In this chapter

- Learn to create forms
- Use forms to view and edit data
- Find the data you need in form view

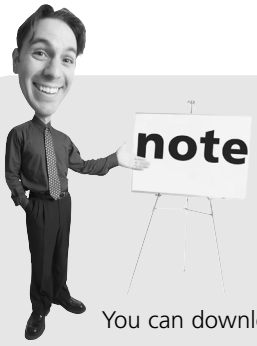
8

Creating and Using Data Entry Forms

Your database performs many tasks, and storing data is just one of them. After you have tables, you need a way to enter and modify data. The most efficient way to work with your data is through forms. Forms let you determine what data is displayed and what types of changes you can make to it.

A properly designed form will help you enter data more quickly and accurately. If you're creating an Access application to replace a process that currently uses paper forms, you can design your Access forms to look just like the paper forms. This will help ease the transition from paper to computer. You can also apply rules that limit the type of data the form accepts, which protects the data from some typos and other human errors.

At this point in your adventure, you have a few tables and queries, and now you're ready to advance to forms. In the next section, you'll create a couple of data entry forms for your gardening database using a few of the wizards that come with Access.



You can download the `Chapter 8.mdb` sample file, which is inclusive of all the examples in this chapter, from `http://www.quepublishing.com/`. If you want to follow along with our examples, download `Chapter 7.mdb`.

Creating Simple Forms

As with many other things in Access, there is more than one way to create a form. You can choose from the following three ways:

- You can use an AutoForm wizard, which automatically creates a form displaying all the data in a table or query.
- You can use the Form wizard, which automatically creates a form after you specify which fields you want the form to display (and a few formatting choices).
- You can create a form from scratch in design view.

The Wizard Way

Without a doubt, the quickest and easiest way to create a form is to let Access do the work for you—use a wizard whenever you can. The two types of form wizards are as follows:

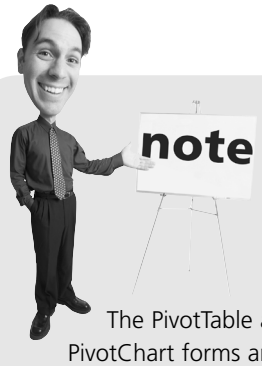
- **AutoForm Wizard**—Creates a specific type of form and displays all the data in a table or query, without asking you any questions.
- **Form Wizard**—Lets you choose the type of form it produces and which data the form displays.

The AutoForm Wizard

Five AutoForm wizards are available, and each one automatically creates a specific type of form:

- **Columnar**—Stacks the fields, one on top of the other, beginning with the first field in the table or query until all the fields are lined up in a single column.
- **Tabular**—Aligns the fields beside each other in a row, positioning the first field in the table or query at the far left and adding subsequent fields in the same order they appear in the table or query.

- **Datasheet**—Displays all the fields in the table or query in the familiar table (or datasheet) row and column format. The form will look just like a table.
- **PivotTable**—The wizard opens the form in PivotTable view. (We won't review this wizard in this book.)
- **PivotChart**—The wizard opens the form in PivotChart view. (We won't review this wizard in this book.)



The PivotTable and PivotChart forms are for advanced analysis of large amounts of data. You won't need to use them in this book.

To quickly create a data entry form based on the Plants table, follow these steps:

1. Click the **Tables** shortcut in the Object bar, and then select the **Plants** table in the Database window.
2. Select **Form** from the Insert menu. Or, click the drop-down arrow next to the New Object button on the main Access toolbar and select **Form** from the list that appears.
3. In the resulting New Form dialog box, select the **AutoForm: Columnar** item, as shown in Figure 8.1, and click **OK**. Or, you can simply double-click the wizard. If you didn't choose the table beforehand, you can do so now by selecting a table or query from the drop-down control at the bottom of the dialog box.

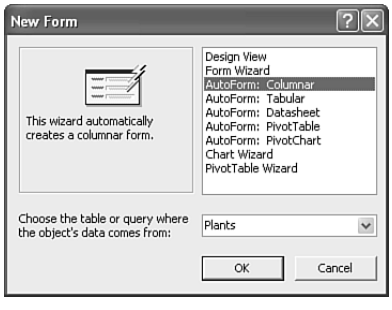


FIGURE 8.1
Select the AutoForm: Columnar Wizard from the New Form dialog box.

4. Save the resulting form, shown in Figure 8.2, by clicking the **Save** button on the Form view toolbar. Then, enter the name `Plants` in the Save As dialog box and click **OK**.

