

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	<i>Atropos</i> = one of the Fates who cut the thread of life	<i>chondr-</i> cartilage	<i>deut-</i> second	<i>gemin-</i> twins
ab- away from	<i>aur-</i> ear, gold	<i>chord-</i> cord	<i>dextro-</i> right	<i>gemm-</i> bud
abduc- lead from	<i>austral-</i> southern	<i>chorion</i> membrane	<i>di(a)-</i> two	<i>genu-</i> knee, joint
acanth- prickle	<i>auto-</i> self	<i>chrom-</i> colour	<i>dia-</i> through	<i>geranium</i> crane
acer- without horns	<i>aux-</i> grow	<i>chrys-</i> golden	<i>didym-</i> twin	<i>gerro-</i> shield
acetabul- vinegar cup	<i>avi-</i> bird	<i>chyl-</i> fluid	<i>digit-</i> finger	<i>gladi-</i> sword
aceto- acid	<i>axi-</i> axis	<i>chym-</i> juice	<i>dino-</i> terrible	<i>glen-</i> socket
acin- cluster of grapes	<i>azyg-</i> unpaired	<i>cili-</i> eyelash	<i>diplo-</i> double	<i>glia-</i> glue
acri- acid, sharp	<i>baca-</i> small berry	<i>ciner-</i> ashen, grey	<i>dipso-</i> thirst	<i>glom(er)-</i> ball of yarn
acro- summit, top	<i>baccatus</i> berried	<i>cipit-</i> head	<i>dissect-</i> deeply cut	<i>glo(ss/it)-</i> tongue
actin- ray	<i>baena-</i> walking	<i>circum-</i> around	<i>dodeca-</i> twelve	<i>glut-</i> sticky
acus- of hearing	<i>balan-</i> acom	<i>cirr-</i> tentacle	<i>dont-</i> tooth	<i>gly(ul)y-</i> sweet
ad- towards	<i>barb-</i> beard	<i>(originally curl)</i>	<i>dors-</i> back	<i>glypt-</i> carved,
adipo- fat	<i>basi-</i> at the bottom	<i>cl(e)ist-</i> closed	<i>drom-</i> quick running	engraved
advent- coming to	<i>bat(is)</i> skate, ray	<i>clad-</i> branch	<i>dubi-</i> doubtful	<i>gnaph-</i> wool
aegopod- goat-foot	<i>bdella-</i> sucker	<i>clast-</i> broken	<i>dulci-</i> sweet	<i>gnath-</i> jaw
aestiv- summer	<i>bell-</i> pretty	<i>clav-</i> key	<i>duo-</i> two	<i>goni-</i> angle
affer- carrying to	<i>bl-</i> two	<i>cleid-</i> key	<i>dur-</i> hard	<i>gono-</i> seed
agrest- rural, wild	<i>bi(o)a-</i> life	<i>cleithr-</i> bar, key	<i>echino-</i> spiny	<i>gracil-</i> slender
agro(st)- field	<i>blast-</i> germ	<i>clin-</i> bed, recline	<i>echis-</i> viper	<i>gram-</i> of grass
al(i)- wing	<i>bore-</i> north	<i>cloaca</i> sewer	<i>eco-</i> house	<i>gymn-</i> naked
alb- white	<i>botry-</i> small bunch of grapes	<i>coccus</i> berry, grain	<i>ecto-</i> outside	<i>gyn-</i> woman
allant- sausage	<i>bov-</i> ox	<i>cochl-</i> shell	<i>effer-</i> carrying away	<i>gyr-</i> turning
allium garlic	<i>brachi-</i> arm	<i>coel-</i> hollow	<i>effusus</i> loosely spreading	
alopec- fox	<i>brachy-</i> short	<i>col(on)</i> large intestine		
altissim- tall	<i>brady-</i> slow	<i>coll-</i> neck	<i>ejacul-</i> throw out	<i>haem-</i> blood
alve- pit, socket	<i>branch-</i> gill	<i>collat-</i> borne together	<i>elasma-</i> plate, flat	<i>hal-</i> salty
ambly- blunt	<i>brevi-</i> short	<i>columella</i> little column	<i>elat-</i> tall	<i>hallu(x/ci)-</i> big toe
ambul- walk	<i>brizo-</i> to nod	<i>com-</i> with	<i>-ell-</i> diminutive	<i>hamat-</i> hook
