

Entomological Society of Canada

Insect Common Names Committee

Recommendations for the Selection of English Common Names

Proposals for English common names or name changes shall be submitted to the Chair of the Committee, on the proper forms. Name proposals shall be formulated according to the recommendations outlined below.

1. Proposals for new names or name changes received by the Chair shall be forwarded to each Committee Member for consideration.
2. The Committee shall confine its deliberations on a submission to a period not exceeding six (6) months from the date of receipt by the Chair of the acceptable documentation.
3. A common name should be simple, short, and should refer to characteristic or notable features of the insect, its habits, or habitat. Honoraria are of little communicative value. Direct translations from Latin Names may or may not be of value, since these are often based on some obscure characteristic of the adult.
4. In the formation of names, the more generalized word, e.g., fly, bee, if used in a systematically appropriate way, should be separate from its modifiers. If such a word is used in the vernacular, it should be combined with a modifier, e.g. mealybug:, :frohopper. One or two further modifiers as separate words will likely be necessary, e.g. European honeysuckle leafroller.
5. Hyphens should be avoided where possible. Hyphenated words usually can be combined without the hyphen and still retain the expected meaning.
6. Upper case should be used only for proper names of places or persons.
7. Occasionally, it may be necessary to assign names to different stages of an insect, e.g. *Nymphalis antiopa* (L.) has two names, Spiny elm caterpillar and mourning cloak butterfly. Authors are asked to consider this when proposing names.
8. Authors of English names searching for a French equivalent must determine the appropriate grammatical gender of their proposal. Members of the Committee of French Names of Insects at the Société d'Entomologie du Québec are available for consultation in this matter.
9. Because both French and English lists exist, it is essential that there be close agreement between them. This does not mean, however, that every name must have its equivalent in the other list. Authors are asked, however, to consider a potential entry in the other language.
10. Although common names may differ in the lists of the Entomological Society of Canada and the Entomological Society of America, the scientific names for a given species should agree.