



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

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Sorry! (I've always said my spelling is good but my typing is bad.)

Try number two – here goes!

Sedum reflexum 'Monstrosum Cristatum'

There, that looks better, doesn't it? Some would say "yes;" others - "No, who makes this stuff up?" Well, we know Carl Linnaeus started all this fuss. And, the conspiracy-theorist in me says it was so we would have lots to memorize in school to keep us out of trouble. But really, it's all about being able to identify a given plant and sell it confidently under a common name. But what sells better? The above binomial taxonomic latinized version or its more common translated version – 'Crested Monster' Stonecrop (or sometimes called 'Blue Spruce' Stonecrop)?



Let's try another. Do you prefer *Sedum dasyphyllum* 'Himalyan Skies' or Hairy-leafed Stonecrop 'Himalyan Skies' (or sometimes called Corsican Stonecrop)?

"Or sometimes" is the issue here.

There are so many common names, regional names, nicknames, let alone complete trashings of names for the same plant. Knowing a few species of a given genus is great; even just using the trademark or marketing name is wonderful. But a landscape contractor who sends in a driver to pick up 5 hydrangeas is really asking for trouble. The old saying is "Be careful what you ask for, you may get it!" The look on the driver's face when we ask them if they want "macrophylla, paniculata, arborescens, petiolaris, or quercifolia" is priceless. Our common response is "call the boss, or I get to pick!" Never, when someone asks for 5 Limelights is there a question of what to load. I have yet to be asked to load 5 *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight.'

The sales staff at CPC faces many daily challenges: Guess-the-Boxwood, Mind-Reading, Why-Do-I-Need-A-Tarp, I-Didn't-Bring-My-Checkbook, etc. Recently, my job description was extended to Phonetic Decoding. A landscape contractor's list included the item "faverna." Time and a little luck revealed the need for "viburnum" (what variety was still a mystery!) Just last week a whole

new category has been added to our experience. I call this one "Fantasy Island." Landscapers are now conjuring up names for plants from their own fanciful world (perhaps encouraged by drugs or alcohol).

Did you know CPC now sells "fern trees?" (You know who you are) Most of you call them "Tiger Eyes Sumac".

I know I must sound harsh and we understand there is a learning curve in all industries. But that's why we call it a curve! At CPC we DO perform miracles; we CAN fill most of your landscape needs. Someday my "fern tree" contractor will come in and ask for "Tiger Eyes Sumac" (or even better, he might ask for a "*Rhus typhina* 'Tiger Eyes'"). They grow up so fast!



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