INDEXING PLANT NAMES

REAL-WORLD CONSIDERATIONS: DEALING WITH TEXT PROBLEMS AND INDEX RESTRICTIONS

By Thérèse Shere[1] with Lina B. Burton

Regardless of who the author or publisher may be, virtually every book that includes plant names, either common or scientific, also contains at least a few textual problems and quirks. Some of the most common of these are inconsistent use of plant names (for example, using the common name daylily in one place but the name *Hemerocallis* in another), using more than one common name for the same plant (such as using Virginia bluebells in one place and cowslip in another), and using scientific names (such as *Coreopsis*) as both common and scientific names in the same text. An indexer must consider the varying needs of different kinds of index users in handling these problems. More knowledgeable readers are more likely to be familiar with botanical names and to be interested in discussions of species and cultivars. Less expert readers are probably more likely to be familiar primarily with common names, and to be interested in genus-level discussions.

At the same time, indexers of gardening, botanical, or horticultural material also have to cope with the ever-present problem of space restrictions. Rare indeed is the book where we have an ample number of lines with which to work. More often, we find ourselves hunting for some way to cut just 10–or 100 or more–lines! And, of course, we also must work within publishers' house styles, which sometimes may be rather unusual.

We all occasionally need some guidance in dealing with these problems. The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition, provides general style guidelines for names of plants in sections 8.127–8.138, but many tricky situations faced by indexers are not addressed. The guidelines I present here are based on my own indexing experience, comparisons of many horticultural book indexes, and conversations with other indexers in the field. They also incorporate my reader's perspective as a frequent *user* of books on plant-related subjects.

I. TEXT PROBLEMS AND QUIRKS

Inconsistent use of plant names

I think this problem appears in virtually every garden book on the face of the earth! Why? There could be several reasons. Possibly several people wrote the book, leading to inconsistency in the text. Perhaps the editor was not as alert as he should have been, she is new and still learning to work with horticultural material, or he does not specialize in horticultural material and thus isn't aware of the importance of consistency in addressing plant names. Or maybe the author simply *liked* using all those different names. Whatever the case, we have to deal with these inconsistencies in our indexes. Following are some common situations and some suggested guidelines for resolving them.

1. **The common name appears on some pages without the botanical name accompanying it, and/or the botanical name appears on some pages without the common name.** In this case, all references to both names must be gathered at each entry. However, readers familiar with just one of the names will not

[1] Based on a paper presented by Thérèse Shere at ASI National Conference, Gardening/Environmental Studies SIG Seminar and Workshop, "Indexing Scientific and Common Names: Real World Considerations," May 12, 2000. Edited for publication by Lina B. Burton, Melinda D. Davis, Thérèse Shere, and Ann Truesdale.

find all of the information available when they turn to a page mentioning only the name they know, unless each name appears parenthetically in the index after its mate, thus giving them the alternative name for which they should look in the text.

Example: Adobe lily appears on pp. 26, 39, 144, 148
Fritillaria pluriflora appears on pp. 144 and 152

Possible index entries:

Best: Here, all references have been gathered together. No matter which name the reader is familiar with, she will find all references to the plant and recognize those references on the page. (In this case, the index also serves as a learning tool — if the reader looks up adobe lily often enough, eventually she will remember *Fritillaria.*)

Adobe lily *(Fritillaria pluriflora),* 26, 39, 144, 148, 152
Fritillaria pluriflora (adobe lily), 26, 39, 144, 148, 152

Unacceptable: The following example is unacceptable because all references to the plant are not gathered together. The reader who knows only the common name will find different pages from those found by the reader who looks up the botanical name.

Adobe lily, 26, 39, 144, 148
Fritillaria pluriflora, 144, 152

The next example is also unacceptable. Here, the page numbers are gathered together in each of the two entries, but the reader who knows only the common name won't know, when he reads page 152, that *Fritillaria pluriflora* is the plant being sought. A reader who knows the botanical name but not the common name will be confused when he doesn't find *Fritillaria* on pp. 26, 39, and 148.

Adobe lily, 26, 39, 144, 148, 152
Fritillaria pluriflora, 26, 39, 144, 148, 152

Compromise: Here, all references have been gathered together. It doesn't matter if the reader is unfamiliar with one of the two names. While it does add an extra step for the reader who looks up the common name, it's an excellent space-saving device for the indexer, because it often keeps a line from wrapping.

