HortScience 60(9):1534–1542. 2025. https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTSCI18749-25

Compiling the First *Tradescantia* Cultivar Checklist

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Keywords. commelinaceae, dayflower, houseplant, inchplant, international cultivar registration authority, ornamental, spiderwort

Abstract. ***Tradescantia*** **are widespread as garden and indoor plants, but their cultivation history has rarely been studied. As a result, there are an abundance of superfluous, invalid, or contentious cultivar names in the genus. The previous International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) never published a full checklist and stepped down before 2009. I was appointed ICRA in 2022 and compiled the first comprehensive *Tradescantia* checklist and register. I conducted archive searches, growing trials, and internet research to determine correct names and distinguish uncertain cultivars. There are currently 267 accepted names, belonging to at least 15 species, hybrids, and groups. A number of previously unpublished names and decisions are established in this publication in line with the rules of the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants. The full checklist was published in an online-first format as an interactive website (https://tradescantia.uk/checklist), making it freely accessible to the public. The lack of central or authoritative sources made it challenging to determine the validity and application of some names, and a holistic approach was required to make decisions that best served to provide nomenclatural stability into the future.**

Botany and Taxonomy of *Tradescantia*

Tradescantia is a highly diverse genus of around 85 species, native to the Americas (Plants of the World Online 2025a). Some species are used as food or medicine, but their main horticultural value is ornamental. Temperate species are grown as frost-hardy perennial garden flowers, while the tender tropicals are grown indoors for their foliage.

Tradescantia belongs to the Commelinaceae, a globally distributed family of mostly perennial herbaceous succulents (Hunt 2020). All members of the family have succulent entire leaves, which wrap around the stem in a sheath. The actinomorphic three-petaled flowers do not produce nectar and deliquesce at the end of their characteristically short life (Burns et al. 2011), earning the family the common name "dayflowers." Members of the *Tradescantia* genus are distinguished by their inflorescence in the form of two fused cincinni, subtended by leaf-like bracts (Pellegrini 2017).

Native environments of *Tradescantia* species include tropical rainforests, savannahs, and deserts (Pellegrini 2017), and the variable morphology within the genus reflects this diversity of habitat. The taxonomy of the genus has changed repeatedly, with different genera being separated and recombined with *Tradescantia* throughout its history (Hunt 1975; Woodson 1942). At present, the historic genera of *Rhoeo*, *Zebrina*, *Setcreasea*, and *Campelia* are all considered synonyms of *Tradescantia* (Plants of the World Online 2025a), although their names are still frequently used in the trade. The latest revision by Pellegrini (2017) divides the genus into five subgenera based on morphological traits.

Cultivation History

The first tradescantias to be described scientifically were the North American prairie species in the 18th century (Linnaeus 1753). These species form sprawling clumps of long grass-like leaves, topped with mounds of fairly large and profuse flowers. They were quickly adopted as perennial garden plants throughout Europe and then the world, and their easy hybridization has led to many distinctive flower colors and patterns being introduced as named cultivars.

The tropical *Tradescantia* species were brought into cultivation comparatively recently. From the mid-1800s, *T. spathacea*, *T. fluminensis*, and *T. zebrina* became popular indoor and greenhouse plants, thanks to their easy growth and propagation (Bailey 1927). There is high diversity among tropical species, but the most popular in cultivation have generally been selected for their colorful trailing foliage. Unlike the hardy species, most tropical tradescantias do not flower or seed easily in cultivation, particularly if grown indoors. As a result, intentional breeding of tropical tradescantias was seemingly nonexistent before recent decades, and until the late 20th century, new cultivars only arose occasionally through random sport mutations or new wild collections.

Although tradescantias are well known as garden and indoor plants, both hardy and tropical cultivars have long occupied a position of low priority in the horticulture industry. Historically many nurseries would offer a small number of tradescantias as a backdrop to their showy favorites, but very few growers specialized in the genus. There have never been any *Tradescantia* plant societies or specialist publications. The consequence of this lack of specialists or centralized information is an extensive history of mislabeling among *Tradescantia* cultivars, with an abundance of reused, invalid, or superfluous names, as well as botanical misidentifications.

Today, the international trade in ornamental plants is dominated by mass producers exporting from the Netherlands (Hinsley et al. 2025). These large businesses often distribute plants with arbitrary trade names, which may be different in different locations or changed from year to year to follow buyer trends. Retailers and suppliers of mass-produced plants may also rename them to appeal to a particular customer base or to suit their own branding. Where breeders do establish valid names for their new cultivars, the lack of any central authority means that this information is fragmentary and easily lost.

The internet has made information more accessible than ever before, and many people now treat it as a first port of call for questions on any topic (Ward 2021). However, the immediate availability of enormous amounts of information also allows misinformation to circulate unchecked. It can be extremely difficult for readers to determine which internet sources to trust, with a range of cognitive biases influencing people's ability to evaluate truth (French et al. 2025). Misunderstandings about how plants are named can result in errors being spread among hobbyists in online communities and out into the wider world of nurseries and retailers.

International Cultivar Registration Authorities

In 1980, the International Hardy Plant Union or Internationale Stauden-Union was appointed International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for over 400 genera, including *Tradescantia* (International Society for Horticultural Science 2025a). The responsibility of ICRA, delegated by the International Society for Horticultural Science, confers the authority to make decisions about the correct names for cultivars in the relevant denomination class. It also confers the expectation to create, publish, and maintain a checklist of all registered or established cultivars in the denomination class (International Society for Horticultural Science Special Commission Cultivar Registration 2019). The responsibilities and rules by which ICRAs are bound are

Received for publication 22 May 2025. Accepted for publication 30 Jun 2025.
Published online 13 Aug 2025.
This research received funding from a Royal Horticultural Society Coke Trust bursary. I thank Melanie Underwood, David Simpson, Carole Whittaker, and Larry Hatch for help and advice. I am also grateful to the innumerable growers, collectors, nurseries, and gardens who provided information, documents, and photographs.
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defined in the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP), which also lays out the general rules for naming plants created or selected for cultivation (Brickell et al. 2016).

