

Taxonomic nomenclature and sources of information**Taxonomic nomenclature**

The notes below mention several of the commonly recognized taxonomic levels used in classifying organisms. The broadest is kingdom, followed (in order of increasing specificity) by phylum or division, class, order, family, genus, species.

In the schedules for specific kinds of organisms, scientific terms are preferred in headings for taxonomic numbers below the kingdom level. If there are alternative scientific names still in current use, the preferred term is given in the heading, and the alternative names are given in a variant-name note. For example, Mycetozoa, Myxomycetes, Myxomycophyta, Myxomycota are given as variant names for Myxomycotina at 579.52. Most obsolete names have been dropped. If a common name is well established in the literature but does not have a clear-cut corresponding scientific term (or terms), the common name may be used alone, e.g., 598.412–.415 Ducks.

A scientific name given in a class-here note is usually that of a subordinate taxon that comprises all or most of the members of the group in the heading. For example, under 583.986 Paracryphiales, the class-here note gives Paracryphiaceae, the only family in the order.

An illustration of two terminology problems appears at 584.288 Laurales. The main family of this order is Lauraceae, which encompasses ca. 90 percent of the species of the order. The family is therefore given in a class here note, signifying that subdivisions can be added to the number for works on the family because it approximates the whole of the order.

Although commonly known as the laurel family, only a few species of Lauraceae, however, are individually known as laurels, while several plants of other orders are also called laurels. Since it is useful to know where to class comprehensive works on laurels, the including note reads, in part: “Including ... comprehensive works on laurels.” Being listed in an including note means that laurels (even when encompassing all plants called laurels) do not approximate the whole of the more than 3000 species in the order Laurales.

Classes of organisms have up to two including or class-here notes, for classifier convenience. The first note in a pair lists the scientific names, the second the common names.

Sources of taxonomic information

Taxonomic schedules usually follow the arrangement accepted in *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Other works that often prove helpful are the Tree of Life web project (tolweb.org), Wikipedia, and Wikispecies.

See also discussion at 579.24–.25; also at 579.3; also at 583–584; also at 599.