Adobe lily. See *Fritillaria pluriflora*
Fritillaria pluriflora (adobe lily), 26, 39, 144, 148, 152

2. The same situation as above can occur with an added complication: more than one common name. In this case, two or more common names appear on various pages without the botanical name accompanying them, and/or the botanical name appears on some pages unaccompanied by the common names.

Example: Checkerbloom appears on pp. 26, 39, and 157
Wild hollyhock appears on pp. 28, 157, 263, and 264
Sidalcea appears on pp. 157-59

Possible index entries:

Best: As above, all references to the plant have been gathered together at each version of the name. It doesn't matter if the reader knows only one of the names —she will find everything available in the text about the plant and be able to recognize the unfamiliar name on the text page.

Checkerbloom (wild hollyhock) *(Sidalcea)*, 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264
Sidalcea (checkerbloom, wild hollyhock), 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264
Wild hollyhock (checkerbloom) *(Sidalcea),* 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264

Unacceptable: As with the first unacceptable solution in situation 1 above, all references have not been gathered together. The reader will not find the entries for the names with which he is unfamiliar.

Checkerbloom, 26, 39, 157
Wild hollyhock, 28, 157, 263, 264
Sidalcea, 157-59

As with the second unacceptable example in situation 1 above, in the following example all references have been gathered together but there is no clue given to the reader as to which alternate name he is looking for when the referenced page is reached.

Checkerbloom, 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264
Wild hollyhock, 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264
Sidalcea, 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264

Compromise: Again, the compromise gathers all references together in one place, using cross references from the common names to the scientific name. While it does add a step for readers looking up either of the common names, it is an excellent way to reduce the number of line wraps in the index without compromising its integrity

Checkerbloom. *See Sidalcea*
Sidalcea (checkerbloom, wild hollyhock), 26, 28, 39, 157-59, 263, 264
Wild hollyhock. *See Sidalcea*

3. Text uses common name and botanical name in different places, but never equates the two. You think they are the same plant, but the text does not actually say so. There are other plants besides *Colocasia esculenta* that you have seen referred to as "elephant's ear," so there's a chance they really are different.

Example: *Colocasia esculenta* appears on p. 119
Elephant's ear appears on p. 202

In this situation, you should query the editor/author: "Are these the same plant?" If the answer is "yes," your problem is solved. Even if the text is not changed to clarify the issue for the reader, you can do so by adding the other name parenthetically in the index and putting all the page references in each entry:

Index entries: *Colocasia esculenta* (elephant's ear), 119, 202
Elephant's ear *(Colocasia esculenta),* 119, 202

If it's not possible to query, or if the answer is unknown, there is little to be done. You'll have to simply index as the names appear in the text, without equating the two names:

Index entries: *Colocasia esculenta,* 202
Elephant's ear, 119

Just remind yourself "I did not write this book...I did not edit this book! I did not write this book...I did not edit this book!" You should make a note about your suspicion that the two plants are the same and include it with the index, in your list of errors found while working on the text, and hope that both text and index can be clarified somewhere down the line.

4. Same common name used for more than one plant. Sometimes the text makes it clear that the same common name is being used for more than one plant species, but if it doesn't, you should query the editor. The index entries for the common names will need to include the botanical name as a qualifier, even if you are not doing this for other common names in the index.

Index entries: Dusty miller *(Artemisia stellerana),* 166
Dusty miller *(Chrysanthemum ptarmiciflorum),* 228
Dusty miller *(Senecio cineraria),* 482

If absolutely essential, you could omit the species names, substituting "sp." or "spp." if appropriate:

Dusty miller *(Artemisia sp.),* 166
or Dusty miller *(Artemisia),* 166

Compound common names

Many common names are compounds of one or more modifiers and a noun. Examples include Norway maple, sweet gum, Douglas fir, sword fern, coast live oak, Mexican tulip poppy. Compound common names like these are inherently difficult to deal with.

The publisher may have its own preferred method of handling this issue. If not, you must decide whether to post such names in natural-language order (i.e., Norway maple), sorting alphabetically in the index on the modifier (in this case Norway); inverting and sorting on the noun element of the name (in this case Maple); or to do both by double posting. Ideally, you would double post, but space restrictions or house style may prevent this. If you must choose one or the other, let me emphasize that there is nothing scientific about these indexing decisions. They have to be made on a case-by-case basis. The following general guidelines will be useful.

Example: Norway maple, 59, 202 (natural order)
Maple, Norway, 59, 202 (inverted)

According to Hans Wellisch, natural order is usually desirable because people who speak English tend to search for compound phrases on the modifying adjective, not the noun that follows it. As he so succinctly puts it, "*inverted headings should be avoided altogether in indexing*…."[2] (emphasis in original) However, there are times, when inversion is desirable and, in fact, is the clearest way in which to present plant names and relationships.