The Internationale Stauden-Union accepted a small number of hardy *Tradescantia* cultivar registrations in the early 2000s (Internationale Stauden-Union 2003), but never published a full checklist or register, and gave up its ICRA status sometime between 2005 and 2009 (Underwood M, personal communication). There has never been any other ICRA covering *Tradescantia*, and no cultivar checklist has previously been compiled for the genus.

I was appointed ICRA for the *Tradescantia* genus in Jan 2022 (International Society for Horticultural Science 2025b). My goal in this research was to clarify and stabilize the cultivar nomenclature of *Tradescantia* by compiling the first comprehensive cultivar checklist for the genus. To make the checklist accessible for hobbyists as well as professionals, I aimed to publish it as an interactive website available for free online.

Materials and Methods

Living collections. I developed a collection of live tender *Tradescantia* specimens to observe and identify unnamed or misnamed plants. It was accepted as a provisional National Plant Collection by the United Kingdom charity Plant Heritage in Dec 2021 and awarded full National Plant Collection status in 2023 (Plant Heritage 2023). The collection now acts as a living archive of the tender *Tradescantia* cultivars present in the United Kingdom. Detailed records are stored in a database using Persephone (https://persephone.plantheritage.org.uk/), including dates and sources of every accession.

Initially I populated the collection with the most common commercially available plants, sourced from major retailers. As it developed, I made accessions of less common cultivars from individual collectors and specialists. I also imported from outside the United Kingdom where possible, to broaden the collection beyond only locally available plants. I believe the collection now holds almost every extant tender *Tradescantia* cultivar in the world, excluding only a small number of the newest introductions.

As required for all National Plant Collections, three separate specimens are kept of each plant. To observe the dramatic morphological variation tradescantias demonstrate under different growing situations, I kept these three specimens in different environments: indoors under artificial light, in greenhouse conditions, and outdoors during summer (in a temperate United Kingdom climate).

In cases of very similar plants or suspected trade names or synonyms, I conducted controlled growing trials to compare the specimens in question. I took cuttings of all the questionable plants at the same time, potted them in identical substrates, and placed them in identical growing conditions for a set period. I conducted multiple trials with each set of questionable plants, under different growing conditions, to observe any differences in response to the environment.

I observed and recorded botanical and horticultural characters of all plants in the collection using photographs, measurements, Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) color charting, and morphological descriptions. I also deposited herbarium specimens at the RHS Wisley herbarium as reference material. David Simpson, holder of the National Plant Collection for the *Tradescantia* Andersoniana Group and *T. virginiana* cultivars, provided photographs and other information on hardy cultivars from his collection.

Archive and internet research. Historic research began with three digitized archives:

- European Nursery Catalogue Collection, a collection of 1725 catalogues from plant nurseries throughout Europe, ranging from 1884 to 1992 (https://archive.org/details/europeannurserycatalogues)
- Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Trade Catalog Collection, 4681 catalogues from US nurseries, ranging from 1814 to 1982 (https://archive.org/details/usda-nurseryandseedcatalog)
- Biodiversity Heritage Library, an archive of hundreds of thousands of biodiversity-related publications, ranging from the 15th to 21st centuries (https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org)

For each archive, I conducted keyword searches for "*Tradescantia*," "*Rhoeo*," "*Setcreasea*," and "*Zebrina*." I checked every result manually and recorded any references to cultivar names.

In Mar 2022, I studied British archives at RHS Lindley Library. Publications included all available issues of the RHS Plant Finder (yearly since 1987), British nursery catalogues from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, and cultivated plant guides or encyclopedias ranging from 1778 to 2011. For every publication, I checked the index or contents page for any information on *Tradescantia*, *Rhoeo*, *Setcreasea*, or *Zebrina* and recorded any references to cultivar names.

I searched the Community Plant Variety Office and US Patent and Trademark Office databases for references to *Tradescantia*, *Setcreasea*, *Rhoeo*, and *Zebrina* and recorded plant breeders' rights registrations or plant patents, as well as in-progress or withdrawn applications. Wherever possible, I examined the full application documents to study detailed descriptions and origins. Based on other sources, I also contacted plant nurseries, breeders, botanic gardens, and universities for further potentially relevant information and documents.

For many of the newest cultivars introduced in the 21st century, no printed records exist. In these cases, I conducted internet searches to find any public information. I dismissed low-quality sources such as "clickbait" and AI apps, and gave precedence to published marketing materials from retailers or first-hand accounts from growers. I then traced the oldest available version of any relevant page through the Internet Archive (https://web.archive.org) to use as a permanent reference.

Determining correct names. After completing the archive research, I compiled a draft checklist containing every name that I had found in use, regardless of status. In parallel to this was a draft database of every unique described cultivar, whether validly named or not. Described cultivars that I had found to be identical were deemed the same cultivar regardless of origins, in line with the ICNCP (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 2.20). Conversely, cultivars with consistent distinguishing features were deemed different cultivars even if they were unnamed or sold under the same name.

When considering Andersoniana Group names, I typically assumed they were unique cultivars, even in the absence of detailed descriptions, unless there was explicit evidence that they were considered synonyms or trade names. This approach was based on the easy breeding of Andersoniana Group cultivars. In contrast, I treated reportedly new cultivars of tropical species with a high index of suspicion to consider whether they were existing plants being brought into the trade under new names.

