



Halton Region Master Gardeners

Serving the communities of Burlington, Hamilton, Milton & Oakville

What do the plant tags mean?

When I am buying plants, I always read the information on the attached tag, but I don't always know what it means. Can you help?

Plant information, whether on tags, in books, or online; is all designed to help gardeners grow better plants. Does “full sun” mean all-day exposure to direct sunlight? Can a “drought tolerant” perennial be left without water? The following is a summary of some important plant tag information and its meaning.

NAMES

- **COMMON NAME** – This is the name often used amongst gardeners, but often plants can have similar names. If you want to be sure you're getting the plant you want, check the Botanical Name.
- **BOTANICAL NAME (SCIENTIFIC NAME – LATIN NAME)** - This will contain the:
 - Genus
 - Specific epithet
 - Cultivar or Hybrid
 - For **Sunset Red Maple** (common name) the botanical name would be:

Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'
↑ ↑ ↑
(Genus) (specific epithet) (cultivar)

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS:



- **FULL SUN** – This means 6 hours of direct sun, including the middle of the day (i.e., 9am – 3pm)
- **PARTIAL SHADE** is an area receiving early morning sun (until 11:00am) or late afternoon sun (after 2:00pm).
- **FULL SHADE** actually means 2 to 3 hours of sun in early morning or after 4:00pm.

MOISTURE REQUIREMENTS:



While drought tolerant perennials, once established, can tolerate dry soil for a period of time, no plant prefers to be without water. All **new plants** require moisture until their roots are growing well. This will usually include watering throughout the first season as needed. Do research to find out which established plants can withstand dry conditions, and for how long.

Here is some other garden terminology defined.

PLANT LIFE CYCLES

- **Perennial** - A plant that requires more than two years to complete its life cycle. Usually the foliage dies back each winter, re-growing in the spring. A short-lived perennial, such as lupine, may last only two or three years (although it may re-seed to provide continuing plants).

- **Biennial** - A plant that takes two years to complete its life cycle, forming foliage the first year and blooming the second. Again, biennials may re-seed.
- **Annual** - Requires only one year to complete the life cycle

HARDINESS ZONES

The plants you buy at nurseries or garden centres may list either the Agriculture Canada zones or the USDA zones, which differ from each other. Many gardening books contain zone maps for reference. Zone ratings are best used as a guideline only. Many variables will affect the hardiness of individual plants.

- microclimates – do you have an especially warm area, protected from extreme weather, this may allow you to push the envelope with regards to hardiness
- elevation – if you're on a balcony you may need to go to 2 zones cooler than you would if you were planting in the ground. If you're in a valley, you may have frost pockets which could affect flowering and fruit production
- exposure – Your chosen site may be especially vulnerable to wind or quite protected by buildings and/or shrubs

SIZE – The size given is for the plant growing in good conditions over a period of time, usually a number of years, dependent on the normal life of the plant you've chosen. . This does not mean that the plant will stop growing at that time. In addition, if it's in an incredibly favourable location, it may well accelerate its growth and likewise if planted under a heavily rooted tree, its growth will be extremely slow.

***Other information may be provided by the grower. Read this carefully for a more complete understanding of the plant and its growth.**

FRONT

The series (SUPERTUNIA) and variety name (Rose Blast Charm) of the plant.
Think of it like a person's name written as SMITH, Jennifer (family name Smith, individual's name Jennifer).

Sun Requirements
How much sun this plant needs to grow well.

The botanical name of the plant, in Latin.
When looking for a specific kind of plant, use the botanical name rather than the common name as it is much more accurate for identification purposes.

Height
How tall you can expect this plant to grow.

QR Code
Scan this code with your smartphone to view a fact sheet on this plant as well as growing information, additional photos, combination ideas, and more.

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BACK

Patent/Propagation information
This information says that the plant is protected by a patent and may not be propagated.

Trademark information
This information says that the plant name's trademark is protected.

Habit
The shape in which this plant grows, for example: mounding, trailing, or upright.

Height
How tall the plant grows.

Zones
Indicates cold hardiness of a plant. If a plant is an annual in most zones, that will be stated here. Knowing the hardiness zone is most important for perennials and shrubs that live through the winter.

Water Needs
How moist the soil should remain consistently for this plant to grow well.

Features
Additional information about this plant that you may find helpful in growing it such as heat tolerance, drought tolerance, or that you won't have to trim off spent flowers for it to continue blooming.

Care
How easy this plant is to take care of.

Blooms
The time of year when this plant has flowers. This may vary a bit by climate.

Spacing
How far apart you should space each plant if planting more than one. Spacing gives you an idea of how wide this plant will grow.

Fertilizing Information
How often you should feed this plant. Most annuals require regular feedings to perform optimally.

Light Requirements
How much sun or shade this plant needs to grow. Full sun = 6 or more hours of direct sun per day. Part sun/Part shade= 4-6 hours of direct sun per day. Full shade= less than 4 hours of direct sun per day.

Uses
A guideline for where this plant grows best, whether in containers or in landscapes, though there are no absolute rules as to where you can or cannot plant.

www.provenwinners.com
Where to go for more information about this plant and other Proven Winners.