

Labeling collection plants

In a reliable plant collection, all trees and shrubs should have legible and lasting labels containing relevant information.

A label should not be too light (wind-resistant), nor too heavy (bending branches) and must be weatherproof. We use flexible plastic labels of maximum 12cm long (depending on the length of the plant name) and 2 cm wide. They are ordered as thermoplastic rolls of 100 m and cut by us afterwards. The exact composition is not disclosed by the company.



This ID-label contains the scientific name, the origin (abbreviated: WLD stands for 'wild' origin', HIL for the nursery 'Hillier', PDS for plants cultivated by us or SPO for spontaneously grown plants etc. - see [list of source codes](#) in our catalogue) and the unique accession number of the plant in our database. This accession number begins with the year in which the plant was planted out in the collection and thus gives us an indication of the age of the plant. For plants of wild origin, we mention the location where the seeds were collected.

The label must also be legible. We engrave the information on the labels and are very happy about the results. The text does not wear off over time, as it mostly does in printed labels. Another advantage is that the dirtier they are, the more legible they become.

More arguments for choosing to engrave our own labels, are the need for a large amount of labels and the wish to keep the collection up-to-date at all times. We use a computer-controlled engraving machine on which the labels are manually placed, cut to size and engraved one by one.



The ID-labels are then hung in the plant with a binding wire. We use copper wire (0.05 mm² or thicker) with a black (or orange) plastic protection cover. The wire needs to be flexible in order to easily tie a knot. The wire is bought on rolls of 100 meters (available in large DIY or electricity shops) and cut into pieces of 50 cm. These pieces are then tied together with a rubber band to make them easily transportable.

When hanging the labels, enough space must be ensured for the growth of the plant, which is why we use wires of 50 cm. In order to easily locate the labels at a later stage, we hang them on a branch close to the trunk or in the heart of the shrub, but not too low as they could rapidly disappear underneath the mulch. We choose a living and sturdy branch so the label is safe for a while and does not easily get lost. The label should not be hung in a v-branching either, as the wire could easily get stuck and grow into the wood which in turn harms the plant.

Labels are tied loosely to the branch with a single knot made downwards to the label so it cannot grow into the wood. The knot should not be too tight so it can easily be untied when the label needs to be replaced or relocated. For *Hydrangea* and *Rosa* we use orange wires because they stand out more and can more easily be found between the leaves and spiny branches.

On trees we look for a low branch and hang the label on the base of this branch. If there are no low branches, we use a small eye screw (zinc-plated (Ø= 3 mm, L = 16 mm) and screw it into the stem. The eye should be vertical in order to minimize the damage to the tree when the wood grows over the screw.





The labels are regularly checked. Is the label still there? Are the binders and the labels still intact? Are the branches not strangled by the binders? Is the label still accessible? Is the scientific name still correct? Proper labeling of plants takes time but is worth the effort. A plant collection with correctly and clearly legible labels is so much more pleasant for the visitors. Without label, a plant immediately loses its collection value.

Our ID-labels are mainly for internal use. For visitors, we have placed display labels at the base of the plants. These larger labels (12 x 7.5 cm) on stakes mention the scientific name, the family to which the plant belongs, the region of provenance and 'Wild Origin' if the plant is grown from wild collected seed.



For perennials and bulbs we only use a simple numbered base label. Large display labels for every plant would create an overwhelming sloppy sight. Our mixed borders are frequently rearranged and simple labels make these changes easier and less expensive. The perennial plants list (listed by number) is available at the reception desk.