I then used the available information to match each name from the draft checklist with one or more unique described cultivars. In some cases, the match was explicitly defined in the sources, for example in statutory registration documents that established a name along with a precise description. In other cases, the match could only be made by examining features of the named plant in cultivation or through photographs and determining which unique described cultivar it resembled. Some names were matched with more than one cultivar, either because they were explicitly used as trade names for multiple cultivars or because they were associated with only a brief or vague description that could have referred to multiple plants.

Finally, I assessed all the names matched with each described cultivar to determine their validity and status and to select which name was correct for the cultivar in question. In simple cases, only one name had ever been used, and therefore this name could be accepted immediately. In other cases, multiple published and unpublished names had been used over decades to refer to the same plant, alongside some names being reused for other plants. I referred to the rules of the ICNCP to determine the validity and status of names wherever possible. In a small number of cases, I made an ICRA ruling to accept a name that would have otherwise been rejected.

I discovered a small number of described cultivars that had never been given valid names and whose originators were either unknown or unwilling to register names. In these cases, I conducted community surveys among *Tradescantia* growers to select new names, which I then formally registered to establish them permanently.

Species and hybrid identification. Although it was not the central focus of my research, I also considered the species and hybrid assignments of the cultivars I studied. I followed

Plants of the World Online (2025a) for correct species names and synonyms.

The majority of *Tradescantia* cultivars are hardy garden plants. These have often been labeled as the species *T. virginiana*, but it has been recognized since the early 20th century that most of these plants show evidence of hybridization with *T. subaspera*, *T. ohiensis*, and possibly other related species (Anderson 1952; Anderson and Woodson 1935). In response, Ludwig and Rohweder (1954) published the nothospecies epithet *Tradescantia* ×*andersoniana* but did not include a precise description, rendering the name invalid (Walters et al. 1989). The Royal Horticultural Society (2000) brought the name into use as a cultivar group, and I follow the same approach here. Based on the ubiquity of hybrids among the temperate species, I reassigned cultivars labeled as *T. virginiana* to the Andersoniana Group unless there was explicit evidence that they had been collected or bred directly from wild specimens.

Tropical cultivars are often indiscriminately labeled as *T. albiflora*. This is a botanical synonym for the species *T. fluminensis* (Plants of the World Online 2025b), but I observed many of these albiflora cultivars to have significant differences from that species. In some cases, I was able to use obvious characteristics such as flower color and indumentum to identify the correct species. Others showed mixed or intermediate characteristics, and so I deemed them unknown hybrids within the subgenus *Austrotradescantia* and placed them into a new cultivar group.

Only a small number of cultivars remain completely unidentified beyond the genus level. Ongoing morphological and genetic research (unpublished) may yet clarify the ancestry of some of these plants.

A number of cultivars commonly labeled as "*Tradescantia*" actually represent species from other genera in the Commelinaceae family. These were easily recognized by their flowering characteristics and excluded from the checklist.

Results

Overview of names. At the time of writing, there are 495 names in the checklist. Of these, 267 are accepted names, 71 are established synonyms, 135 are invalid or nonestablished trade names, and 22 are of uncertain status. These uncertain names were all published before 1985 and are likely never to have a definitive status because of the lack of evidence or records required to determine whether they are associated with a specific plant.

Of the unique accepted cultivars, 72 are deemed permanently lost (last documented before 2000), 35 are rare and possibly lost (last documented before 2020), 117 are in circulation locally or among specialists and collectors, and 43 are widely mass-produced (see Fig. 1 for a visual representation). A total of 27 cultivars have currently active statutory registrations for plant patents or plant breeders' rights. Four cultivars were registered with the previous ICRA (all in 2003), and 18 have been registered since my appointment as ICRA, including 6 registrations of new names for plants that were already in circulation without valid names and 12 registrations of newly introduced cultivars from 2023 onwards.

Contentious names accepted

Six names were accepted against other articles of the ICNCP to preserve nomenclatural stability. The present publication serves to establish these decisions, as follows. See the online checklist for more detailed descriptions and photographs.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'Albovittata'. This cultivar was established by the staff of the L. H. Bailey Hortorium (1976, p. 1119). Although a Latin epithet published after 1959 should not be accepted (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 21.11), it is now accepted on the basis that it is the most widely used name and to reject it now would cause instability (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 11.6). 'Vittata', 'Rochford Silver', 'Quicksilver', 'Sanna', 'Silver Queen', and 'Rochford's Quicksilver' are established synonyms.

This cultivar has unknown origins and is extremely common and widely mass-produced today. Plants have long trailing stems and narrow leaves with marginal white variegation. This cultivar was previously identified as *T. fluminensis* or *T. albiflora* but is now classified in the Continental Group.

Tradescantia zebrina 'HappiLee'. The name was chosen by the grower (Hancock J, personal communication), and so other published names are rejected (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 31.4). The grower declined to register the cultivar, so the present publication serves to establish their chosen name. 'Danny Lee' is an established synonym.

This cultivar is a sport from *Tradescantia zebrina* 'Minima', which was developed at Costa Farms (Miami, FL, USA, in around 2018 and named by Danny Lee, the staff member who found the sport (Costa Farms, personal communication). Mass-produced in the United States and locally available elsewhere. Plants have green to purple leaves with zigzagged silver bands, overlaid with random streaks of cream to pink variegation.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Merlot Clusters'. This cultivar was first described in a plant breeders' rights application by Gooderham (2010). Although the legal protection was never granted, the name is now accepted as it has become the most widely known and no other name has been established (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 11.6). This cultivar is a mutation from an unspecified plant, found in Bressingham, UK (Gooderham 2010). It is now mass-produced and widely available. Plants have an upright habit to 45 cm high, with moderate yellowish green foliage becoming flushed red purple in spring. Flowers are 3 cm across and are yellowish white with a violet blue center. Flower buds are larger and more purple than 'Osprey', with darker yellow stamens.