1. Inverted index entries are desirable in the following situations:

a) *When the compound name is one of several discussed that share the same noun element.* Often this will be the common name for a genus. (In the following example, botanical names have been

[2] Hans Wellisch. *Indexing from A to Z,* 2nd edition. (New York, Dublin: H. W. Wilson, 1995) p. 75.

omitted for simplicity, but if space permits, it is preferable to include them, as mentioned above.)

Example:
Coast live oak
Cork oak
Engelmann oak
Oak
coast live
cork
Engelmann
pin
red
Pin oak
Red oak

If space considerations don't permit double posting, inversion is generally preferable to natural order. This is a common style for field guides. In this example, you could save five lines by using only the inverted form:

Example:
Oak
coast live
cork
Engelmann
pin
red

b) *When the compound name is one of several sharing the same noun element (genus), as above, and the text has genus-level information (i.e., culture, diseases, pests) that you do not want readers to miss.*

Example:
Coast live oak. *See* Oak, coast live
Cork oak. *See* Oak, cork
Engelmann oak. *See* Oak, Engelmann
Oak
coast live
cork
cultural problems
diseases
Engelmann
pests
pin
red
Pin oak. *See* Oak, pin
Red oak. *See* Oak, red

In this case, if you put locators at the natural-order entries, readers would miss the generic information on cultural problems, pests, and diseases of oaks. It is rare that sufficient line space exists in indexes for double posting all of the cultural information under each of the natural-language entries. Therefore, the inverted form is the better choice. An alternative would be to list the pages at the natural-language order entries and add a cross reference, space permitting:

Coast live oak, 118, 253
See also Oak

c) *When there is a possibility of confusion.*

Foxglove *(Digitalis)*
Foxglove, wild *(Penstemon cobaea)*
Wild foxglove *(Penstemon cobaea)*

Douglas fir *(Pseudotsuga menziesii)*
Fir *(Abies)*
Fir, Douglas *(Pseudotsuga menziesii)*

In cases like these, if space is too tight to double post, I would stick with the natural order; the inversion is "extra help" for the reader but it's probably not the first place they'll look.

2. Natural-order index entries are desirable in these situations:

a) *When the noun element is a common name for a genus, and the compound common name is for a totally unrelated plant that wouldn't be confused with the genus.*

Laurel *(Laurus nobilis)*
Mountain laurel *(Kalmia latifolia)*

NOT Laurel, mountain *(Kalmia latifolia)*

b) *When the noun element is very generic.*

Buffalo grass	NOT Grass, buffalo
Butterfly bush	NOT Bush, butterfly

However, there may be circumstances where you want to call attention to, for example, grasses as a group, distinct from the other plants in the book. Such might be the case when you can mentally "hear" the reader saying, "Well, I know it's some kind of ornamental grass, but I haven't the slightest idea which one." (This kind of situation is most likely to occur with plants that many people are relatively unfamiliar with, such as the grasses, ferns, cacti, and mosses.) By grouping them together, you narrow the reader's choices. Even if she doesn't know the name of the plant, it is possible to run down the list until one is found that matches the plant being sought. Such a list might look like this:

Ornamental grasses. *See also* Lawn grasses; Weedy grasses
big bluestem (*Andropogon*), 181
black dragon (*Ophiopogon*), 908
blue fescue (*Festuca*), 137-38, 181
mesquite grass (*Bouteloua*), 721

In this case, sorting was done on the common name, with the genus name only in parentheses to save space. The name used for sorting could just as easily have been the botanical name, with the common name in parentheses.

c) *When the inverted form just doesn't make sense.*

Miller, dusty
Breath, baby's

Lace, Queen Anne's

(You can have lots of fun thinking up more of these!)

Botanical names used as common names

Some plants are commonly known by their scientific genus names: chrysanthemum, magnolia, zinnia, and daphne are examples. Garden books often present such names in roman type and lowercased. Many garden books go so far as to use these names both in roman type, lowercased *and* in italic type, with the genus name initial capped, sometimes within the same paragraph. In these cases, sometimes you can just omit the common name typography from the entry and use the botanical name only

Example: *Daphne,* 64, 89

Or, if adding the common name won't cause a wraparound line, eating up space, you could also index this as follows

Example: Daphne (*Daphne*), 64, 89

This is the way one well-known publisher prefers to handle this type of situation; it makes it absolutely clear to the reader that the common name and the scientific name are the same.