ammo- sand	<i>bromo-</i> oats, broom, shadow	<i>commis-</i> sent out	<i>embio-</i> living	<i>haplo-</i> single, simple
amnio- fetal envelope	<i>bronch-</i> windpipe	<i>communis-</i> colonial	<i>embol-</i> thrown in	<i>hasta(t)-</i> spear-tip
amoeb- change	<i>bucca-</i> mouth cavity	<i>commutat-</i> changed	<i>endo-</i> inside	<i>hect-</i> hundred
amphi- both	<i>bulbos-</i> bulbous	<i>compact-</i> compact	<i>endo-</i> inside	<i>heira-</i> hawk
amplex- clasping	<i>bulfa-</i> bubble, flask	<i>compress-</i> flattened	<i>engy-</i> narrow	<i>helios</i> sun
ampulla flask	<i>bullat-</i> wrinkled	<i>con-</i> with	<i>ensi-</i> sword	<i>helminth</i> worm
amygdala almond shaped organ	<i>buno-</i> hill	<i>conch-</i> shell	<i>ento/enter-</i> inside	<i>heho-</i> wart
amyl- starch	<i>bursa-</i> pouch, purse	<i>condyl-</i> knuckle	<i>eo-</i> dawn, east	<i>hemi-</i> half
an- without	<i>caduci-</i> temporary	<i>cono-</i> cone	<i>epi-</i> upon	<i>hepa(r/t)-</i> liver
ana- up, back, again	<i>caec-</i> blind	<i>contra-</i> opposite	<i>equi-</i> horse, equal	<i>hepta-</i> seven
anatol- east	<i>caerul-</i> sky blue	<i>convolvo-</i> to entwine	<i>erect-</i> upright	<i>hetero-</i> different
Anagallis delightful	<i>caespit-</i> tufted	<i>copro-</i> dung	<i>erythr-</i> red	<i>hex-</i> six
anchus- bend, bay	<i>calam-</i> reed, aspen	<i>cora(x/g)-</i> raven	<i>esculent-</i> edible	<i>hibern-</i> winter
andr- male	<i>calc-</i> stone	<i>corb-</i> basket	<i>ethm-</i> sieve	<i>hippo-</i> horse
anemo- wind	<i>calli-</i> beautiful	<i>cord-</i> heart	<i>eu-</i> well, very	<i>hirsut-</i> hairy
angl- vessel	<i>callos-</i> callous	<i>corium-</i> leather	<i>cury-</i> wide	<i>hispid-</i> bristly
angul- angle	<i>calor-</i> heat	<i>corn-</i> horn	<i>ex-</i> out of	<i>histri-</i> actor
angusti- narrow	<i>calyx</i> cup, chalice	<i>coron-</i> crown	<i>exiguus</i> slender	<i>holo-</i> complete, whole
ankyo- stiff jointed	<i>camp-</i> field	<i>corp-</i> body	<i>exo-</i> outside	<i>homo-</i> man, same
annu- annual	<i>campanula</i> bell	<i>cort-</i> bark	<i>extens-</i> draw out	<i>homal-</i> flat
anomo- lawless, irregular	<i>cani-</i> dog	<i>cost-</i> rib	<i>extra-</i> beyond	<i>hormon-</i> that which excites
anser- geese	<i>cap(itt)-</i> head	<i>cotyl-</i> cup	<i>extrins-</i> coming from	<i>hortens-</i> of gardens
ante- before	<i>capill-</i> hair	<i>crani-</i> skull	<i>fab-</i> bean	<i>humus</i> ground
antho- flower	<i>capsella</i> small box	<i>crass-</i> thick	<i>falc-</i> sickle-shaped	<i>hyal-</i> glassy
anthro- man	<i>card-</i> heart	<i>crep-</i> shoe	<i>fallax</i> false	<i>hydr-</i> water
anti- against, opposite	<i>carin-</i> keel	<i>crib-</i> sieve	<i>fasc(ic)-</i> bundle	<i>hyemal-</i> winter
antr- cave	<i>cam-</i> flesh	<i>cric-</i> ring	<i>fatuus</i> foolish, useless	<i>hyo-</i> U-shaped
apo- separate, from	<i>carotid</i> producing stupor	<i>crispus</i> curled	<i>fel-</i> cat	<i>hyper-</i> above
aqua- water	<i>carp-</i> seed, wrist	<i>crest-</i> crest	<i>fer-</i> carry	<i>hypo-</i> beneath