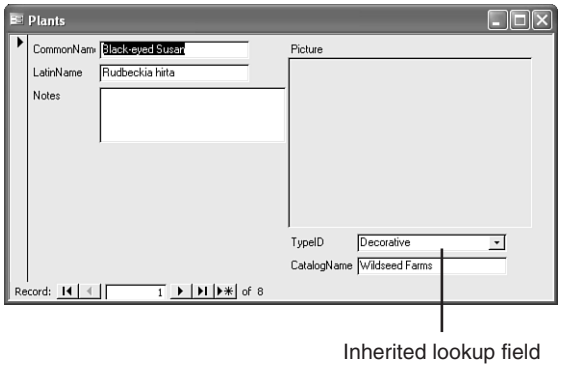


FIGURE 8.2
A columnar form stacks the controls vertically.

Figures 8.3 and 8.4 show two more forms. Specifically, we used the AutoForm: Tabular Wizard to base a form on the Catalogs table and the AutoForm: Datasheet Wizard to base a form on the Types table. Creating these forms will help you practice with the AutoForm feature and show you the variety of forms you can get with a minimal amount of effort. Sometimes, though, you'll find that AutoForms just aren't good enough for what you want to do with the database. We'll show you how to create more complex and customized forms in the rest of the chapter.

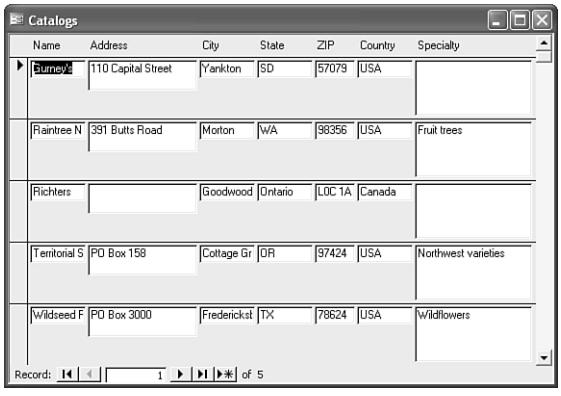


FIGURE 8.3
The tabular form aligns the controls in the same row.

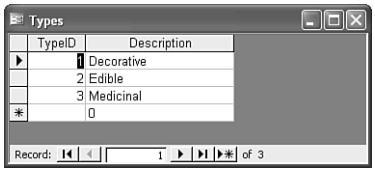
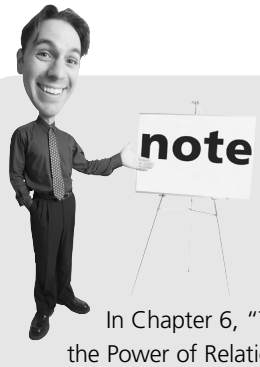


FIGURE 8.4
Datasheet forms look just like a table (or datasheet).



In Chapter 6, "Tapping the Power of Relationships," you added a lookup field to the TypeID field in the Plants table. We told you then that a form will inherit a lookup field, and that's just what happened with the Plants form. The TypeID control in the form shown in Figure 8.2 is a combo box control—you can tell by the drop-down arrow to the right of the control. You'll learn more about combo box controls in Chapter 13, "Customizing Forms."

About Subforms

You might have noticed that the New Object button's list includes an AutoForm item, but you didn't select it in the previous example. This wizard automatically produces a columnar form similar to the AutoForm: Columnar Wizard used earlier. But there's an important difference between these two wizards: The wizard in the New Object list includes a table's relationships in the finished form. As you'll see, the relationship between tables translates into a relationship between forms. Specifically, the resulting form has a subform (an embedded form within the main form) that displays related data.

We'll show the difference between these two forms in the following steps. Let's use the AutoForm Wizard on the New Object list to base a form on the Catalogs table. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Click the **Tables** shortcut in the Object bar, and then Select **Catalogs** in the Database window.
2. Open the New Object button's drop-down list and select **AutoForm**. Figure 8.5 shows the new form. Note that the wizard uses the name of the main table (Catalogs) as the title of the form, even though the form shows data from both the Catalogs table and the Plants table. Save this form as `CatalogsAndPlants`.