Often, however, things are not quite so simple. For instance, the genus name may be used as a common name, but it in fact refers to just a single member of the genus:

Example: Calliopsis *(Coreopsis tinctoria),* 89
Coreopsis
lanceolata (coreopsis), 119, 178
tinctoria (calliopsis), 89
Coreopsis *(Coreopsis lanceolata)*, 119, 178

Or, a genus name may be used as a common name for members of two genera:

Example: *Keckiella*
cordifolius, 109
corymbosus, 109
Penstemon
azureus, 113, 115, 260, 265
speciosus, 37, 116, 265, 266
Penstemon
azure *(Penstemon azureus),* 113, 115, 260, 265
climbing *(Keckiella cordifolius),* 109
red foothill *(K. corymbosus),* 109
showy *(P. speciosus),* 37, 116, 265, 266

These situations may require forcing the sort order of the entries, so that the *Penstemon* and penstemon entries, for example, do not interfile, causing utter confusion for the poor reader.

When common names and genus names are close, but not identical, both forms should be given, but you should omit either the common name entry or the botanical name entry, since they will sort right next to each other:

Lily *(Lilium)*	or	*Lilium* (lily)
Rose *(Rosa)*		*Rosa* (rose)
Tulip *(Tulipa)*		*Tulipa* (tulip)

You could provide a cross reference as well:

Lilium. See lily
Lily *(Lilium)*

Genus-level vs. species-level discussions using common names

Indexers must be careful to understand and sort out discussions of genera from discussions of species. This can lead to complex common-name entries like this one, which mixes subentries for an unaccompanied common name, two different genera, and a species:

Example: Elm, 156, 160, 170, 182, 187, 236
American *(Ulmus)*, 158, 221
Asian *(Zelkova)*, 168, 191
European *(Ulmus)*, 93, 168, 221
Siberian *(U. pumila)*, 93, 219

Since you have no idea which of the elms are being referenced on pages 156, 160, 170, 182, 187, and 236, you have no choice but to either query the editor for clarification or, if this doesn't work, to list these locators as shown here.

You also want to be sure that readers who look up a common name for a species will not miss genus-level information, as discussed above.

A-Z text formats

Garden books often use an A-Z encyclopedia-style format for part, but not all, of the text, with the encyclopedia usually being organized by botanical name. This can pose several problems for indexers.

1. The editors may ask that the A-Z section not be indexed. Often it is necessary to index one or two introductory chapters, but not the main A-Z part of the book. This can be fine, *if* the A-Z text contains entries for common names that are cross referenced to botanical names. Here's an example of an easy-to-understand format:

Poppy. See *Papaver*
Poppy, Himalayan. See *Meconopsis betonicifolia*
Poppy mallow. See *Callirhoe involucrata*
Populus [followed by a lengthy discussion on this genus,
along with several of its species]
Porcupine grass. See *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Strictus'

If common names are not included in the encyclopedia listing with cross references to the botanical

names, readers unfamiliar with the botanical names would have no way to find them and the usefulness of the book would be severely impaired.

If an encyclopedia section is not indexed, another problem arises: when there is information about specific plants in the non-encyclopedic section of the book as well as in the encyclopedia proper. In this case you might have numerous index entries for specific plants with page references for those introductory chapters, but no page listing for the plant's primary entry in the encyclopedia—not an ideal situation.

Example: Crabapple *(Malus)* appears in plant lists or introductory material on pp. 22, 54 and 56; the main discussion of the plant is in the A-Z section on page 289.

Index entries: Crabapple *(Malus),* 22, 54, 56
Malus (crabapple), 22, 54, 56

It's very important in this case to include a head note at the beginning of the index which tells the reader that the listings in the encyclopedia section are not indexed.

Example: "This index covers pages 1 to 376. You will find some entries for specific plants in the index; however, additional information for individual plants appears in the Encyclopedia of Plants, which begins on page 377."

2. Indexing the encyclopedia listings. When you *do* index an encyclopedia section, often all or almost all references to a particular genus will occur on one page. If there is discussion of several different species and you include each as a subentry, this can lead to funny-looking entries.

Example: *Angelica,* 178
breweri, 178
hendersonii, 178
lineariloba, 178
tomentosa, 178

In this situation it's usually best to drop the subentries and make an entry for the genus only:

Angelica species, 178
or *Angelica* spp., 178
or *Angelica*, 178

The first two examples are better than the last, because they give the reader a clue that more than one species is discussed on that page.

Frequently there will be just one or two mentions of a particular species on other pages as well.

