

LIST OF LATIN & GREEK ROOTS

The following list was produced originally for students on field courses, where they encountered large numbers of scientific names. It is reproduced here in the hope that

it might be a handy reference for other students. I would welcome additions and amendments.

Bill Bailey

a(n)- without
ab- away from
abduc- lead from
acanth- prickle
acer- without horns
acetabul- vinegar cup
aceto- acid
acin- cluster of grapes
acri- acid, sharp
acro- summit, top
actin- ray
acust- of hearing
ad- towards
adipo- fat
adventit- coming to
aegopod- goat-foot
aestiv- summer
affer- carrying to
agrest- rural, wild
agro(st)- field
al(i)- wing
alb- white
allant- sausage
allium garlic
alope- fox
altissim- tall
alve- pit, socket
ambly- blunt
ambul- walk
ammo- sand
amnio- fetal envelope
amoeb- change
amphi- both
amplex- clasping
ampulla flask
amygdala almond shaped organ
amyl- starch
an- without
ana- up, back, again
anatol- east
Anagallis delightful
anchus- bend, bay
andr- male
anemo- wind
angi- vessel
angul- angle
angusti- narrow
ankylo- stiff jointed
annu- annual
anomo- lawless, irregular
anser- geese
ante- before
antho- flower
anthro- man
anti- against, opposite
antri- cave
apo- separate, from
aqua- water
aquilin- eagle-beaked
arach- spider
arbor- tree
arc- arch
arch(ae/i)- ancient
arct(i/o)- north, bear
are- space
areni- sandy
arg(en)yr- silver
arthro- joint
artic- jointed
artio- even-numbered
arundin- reed-like
asc- sac
asper- rough
aspid- shield
ast(e)r- star
astrag- dice (originally a knuckle bone)
ater, atra- black
Atlas = a Titan (mythical giant) who supported the world on his shoulders
atr(ium)- vestibule

Atropos = one of the Fates who cut the thread of life
aur- ear, gold
austral- southern
auto- self
aux- grow
avi- bird
axi- axis
azyg- unpaired

baca- small berry
baccatus berried
baena- walking
balan- acorn
barb- beard
basi- at the bottom
bat(is) skate, ray
bdella- sucker
bell- pretty
bi- two
bi(o)a- life
blast- germ
bore- north
botry- small bunch of grapes
bov- ox
brachi- arm
brachy- short
brady- slow
branch- gill
brevi- short
brizo- to nod
bromo- oats, broom, shadow
bronch- windpipe
bucca- mouth cavity
bulbos- bulbous
bulba- bubble, flask
bullat- wrinkled
buno- hill
bursa- pouch, purse

caduci- temporary
caec- blind
caerul- sky blue
caespit- tufted
calam- reed, aspen
calc- stone
calli- beautiful
callos callous
calor- heat
calyx cup, chalice
camp- field
campanula bell
cani- dog
cap(it)- head
capill- hair
capsella small box
card- heart
carin- keel
car- flesh
carotid producing stupor
carp- seed, wrist
cary- nut
cata- down
cauda- tail
cav- hollow
centi- hundred
ceph(al)- head
cera(s)(t)- horn
cerc- horns, lobes, short tail
cerebro- brain
cerv- neck
ch(e)ir- hand
chaero- to please
chaet- bristle
chamae- on ground
chel- turtle
cheno- goose
chiasm- crossing
chil- lip
chlamy- outer garment
chlor- green
choan- funnel

chondr- cartilage
chord- cord
chorion membrane
chrom- colour
chrys- golden
chyl- fluid
chym- juice
cili- eyelash
ciner- ashen, grey
cipit- head
circum- around
cirr- tentacle
 (originally curl)
cl(e)ist- closed
clad- branch
clast- broken
clav- key
cleid- key
cleithr- bar, key
clin- bed, recline
cloaca sewer
coccus berry, grain
cochl- shell
coel- hollow
col(on) large intestine
coll- neck
collat- borne together
columella little column
com- with
commis- sent out
communis- colonial
commutat- changed
compact- compact
compress- flattened
con- with
conch- shell
condyl- knuckle
cono- cone
contra- opposite
convolvo- to entwine
copro- dung
cora(x)g- raven
corb- basket
cord- heart
corium- leather
com- horn
coron- crown
corp- body
cort- bark
cost- rib
cotyl- cup
crani- skull
crass- thick
crep- shoe
cribi- sieve
cric- ring
crispus curled
crist- crest
crosso- fringe, tassel
cru(ral)s- shank
cruci- cross-like
crypt- hidden
cten- comb
cune- wedge
cuspl- lance, point
cuti- skin
cyan- blue
cycl- circular
cyno- dog
cyst- capsule
cyt- cell