Tradescantia zebrina 'Purple Plush'. This cultivar was established by Glasshouse Works (1984, p. 18). Although it was not the first name to be established, it has become the most widely used and least ambiguous so is now accepted (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 29.2). 'Discolor' is an established synonym. Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is locally available around the world today. Plants have furry leaves that lack the species' characteristic silver bands but develop purple pinstripes in bright light.

Tradescantia zebrina 'Quadricolor'. This cultivar was established by Regel (1884, p. 125–126). The cultivar was originally published as 'Multicolor Mme Lequesne', but 'Quadricolor' is now the most widely used name and so is accepted (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 29.2). 'Multicolor Mme Lequesne', 'Versicolor', 'Multicolor', and 'Mme Lequesne' are established synonyms. This cultivar is a sport from an unspecified *T. zebrina* plant, selected by Stanislas Lequesne in Rouen, France (Pynaert 1879, p. 169). Plants have green to purple leaves with wide silver bands, overlaid with random sectors of white to pink variegation.

Tradescantia cerinthoides 'Variegata'. This cultivar was established by Graf (1959, p. 435, 1068). Although a Latin epithet published after 1 Jan 1959 should not be established (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 21.11), it is now accepted on the basis that it is widely used and no other name has ever been established for this cultivar (Brickell et al. 2016, Art. 11.6). Its origins are unknown and it is now likely lost from cultivation. Plants have robust sprawling stems and hairy leaves with random sectors of cream to pink or yellow.

Names to be established

Many names were widely in use but documented only in invalidly published sources such as web pages. Based on the information available, most of these were deemed invalid trade names for other cultivars. However, I determined 57 unpublished names to be legitimate cultivars and accepted them despite the lack of hardcopy references. This publication serves to formally establish these names, with reference to archived copies of the earliest online sources documenting them, as follows. See the online checklist for more detailed information, descriptions, and photographs.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'Angel Wings'. This cultivar was documented online by Korbas (2022). Its origins are unknown, but the cultivar circulates among collectors. Plants are very compact with densely branching growth. Leaves have bright white marginal variegation.

Tradescantia chrysophylla 'Baby Bunny Bellies'. This cultivar was documented online by Dave's Garden (2008). Its origins are unknown, but plants are now widely mass-produced. Plants have fast-growing, creeping purple stems and dark green leaves with purple undersides. The leaves and stems are entirely covered in uniform velvety fur.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Baby Doll'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2000, p. 717) and first described online by Elmlea Plants (2022). Its

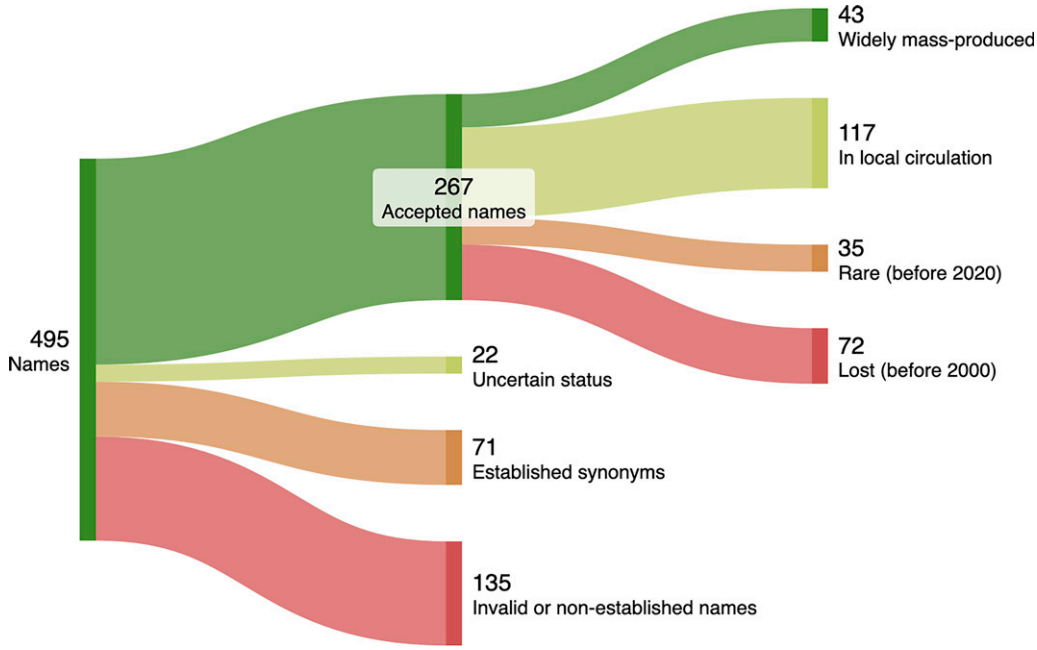

Fig. 1. Breakdown of names in the checklist, by name status and cultivar availability.

origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries. Plants have light purple-blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Big Sky'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021). It was introduced by East Coast Nurseries sometime before 2001 (Hatch 2021); it is now rare or possibly lost from cultivation. Plants are 45 cm high, with sky blue flowers that are larger and darker than 'J.C. Weguelin'.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Bilberry Ice'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (1991, p. 523) and first described online by The Little Green Plant Factory (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now mass-produced and widely available. Plants have very narrow leaves, with white flowers flushed with lilac.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blanca'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2001, p. 714) and first described online by Barretts Bridge Nurseries (2021). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries. Plants are 70 cm high with white flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blue Denim'. This cultivar was mentioned online by Land (2008) and was described by Kevin Vaughn (personal communication). It was created from a seedling from a cross between 'Blue Stone' and 'Zwanenburg Blue', bred and named by Kevin Vaughn (personal communication). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Flowers are the color of washed blue jeans, with a shorter habit and larger flowers than 'Blue Stone'.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blue Spider'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2017, p. 787) and first described online by Ashwood Nurseries (2022a). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now only known from Ashwood Nurseries (2022a). Plants are 45 to 50 cm high, with midblue flowers with slightly ruffled edges.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blueberry Sundae'. This cultivar was listed online by Dave's Garden (2007) and described online by Smith's Gardens, Inc. (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by some nurseries in the United States. Plants are 60 to 75 cm high. Flowers are large with icy blue petals and a darker lavender-blue center.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blueberry's Baby'. This cultivar was listed online by Almost Eden (2022) and described by Jeff McMillian of Almost Eden (personal communication). An open-pollinated seedling was found at Almost Eden gardens, assumed to be a seedling of 'Blueberry Sunday' (McMillian J, personal communication). This cultivar is only known from this nursery. Plants are 45 to 60 cm high. Flowers are 3 to 4 cm wide and are deep indigo blue with brightly contrasting yellow stamens.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Blushing Bride'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2000) and first described by Kevin Vaughn (personal communication). 'Blushing Bride' has also become an established synonym for a different cultivar, Maiden's Blush. True 'Blushing Bride' was a seedling from 'Pauline' sometime before 1996, selected by Kevin Vaughn (personal communication). This cultivar is rare and possibly lost from cultivation. Plants have a tall but clumping habit and clear pink flowers with very rounded, overlapping petals.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Bold Blue'. This cultivar was described online by Streambank Gardens (2021) and was selected and introduced by Streambank Gardens (2021). It is known only from this nursery. Plants are 60 cm high × 45 cm spread. Foliage is stocky, glaucous, and never flops. Flowers are midblue.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Charlotte'. This cultivar was first mentioned by Boomteelt Praktijkonderzoek (1995, p. 289) and first described online by Beth Chatto's (2021). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by many nurseries. Its extra-large flowers are a soft amethyst color.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Chedglow'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (1996, p. 679) and first described online by Longwood Gardens (2022). It was introduced by Hopleys (2022). It is now rare and possibly lost from cultivation. Plants have golden green foliage with purple flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Cindy'. This cultivar was described online by Spring Park Nursery (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is known only from Spring Park Nursery (2022). Plants are 40 cm high with soft icy blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Clifford's Good Morning'. This cultivar was described online by Dave's Garden (2023). It was introduced by Clifford's Perennial & Vine (Lewisburg, TN, USA) sometime before 2010 (Lawgal 2010). This cultivar is now rare and possibly lost from cultivation. Plants are 45 to 60 cm high × 45 to 60 cm spread with blue-violet and white flowers.

Tradescantia spathacea 'Cream'. This cultivar was first listed online by cuttingsNL (2022). Its origins are unknown. It now circulates among collectors. Plants have compact rosettes of hairless leaves 6 to 15 cm long that are olive green above and purple below, with random sectors of yellowish pink.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Danielle'. This cultivar was described online by Beeches Nursery (2000). Its origins are unknown. It is held by a small number of nurseries.

Plants are vigorous with a compact growth habit and huge, pure-white flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'David's Blaby Blue'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2000, p. 717) and first described by Hazel Kaye (Simpson D, personal communication). The plant occurred in the nursery of Ted Brown in Blaby, Leicester, UK, and was named after his son, David, who was killed in a road accident shortly before. This cultivar is now rare or possibly lost from cultivation. Plants have porcelain-blue flowers.

Tradescantia zebrina 'Deep Purple'. This cultivar was listed online by Steve's Leaves (2021). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar now circulates among collectors and some nurseries. Plants have dark purplish gray leaves overlaid by two silver bands, and small purple flowers with purple stamen filaments.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Domaine de Courson'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (1995, p. 669) and first described online by Pépinière Lepage (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries in France. Flowers are pinkish-white, with small carmine bristles in the center.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Double Grape'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (1999, p. 719) and was described by Hatch (2021) and Cotswold Garden Flowers (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants have grape-purple flowers, sometimes with double petals.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'European Pink Dragon'. The name has been used informally online but never established. Its origins are unknown. The cultivar now circulates among collectors. Plants are compact with densely branching growth. Leaves are curved to one side, with pink marginal variegation.

Tradescantia longipes 'Fritz Kummert'. This cultivar was described online by Sarastro (2014). It originated from Sarastro in 1989 (Sarastro 2014). It is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are only 5 cm high, with bright red flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Gold Mound'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2011, p. 787) and first described online by Shoot Gardening (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are 60 cm high with yellow-green foliage and deep purple flowers.

Tradescantia pallida 'Green Moon'. This cultivar was described online by Jane (2020). It is a cross between 'Ocampo White' and an unnamed *T. pallida*, created in the United States by Jane (2020). Foliage is olive green to purplish gray, with scattered hairs. Flowers are 25 mm across, and petals are light purple with a stripe of white down the center.

Tradescantia cerinthoides 'Green Nanouk'. This cultivar was listed online by Bioactive Herps (2021). Its origins are unknown, but it is presumed to be from reverted stems of 'Nanouk', which have developed separately on many occasions. This cultivar is now widespread. Stems and leaves are smooth except for a few hairs at the top of the sheath. Leaves are solid green above and purple below.