Example: Encyclopedia entry for genus *Erysimum* appears on p. 171; five species are discussed there. One of those species also appears in a plant list on p. 29; another is illustrated on p. 170.

Possible index entries*:*

Erysimum (wallflower), 171
capitatum, 171
concinnum, 171
franciscanum, 29, 171

grandiflorum, 170, 171
menziesii, 171
Wallflower *(Erysimum)*, 29, *170,* 171

or *Erysimum* spp. (wallflower), 29, *170,* 171
Wallflower *(Erysimum),* 29, *170,* 171

In these instances, the choice between these two entry methods depends on two factors: the book's audience and space requirements.

Knowledgeable readers are probably more likely to be looking for species-level information in the index and would prefer to see species listed, if possible. You could leave out the abbreviation "spp.," but to do so is inadvisable since it does provide the reader with a useful clue that several species are contained in the page references.

Note that in the *Erysimum* examples, a difference of five lines exists between the two examples. A savings of five lines per double posted entry throughout the index could result in an index that is much too short for the space allowed, leaving blank pages at the end. Some publishers don't consider this a problem. For others, however, it is a hanging offense! So you do need to keep in mind the number of lines you have to work with and adjust accordingly.

Unacceptable: Including only two of the species and omitting the other three species from the subentry list. This gives the erroneous impression that the two that *are* listed are the only ones discussed in the book.

Erysimum (wallflower), 171
franciscanum, 29, 171
grandiflorum, 170, 171

Deleting the species names as subentries raises another issue. Suppose you have a common name entry for one of the species. If the common name bluff wallflower is given for *Erysimum concinnum,* you have two possible forms for the common name entry:

Bluff wallflower *(Erysimum concinnum),* 171
or Bluff wallflower. See *Erysimum concinnum*

If you do not list species as subentries under *Erysimum,* you cannot use the *See* reference because the reader won't find its target entry.

Text organized by plant families

Sometimes long sections of a book will be organized by plant family, with genera listed alphabetically within the sections.

Example: Sunflower family genera are listed from p. 230 to p. 249. The only mention of the family *per se* is on p. 230.

Index entry: Sunflower family *(Asteraceae, Compositae),* 230
See also specific genera

If there were no specific discussion of the family at all, just listings of genera, you could make the entry

like this:

Sunflower family *(Asteraceae, Compositae),* 230-49
See also specific genera

or Sunflower family *(Asteraceae, Compositae). See specific genera*

The first example, which lists a page range (230-49) is preferable. If you use only the *See* reference, readers who don't know which genera belong to the family will be lost. Note: families, too, have both common and scientific names, just like genera and species. You may need to make entries for both.

Plant lists

Often some of the most useful information in a book is contained in plant lists. Alas, sometimes indexers are directed not to index their contents. Well-edited books present all plant lists consistently in the same format, with both botanical name and common name, if present, given.

If your book has common-name-only plant lists, beware! You'll have to be certain of the plants' identities so you can add the page references to the botanical name entries. Also, if more than one common name is used for a plant, each may show up in a separate plant list; you'll need to make sure such references are gathered together, as discussed above.

Illustrations and captions

Photographs and illustrations in garden books can be problematic for indexers. If you're lucky, you'll have well-written captions that list all the major plants in the photo, so they are easily indexed. Often captions will have common names only, so you'll have to be careful about botanical name identification. Sometimes a clearly identifiable plant is in the photo, but not mentioned in the caption. I think it's best to index such appearances, after checking with the editor. Often, though, the pages the indexer receives have poor copies of the photos, or the photos are missing entirely—in which case you've only the captions to go on.

In some garden books photos are bound in as an insert. Ideally, if the insert pages are not numbered, the photos will be identified by plate numbers that you can use as locators.

Example: *Salvia disjuncta,* 65-66, 195, 201, 207, 208, Plate 89

If not, you'll have to come up with another locator scheme. Fortunately, this doesn't happen often!

Books devoted to a single genus

Books devoted to a single genus are common. In these specialized books, it's often better to list species names as main entries instead of subentries, because the text is focused at the species level and a lot of the information that is discussed is species-specific. If cultivars are discussed, they can be given as either subentries or as part of the species entry, repeating the genus and species names for each entry.

Example: *Salvia farinacea,* 74-76, 97, 115, 207

‘Blue Bedder’, 75, 76,
‘Mina’, 75, 199
‘Victoria’, 75, 76, 94, 173, 199

or *Salvia farinacea,* 74-76, 97, 115, 207
Salvia farinacea ‘Blue Bedder’, 75, 76, 199
Salvia farinacea ‘Mina’, 75, 199
Salvia farinacea ‘Victoria’, 75, 76, 94, 173, 199

To my eye, the first choice “reads” easier, and requires less line space, but both techniques are common and correct.