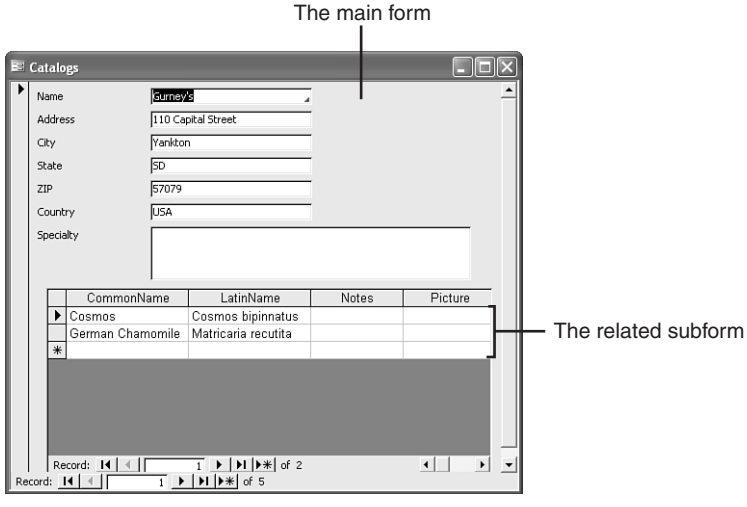


FIGURE 8.5
The AutoForm Wizard accommodates the relationship between the Catalogs and Plants tables.

This form is special because it includes data from both the Catalogs and the Plants tables, even though you didn't tell the wizard to do so. That's because the wizard encountered the relationship between the two tables and included a subform to display the related plant information for the current catalog.

The main form displays the catalog records, and the subform displays plants where the primary/foreign key value in the two tables matches. In other words, the subform displays any plants where the CatalogName field matches the value in the main form's Name field. This might or might not be what you want. Just remember, you can always dump the form and use one of the other AutoForm wizards. Or, you can use the Form Wizard to exercise a bit more control over the results. Close the form before continuing. You'll learn more about building and customizing subforms in Chapter 13.

If you used the New Object list's version of the AutoForm to create a form based on the Plants table, it will not create a subform, even though that table has two relationships: one with Catalogs and one with Types. The wizard creates a subform when the form you specify contains the primary key value in a relationship. The primary key in Plants is not related to any other table—only the Plants table's foreign key values are related to the other tables.

The Form Wizard

The Form Wizard creates the form for you but allows you to set limits to the data the form will display. You start the wizard the same way you do an AutoForm wizard, except in the New Form dialog box, you select Form Wizard.

Now, let's look at the options the Form Wizard enables you to select as you create a new form. Specifically, we'll base a form on both the Types and Plants tables. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Display the New Form dialog box by selecting **Form** from the New Object button's drop-down list or selecting **Form** from the Insert menu.
2. Select **Form Wizard** in the New Form dialog box.
3. Select **Types** from the drop-down control, and click **OK**.
4. The Available Fields list displays all the fields in the Types table. You'll move the fields you want to add to the form to the Selected Fields list by clicking one of the arrow buttons the same way that you did with the Simple Query Wizard in Chapter 7, "Retrieving Data with Queries." The single arrow button (>) moves one field at a time; the double arrow button (>>) moves all the fields to the Selected Fields list. For this example, click the double arrow button to move all the fields to the Selected Fields list, as shown in Figure 8.6.
5. Now, let's add some data from the Plants table. To do so, simply select **Table: Plants** from the Tables/Queries drop-down list, which updates the Available Fields list accordingly. Move the CommonName, LatinName, and CatalogName fields to the Selected Fields list, as shown in Figure 8.7. Click **Next** to continue.

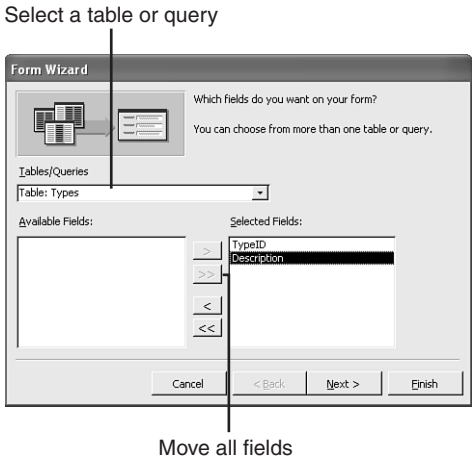


FIGURE 8.6
Include both fields from the Types table.

