

American Orchid Society Usage Guide for Publications

- above, below: when referring to something in an article that appeared previously, use previous rather than above as it might actually not physically be above; similarly, use following rather than below to indicate information that is to come.
- affect/effect: affect is a verb; effect a noun. The effect of pH on blue color in cattleyas is affected by the chemicals added to the mix.
- after having: use after
- airborne
- air plant (n)
- air-plant (adj)
- aquinii flares: use flared petals
- all of: use all. All of the attendees. . . All the attendees. . . exception: all of us
- amid/among/between: found amid numerous other species (for position or location, when the nouns cannot be counted); among the hybridizers present (represents three or more); It was hard to make a decision between the two display entries (relation between two nouns)
- Alliance: as in a botanical grouping: italics not needed in groupings such as botanical ‘alliances’ or ‘tribes’ or study groups or alliances such as The Pleurothallid Alliance, which publishes a newsletter
- alongside of: use alongside
- analyze, not UK analyse
- and: acceptable to use to start a sentence to add emphasis, contrary to earlier teaching
- anyhow: do not use
- anytime
- anywhere
- aquinii flares should be flared petals
- area codes: place before number and connect with a hyphen if within parentheses (telephone 232-232-8568) or put in parentheses if the rest of the number is not in parentheses (232) 232-8568.
- article and department titles are in quotation marks when mentioned in text. Include month and year if reference to Orchids article.
- author
- backcross
- back yard (n), backyard (adj)
- bare-root adj.; bareroot noun
- bean yellow mosaic virus (BYMV)
- by-product
- bird feeder
- birdbath
- birdhouse
- black and white: hyphenate before noun, as in black-and-white photographs
- bone ash
- bone meal
- booklist

- botrytis: Italicize and capitalize when referring to the bacteria that cause the disease: Cattleyas are susceptible to infection by the fungus *Botrytis*. Lowercase, no italics when referring to the disease: Cattleyas often get a disease known as botrytis blight.
- -bound: Hyphenate when used in such forms as root-bound and pot-bound, whether before or after a noun: A root-bound plant; the plant is root-bound.
- *Brassavola digbyana*: use *Rhyncholaelia digbyana*
- broad-leaved
- bulb: orchids do not have bulbs, they have pseudobulbs, so change copy that reads bulb(s) to pseudobulb(s)
- Burma: use Myanmar (also known as Burma) in first usage in an article, then simply Myanmar
- buzzword
- catalog not catalogue
- Cattleya Alliance (a botanical grouping): italics not needed in groupings such as botanical ‘alliances’ or ‘tribes’ or study groups or alliances such as The Pleurothallid Alliance, which publishes a newsletter
- centuries: Use figures (In the 18th century...); do not use superscripts
- chemicals: first letter not capitalized for generic name; capitalize first letter for brand or trade names: benomyl; Benlate
- cite/site: cite as in a citation in an article; site means a location
- cities: No state after these cities in text: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Miami, St. Louis.
- CITES: Acronym for Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
- close-up
- cloud forest
- cold-stratify, -ied
- color (not colour)
- colors: Hyphenate two-color compounds such as blue-green and orange-red (two colors of equal importance) and noun-color compounds (snow-white, slate-gray) when the colors *modify* another noun such as snow-white petals or blue-green algae. Leave open all other color compounds such as the house is slate gray or the water had turned blue green. The petals are yellowish orange unless there is a noun immediately after the compound, then yellowish-orange petals. Using -ish after a color is not preferred usage for describing orchids. *Note*: special style and syntax rules apply to award descriptions used in AOS Judging Centers and by botanists and others doing official descriptions of species and both of these instances are different from those used in prose.
- common names: use lowercase Roman type and do not put in quotes, eg. lady-of-the-night orchid
- compliment/complement: compliment is praise; complement means complete as in he had a full complement of varieties on display
- compots
- contractions such as I’m, we’re, they’re, it’s: contractions are colloquial so spell out I am, we are, etc.
- Cooperative Extension Service: Initial cap when referring to a specific one: The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service; lowercase and hyphenate all

others: Have your soil tested at your local cooperative-extension service; your cooperative-extension service agent will test your soil for free.