aquillin- eagle-beaked	<i>cary-</i> nut	<i>crosso-</i> fringe, tassel	<i>ficar-</i> fig-like	<i>ichthy-</i> fish
arach- spider	<i>cata-</i> down	<i>cru(r/a)s-</i> shank	<i>fil-</i> thread	<i>-ida</i> like
arbor- tree	<i>cauda-</i> tail	<i>cruci-</i> cross-like	<i>filstul-</i> hollow, tube	<i>-idae</i> ending of zoological family names
arc- arch	<i>cav-</i> hollow	<i>crypt-</i> hidden	<i>flacc-</i> flabby	<i>ileum</i> twisted
arch(aeli)- ancient	<i>centi-</i> hundred	<i>cten-</i> comb	<i>flav-</i> yellow	<i>impar</i> unpaired
arct(i/o)- north, bear	<i>ceph(a/l)-</i> head	<i>cune-</i> wedge	<i>flexu-</i> wavy	<i>in-</i> in, not
are- space	<i>cera(s)(t)-</i> horn	<i>cusp-</i> lance, point	<i>flocculus</i> lock of wool	<i>-in-</i> diminutive
areni- sandy	<i>cer-</i> horns, lobes, short tail	<i>cuti-</i> skin	<i>fluitans</i> floating	<i>-inae</i> ending of zoological sub-family names
arg(en/yr)- silver	<i>cerebro-</i> brain	<i>cyan-</i> blue	<i>foen-</i> hay	<i>incarnat-</i> flesh coloured
arthro- joint	<i>cerv-</i> neck	<i>cycl-</i> circular	<i>foetid-</i> foul smelling	<i>incis-</i> cutting in
artic- jointed	<i>ch(e)ir-</i> hand	<i>cyno-</i> dog	<i>foli-</i> leaf	<i>incus</i> anvil
artio- even-numbered	<i>chaero-</i> to please	<i>cyst-</i> capsule	<i>fontan-</i> fountain	<i>inermis</i> unarmed
arundin- reed-like	<i>chaet-</i> bristle	<i>cyt-</i> cell	<i>foramen</i> opening	<i>inflexis</i> rigid
asc- sac	<i>chamae-</i> on ground	<i>dactyl-</i> finger	<i>fovea</i> shallow round depression	<i>infra-</i> under
asper- rough	<i>chel-</i> turtle	<i>dasy-</i> shaggy	<i>fruticans</i> shrubby	<i>inter-</i> between
aspid- shield	<i>cheno-</i> goose	<i>decid-</i> ten	<i>fund-</i> to pour	<i>intra-</i> within
ast(e)r- star	<i>chiasm-</i> crossing	<i>decid-</i> falling off	<i>furc(u)l-</i> fork	<i>iod-</i> violet
astrag- dice (originally a knuckle bone)	<i>chil-</i> lip	<i>decuss-</i> cross banding	<i>gal-</i> milk	<i>-iola</i> diminutive
ater,atra- black	<i>chlor-</i> outer garment	<i>deka-</i> ten	<i>gale-</i> weasel	<i>iris</i> rainbow
Atlas = a Titan (mythical giant) who supported the world on his shoulders	<i>chlor-</i> green	<i>delph-</i> womb	<i>gall-</i> of France	<i>iso-</i> equal
atrium- vestibule	<i>choan-</i> funnel	<i>dem-</i> half	<i>gangli-</i> knot	<i>iter-</i> passage
		<i>dent-</i> tooth	<i>gano-</i> shining	
		<i>derm-</i> skin	<i>gast(e)l-</i> stomach, pouch	
		<i>dero-</i> persisting		
		<i>desmo-</i> band		

jung(junc- to bind	nema- hair	pher- carry	rhin- nose, snout	tarsus ankle
ket- ketone	nemoral- in woods	phil- love	rhiz- root	tect- covered
kilo- thousand	neo- new	phloe- tree bark	rhodo- red	tegmen- covering
labi- lips	neph- kidney	phor- carry	rhynch- snout	tel(e/o)- far, end
labyrinth tortuous	neur- nerve	pho(s/to)- light	-rrh- flow	teleo- complete
passage	nictitid- winking	phragm- fence	rode- gnaw	temno- cut
lacer- torn	nigr- black	phren- diaphragm, mind	rogos- wrinkled	tenacul- holding