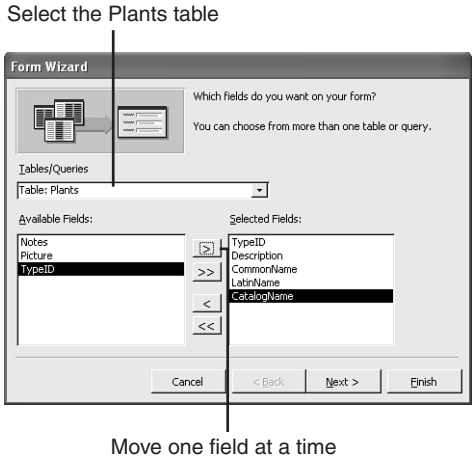


FIGURE 8.7
Include three fields from the Plants table.

6. Because you selected fields from more than one table, the wizard offers three ways to display the related data. The wizard defaults to displaying the plant records data in a subform and shows you a schematic picture of this option.
7. To see the other options, select the **By Plants** item in the list to the left, and the wizard updates the sample form to the right accordingly. Notice that the wizard also selects the Single Form option at the bottom of the dialog box. Reselect the **By Types** item and click the **Linked Forms** option to view that sample, which creates two linked forms. Be sure to reselect the **Form with SubForm(s)** option before clicking **Next** to continue.
8. The next window enables you to choose the type of form you want: Tabular, Datasheet, PivotTable, or PivotChart. Select **Tabular**, and click **Next**.

9. At this point, you can choose from any number of autoformats. An *autoformat* lets you set the default colors and fonts for a form, among other things. The wizard defaults to Standard, and that's the format we'll keep. Click **Next** without changing this option. (You can learn more about autoformats in Chapter 13.)
10. In the last window, rename the form and the subform **`TypesMain`** and **`PlantsSub`**, respectively, as shown in Figure 8.8. You can also select to open the form in form view so you can start entering data or in design view, where you can modify the form's design. (It's common to tweak the product of a wizard.) Open the form in form view by clicking **Finish** without changing the wizard's selection.

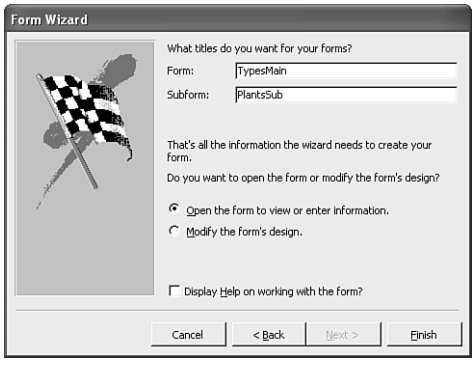


FIGURE 8.8
Name the two forms (the main form and subform) and click Finish.

The new form, shown in Figure 8.9 lists the type possibilities in the main form. The subform displays the plant records for the type that's current in the main form.

You'll see that forms contain the same navigation buttons that you're already familiar with from datasheets. If you click the Next Record navigation button on the subform (refer to Figure 8.9), the selection arrow in the left margin of the subform advances one row, from Black-Eyed Susan to Cosmos. If you click the Next Record navigation button on the main form to display a new type, the subform updates the plant records accordingly. As you can see in Figure 8.10, type 2 (edible plants) currently has no related plant records. Close the form.

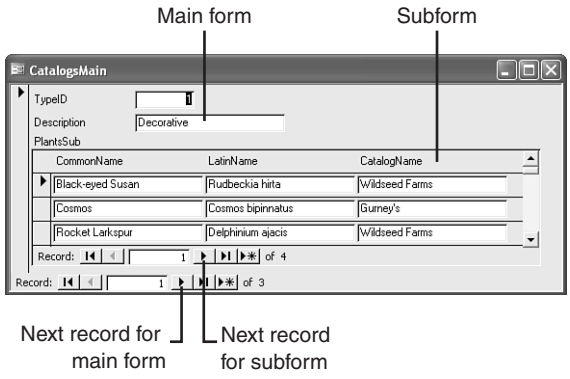


FIGURE 8.9
The wizard has produced a form that displays the plant names in a subform.

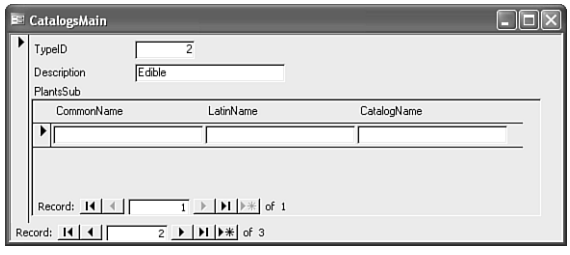


FIGURE 8.10
As yet, no edible plants exist in the database.