- contact: avoid using this word as a verb
- crisscross: n and v
- crosshatch: n and v
- cross-pollinate
- cucumber mosaic virus (CMV)
- Cymbidium mosaic virus (CyMV)
- Cymbidium ringspot virus (CyRSV)
- Cymbidium Society of America, Inc.
- damping-off
- data: The word data is plural. The data are good, not is.
- day length
- daylong
- day-neutral
- daytime: often the word day will suffice
- *Dendrobium* vein necrosis virus (DVNV)
- depth of field (no hyphens unless before a noun)
- desert: to leave or an area as in the Sahara Desert; dessert is a food eaten after a meal
- desiccate
- Diazinon (formerly a common name, it is now a tradename)
- diehard
- dimethoate
- disc: as in a compact disc (CD); optical drives or as in ophthalmology
- discrete/discreet: discrete means unconnected; discreet means tactful
- disk: as in a hard drive disk; magnetic not optical disks; used in orthopedics, lumbar disk
- doctor: To distinguish between the two types, do not use Dr. in a byline, a name in the text or before the author's name in the biographical note at the end of a story. Instead, when known, place PhD or MD after the person's name.
- down-size
- due to the fact: use because
- dwarfs (not dwarves)
- effect/affect: see affect
- e.g. not eg
- ELISA: enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, a test for viruses
- en or em dashes: en dash is a single hyphen that connects two words such as red-haired; an em dash is two hyphens used in the place commas or parentheses for effect: the flowers—that scored a high FCC/AOS—had only come out this morning. Commas, parentheses and em dashes are interchangeable and the only difference is in the strength of the effect: commas the least emphasis, parentheses more and em dashes the most
- email not e-mail; the former is now generally accepted
- embed not imbed
- et al.: refers only to people, not things
- etc.: refers only to things, not to people. Never say, John, George, Bill, etc. attended the banquet; instead use et al.
- everbearing

- everblooming
- evergreen
- *ex situ*: in italics (except in titles)
- farther/further: farther refers to distance; further means additional
- fax
- feed: we do not feed orchids; we provide nutrients that are utilized to manufacture food
- fewer/less: fewer is more specific for counted items (usually with plural nouns) as in ‘the second inflorescence had fewer than five flowers’; less is more vague (usually with singular nouns) as in ‘you use less fertilizer than I do’
- fiberglass
- film titles: set in italics
- fine-tuning
- firsthand
- first-rate
- flower bud
- flower spike
- flower stalk
- flowerpot
- footcandle or foot-candle
- fruit: plural is fruits
- f/stop (camera lingo)
- full-size
- full-time (adj)
- full time (n)
- fundraiser
- fundraising: the act
- fundraising (adj)
- further/farther see farther/further
- Gardeners' Chronicle
- genus abbreviations: see American Orchid Society *Orchids Plus* under Genera Search
- good-size
- Grammatophyllum bacilliform virus (GBV)
- grassland
- greenhouse
- green thumb
- grex: hybrid name, singular. Greges is the plural but try to avoid. Do not use grexes.
- groundcover
- half-day (n, adj)
- half sun
- handpick (-ed)
- hand-pollinate (-d)
- handsaw
- hand-water
- hardcopy
- hardcover
- hardening off

- hardheaded
- hardworking
- home page (not homepage)
- horticulturist: not horticulturalist
- housebound
- houseplant
- hybridizer
- hybrids: Give grex name followed by parentage in parentheses.
- i.e. not ie
- in situ: in italics (except in titles)
- intergeneric cross: a hybrid cross between two different genera
- International Phalaenopsis Alliance
- Internet but web, website, etc. need not be capitalized
- intrageneric cross: a hybrid cross within the same genus
- in excess of: use over
- in order to: use to or for
- *in vitro*: always in italics (except in titles)
- irregardless use regardless
- Laelia red leafspot virus (LRLSV)
- leaf blade
- leaf miner
- leaf roller
- leafhopper
- less/fewer: see fewer/less
- life cycle
- lifelong
- life span
- life-size
- lifestyle
- lifetime
- -like: The suffix -like is generally spelled solid (catlike, pagodalike) except for compounds formed from proper names (Tokyo-like), words that end in l (gull-like), and word combinations (oil-can-like). Also proper-name word combinations (Oil-Can-Boyd-like)
- long-lived
- long-standing
- long-term
- longtime
- long-winded
- luster
- Madagascar: the island
- Malagasy Republic: the nation
- malathion (lower case)
- *militaris*: use *Masdevallia ignea*
- MasterCard (always with a cap C)

- mealybug
- media is plural for medium.
- memoriam
- micro-: as a prefix, it is usually joined as in microclimate, micromanage.
- mid-: The prefix mid- is generally spelled solid (midmorning, midtown). Some exceptions are the seasons mid-fall and mid-spring (midsummer and midwinter are not exceptions). Proper nouns are hyphenated (mid-June).
- midsize (rather than mid-sized)
- montane
- multi-: Spelled solid (multifaceted)
- multiflowered
- names (people): Use first and last name on first mention, then last name for subsequent mentions. If two family members with the same last name are in an article, use their first names after the first mention to avoid confusion if both are the subject of the story. If only one is the subject of the story, and this is clear to the reader, continue to use last name.
- natural hybrids: precede name by a multiplication sign (non-ital) without a space between × and the name
- nice: weak word, avoid in text
- nighttime: night will do
- non-: The prefix non- is generally spelled solid (nonlethal, nonessential)
- nonresupinate
- noon: not 12 noon
- North American Native Orchid Alliance
- nursery names: consult the appropriate website
- nutshell
- ocher (not ochre)
- Odontoglossum Alliance (botanical grouping) and Odontoglossum Alliance (no italics, a specialty group that also publishes a newsletter)
- off of: use off
- once a week: I water once a week; use hyphens in front of a noun: I practice once-a-week watering
- One-of-a-kind opportunity (as an adjective preceding a noun); otherwise, it was one of a kind.
- online
- The Orchid Badge Club International
- *The Orchid Digest*
- orchid fleck virus (OFV)
- Orchid Pests and Diseases
- Orchid Photography
- *The Orchid Review*
- orientate: do not use
- overall
- over fertilize
- overpot
- overwater