The *Salvia* examples above work well for a book that is devoted to that genus, but which also mentions lots of other plants used, for example, as companions to the *Salvias*.

In some books on a single plant, the variety or cultivar names alone may become the main entries. For example, a book on roses that discusses hundreds of cultivars, and no (or few) other genera would more appropriately be indexed by cultivar name, as is the case with the following example

Example: Aloha
Alpine Sunset
Altissimo
Amanecer
Amaryllis josephinae
Amatsu-Otome
Amber Queen

Note that in this case, the companion plant, *Amaryllis josephinae,* is listed among the cultivars but stands out distinctly because it is italicized, as it should be.

If species are discussed as well as cultivars, however, the species must be listed under the full binomial:

Example: Rocky
Rödhätte
Roger Lamberlin
Romance
Romanze
Rosa alba
Rosa arkansana

Note that in both of these cases, the indexer has chosen not to enclose the cultivar names in single quotation marks. This is technically incorrect, but it does arguably make the list of entries more readable, and saves the indexer some keystrokes. This should not be done without permission from the editor.

Note also that while it is accepted practice (by most) to separate the genus and species names by placing genus name on one line and making the species name a subentry on a second line beneath it, you absolutely *cannot* make the species name (i.e., *alba, arkansana*) the main entry. Species names cannot stand alone. The proper main entries are *Rosa alba* and *Rosa arkansana.*

Texts requiring mixed subentry types in the index

A very common problem arises for indexers when species names as subentries (or sub-subentries) must be mixed with other subentries referring to subjects, rather than plant species. It can look awkward to have the two subentry types interfiled.

Example: *Acer* (maple), 45, 71, 120-121, 236, 237
- diseases, 120-121, 208, 242, 256
- *palmatum* (Japanese maple), *6,* 236, 252
- pests, 121, 147, 157, 167, 184, 195
- *platanoides* (Norway maple), 207, 256
- *rubrum* (red maple), 39, *44,* 45
- *saccharinum* (silver maple), 45, 157, 256
- *saccharum* 'Caddo' (Caddo maple), 51
- wind-resistant selections, 236

The common name entry for Maple would look almost as awkward, although at least all the subentries would begin with roman type. When entries like this get very, very long (say, a full column, in a book that devotes a great deal of discussion to one genus or species), this interfiling becomes quite objectionable, and you may want to group each of the two subentry types within the list. Usually this means adding a sub-subentry level. Sometimes this can be done via tricky wording, without breaking any indexing rules:

Example: Tomato, **119-138**
- diseases, 120-122
- early-maturing varieties, 124
- pests, 122-123
- planting and care, 119-120
- varieties listed, 125-138
  - 'Beefmaster', 127
  - 'Brandywine', 127
  - 'Early Girl', 129
  - 'Green Grape', 130
  - 'San Francisco Fog', 136
  - 'Sweet 100', 137
  - (etc.)

Example: Rose *(Rosa),* 20, 28, 76, **228-242**
- care and planting, 228-229
- choosing varieties, 232-233, 240
- pictured, *16, 20-21, 49, 77*
  - 'Abraham Darby', 228
  - 'Dortmund', 231
  - 'Fragrant Cloud', 233
  - (etc.)
- in plans
  - 'China Doll', 115
  - 'French Lace', 127
  - 'New Dawn', 127
  - (etc.)
- species and cultivars listed, 235-242
  - 'Angel Face', 235
  - 'Cécile Brunner', 236

‘Don Juan’, 236
‘Golden Rambler’, 237
‘Mr. Lincoln’, 238
‘White Wings’, 242
(etc.)
R. banksiae, 240
R. chinensis, 240
R. gallica, 240
R. moyesii, 241
(etc.)

Notice that I have forced the sort in the example above so that ‘White Wings’ sorts before the italicized species entries. This is a pretty subtle example of breaking the rules to make the entry more readable. You might go all out, with the editor’s permission, and really break the rules, listing subentries in the most readable fashion, even if that puts them way out of alphabetical order. If there are going to be very many subentries, this can really help the reader. This example breaks sorting rules in order to group all the species together and all the cultivars together. All subentries for other information about the genus are grouped at the top of the entry:

Narcissus, 23, 26, 198-205
allergies to, 59
classification of, 199-200, 202-5
flower form, 8
lifting and storing bulbs, 46
water requirements, 59
asturiensis, 203
canaliculatus, 204
(several more species names follow)
cultivars:
‘Actaea’, 203
‘Baby Moon’, 203
(many more cultivar names follow)

II. SPACE RESTRICTIONS

I find that space restrictions, often very severe, are an almost omnipresent problem. Here are some strategies for dealing with them, more or less in the order I would use them.