Creating a Form in Design View

You don't need a wizard to create a form. Although the wizards do a good job, sometimes simply starting from scratch can be more efficient. When this is the case, open a blank form in design view and start adding controls. To open a blank form in design view, do the following:

1. Select **Form** from the Insert menu. Or, select **Form** from the New Object button's drop-down list.
2. Design view is the default option in the resulting New Form dialog box, and this is the option you want.
3. If you didn't specify a table or query in step 1, select the appropriate table or query now in the drop-down control.
4. Click **OK** to open a blank form in design view, as shown in Figure 8.11.

In Chapter 13, you'll learn how to customize a form in design view by adding and formatting controls and formatting the form itself. For now, just close the form without saving it.

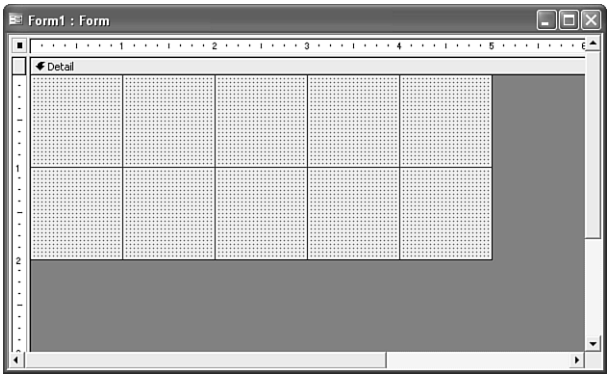


FIGURE 8.11
A blank form in design view.

Quick Error Detection with Error-Checking

Access 2003's new error-checking smart tag warns you when you make common form and report errors. (You can learn more about smart tags in Chapter 5, "Building Your First Tables.") If you're familiar with Excel 2002, you may be familiar with the feature already, as Excel 2002 uses a similar smart tag to point out spreadsheet errors. In this section, you'll make a mistake on purpose, just so you can experience the error-checking smart tag:

1. Open the Plants form in design view by clicking the **Forms** shortcut in the Database window, selecting **Plants**, and then clicking **Design** in the Database Window toolbar.
2. In form view, double-click the **CommonName** control to display that control's properties in the Properties window.
3. Click the All Tab. The Control Source property is currently CommonName because this control is bound to the CommonName field in the Plants table. Change that setting to anything other than the name of a valid field in the Plants table. As you can see in Figure 8.12, we entered **Test** (there is no field named Test).

Although you'll be working more closely with forms in Chapter 13, now is the time to learn about this built-in smart tag. As you work through our examples in each chapter, you may launch one of these smart tags and you'll need to know what it is and how to get rid of it.

4. When you press Enter or try to move to another field, Access displays a smart tag icon next to the problem control in the form. Clicking the icon displays a list of possible errors and solutions, as shown in Figure 8.12. In this case, the error is an invalid Control Source property. Among other actions, you can select Edit the Control's Control Source Property to automatically select and highlight the Control Source property in the Properties window, or you can ignore the error. For now, just close the form without saving the change.

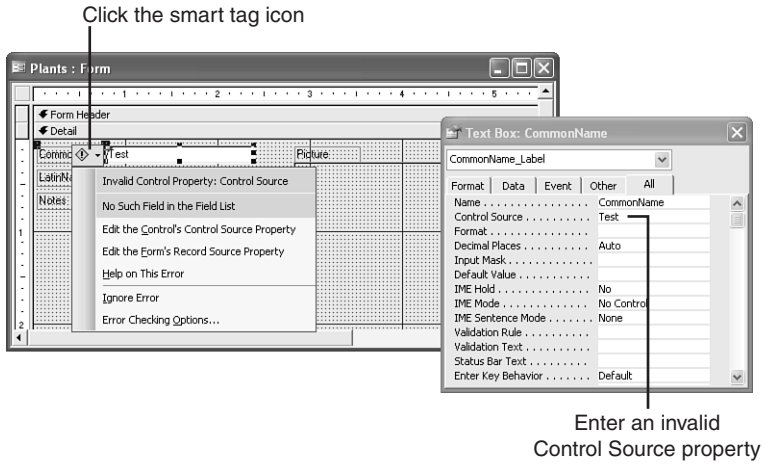


FIGURE 8.12
Enter a field name that doesn't exist to display the error smart tag.

