

National Register of Champion Trees

Technical Terms from A to Z

classification – The formal arrangement of plants into groups and groups into various hierarchical levels.

conservation – 1. protection of plant and animal habitat 2. the management of a renewable natural resource with the objective of sustaining its productivity in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource 3. The process or means of achieving recovery of viable populations

cultivar - a clone, race, or product of breeding selected from a population of plants because it has desirable characteristics and is generally more or less genetically uniform – *note* such cultivated plants are given a non-Latin name and designated cv

DBH – Diameter breast height; the diameter measurement taken on a tree at 4.5 ft or 1.37 m above ground level

exotic – a plant or species introduced from another country or geographic region outside its natural range – *note* an exotic can become naturalized

growth form – the characteristic general appearance, i.e., shape, posture, and mode of growth, rather than size or color, of an organism – *note* with plants, growth form is preferably termed the (growth) habit, e.g., pyramidal and erect, bushy and procumbent

habit – the general form of a plant; i.e., tree, shrub, herb

hybrid - the progeny of genetically different parents – *note* the term is applied to the progeny from matings within species (intraspecific) or to those between species (interspecific)

indigenous – native to a specific area or region, not introduced

interspecific – occurring among members of different species

interspecific hybrid – a hybrid produced by crossing between members of different species

introduced species – an established plant or animal not native to the ecosystem, region, or country

native species - 1. an indigenous species that is normally found as part of a particular ecosystem 2. a species that was present in a defined area prior to European settlement

naturalize – *of an alien or exotic species* to establish, grow, reproduce, and maintain itself in an area where it did not originally grow

nonnative – a plant grown outside its natural range

shrub - a woody, perennial plant differing from a perennial herb in its persistent and woody stem, and less definitely from a tree in its lower stature and the general absence of a well-defined main stem

species – *biology* the main category of taxonomic classification into which genera are subdivided, comprising a group of similar interbreeding individuals sharing a common morphology, physiology, and reproductive process – *note* 1. there is generally a sterility barrier between species, or at least reduced fertility in interspecific hybrids – *note* 2. the species is the basic unit of taxonomy on which the binominal system has been established; the lower taxonomic hierarchy is species, subspecies, variety, and forma

species hybrid – the offspring produced by crossing two species

subspecies - a category usually intermediate between species and variety, based on fewer correlated characters than are used to differentiate species but more correlated characters than are used to differentiate varieties – *note* subspecies are generally identified by their geographical or ecological occurrence

taxonomy – the classification of organisms, including identification and nomenclature (naming)

tree – a woody perennial plant, typically large and with a well-defined stem or stems carrying a more or less definite crown – note sometimes defined as attaining a minimum diameter of 5 in (12.7 cm) and a minimum height of 15 ft (4.6 m) at maturity, with no branches within 3 ft (1m) of the ground

trunk – the bole or main stem of a tree

variety – *ecology* a category usually intermediate between species (or subspecies) and forma (i.e., form), given a Latin name preceded by “var.”, based on fewer correlated characters than are used to differentiate species or subspecies, and having a more restricted geographical occurrence 2. an assemblage of cultivated individuals distinguished by any useful, reproducible character(s), usually termed a cultivar

Sources

Helms, John A. *The Dictionary of Forestry*. CAB International, 1998.