Tradescantia ohiensis 'Hoge Jan'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021). It was introduced by Jan Spruyt of Van der Jeugd nursery in Belgium around 2017 (Hatch 2021). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are 60 to 80 cm high with medium lilac-blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'In the Navy'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2001, p. 714) and first described online by Larch Cottage Nurseries (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by some nurseries in the United Kingdom. Plants are 45 cm high with sky blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Lilac Twist'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021) and was introduced by Nikau Hill nursery in New Zealand (Hatch 2021). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants have small, light-lilac flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Little White Doll'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2000, p. 718) and first described online by Walnut Tree Garden Nursery (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now widely available. Plants are 25 cm high and have white flowers with fluffy blue and gold stamens.

Tradescantia subaspera 'LSS Lazy Blue'. This cultivar was listed online by Lazy S's Farm (2004). It originated from We-Du nurseries (Lazy S's Farm 2004) and is now held by a small number of nurseries in the United States. Plants are 75 cm high with icy lavender-blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Mac's Double'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2003, p. 728) and first described online by Beeches Nursery (2020). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries. Plants are 45 cm high with lavender-blue flowers with double petals.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Melissa'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2012, p. 751) and first described online by Atelier du Vegetal (2020). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries in Europe. Plants are 45 cm high with rose-pink flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Midnight Blue'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021) and was introduced by Nikau Hill nursery (Hatch 2021). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants have a compact growth habit with dark-blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'Mini Pink'. The name has been used online but never established. This cultivar's origins are unknown. It is now in circulation among collectors. Plants are extremely compact with densely branching growth and small, wide leaves with soft-pink marginal variegation.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Nutshell Rosy'. This cultivar was described online by Nutshell Nursery (2019a). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is known only from Nutshell Nursery. Plants are 60 cm by 45 cm with dense and strappy foliage and rosy-mauve flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Ocean Blue'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2012, p. 751) and first described online by Hayloft (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now mass-produced and widely available. Plants are 75 cm high with 75 cm spread. Flowers are light, powdery blue with slightly darker filaments.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Perrine's Pink'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2004, p. 733) under the misspelling 'Perinne's Pink' and was described online by The Bressingham Gardens (2021). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now mass-produced and widely available. Plants are 50 cm high with glaucous foliage and pale-pink flowers.

Tradescantia 'Pink Hill'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by Floricode in 1999 (Floricode 2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now circulates among collectors. Plants have creeping stems with narrow, pointed leaves. The leaves have unstable variegation ranging from silverish green to light purple, with darker purple undersides. The species has been identified as *T. fluminensis* and *T. umbraculifera* and is currently treated as unknown.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Pink Spider'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2017, p. 787) and first described online by Ashwood Nurseries (2022b). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is known only from Ashwood Nurseries (2022b). Plants are 45 to 50 cm high and have pink flowers with a slightly ruffled edge.

Tradescantia zanonia 'Scream'. This cultivar was described online by Glasshouse Works (2022) and was selected by Frieling at Glasshouse Works (2022). This cultivar is only known from that nursery. Plants have upright bamboo-like stalks with whorled leaves. Foliage is glossy green with narrow mint streaks. This cultivar is more tolerant of cold than 'Mexican Flag'.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Snowflake'. This cultivar was described online by Nutshell Nursery (2019b). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is known only from Nutshell Nursery (2019b). Plants are 60 cm high and have a 45-cm spread with dense foliage and white flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Storm Warning'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021) and originated from Eastcoast Nurseries before 2001 (Hatch 2021). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are 45 cm high with large, dark bluish-purple flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Sweet Green'. This cultivar was described online by Esveld (2015). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by a few nurseries in Europe. Plants are 40 cm high with lime-green foliage and blue flowers.

Tradescantia hirta 'Swifttale'. This cultivar was described online by Dirk van der Werff's Plants (2004). It has been given several trade names, with 'Swifttale' now accepted as the oldest and most widely used. Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now circulates among collectors and some nurseries. It is a clump-forming perennial with very long, narrow, hairy leaves. Flowers are 30 to 35 mm across and are a strong reddish purple with yellow stamens.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Sylvana'. This cultivar was first listed for sale by the Royal Horticultural Society (2002, p. 690) and first described online by Beeches Nursery (2020). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now held by several nurseries. Plants are 35 cm high, and flowers are claret-red with furry anthers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Tall and Blue'. This cultivar was described online by Quackin' Grass Nursery (2022) and Issima (2022) and was selected at Yucca Do nursery (Issima 2022). This cultivar is now held by a small number of nurseries in the United States. Plants are 90 to 120 cm high and 60 to 90 cm wide, with tall vertical stems that eventually droop. Flowers are dark steely blue and sterile, and they have a long blooming period.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Tall Blue'. This cultivar was described online by Hatch (2021). It is of garden origin and has been grown since 2002 in bed R23 at J. C. Raulston Arboretum (2015). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are 120 to 150 cm high with rich medium-blue flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Therese'. This cultivar was first listed online by the Trial Gardens (2009) and first described online by Plant Lust (2022). It was introduced by Intrinsic Perennial Gardens (Plant Lust 2022). This cultivar is now likely rare or lost from cultivation. Plants are 60 cm high with gray-green foliage and true pink flowers.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'Unicorn'. This cultivar was listed online by Ania (2021). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar now circulates among collectors. Plants are very compact and have densely branching foliage. Leaves have peach-pink marginal variegation.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'US Pink Dragon'. The name has been used informally online but never established. Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now in circulation among collectors. Plants are compact with densely branching growth. Plants have long pointed leaves with light-purple marginal variegation.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Violeta'. This cultivar was described online by Suncrest Nurseries Inc. (2022a) and was introduced by Suncrest Nurseries Inc. (2022a). This cultivar is known only from this nursery. Plants are 30 to 60 cm high with intense violet flowers.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Webmaster'. This cultivar was described online by Proven Winners (2024) and was introduced by Proven Winners (2024). This cultivar is now widely available in the United States. Plants are 45 cm high with a 60-cm spread. Flowers are 5 cm across with warm-purple petals and a soft lilac edge.