Entering Data Through Forms

Now that you know how to create a form, let's learn how to use it to enter and modify data. First, open the Plants form by clicking the **Forms** shortcut on the Object bar and double-clicking **Plants** in the Database window. You'll see that some of the user interface for a form resembles the user interface you've already seen for tables and queries, but there are new things here as well. The form shown in Figure 8.13 can tell you a lot, such as

- The title bar displays the form's name and purpose.
- The record selector points out the active record. The sample form displays only one record at a time, but that isn't always the case. For example, in the subform in Figure 8.9 you can see more than one record at a time. On this form, the current record is for Black-eyed Susan.
- The navigation bar displays the number of records and enables you to browse through those records. The current record is the first record of seven.

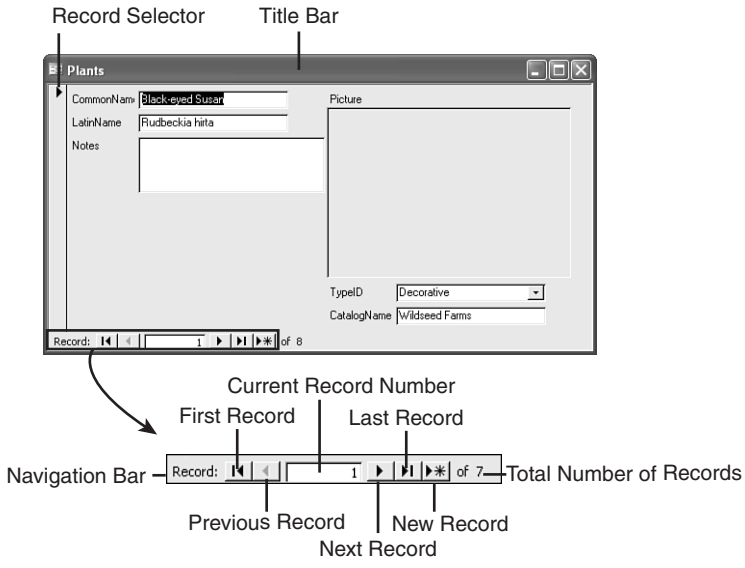


FIGURE 8.13
A basic form can give you a lot of information about your data.

Navigating Fields and Records

In a table or query, you might refer to a particular column of data as a *field*. Forms use controls to display data. Right now the form displays the records you entered directly into the Plants table in earlier chapters.

When you open a form, Access selects the first control in the form. For instance, when you open the Plants form, Access selects the CommonName control—you can tell because the actual entry is highlighted. To move from one control to the next, simply press the Tab key. Sometimes the Enter key performs the same function, but not always, so the preferred method is the Tab key. For example, press the **Tab** key once to select the LatinName control. Then, press **Enter** to select the Notes control. While in the Notes memo field, pressing Enter simply moves the insertion point to the next line in the memo field. To move to the next control, the Picture control, you must press the Tab key. Table 8.1 lists helpful keystroke combinations for navigating a form, and Table 8.2 contains combinations for navigating in a form with a subform.

TABLE 8.1 Keyboard Shortcuts for Navigating Controls

Press	Result
F5+number	Selects a specific record
Tab	Moves to the next field
Shift+Tab	Moves to the previous field
End	Moves to the last field in the current record

Press	Result
Ctrl+End	Moves to the last field in the last record
Home	Moves to the first field in the current record
Ctrl+Home	Moves to the first field in the first record
Ctrl+Page Down	Moves to the current field in the next record
Ctrl+Page Up	Moves to the current field in the previous record

TABLE 8.2 Keyboard Shortcuts for Navigating Between a Main Form and a Subform

Press	Result
Tab	Enters the subform from the field that precedes the subform in the main form
Shift+Tab	Returns to the subform from the field following the subform in the main form
Ctrl+Tab	Exits the subform and moves to the next field in the main form or next record
Ctrl+Shift+Tab	Exits the subform and moves to the field that precedes the subform in the main form or previous record

Did you notice that the Notes control displayed a scrollbar when you selected it? That's because that control is based on a memo data type (at the table level). We chose that data type because it can store a lot more text than the normal text data type.

When you're ready to see the next record, simply click the **Next Record** button on the navigation bar. Or, keep pressing the **Tab** key until the last control is selected, which in this case is the CatalogName control. Then, press **Tab** one more time. When you do, Access displays the next record.

