Anatomy of a scientific name

The species: *Angelonia angustifolia* Benth.
Angelonia angustifolia Benth.

Genus or Generic Epithet

Angelonia angustifolia Benth.

Specific Epithet
Taxonomic Categories

Domain
Kingdom
Division
Class
Order
Family
Genus
Species

Additional ranks prefixed with “sub” (below) or “super” (above) also exist, e.g. subfamily, superorder, etc.
Infraspecific Categories

Species sp. (plural spp.)
Subspecies ssp. or subsp. (plural sspp. or subspp.)
Variety (=Varietas) var.
Subvariety (=Subvarietas) subvar.
Form (=Forma) f.
Subform (=Subforma) subf.
The variety and subspecies are NOT interchangeable! They refer to different levels of the hierarchy – some people treat them interchangeably but they are not.

*Saxifraga aizoon* var. *aizoon* subvar. *brevifolia* f. *multicaulis* subf. *surculosa*
Saxifraga aizoon var. aizoon subvar. brevifolia f. multicaulis subf. surculosa

Note: the name of the category is NOT italicized

Notice that the category is NOT italicized, but the epithet IS.
Saxifraga aizoon var. aizoon subvar. brevifolia f. multicaulis subf. surculosa

Correction to LAB WORKBOOK:
Plant species with a ssp or variety – written including the “ssp.” or “var.”, never just three epithets, e.g.:

Agapanthus praecox ssp. orientalis

NOT

Agapanthus praecox orientalis
Hybrids can occur in nature or are created by man deliberately or accidentally by growing different plants in close proximity.
Hybrids are predominantly between species (interspecific hybrid) or less frequently between genera (intergeneric hybrid). The multiplication sign is used to designate a hybrid, in the following ways:

1) Both species in an interspecific hybrid written and separated by a multiplication sign:

   *Magnolia denudata × liliiflora*

Notice the multiplication sign is not italicized.
2) A natural interspecific hybrid written with a multiplication sign immediately preceding the hybrid species epithet (no space):

\[ \textit{Magnolia} \times \textit{soulangeana} \]

Notice again that the multiplication sign is not italicized

3) Intergeneric hybrid written with a multiplication sign immediately preceding the hybrid generic epithet (no space):

\[ \times \textit{Fatshedera lizei} \]

Notice again that the multiplication sign is not italicized
The Cultivar
Stands for “Cultivated Variety”

Cultivar is a selection that is distinguishable from other plants of its species or hybrid that can be reproduced either clonally or sexually and maintain its characteristics. Some are selections from the wild, generally mutations, but most are selections made from a breeding program. Once a selection is made, a cultivar name is given.
A cultivar can be made by asexual or sexual means; the only requirement is that you must be able to maintain the desired characteristic when you produce it by either means.

**What Characteristics are Cultivars Selected For?**
Flower Color and Form
Floriferousness
Plant Form
Resistance to Disease
Cold Hardiness
Heat Tolerance
Yield / Quality of Crop
Flavor
etc.

A cultivar can be made by asexual or sexual means and should be:

- distinct
- stable
- uniform
How cultivar names are written

*Sansevieria trifasciata* ‘Laurentii’

You may see this, but it is NO LONGER CORRECT: *Sansevieria trifasciata* cv. Laurentii
The Problem of Ownership
Ownership of the Plant

Plant Patents
A plant patent protects a new cultivar.

To propagate it, you must have permission of the patent owner.

Patented plants are written as either “PVR” (Plant Variety Rights), or “PPAF” (Plant Patent Applied For).

The Plant Patent is good for 20 years. A patented plant may also be labeled by its patent number.

Ownership of the Plant’s Name
Plant Trademarks

The trademark or trademark registration is a protection of a name given to a new cultivar or series of cultivars.

It is **NOT** the cultivar name and doesn’t protect it from being propagated.

You may not label it by its trademark for sale without permission of the trademark owner.

If the plant is also patented, you must have permission to propagate and/or sell it.
A plant name you are in the process of registering is labeled with ™, a trademark.

If the process is complete, it is labeled with ® and is called a registered trademark.

*Rhaphiolepis ‘Montic’ = Rhaphiolepis Majestic Beauty®
(The name Majestic Beauty property of Monrovia Nursery)*
Be careful and do not believe everything you read online!

Important Online Resources:

www.ipni.org (most accurate)
www.theplantlist.org
plants.usda.gov (least accurate!)