant accessioned in 1985 or 2008-0184 = the 184th plant accessioned in 2008. This reveals the age of the plant and the lineage in which it was accessioned into the collections.

Tertiary Labels

In some cases aluminium labels may be especially difficult or unwieldy to attach to plants. Two examples of this would include plants grown exclusively in pots such as the orchid collection or plants moving rapidly through propagation facilities. In these situations the plants are often very small and so require a system of smaller, less cumbersome labels not made from aluminium. Small or containerised plants are frequently moved around the garden from one location to another. This can further exacerbate problems resulting in lost or broken plant labels. In such a situation it is often the case that white plastic nursery or computer labels are used. It is always good practice to include a tertiary back up label to avoid the above or to avoid the problem of ink fading on labels and becoming illegible. A tertiary label should be pushed down inside the pot or buried below the plant to prevent information about plants being lost. Nursery labels are often made of thin white plastic and contain handwritten information or can be printed via computer. They often look like the following:



Taking a little time to learn to read and understand the various plant labels attached to plants around the garden can provide a wealth of information about each plant in the collection helping to broaden your professional development. Please also take the time to report any plants that lack or have lost a label in order that you help us to help you grow as horticulturists
