Table 1. Examples of plant taxa at different levels of inclusiveness, or ranks, in British Columbia First Nations’ languages, as drawn from ethnobotanical reference sources. The ranks follow the hierarchical categories proposed by Berlin (1992) from most general and inclusive to most distinctive. (Note: the writing systems used in this table generally follow those of the original sources, where these are “practical systems” based mainly on characters in the English alphabet; in all cases, the reader should refer to the original sources to ensure complete linguistic accuracy; note that “7” is a glottal stop).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank (from most general and inclusive terms to most specific and restricted)** | **Examples of corresponding terms/ lexical elements from various languages** | **Reference** |
| I. Most general rank (~”plant”)[[1]](#footnote-1) | Nuu-chah-nulth (Hesquiaht): ***tl’aqapt*** – plant (general); also generic rank name for kinnikinnick, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*; Note: ***tl’aqaptsu7isim*** [“plant that grows under (ocean)” – for seaweeds, gen.] | Turner and Efrat 1982; Turner 1987 |
| I. Most general rank (suffix indicating ~”plant”) | Haida (Skidegate): ***- xil*** (suffix denoting “leaves, leafy plant”) cf. ***xil*** ‘leaf/medicine’; ***xil sgunxulaa*** ‘fragrant leaves/plant/medicine’ (for yarrow, *Achillea millefolium* and related aromatic plants); applied widely but not universally in Haida plant names | Turner 1974, 1987, 2004 |
| I. Most general rank (suffix indicating ~”plant”) | Nuxalk: ***-lhp*** (suffix denoting “tree/ bush,” “plant”) [e.g. ***kwululuuxwu*** (wild strawberries, *Fragaria* spp.); ***kwululuuxwu-lhp*** (strawberry plant)]; versions of this suffix are found in all Salishan languages (Kuipers 2002; Turner, Ignace and Compton 1998) | Turner 1974, 1973, 1987; cf. also Turner et al. 1990; Turner and Hebda 2012 |
| I. Most general rank (suffix indicating ~”plant”) | Ditidaht: ***- apt*** (suffix denoting “tree/ bush,” “plant”) [e.g. ***tutubuqwsapt*** (lit. ‘standing-in-the-water plant’); versions of this suffix are found in all Wakashan languages | Turner et al. 1983; Turner 1987 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”; corresponding with “life form” rank of Berlin (1992) (cf. Turner 1987) | Dakelh (Saik’uz): ***tl’o*** – grass, hay, marijuana (general) | Poser 2008 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***hap'iskw*** (grass, sedge) (general) | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***majagalee***(flower) (general) | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Ts’msyen: ***müdza̱g̱a̱lee*** – flower/house plant (general) | Turner and Thompson 2006 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nlaka’pamux: ***syíq-m***– grass (general) | Turner et al. 1990; Turner 1987 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Okanagan-Colville: ***swupúla7xw*****(**lit. ‘ground-hair/growth’) – grass/low leafy growth (general) | Turner et al. 1980 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Straits Salish (Saanich): ***q’ə´ch’ əy7*** – mosses, lichens (general) | Turner and Hebda 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***bilak* –** mosses and dry soft lichens | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Dakelh (Saik’uz): ***imbenidzo*** – mushroom (general) | Poser 2008 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***gayda ts’uuts’*** (mushroom with caps) | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Stl’atl’imx, or Lillooet: ***sγáp*** – “tree, general” (lit. ‘something standing, put upright’) (see name for Douglas-fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, below) | Kuipers 1974, 1989; Turner 1987 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***g̱an*** (tree) | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nlaka’pamux: ***muyx***  – “tall bushes” (originating from Proto-Interior Salish term for cottonwood, *Populus balsamifera*) (cf. ***mulx***“stick” in Stl’atl’imx) | Turner et al. 1990; cf. also Kinkade 1989; Kuipers  2002; Turner et al. 1998 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***hlguug̱an*** – “shrub, bushes” (***hlgu*** means ‘small’; ***gan*** is ‘tree/wood’) | Burton 2012 |
| II. Broad subcategory within “plant”: “life form” | Nisga’a: ***damtx*** (ferns) | Burton 2012 |
| III. Midlevel or “intermediate” rank category (cf. Berlin 1992; Turner 1989)[[2]](#footnote-2) | Haida (Massett): ***kiid*** – “evergreen tree”; also Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) (a polysemous term) | Turner 2004 |
| III. Midlevel or “intermediate” rank category name | Stō:lo, or Upriver Halkomelem: ***skous*** – “potato; edible tuber or root”(cf. Proto-Salish ***s-qawts*** (Indian) potato) | Galloway 1982; cf. also Kuipers 2002 |
| III. Midlevel or “intermediate” rank category name | St’at’imc/Stl’atl’imx (Lillooet): ***qwláwa7*** –“onions” (including domesticated onions and wild onions)(cf. ***qwláwa-7úl*** ‘real/original onion,’ for nodding onion *Allium cernuum*) | Turner, et al, 1987; Turner 1989 |
| III. Midlevel or “intermediate” rank category name | Nuu-chah-nulth (Hesquiaht): ***sachk-mapt*** (lit. ‘sharp plant’) – thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), blackberries (*Rubus ursinus*), and other spiny or thorny plants (similar term in Ditidaht) | Turner and Efrat 1982; Turner 1989 |