dactyl- finger
dasy- shaggy
deci- ten
decid- falling off
decuss- cross banding
deka- ten
delph- womb
delphis dolphin
demi- half
dendr- tree
dent- tooth
derm- skin
dero- persisting
desmo- band

deut- second
dextro- right
di(a)- two
dia- through
didym- twin
digit- finger
dino- terrible
diplo- double
dipso- thirst
dissect- deeply cut
dodeca- twelve
dont- tooth
dors- back
drom- quick running
dubi- doubtful
dulci- sweet
duo- two
dur- hard

echino- spiny
echis- viper
eco- house
ecto- outside
effer- carrying away
effusus loosely spreading
ejacul- throw out
elasma- plate, flat
elat- tall
-ell- diminutive
embio- living
embo- thrown in
endo- inside
engy- narrow
ensi- sword
entofenter- inside
eo- dawn, east
epi- upon
equi- horse, equal
erect- upright
erythr- red
esculent- edible
ethm- sieve
eu- well, very
eury- wide
ex- out of
exiguus slender
exo- outside
extens- draw out
extra- beyond
extrins- coming from

fab- bean
falc- sickle-shaped
fallax false
fasc(ic)- bundle
fatuus foolish, useless
feli- cat
fer- carry
ficar- fig-like
fil- thread
fistul- hollow, tube
flacc- flabby
flav- yellow
flexu- wavy
flocculus lock of wool
fluitans floating
foen- hay
foetid- foul smelling
foli- leaf
fontan- fountain
foramen opening
fornix vault
fovea shallow round depression
fruticans shrubby
fund- to pour
furc(ul)- fork

gal- milk
gale- weasel
gall- of France
gangli- knot
gano- shining
gast(e)r- stomach, pouch

gemin- twins
gemma- bud
genu- knee, joint
geranium crane
gerro- shield
gladi- sword
glen- socket
glia- glue
glom(er)- ball of yarn
glo(ss)it- tongue
glut- sticky
gl(ul)y- sweet
glypt- carved, engraved
gnaph- wool
gnath- jaw
goni- angle
gono- seed
gracil- slender
gram- of grass
gymn- naked
gyn- woman
gyr- turning

haem- blood
hal- salty
hallu(x)ci- big toe
hamat- hook
haplo- single, simple
hasta(t)- spear-tip shape
hect- hundred
heira- hawk
helios sun
helminth worm
helo- wart
hemi- half
hepa(r)t- liver
hepta- seven
hetero- different
hex- six
hibem- winter
hippo- horse
hirsut- hairy
hispid- bristly
histri- actor
holo- complete, whole
homo- man, same
homal- flat
hormon- that which excites
hortens- of gardens
humus ground
hyal- glassy
hydr- water
hyemal- winter
hyo- U-shaped
hyper- above
hypo- beneath

ichthy- fish
-ida like
-idae ending of zoological family names
ileum twisted
impar unpaired
in- in, not
-in- diminutive
-inae ending of zoological sub-family names
incarnat- flesh coloured
incis- cutting in
incus anvil
inermis unarmed
inflexis rigid
infra- under
inter- between
intra- within
iod- violet
-iola diminutive
iris rainbow
iso- equal
iter- passage