1. Suggest a single index instead of separate subject and plant name indexes. While it is fairly rare for an editor to request separate subject and plant name indexes, if he has done so, suggest that you be allowed to combine the two. You’ll save the space of the break between them (i.e., the space that the header for the second index will consume). These can be precious lines in a pinch.

2. Streamline entries for plant names line by line to shorten them.

a) *If it will actually save space, use the* See *reference to reduce the number of lines used.* If, however the locators don’t cause the line to wrap, leave them as they are.

Example: Ivy *(Hedera),* 224, 226

but Maple. See *Acer* (where *Acer* has an entry taking 10 lines)

Sometimes you may want to direct readers from the botanical name entries to the common name entries, instead of the other way around. Such would be the case if the target audience is less knowledgeable about plants, if the text is organized by common name, or if the book's topic is broader than the plants themselves (such as a craft book). Put the locators where you think most readers will look first.

b) *Drop parenthetic common names following botanical names*. For a well-edited book in which the common and botanical names always appear together, this presents no problems. If the reader will be sent to pages that contain only the common name, it is not ideal, but one could argue that a reader knowledgeable enough to look up the botanical name is likely to recognize the common name when she sees it.

Example: *Sisyrinchium bellum* (blue-eyed grass) (original version)

cut to *Sisyrinchium bellum*

c) *Drop species names from parenthetic botanical names where it will keep a line from wrapping.*

Example: Blue-eyed grass *(Sisyrinchium bellum)* (original version)

cut to Blue-eyed grass *(Sisyrinchium)*

While not technically correct, this would not pose a practical problem unless more than one species of *Sisyrinchium* appeared on one of the pages referenced without the common names, making it impossible for the reader to know which one was blue-eyed grass.

I would drop the *entire* parenthetic botanical name only in cases of dire necessity, and only if the botanical name appeared with the common name in the text.

3. Shorten whole classes of entries. Sunset's *Western Garden Book* gives only the locator for the encyclopedia listing of a plant at the common name entry. Only the botanical name entries contain all the page references. This scheme obviously requires a head note, and I find it rather odd. However, unusual schemes like this can work fine for books that will be consulted over and over, because readers will learn what the index's structure is.

4. Delete entire entries. As discussed above, delete species names as subentries and double posting of compound common names where possible.

5. Condense locators.

a) *Use special typography to cut the number of locators***.**. For instance, use bolding to indicate a page range for a main discussion that includes illustrations so you don't need separate locators for the illustrations. (Warning: This must be done consistently throughout the entire index, not just here and there, as needed, and a head note will be required to explain the typography.)

Thus, if there is a discussion of Rose (*Rosa)* on pages 111-119 and 235, with illustrations on pages 112, 113, 114, 115, and 236, you could truncate the entry as follows:

Example: Rose *(Rosa),* **111-119**, 235, *236*

instead of Rose *(Rosa),* 111-119, *112, 113, 114, 115,* 235, *236*

A head note for this type of entry might read as follows: "Page references in **bold type** indicate encyclopedia entries, which always contain photographs. Page references in *italic type* indicate additional illustrations."

b) *Condense strings of locators for separate mentions on consecutive pages into page ranges*. While it is preferable not to do this for separate text mentions, particularly if text on other plants exists between the mentions, I find it less objectionable if the material being dealt with in this manner consists of illustrations on consecutive pages. Thus:

Example: Ivy *(Hedera), 54-56,* 59

instead of Ivy *(Hedera), 54, 55, 56,* 59

6 Delete whole classes of entries as a last resort. If you've begun by including them, you could omit botanical names of vegetables and fruits, for instance. For a book that discusses pests or weeds where the scientific name of each is given parenthetically just once, in the subject's main entry, you could omit those scientific name entries. It is highly unlikely that a general reader would look up vegetables, fruits, pests, or weeds under their scientific names; they generally don't know what those names are. When I indexed Sunset's *Western Garden Problem Solver,* space was so short that I ended up deleting *all* the botanical name entries, which made up about 10% of the index lines. I justified the decision for myself by noting that the plant-specific sections of the book were organized entirely by common name, and the book had a problem-solving focus, which meant there were many more non-plant entries than plant name entries. Half the plants mentioned were weeds, plants that index users would be most likely to look up by their common names.