lacrim- tears	non- not	phyl- tribe	rostr- beak, prow	tentor- spread like a tent
lact- milk	nona- nine	phyll- leaf	rotal- turn, wheel	tenuis slender
lacuna- space	noth- spurious	physio- nature	rub(e)r- red	ter(3)- three
laevo- left	notho- southern	phyto- plant	rumen- throat	teres- round
lagena flask	noto- back, south	pil- hair	sacchar- sugar	tetr- four
lamella leaf, layer	nu(c/x)- nut	pinea- pine cone	saccul- little sac	textilis of textiles
lan(at)- wool	nuch- back of neck	pinnal- feather-shaped	sacr- sacred	thalam- chamber, bed
lanceol(at)- lance-shaped	nucle- little nut	pisum pea	sagitta arrow	thalass- sea
lati- broad	nud- naked	pisc- fish	sal- salt	theca- case
lecit- egg yolk	nulli- none	placi- plate, tablet	sanguini- bloody	thel- nipple, female
lemm- skin, husk	nutans nodding	plagi(o/t)- twist, pluck	sapon- soapy	therm- heat
lens- lentil, bean	obtect- concealed	plan- flat	sarc- flesh	thero- breast, mammal
leo(n)- lion	obturat- closed	platy- flat, broad	sativus cultivated	thyreo- large shield
lepid- scale	obtusi- blunt	plec(o/t)- twist, pluck	saur- lizard	tinctori- of dyes
lepto- slender	occiden- Western	pleso- near	scala- ladder	tom- cut
leuc- white	occip- back of head	pleth- full	scalene uneven	tomentos- densely
levator lifter	oct- eight	pleur- side	scaph- anything hollow,	woolly
ligin- wood	odont- tooth	plex- interwoven	bowl, ship	torpe- numb
ligul- strap-shaped	odor- fragrant	plica- fold	schizo- split	toxo- arrow, dart
lin- line	oeclus- house of	plum- feather	scler- hard	trab- beam
ling- tongue	oed- swollen	pneu(mo/st)- air, lung	scop- gaze, small owl,	trachy- rough
lip- fat	oen- wine	pod- foot	broom, shadow	trago- goat
lith- stone	oesoph- gullet	pogo- beard	scut- shield	trans- across
log(y)- discourse	officinal- used in	polia- grey	scyph- cup	trapez- four sided, table
loph- crest	medicine	polit- polished	seba- tallow, wax	trrema- hole
lumen- cavity	-old like	polli(ex)- thumb	sect- cut	tremulans trembling
luna- moon	olecran- skull of elbow	poly- many	segetum in cornfields	tri- three
lupus wolf	oleo- oily	pons bridge	selon- moon	trich- hair
lute- yellow	olfact- smelling	porc- pig	sell- saddle, seat	trivialis trivial
lymph clear water	oligo- few	porphyr- purple	semi- half	troch- wheel
lysis- loosen	oliva olive	porta gate	sept- seven, wall	trop- turning
macr- large	omaso- paunch	post- after	ser(o/u)- any body fluid	troph- feed
macula spot	oment- fat skin	potam- river	serot- late	tussi- cough
magni- large	omm- eye	potero- drinking cup	serrat- saw-toothed	uliginosus in marshes
maj- greater	omo- shoulder	praeco- early	set- hair	-ul- diminutive
mala- cheek	omphalo- navel	pratens- in meadows	sex- six	ulo- wooly
malleus hammer, mallet	onto- existing	pre- before	simi- monkey	ultra- above
mamma- breast	oo- egg	prim- first	sinus hollow, bay	umbilic- navel
mandib- lower jaw	op(t)- eye	pro- in front of	siph- tube	un- one
manu- hand	operculum little cover	procot- anus	sol- sun	unc- hook
maritim- of the sea	ophi- snake	procumbens lying flat	soma- body	ungui- nail, claw