jug- yoked together

<i>junc-</i> to bind	<i>nema-</i> hair	<i>pher-</i> carry	<i>rhin-</i> nose, snout	<i>tarsus</i> ankle
<i>ket-</i> ketone	<i>memoral-</i> in woods	<i>phil-</i> love	<i>rhiz-</i> root	<i>tect-</i> covered
<i>kilo-</i> thousand	<i>neo-</i> new	<i>phloe-</i> tree bark	<i>rhodo-</i> red	<i>tegmen-</i> covering
	<i>neph-</i> kidney	<i>phor-</i> carry	<i>rhynch-</i> snout	<i>tel(eo)-</i> far, end
<i>labi-</i> lips	<i>neur-</i> nerve	<i>pho(s)to-</i> light	<i>-rrh-</i> flow	<i>teleo-</i> complete
<i>labyrinth</i> tortuous	<i>nictitat-</i> winking	<i>phragm-</i> fence	<i>rode-</i> gnaw	<i>temno-</i> cut
<i>passage</i>	<i>nigr-</i> black	<i>phren-</i> diaphragm, mind	<i>rogos-</i> wrinkled	<i>tenacul-</i> holding
<i>lacer-</i> torn	<i>non-</i> not	<i>phyl-</i> tribe	<i>rostr-</i> beak, prow	<i>tensor-</i> spread like a tent
<i>lacrim-</i> tears	<i>nona-</i> nine	<i>phyll-</i> leaf	<i>rota-</i> turn, wheel	<i>tenuis</i> slender
<i>lact-</i> milk	<i>noth-</i> spurious	<i>physa</i> bladder	<i>rub(e)r-</i> red	<i>ter(t)-</i> three
<i>lacuna-</i> space	<i>notho-</i> southern	<i>physio-</i> nature	<i>rumen-</i> throat	<i>teres-</i> round
<i>laevo-</i> left	<i>noto-</i> back, south	<i>phyto-</i> plant		<i>tetr-</i> four
<i>lagna</i> flask	<i>nu(c)l-</i> nut	<i>pil-</i> hair	<i>sacchar-</i> sugar	<i>textilis</i> of textiles
<i>lamella</i> leaf, layer	<i>nuch-</i> back of neck	<i>pinna-</i> pine cone	<i>saccul-</i> little sac	<i>thalam-</i> chamber, bed
<i>lan(at)-</i> wool	<i>nucle-</i> little nut	<i>pinnat-</i> feather-shaped	<i>sacr-</i> sacred	<i>thalass-</i> sea
<i>lanceol(at)-</i> lance-shaped	<i>nud-</i> naked	<i>pisum</i> pea	<i>sagitta</i> arrow	<i>theca-</i> case
<i>lati-</i> broad	<i>nulli-</i> none	<i>pisc-</i> fish	<i>sal-</i> salt	<i>thel-</i> nipple, female
<i>lecith-</i> egg yolk	<i>nutans</i> nodding	<i>plac-</i> plate, tablet	<i>sanguini-</i> bloody	<i>therm-</i> heat
<i>lemm-</i> skin, husk		<i>plagio-</i> oblique	<i>sapon-</i> soapy	<i>thero-</i> breast, mammal
<i>lens-</i> lentil, bean	<i>obtect-</i> concealed	<i>plan-</i> flat	<i>sarc-</i> flesh	<i>thyreo-</i> large shield
<i>leo(n)-</i> lion	<i>obturat-</i> closed	<i>platy-</i> flat, broad	<i>sativus</i> cultivated	<i>tinctori-</i> of dyes
<i>lepid-</i> scale	<i>obtus-</i> blunt	<i>plec(o)t-</i> twist, pluck	<i>saur-</i> lizard	<i>tom-</i> cut
<i>lepto-</i> slender	<i>occiden-</i> Western	<i>plesio-</i> near	<i>scala-</i> ladder	<i>tomentos-</i> densely
<i>leuc-</i> white	<i>occip-</i> back of head	<i>pleth-</i> full	<i>scalene</i> uneven	woolly
<i>levator</i> lifter	<i>oct-</i> eight	<i>pleur-</i> side	<i>scaph-</i> anything hollow,	<i>torpe-</i> numb
<i>lign-</i> wood	<i>odont-</i> tooth	<i>plex-</i> interwoven	bowl, ship	<i>toxo-</i> arrow, dart
<i>ligul-</i> strap-shaped	<i>odor-</i> fragrant	<i>plica-</i> fold	<i>schizo-</i> split	<i>trab-</i> beam
<i>lin-</i> line	<i>oecious-</i> house of	<i>plum-</i> feather	<i>scler-</i> hard	<i>trachy-</i> rough
<i>ling-</i> tongue	<i>oed-</i> swollen	<i>pneu(mo)st-</i> air, lung	<i>scop-</i> gaze, small owl,	<i>trago-</i> goat
<i>lip-</i> fat	<i>oen-</i> wine	<i>pod-</i> foot	broom, shadow	<i>trans-</i> across