- over winter (adv)
- overwinter (v)
- overwintering (adj)
- The Paphiopedilum Guild (a specialty group)
- pendant/pendent: a necklace is a pendant; pendent as in a hanging inflorescence
- percent: spell out the word percent in essays and editorial, but use the % symbol in charts
- phenomenon = singular; phenomena = plural
- photograph: not photo or photos
- pinecone
- plant materials: do not use this word combination
- The Pleurothallid Alliance: a specialty group
- Pleurothallids: common name for a botanical grouping of orchids. Cap if it starts a sentence, but lower-case p if used as a common name within a sentence.
- principal is the head of a school or denotes the main one, such as the principal use of chemicals. . . principle is a rule or law or concept: the principle of parallel evolution
- postcards
- pseudobulb (not bulb)
- puree, pureed
- rainforest
- rainwater
- realize, not realise
- regardless, not irregardless
- repot, not re-pot
- root-ball
- root-bound
- root zone
- root-hardy
- root-prune
- round-trip (adj)
- Roundup
- The RHS Orchid Register
- Sander's: with the apostrophe (The man's name was Sander)
- Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids
- sawtooth
- saw-toothed
- screwdriver
- seasons: always lowercase (spring, summer, autumn, winter) except when in a title or when referring to an AOS Members Meeting (then Fall Members Meeting and Spring Members Meeting)
- seed coat
- seed leaf
- seedbed
- seedpod: use capsule; orchids do not have pods or beans (although you often hear of the vanilla bean)
- semi-: words with the "semi-" prefix are spelled solid (semiopaque, semiconductor) except words such as semi-independant and semi-indirect. Also semi-arid

- semiannual (not semi-annual)
- shade cloth
- shade house
- shelf life
- shirt-sleeve
- short-day
- *sic*: always in italics
- since: Implies passage of time (The barn had been used as a garden center since 1955.)
Not to be used in place of "because" (He planted rye because winters were long and his garden needed a cover crop.)
- site/cite: see cite/site
- sledgehammer
- softcover
- soilborne
- strap-leaved
- subscripts and superscripts: avoid using
- sulfur (not sulphur)
- sunroom
- SuperThrive
- taglines: Author taglines present a brief biography of the author and mention of an article previously printed in Orchids or elsewhere, plus the author's address. These vary in length and should be updated.
- telephone: not phone
- though: Change to "although" when it starts a sentence
- the fact that: use something else instead
- The New York Times
- through: not thru
- timberline
- Time of day: Time of day is expressed in figures, followed by lower case a.m. or p.m. not am/pm
- tipo; use typical or type. There is no variety tipo.
- tiptoe
- tip-top
- tobacco mosaic virus (TMV-O)
- tobacco rattle virus (TRV)
- tomato ringspot virus (TomRSV)
- top growth
- top-dress (v)
- topdressing (n)
- top-prune
- topside
- topsoil
- toward, upward, downward, forward, backward: do not add an s to these words in American usage; adding an s is common in the UK
- trademark names: Do not put in all caps (even if that way on the package). Follow by the type of product, e.g., Q-tipsTM cotton swab.

- travelog (not travelogue)
- tree fern (n), tree-fern (adj)
- Tribe as in Maxillaria Tribe: do not italicize as it is a grouping, but capitalize first letter in each word
- underside
- unique: no modifier needed
- *Vanda* Alliance
- vandaceous (common name for *Vanda* Alliance)
- very: weak word, eliminate from text when possible
- vice president
- viewfinder
- vinicolor
- Visa® : not all caps in editorial
- wannabes
- waterborne
- watercolor
- web
- website
- www
- wheelbarrow
- who/whom: who is the subject of a clause or sentence; whom is the object of a verb or preposition: who are you going to make head judge; to whom it may concern or the judge whom you selected. . .with such phrases it is easier to turn the sentence around and it becomes apparent that whom is the object: you selected whom
- wildflower
- window box
- windowsill
- woodland
- World Orchid Conference: not Congress. When referring to a specific one, spell it out the first time mentioned and then abbreviate, e.g., 14th World Orchid Conference and then 14th WOC. Do not use superscripts.
- worldwide
- year round but year-round (with hyphen) when an adjective