marsupium pouch	ophthalmo- eye	profund- deep	sonni- sleep	ungul- hoof, claw
masseter chewer	opistho- behind	proliger- bear offspring	specios- showy	urens bum
mast- nipple	opoter- either	prom- first	sperm- seed	uro- tail
mat(e)ri- mother	or- mouth	proso- front	sphen- wedge	urs- of bears
maxi- large	orbi- circle	prostratus lying flat	sphinct- closing	utricul- little skin bag
maxill- jaw	orch- testicle	prot- first	spinos- spiny	uv(e/a)- grapes
maxim- greatest	oriental- Eastern	prunus plum	spondyl- vertebra	vagina sheath
meatus passage	omith- bird	psamma- sand	squalid- squolid	vagus wandering
medi- medium	ortho- straight	pseud- false	squam- scale	vas vessel
medull- marrow	os(ti)- mouth	psycho- mind	squarros- spreading at	velum veil
mega- large	os(s/t)- bone	psychro- cold	tips	ven- vein
mel(l)i- honey	ostrac shell	pter- wing, fern	stae(r/t)- fat	ventr- belly
melan- black	ot- ear	ptyal- saliva	sta(s/t)- standing	verd- green
menin(x,g)- membrane	ovi- sheep	pubescens downy	steo- covering	veris true
meno- moon	ovo- egg	publi- sexually mature	stell- star	verm- worm
mer- part	oxy- sharp	pulmo- lung	steno- narrow	vern- spring
meso- middle	pachy- thick	pungens pungent	stereo- solid	versi- various
meta- after	palae- old	pusilli- very small	steril- sterile	vesic- blister
micro- small	palif(um) mantle	pygo- rump	stem- breastbone	vesper- evening, western
milli- thousand	palid- pale	pyl- gate	storm- mouth	vill- shaggy hair, velvet
min- smaller	palustri- in marshes	pyo- pus	strat- layer	virens green
minim- smallest	pan- all	pyro- heat, fire	strept- twisted	visc- organs of body cavity
mirabil- wonderful	par(a)- near	pyrus pear	strictus upright, stiff	vita- life
miss- sent	pane- wall	quadr- four	strigos- having stiff	vitell- yolk
mito- thread	parvi- little	quater- four	bristles	vitri- glass
mixi- mingle	patella small dish	quin(l)que five	strophi- turning	vora- devour
moll- soft	patens spreading	rach- spine	styl- column	vulgaris common
monil- string of beads	pect(or)- chest	radi- root	sub- below	vulp- fox
mono- one	pectin- comb-like	ram- branching	sucr- sugar	xanth- yellow
montan- of mountains	ped- foot, child	ran- frog	super- beyond	xen- stranger
morph- form	pellucid shining through	rapa turnip	supin- lying back	xer- dry
motor- mover	pene- almost	raph- seam	supra- above	xiph- sword
multi- many	pent- five	rect- straight	sutur- seam	xyl- wood
mural- walls	peri- through, beyond	reflex- bent back	syn- with	zo- animal
muri- mouse	peregrin- foreign	ren- kidney	syrin(g/x)- pipe	zon- girdle
myo- muscle, mouse	peri- around	repens crawling	sys- with	zyg- yoke
myri- countless	persic- peach	reptans crawling	tachy- fast	
myx- mucous	petr- rock	retic- network	tact- touch	
myz- sucker	phaeo- dark	retina little net	taenia- ribbon	
	phag- eat	retro- behind, backward	talus- ankle	
	phalan(g/x)- close	rhabd- rod	tapetum carpet	
	formation of troops	rhach- spine	tard- late	
	phalar- shining	rhage- tear, rent		
	phanero- visible			