Entering data is simple: Just select a field and type the data. When you're done, press Tab or Enter, as the case may be. For example, with the Calendula record current, select the Notes control and enter the following text: **`This plant loves cooler weather and full sun but will tolerate a hot spot if you keep well watered. You can expect lots of blooms well into fall.`** When you're done, press **Tab** to select the Picture control. Right now, none of your records are displaying pictures, but you can fix that by following these steps:

1. With the Picture control selected, select **Object** from the Insert menu. (You can also right-click the **Picture** control and select **Insert Object** from the resulting submenu.)

2. Click the **Create from File** option to the left of the dialog box.
3. Click the **Browse** button to locate the picture file you want to display. We recommend you store pictures in the same folder with your database. When you find the correct graphics file, double-click it. Or, select it and click **OK**. Access will display the name of the graphic file in the File control, as shown in Figure 8.14. Click the Link option only if you plan to modify the graphic file. In this case, you won't be modifying the pictures, so don't select it.

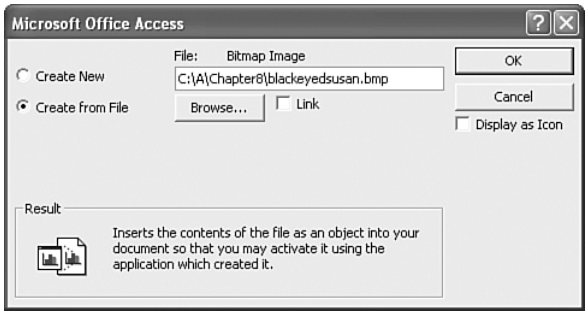


FIGURE 8.14
Browse to the graphic file that you want to display with the current record.

4. Click **OK**.
5. The control will probably display a small version of the file in the upper-left corner, as shown in Figure 8.15. If this happens, click the **Properties** button on the Form view toolbar.

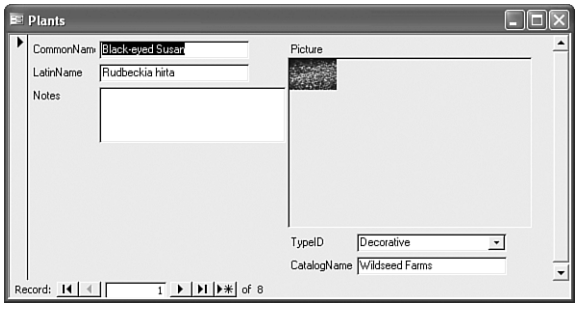


FIGURE 8.15
Sometimes, the control displays a small version of the file.

6. In the Properties list for the Bound Object Frame, open the **Size Mode** properties drop-down list and select **Stretch**, as shown in Figure 8.16. The default is Clip.

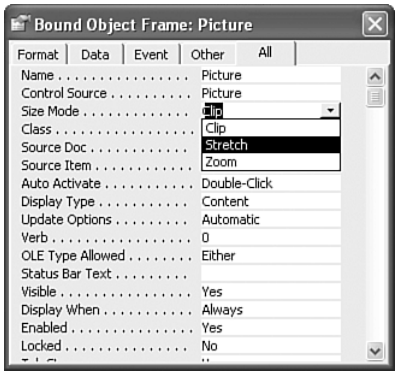


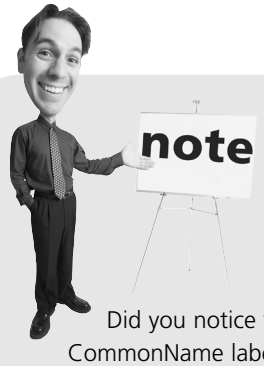
FIGURE 8.16
Select the Stretch Size Mode property.

7. Close the Properties window, and the control should display a full view of the file. You'll learn more about control properties in Chapter 13.
8. Repeats steps 1–4 to embed pictures of each plant.
9. When you're done, close the form and save it when prompted. You're not saving the data you just entered; Access automatically saves the new picture data. Remember during step 6 when you changed the Size Mode property? That's what you're saving now.

You might be curious about how a picture looks in datasheet view, so open the Plants table after you enter a few (or all) of the picture files. Figure 8.17 shows the Plants table after inserting a picture for each record. Each picture entry is a bitmap image. A table doesn't actually display a picture the same way a form or report does.

Of course, you won't always be adding new data via forms. Sometimes you'll delete data or replace an entry with something new. Fortunately, it's all very easy in a form. When you select a control, the form automatically highlights the entry. At this point, you can do any of the following:

- Press Delete to delete the entry.
- Start typing to replace the entry.