| III. Midlevel or “intermediate” rank category name | Ditidaht: ***tlichsap*** – edible roots (general); also specific name for Pacific silverweed (*Argentina egedii*) | Turner et al. 1983 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name (cf, Berlin 1992) | St’at’imc/Stl’atl’imx (Lillooet): ***sγap-7úl*** (lit. ‘real-tree’) – Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) (cf. name for tree, above: ***sγap***) | Turner 1987; Turner, et al (1987 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Nisga’a: ***simgan*** (lit. ‘real tree’) – western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) | Burton 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Okanagan-Colville: ***merílhp*** (lit. ‘medicine-plant’) – subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) | Turner et al. 1980 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Kwakwaka’wakw: ***ham’úm’s-m’es*** – cascara tree (*Rhamnus purshiana*) (cf. ***ham’úm’s*** – cascara bark) | Turner and Bell, 1973 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank | Ts’msyen: ***nagaganaw*** (lit. ‘dress/frill of the frog’) – lung lichen (*Lobaria pulmonaria*) and other foliose lichens | Turner and Thompson 2006 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Straits Salish (Saanich): ***tl’əsíp* –** licorice fern (*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*) | Turner and Hebda 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Nisga’a: ***ts’ak’a aam* –** licorice fern (*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*) | Burton 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Secwepemc: ***púxwstl’ye*** (cf. ***púxwem*** ‘to blow with the mouth’) – cinder conk fungus (*Inonotus obliquus*) | Mary Thomas, pers. comm. to NT 2001 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | St’at’imc/Stl’atl’imx (Lillooet): ***7ús7-az’*** – black mountain huckleberry plant (*Vaccinium membranaceum*) [cf. ***7úsa7*** ‘berry, general’; ***-az’* (**plant suffix)] | Turner et al. 1987; also Turner 1989 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Nisga’a: ***simmaaý* –** black mountain huckleberry berry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*) | Burton 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Nisga’a: ***sbiks –*** highbush cranberry ***(****Viburnum edule*) | Burton 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Nlaka’pamux: ***kəl’wet* –** false Solomon’s-seal (*Maianthemum racemosum* subsp. *amplexicaule*) | Turner et al. 1990 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Haida (Skidegate): ***xuyaa tluuga*** (lit. ‘Raven’s canoe’) – beach pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*) and giant vetch (*Vicea nigricans* subsp. *Gigantean*) | Turner 2004 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Gitxsan: ***sganmaa’ya smex*** (lit. ‘black bear berry plant’) – red baneberry(*Actaea rubra*) | Smith et al. 1997 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Dakelh (Ulkatcho): ***tl’otsun*** – nodding onion **(***Allium cernuum*) | Hebda et al.1996 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Okanagan-Colville: ***sp’its’n*** – Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) | Turner et al. 1980 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Straits Salish (Saanich): ***shiwə7 7ə tl’ stqeyə7*** (lit.‘wolf’s urine’) – Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) | Turner and Hebda 2012 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Kwakwaka’wakw: ***nexwm’és, neqw’elhm’es*** (bush) – salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) (cf. ***neqw’élh(i)*** – salal berries) | Turner and Bell 1973 |
| IV. Most basic plant category; “folk generic” rank name | Secwepemc: ***legmín*** - alumroot**(***Heuchera cylindrica*) | Mary Thomas, pers. comm. to NT 2001 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names (cf. Berlin 1992) | Ts’msyen: ***moolks sigawgáaw*** (lit. ‘crow’s crabapples’); ***gasasii*** (lit. ‘long legs’); and ***bu’uxs*** (lit. ‘dice’) – all “varieties” of Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*) (Figure 2) | Turner and Thompson 2006 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names | Ditidaht: ***huubaaq*** and ***qistuup*** – different edible parts (leafstalks and budstalks) of cow-parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*); (many languages name these parts with different terms) | Turner et al. 1983 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names | Ditidaht: ***bachlheey’-apt*** and ***ch’ukwtlapt*** – two varieties of yellow cedar [*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*] | Turner et al. 1983 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names | Haida (Massett): ***dall****-****xil-sgid*** (lit. ‘red rain leaves/medicine’), for red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), and ***dall-xil-guhlahl*** (‘blue rain leaves/medicine’), for blue harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) | Turner 2004 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names | Nlaka’pamux: ***spəqpáq, spəqpaq-élhp*** (lit.‘white-white’); ***si7h-úse7, si7huse7-élhp*** (lit. ‘good fruited’); ***qwu7qwu7-úse7 (tək stsáqwm), qwu7qwu7use7-élhp*** [lit.‘watery-fruit (Saskatoonberry)’]; ***snk’y’ep-úpse7*** (lit. ‘little coyote berry’); ***təxtəx-óxse7*** (lit. ‘little bitter berry’); ***tl’əxwixw-úse7*** (lit. ‘little sweet berry’) ***nəq’naq’-óqw’se7*** (lit. ‘little-rotten-berries’) – all varieties of Saskatoonberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) (equivalent terms in Stl’atl’imx) | Turner et al. 1990 |
| V. Most restricted category; “folk specific” rank names | Straits Salish (Saanich): ***pəlpəq’xəlíqw*** (lit. ‘white ones’); ***nəq’íx*** (lit. ‘black’); ***nənəl’pxwíqw*** OR ***nəlpxwíqw*** (lit. ‘blond ones’); ***nənəl’kwəmíqw*** (lit. ‘red ones’) – all colour forms of salmonberries (*Rubus spectabilis*) | Turner and Hebda 2012 |

1. This term represents an exception, since Indigenous languages of BC and neighbouring areas generally do not include a single lexeme whose meaning corresponds with that of the English word “plant” (Turner 1974, 1987). This term would not include fungi (Turner and Efrat 1982: 20). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As noted by Berlin (1992), many “intermediate” categories are covert, or unnamed, and may be quite variable and ephemeral (Turner 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)