<i>lith-</i> stone	<i>oesoph-</i> gullet	<i>pogo-</i> beard	<i>scut-</i> shield	<i>trapez-</i> four sided, table
<i>log(y)-</i> discourse	<i>officinal-</i> used in	<i>polio-</i> grey	<i>scyph-</i> cup	<i>trema-</i> hole
<i>loph-</i> crest	medicine	<i>polit-</i> polished	<i>seba-</i> tallow, wax	<i>tremulus</i> trembling
<i>lumen-</i> cavity	<i>-oid</i> like	<i>poll(ex)-</i> thumb	<i>sect-</i> cut	<i>tri-</i> three
<i>luna-</i> moon	<i>olecran-</i> skull of elbow	<i>poly-</i> many	<i>segetum</i> in cornfields	<i>trich-</i> hair
<i>lupus</i> wolf	<i>oleo-</i> oily	<i>pons</i> bridge	<i>selen-</i> moon	<i>trivialis</i> trivial
<i>lute-</i> yellow	<i>olfact-</i> smelling	<i>porc-</i> pig	<i>sella-</i> saddle, seat	<i>troch-</i> wheel
<i>lymph</i> clear water	<i>oligo-</i> few	<i>porphyr-</i> purple	<i>semi-</i> half	<i>trop-</i> turning
<i>lysis-</i> loosen	<i>oliva</i> olive	<i>porta</i> gate	<i>sept-</i> seven, wall	<i>troph-</i> feed
	<i>omaso-</i> paunch	<i>post-</i> after	<i>ser(ou)-</i> any body fluid	<i>tussi-</i> cough
	<i>oment-</i> fat skin	<i>potam-</i> river	<i>serot-</i> late	
<i>macr-</i> large	<i>omm-</i> eye	<i>potero-</i> drinking cup	<i>serrat-</i> saw-toothed	<i>uliginosus</i> in marshes
<i>macula-</i> spot	<i>omo-</i> shoulder	<i>praeco-</i> early	<i>set-</i> hair	<i>-ul-</i> diminutive
<i>magni-</i> large	<i>omphalo-</i> navel	<i>pratens-</i> in meadows	<i>sex-</i> six	<i>ulo-</i> woolly
<i>maj-</i> greater	<i>onto-</i> existing	<i>pre-</i> before	<i>simi-</i> monkey	<i>ultra-</i> above
<i>mala-</i> cheek	<i>oo-</i> egg	<i>prim-</i> first	<i>sinus</i> hollow, bay	<i>umbilic-</i> navel
<i>malleus</i> hammer, mallet	<i>op(t)-</i> eye	<i>pro-</i> in front of	<i>sipho-</i> tube	<i>un-</i> one
<i>mamma-</i> breast	<i>operculum</i> little cover	<i>proct-</i> anus	<i>sol-</i> sun	<i>unc-</i> hook
<i>mandib-</i> lower jaw	<i>ophi-</i> snake	<i>procumbens</i> lying flat	<i>soma-</i> body	<i>ungui-</i> nail, claw
<i>manu-</i> hand	<i>ophthalmo-</i> eye	<i>profund-</i> deep	<i>somni-</i> sleep	<i>ungul-</i> hoof, claw
<i>maritim-</i> of the sea	<i>opistho-</i> behind	<i>proliger-</i> bear offspring	<i>specios-</i> showy	<i>urens</i> burn
<i>marsupium</i> pouch	<i>opoter-</i> either	<i>prom-</i> first	<i>sperm-</i> seed	<i>uro-</i> tail
<i>masseter</i> chewer	<i>or-</i> mouth	<i>proso-</i> front	<i>sphen-</i> wedge	<i>urs-</i> of bears
<i>mast-</i> nipple	<i>orbi-</i> circle	<i>prostratus</i> lying flat	<i>sphinct-</i> closing	<i>utricul-</i> little skin bag
<i>mat(e)r-</i> mother	<i>orch-</i> testicle	<i>prot-</i> first	<i>spinos-</i> spiny	<i>uv(e)la-</i> grapes
<i>maxi-</i> large	<i>oriental-</i> Eastern	<i>prunus</i> plum	<i>spondyl-</i> vertebra	
<i>maxill-</i> jaw	<i>ornith-</i> bird	<i>psamma-</i> sand	<i>squalid-</i> squalid	<i>vagina</i> sheath
<i>maxim-</i> greatest	<i>ortho-</i> straight	<i>pseud-</i> false	<i>squam-</i> scale	<i>vagus</i> wandering
<i>meatus</i> passage	<i>os(t)i-</i> mouth	<i>psycho-</i> mind	<i>squarros-</i> spreading at	<i>vas</i> vessel
<i>medi-</i> medium	<i>os(s)t-</i> bone	<i>psychro-</i> cold	tips	<i>velum</i> veil
<i>medull-</i> marrow	<i>ostrac</i> shell	<i>pter-</i> wing, fern	<i>stae(rit)-</i> fat	<i>ven-</i> vein
