



2020 WSSA Standing Committee Report

Committee Name and Code: P22b Standardized Plant Names

Committee Chair: Karla Gage

Committee Members: Lauren Lazaro, Mark Czarnota, Joan Campbell, Shawn Askew, Camp Hand, Theresa Piskackova, Eugene Law, Brian Young (ex-officio), Carroll Moseley (ex-officio), Tom Mueller (ex-officio)

Board of Directors Liaison: Rob Richardson

Committee members rotating off and recommended replacements: None of the current members will rotate off the committee until 2022.

Summary of past year's activities: Since the P22b meeting at the 2020 WSSA annual meeting, the committee has been involved in regular meetings with USDA to plan a review of the species common names on the WSSA list. New members were added to the committee, and the committee has merged the WSSA weeds list with the USDA PLANTS database list to compare common names between WSSA and USDA. The committee is working with Gerry Moore and Chris Taliga (USDA) for further guidance.

- **Committee goals**

Provide recommendations for an updated, revised list of WSSA-sanctioned common names to the WSSA Board for review. The WSSA P22b subcommittee will work in cooperation with USDA PLANTS database (<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>) to either suggest changes to WSSA names to match USDA names, or provide a WSSA-sanctioned common name alternatives or additions to the USDA PLANTS names on the USDA website and database list.

Background and justification: Standardized common names are important for communication between WSSA and non-scientific audiences. As far as we know, this is the first comprehensive review of the WSSA list of common names of weeds in several

decades. This review is now timely for a number of reasons. This review has been initiated by Board suggestion to the P22b Standardized Plant Names Subcommittee. The review somewhat coincides with a USDA Plants database (USDA) website redesign plan. USDA Plants (<https://plants.usda.gov/>) is the taxonomic authority for the Cambridge weeds journals, as indicated in instructions for authors (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/weed-science/information/instructions-for-authors>). USDA Plants is commonly referenced, and the website has over 50,000 hits per day. Common name inconsistencies between WSSA and widely referenced sources of information, such as USDA Plants, can cause confusion in species identification and management. Additionally, some common names may have cultural, geopolitical, or religious symbolisms or references, and may be deemed offensive or insensitive. This review is an opportunity to quantify the number of divergent or potentially insensitive names, and bring these to the Board's attention.

Names may also be different because they are orthographic variants of one another. Orthographic variants may differ in their use of spaces or hyphens between compound words or an added apostrophe, for example. The etiological evolutionary process of the common name change usually starts with two words. Over time the words may be hyphenated and eventually merged. In many cases, the resulting merged words may seem awkward together with no space or hyphen (i.e. gianthyssop, burgherkin). In the case where the WSSA and USDA common names differ as orthographic variations, the committee may consider adopting the USDA orthographic variant if the orthographic variant provides separation of two words in an awkward compound word. There may need to be exceptions in the case of a usage issue, where the more awkward variant is the more highly referenced name. If the P22b committee does not choose to adopt the USDA orthographic variant, USDA Plants will be able to add the WSSA orthographic variant as WSSA-sanctioned. The committee has suggested changing WSSA's orthographic variant to match USDA's when the name in question is not a high-profile weed. In order to determine status of "high-profile" weeds, the committee will reference regional weed contest lists and the "Most Common and Troublesome" weed lists.

The target deadline for completion of the main objective will be determined by the committee. The common names that diverge between USDA Plants and WSSA will need to be evaluated by our committee, changed if warranted, and reported as a final list to USDA. If the WSSA and USDA names still diverge after committee review, then USDA has agreed to add a "WSSA-approved" name to their website listing for these species. For example, Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*) would still be listed as "carelessweed" by the USDA, but "Palmer amaranth" would also be listed as the WSSA-approved name. All common names will remain in the PLANTS database.

- **Committee accomplishments**

The review is currently underway. When the USDA and WSSA databases were merged for comparison, there were 5,423 lines in the database with several name duplicates. The committee has developed a tentative timeline to accomplish the review but will continue to work on standardizing the review process during the next meetings. The committee will meet monthly throughout the review period to address questions and ensure the greatest degree of standardization between reviewers as possible.

- **Impact of committee activities/accomplishments on membership, publications, policy, education, other, etc.**

There are no impacts to report yet.

- **WSSA funds requested if any?**

No funds are requested.

- **Current state of the committee's projects or activities?**

Activities will be ongoing for the next several months as we review common names.

- **Any new information posted on the WSSA website?**

There is no new information to post yet, but any suggested revisions to the WSSA weeds list will be presented to the Board. If approved, we will request that a revised list is posted on the website.

Summary of plans for next year (changes in goals, key initiatives, plan of action, etc.):

As the committee reviews common names, cases of divergent scientific names are being noted. Following the review of common names, the committee will move forward with a review of scientific names.

Recommendations for Board or Membership action (funds or other requests):

There are no recommendations for Board action at this time, but the committee welcomes questions or feedback.