Tradescantia (Continental Group) 'White Giant'. The name has been used informally online but never established. Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now in circulation among collectors. Plants are very compact with densely branching growth. Leaves have white or slightly pink marginal variegation.

Tradescantia (Andersoniana Group) 'Wild Eyes'. This cultivar was described online by Suncrest Nurseries Inc. (2022b) and was introduced by Suncrest Nurseries before 2001 (Hatch 2021). Plants are 30 to 60 cm high. Flowers are white with lavender centers.

Tradescantia fluminensis 'Yellow Hill'. This cultivar has been listed online since 1999 by Floricode (2022). Its origins are unknown. This cultivar is now mass-produced and widely available. Plants have fast-growing, creeping stems. Leaves are variegated with mottled yellow stripes and are less crisp than 'Variegata'.

Species and hybrids

At the time of writing, there are representatives of four of the five subgenera in the checklist, comprising 15 pure species, 3 specific first-generation crosses, and 2 complex hybrid groups, as well as 10 cultivars of currently unknown hybrids or species (Table 1). I created a new cultivar group to classify a set of unknown species or hybrids in the subgenus *Austrotradescantia*. This publication serves to establish the group, as follows. See the online checklist for more details and photographs.

Tradescantia Continental Group. The *Tradescantia* Continental Group is a group of cultivars of unknown origin that are most likely hybrids from various species of subgenus *Austrotradescantia*. The groups was sonamed by Helen Winnington because many cultivars of the group seem to originate from continental Europe. At the time of writing, there are 16 accepted cultivars in the group, as well as various unnamed forms and reverted sports.

Plants are tropical evergreen perennials, with sprawling, creeping, or trailing stems. Growth is often slow and very compact, usually with a densely branching habit. Stems and leaves are succulent, often smooth but occasionally slightly hairy. Most cultivars have marginal pink or white variegation with thin green stripes extending upwards from the base. The group also includes plain-green reverted sports. Flowers are 8 to 15 mm across, always with white petals, yellow anthers, and white stamen filaments and pistils.

Online checklist

The checklist was published on the Tradescantia Hub website in Sep 2022 (https://tradescantia.uk/checklist). The website was constructed using WordPress software, with a number of additional plugins and code changes to achieve the intended layout and structure.

The online checklist contains an entry for every name that I have found in use, with a standalone page hosted at a permanent URL, which can be used as a reference. Every entry that is the accepted name for a cultivar includes the following sections:

- The correctly formatted and complete name for the cultivar, including the cultivar group and/or the most specific botanical taxon possible (species, hybrid, or subgenus)
- The status of the accepted name, any other names that are used for the same cultivar, and an explanation of why the accepted name was chosen over any others
- The place and date the plant was found or created, how it arose, and who was involved, if known
- Notes about the plant's species, hybrid, or cultivar group identity, including common misidentifications and botanical synonyms
- Any plant patents or plant breeders' rights registrations that currently or formerly cover the plant
- A brief statement on the plant's availability, classifying it as either:
  - Mass produced (widely available around the world)
  - Locally available (from smaller nurseries and collectors)
  - Rare (last documented before 2020)
  - Lost (last documented before 2000)
- A description of the plant, giving as much detail as possible, including:
  - Growth habit, general size, and shape
  - Leaf and stem size, shape, and color
  - Flower size and color
  - Comparisons to similar cultivars, with emphasis on distinguishing features
- Illustrative photographs of the plant, either taken by me or used with permission from nurseries and growers

In each of these sections, I include references to sources of information wherever available, with hyperlinks to online copies where these exist. Sections are divided with subheadings to make the content as accessible as possible and to allow readers to quickly find the information they are searching for. Entries that are not the accepted name for a cultivar are shorter, containing only the status of the name and a cross-reference to the correct accepted name(s) of the cultivar(s) with which it is associated.

The checklist itself is displayed as a main page showing a grid of names with thumbnail images, each hyperlinked to the corresponding detail page. A sidebar allows the list to be filtered according to name status, availability, and species and sorted according to name or

Table 1. Cultivar counts per species and hybrid, organized by subgenus.

Subgenus	Species, hybrid, or group	Cultivars
Austrotradescantia	*T. cerinthoides*	6
	T. chrysophylla	1
	T. fluminensis	7
	T. mundula	3
	Continental Group	16
Campelia	*T. spathacea*	7
	T. zanonia	3
	T. zebrina	21
Setcreasea	*T. brevifolia*	1
	T. hirta	1
	T. pallida	13
	T. sillamontana	4
	T. brevifolia ×*hirta*	1
	T. buckleyi ×*pallida*	1
Tradescantia	*T. longipes*	1
	T. ohiensis	2
	T. subaspera	1
	T. virginiana	5
	T. tharpii ×*occidentalis*	1
	Andersoniana Group	162
Unknown	Unknown species or hybrids	10

publication date. A search bar on the checklist view searches only the names themselves, while the main website search bar gives results matching the content within cultivar pages as well as titles.

Since the online checklist was launched, it has been kept updated with cultivar registrations, other new introductions, and common trade names. The website has received a steadily increasing number of pageviews since the checklist was first published, averaging around 18,000 per month over the last 6 months. An exported PDF copy of the checklist is archived at the Zenodo repository (Rowe 2025).

Discussion

Obstacles to studying Tradescantia *history.* The cultivation history of the *Tradescantia* genus presented unique challenges in conducting archive research. The lack of any specialist societies or other authorities meant that information was scattered, and even different sources contemporary to each other sometimes made conflicting claims. The diversity of the genus itself also meant that the types of gardens and nurseries that had grown tradescantias ranged between succulent specialists, tropical greenhouses, annual bedding growers, and perennial nurseries—with little communication or information exchange between these different domains of horticulture.