<i>mega-</i> large	<i>ot-</i> ear	<i>ptyal-</i> saliva	<i>sta(silt)-</i> standing	<i>ventr-</i> belly
<i>mel(l)i-</i> honey	<i>ovi-</i> sheep	<i>pubescens</i> downy	<i>steg-</i> covering	<i>verd-</i> green
<i>melan-</i> black	<i>ovo-</i> egg	<i>pubi-</i> sexuality mature	<i>stell-</i> star	<i>veris</i> true
<i>menin(x,g)-</i> membrane	<i>oxy-</i> sharp	<i>pulmo-</i> lung	<i>steno-</i> narrow	<i>verm-</i> worm
<i>meno-</i> moon		<i>pungens</i> pungent	<i>stereo-</i> solid	<i>vem-</i> spring
<i>mer-</i> part		<i>pusill-</i> very small	<i>steril-</i> sterile	<i>versi-</i> various
<i>meso-</i> middle	<i>pachy-</i> thick	<i>pygo-</i> rump	<i>stern-</i> breastbone	<i>vesic-</i> blister
<i>meta-</i> after	<i>palae-</i> old	<i>pyl-</i> gate	<i>stom-</i> mouth	<i>vesper-</i> evening, western
<i>micro-</i> small	<i>palli(um)</i> mantle	<i>pyo-</i> pus	<i>strat-</i> layer	<i>vill-</i> shaggy hair, velvet
<i>milli-</i> thousand	<i>pallid-</i> pale	<i>pyro-</i> heat, fire	<i>strept-</i> twisted	<i>virens</i> green
<i>mini-</i> smaller	<i>palustri-</i> in marshes	<i>pyrus</i> pear	<i>strictus</i> upright, stiff	<i>visc-</i> organs of body cavity
<i>minim-</i> smallest	<i>pan-</i> all		<i>strigos-</i> having stiff	<i>vita-</i> life
<i>mirabile</i> wonderful	<i>par(a)-</i> near	<i>quadr-</i> four	bristles	<i>vitell-</i> yolk
<i>miss-</i> sent	<i>pane-</i> wall	<i>quater-</i> four	<i>stroph-</i> turning	<i>vitr-</i> glass
<i>mito-</i> thread	<i>parvi-</i> little	<i>quin(t)que</i> five	<i>styl-</i> column	<i>vora-</i> devour
<i>mixt-</i> mingle	<i>patella</i> small dish		<i>sub-</i> below	<i>vulgaris</i> common
<i>moll-</i> soft	<i>patens</i> spreading	<i>rach-</i> spine	<i>sucr-</i> sugar	<i>vulp-</i> fox
<i>monit-</i> string of beads	<i>pect(or)-</i> chest	<i>radi-</i> root	<i>sulc-</i> furrow	
<i>mono-</i> one	<i>pectin-</i> comb-like	<i>ram-</i> branching	<i>super-</i> beyond	<i>xanth-</i> yellow
<i>montan-</i> of mountains	<i>ped-</i> foot, child	<i>ran-</i> frog	<i>supin-</i> lying back	<i>xen-</i> stranger
<i>morph-</i> form	<i>pellucid</i> shining through	<i>rapa</i> turnip	<i>supra-</i> above	<i>xer-</i> dry
<i>motor-</i> mover	<i>pene-</i> almost	<i>raph-</i> seam	<i>sutur-</i> seam	<i>xiphi-</i> sword
<i>multi-</i> many	<i>pent-</i> five	<i>rect-</i> straight	<i>sym-</i> with	<i>xyl-</i> wood
<i>mural-</i> walls	<i>per(i)-</i> through, beyond	<i>reflex-</i> bent back	<i>syn-</i> with	
<i>muri-</i> mouse	<i>peregrin-</i> foreign	<i>ren-</i> kidney	<i>syrrin(g)l-</i> pipe	<i>zo-</i> animal
<i>myo-</i> muscle, mouse	<i>peri-</i> around	<i>repens</i> crawling	<i>sys-</i> with	<i>zon-</i> girdle
<i>myri-</i> countless	<i>persic-</i> peach	<i>reptans</i> crawling		<i>zyg-</i> yoke
<i>myx-</i> mucous	<i>petr-</i> rock	<i>retic-</i> network	<i>tachy-</i> fast	
<i>myz-</i> sucker	<i>phaeo-</i> dark	<i>retina</i> little net	<i>tact-</i> touch	
	<i>phag-</i> eat	<i>retro-</i> behind, backward	<i>taenia-</i> ribbon	
<i>na(r)s-</i> nose	<i>phalan(g)l-</i> close	<i>rhabd-</i> rod	<i>talus-</i> ankle	
<i>necro-</i> dead	formation of troops	<i>rhach-</i> spine	<i>tapetum</i> carpet	
<i>necto-</i> swimming	<i>phalar-</i> shining	<i>rhage-</i> tear, rent	<i>tard-</i> late	
	<i>phanero-</i> visible			