7. Use run-in format. The run-in format for subentries is not as common as it used to be, but you do still run across it. It can be a great space saver in some situations In the following example, two lines have been saved by this format.

Example: *Aquilegia,* 28, 29, **91-92**; *eximia,* 32, **91**; *formosa,* 28,
32, **91**, 262, 264; *pubescens,* 37, 41, **92**

As a practical matter, the run-in format is suitable *only* when there is one subentry level. However, you could also use a hybrid format, with subentries indented, and sub-subentries in run-in style. The Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) now recommends this hybrid style for all indexes which use sub-subentries. I find it can work well for some types of books, but horticultural indexes can be difficult to read formatted in this way:

Example: Rose *(Rosa),* 20, 28, 76, **228-242**
care and planting, 228-229
choosing varieties, 232-233, 240
pictured, *16, 20-21, 49, 77;* 'Abraham Darby', *228;*
'Dortmund', *231;* 'Fragrant Cloud', *233*
in plans: 'China Doll', 115; 'French Lace', 127; 'New Dawn', 127
species and cultivars listed, 235-242; 'Angel Face', 235;
'Cécile Brunner', 236; 'Don Juan', 236; 'Golden Rambler', 237;
'Mr. Lincoln', 238; 'White Wings', 242; *R. banksiae,* 240; *R. chinensis, 240; R. gallica, 240; R. moyesii, 241*

III. CLIENT-IMPOSED FORMAT/STYLE RESTRICTIONS

A client frequently will impose certain restrictions on index format and style, either for all of its books or on a book-by-book basis. I've found that if I think such a restriction will compromise the index, I can often make a case to the client and get it lifted. A simple explanation of why I think a practice is necessary, combined with an assurance that the index will fit in the available space, is often enough.

Other times, the in-house stylistic criteria are non-negotiable and may strike you as distinctly different, if not, in fact odd.

For example, one client separates the subject index from the plant name index. They also use roman type for all main-entry botanical names, i.e.,

Example: Artemisia stelleriana

However, if the names are in parentheses, they ask that the parenthetical name be italicized:

Example: Dusty miller (*Artemisia stelleriana)*

According to every authority that I've read on this question, botanical names should be italicized. Nevertheless, I don't believe the index is seriously compromised by setting the botanical names in roman type; in any case, this is the house style they've used for years and I doubt very seriously if they're about to change it now!

Other clients may prefer that plant lists not be indexed, or that the lists in a particular book not be indexed. In this case, I might point out to the editor that the plant lists contain some of the most valuable information about the specific plants, and if it is not indexed, the information will be inaccessible to the reader. Usually, indexing the lists means adding only a few locators to already-existing entries and can be handled within space limitations.

Other clients may not allow parenthetical common or scientific names in the index. This issue may be resolved by pointing out how much more useful an index containing such references is to the reader in finding all references to a particular plant. It also helps to have a good example available—perhaps from another book you've indexed—which you can fax to them so they'll see how it looks. This may be a visualization issue—they simply can't "see" it unless you show it to them.

Some garden book indexes use a *See* reference from every common name entry, sending readers to the botanical name, a practice that the reader may find annoying — he has to look two places instead of one to find the locator. In this case, the common name entries for species will require separate species subentries under the genus name, as discussed above. A head note warning the reader that locators are under the botanical name may be helpful in this instance, but is not essential.

Other clients may not allow subentries that repeat locators that appear in the main entry. This is an editing decision which overlooks the many different kinds of distinct kinds of information that can appear on a single page. Omitting locator subentries makes it much harder for the reader to find detailed information or information on a specific subtopic. At the same time, omitting locator entries from the general heading prevents quick access to the general, lengthy discussion on the subject.

Sometimes client education is helpful. In this regard, the information presented here should give you some ammunition. For example, you might point out that it's very common to have combined subject and plant-name indexes and combining them will save space so that you won't have to delete crucial entries. Once you understand the pros and cons of, for example, including both common and scientific names in each

plant name entry, you can explain to your editor why this is a good idea and give examples, emphasizing the confusion that can be avoided when plants in different genera have the same common name. Your editor may never have thought about the reasons for doing this before.

Sometimes house style requests are odd, but this is an issue that is generally not worth arguing about. My advice: Choose your battles and don't get heartburn over client criteria about which you disagree but that are non-negotiable! Remember, it may be your index, but it's *their* book.