Thanks to their ease of propagation and culture, it has long been common for any given nursery to offer a small number of tradescantias as an aside to any main specialty, without particular care for documenting their origins or verifying their names. The easy breeding and self-seeding nature of hardy Andersoniana hybrids makes it difficult for growing stock to remain pure (Anderson 1952; Anderson and Woodson 1935) and therefore difficult to trust or confirm the name and description of any cultivar that has been in circulation for a long time. Conversely, the widespread asexual propagation and distribution of tender species results in a proliferation of synonyms and trade names for the same plants, which obscures the true number of new or distinct cultivars.

Compiling a cultivar checklist for a genus with this combination of issues required a holistic approach incorporating interpretation of the ICNCP, archive research, growing trials, engagement with the community of experienced growers, and consideration of the horticultural and historic context for each name and plant. Such an approach is not without risk, and it is possible that some interpretations and decisions I made in compiling the checklist led me to inappropriate conclusions.

The general assumption that new Andersoniana Group names were likely to refer to truly new cultivars created a possibility that some of the accepted names in the checklist are in fact established synonyms for other cultivars. Similarly, the expectation that new tender cultivars were likely to be synonyms could have resulted in the names for distinct plants being relegated to synonyms where they should have rightly been accepted. The process of matching old names to plants based on their descriptions creates the potential for misassignments and the possibility that the plant originally given the name is not the plant associated with it today. The dispersed nature of information about tradescantias in cultivation means there is a high likelihood that some relevant publications were not found, and there may even be validly established names missing from the present checklist.

Although many retailers and small-scale growers have engaged with and benefited from the checklist or the cultivar registration process, the largest commercial mass producers have been reticent. Most outreach attempts were met with silence or dismissal, in spite of assurances that the ICRA system is free and has no bearing on trademarks, patents, or plant breeders' rights. As the largest global businesses control such a major share of the market (Devrani et al. 2023), this means that many tradescantias sold still have invalid or missing names, and new plants are frequently introduced without being registered. Without engagement from these businesses, only publicly available information from marketing materials and statutory registrations can be used to update the checklist regarding their new introductions and trade names.

For every decision, I widely assessed the contextual information to determine the most accurate and functional interpretation of the available evidence. Overall, when there was uncertainty, I gave priority to establishing nomenclatural stability for the future rather than to preserving the ambiguity and confusion of the past.

An online-first ICRA checklist for modern growers. Since my appointment as ICRA for *Tradescantia* in 2022, the rate of new cultivar registrations in the genus has drastically increased. The provision of a central authoritative resource on correct naming has garnered positive responses from hobbyists, retailers, and even botanic gardens, who have been able to reliably identify and label plants for the first time (Kovačić 2023). The Tradescantia Hub website has also functioned as a focal point for an online community of *Tradescantia* growers, prompting greater information sharing around cultivar naming and identification, as well as other technical subjects such as breeding, climate tolerance, and taxonomy. Overall, this seems to have had a greatly positive impact on the knowledge and popularity of *Tradescantia* in cultivation.

This publication serves to formally establish names that were previously not validly published, as well as definitive decisions on contentious or problematic names. This ensures that every name in the electronic checklist has now been formally established, thus meeting the recommendation given by the International Society for Horticultural Science Special Commission Cultivar Registration (2019). I have chosen not to publish the full checklist here in hardcopy and instead to take an online-first approach, treating the website as the main functional checklist. This allows for quicker and more frequent updates, as well as the space for far more detailed information and photographs than a print document would allow. Compared with a subscription journal or print publication, a free online resource is also more accessible to hobbyists, young people, those with low incomes, and other groups who may be underrepresented in horticulture.

Future of the checklist. No cultivar checklist can ever be permanently complete. Just like the plants it represents, the checklist is a living entity that is continually growing and changing. As such, keeping the checklist in an accurate and usable state requires ongoing work. New cultivar registrations must be documented and published regularly. In addition, newly released cultivars and trade names should be documented even if they are not registered. Existing entries in the checklist may require changes and updates in light of new botanical research or old information coming to light. Finally, the technical infrastructure of the website hosting and online checklist must be maintained to ensure continued access and usability for the public.

Other genera in the Commelinaceae family are frequently labeled as *Tradescantia* due to their morphological and horticultural similarities. The exclusion of these other genera from the current checklist has resulted in some confusion over why seemingly widespread *Tradescantia* cultivars are missing. As of May 2025, my ICRA scope has been expanded to the entire Commelinaceae family (International Society for Horticultural Science 2025b). Alongside this, the family has been deemed a new denomination class, and as such, cultivar epithets cannot be repeated between different genera in the family. I hope these changes will have a long-term positive impact on stability and clarity of names within the family. Further research will be required to compile the full Commelinaceae cultivar checklist, and I will publish this electronically alongside the existing *Tradescantia* checklist when complete.

Conclusions

The cultivation history of the *Tradescantia* genus has seldom been studied. Its overlooked status, along with its morphological and taxonomic variability, has led to decades of naming instability. Superfluous and reused names abounded, and there were no central or authoritative sources to rely on for clarity. The publication of the first ever complete cultivar checklist for the genus is intended to put an end to this situation by settling existing contentious names and establishing a stable foundation for the future. The electronic publication of the checklist makes it easily accessible and user-friendly for the public and enables it to stay regularly updated. In the 3 years since its initial publication, the online checklist has already had positive impacts on hobbyists, botanic gardens, and businesses working with *Tradescantia* cultivars. The expansion of scope to the entire family is hoped to bring further benefits to nomenclatural stability of Commelinaceae in cultivation in future.

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