Did you notice that the CommonName label to the left of that control isn't completely visible? (Depending on your system's display properties, this might not occur in your form, so don't worry if it doesn't.) That's just one of the small annoyances you'll run into when using a wizard; it simply didn't allow enough room. In Chapter 13, you'll learn how to modify controls that don't behave the way you want them to.

Graphic files vary greatly, and there's no way to guarantee the quality of each file from record to record. You can improve a picture, but that's a bit beyond the scope of this chapter.

- Use the mouse to precisely position the insertion point so you can change one or just a few characters in the existing entry.

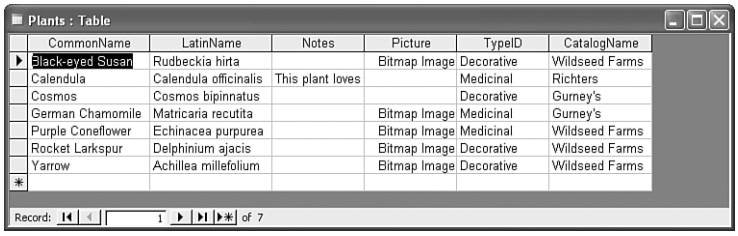


FIGURE 8.17
Graphic files appear as text in datasheet view.

When you're editing records, the record selector you saw earlier changes to the small pencil icon, just as it does on a datasheet (refer to Figure 8.15). You can demonstrate this in the Plants form by selecting the LatinName control and pressing the Delete key. If you try this yourself, press Esc to cancel the delete task so that you don't lose data.

Adding and Deleting Records

In the previous section, you learned how to enter and delete new data. Occasionally, you'll need to add or delete an entire record. You can add records in four ways:

- Click the New Record button on the form's navigation bar, as mentioned earlier.
- Click the New Record button on the form view toolbar.
- Select New Record from the Insert menu.
- Press Ctrl++.

All the previous methods display a blank record. Let's walk through the process of creating a new record. Do the following:

1. Use one of the methods mentioned above to display a new record. Notice that the record number control in the navigation bar displays the number 8—you will be entering the eighth record. As soon as you begin to enter data, Access updates the record selector to display the editing symbol (the pencil icon).
2. With the CommonName control selected, enter `French Lavender` and press **Tab**.
3. Enter `Lavandula stoechas` and press **Tab** three times.
4. Open the TypeID control's drop-down list and select **Decorative**; then press **Tab**.
5. Enter `Richters`.
6. Save the record by selecting **Save Record** from the Records menu, pressing **Shift+Enter**, or simply moving to another record. Figure 8.18 shows the new record.

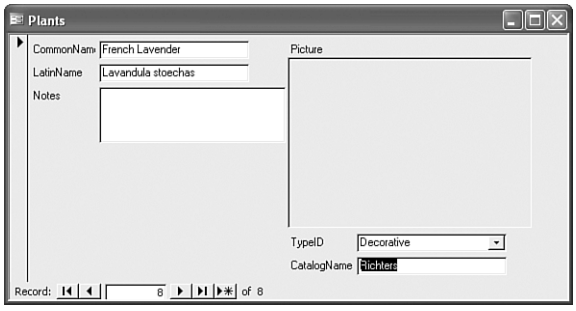


FIGURE 8.18
You haven't entered a picture of your new plant yet.

Deleting a record is even easier. After selecting the appropriate record in your form, use one of the following methods to delete that record:

- Click the Record Selector and then press the Delete key.
- Select Delete Record from the Edit menu.
- Click the Delete Record button on the form view toolbar.

After you attempt to delete the record, Access displays a confirmation message. You'd click Yes to delete the record, or you'd click No to cancel the delete task. Right now, click **No** because you don't want to delete the record.

tip

If you change your mind while you're entering a record, you can press Esc twice to delete the record before it's saved.

You won't always want to view existing records while entering new ones. When that's the case, select **Data Entry** from the Records menu and Access will remove existing data from the form and update the record numbers in the navigation bar. To return the records, select **Remove Filter/Sort** from the Records menu.

Not all forms allow you to enter new records. If the New Record button is disabled, you'll know the form is just for browsing and editing existing data.

Finding Information with Forms

In Chapter 6, you learned how to sort and limit the results of a query. You can also sort and limit data in a form; we'll show you how to do so in this section.

Sorting Records in a Form

Do you remember setting the sort order for a query in Chapter 7? In the design grid, you selected Ascending, Descending, or None in a field's sort cell. When you ran the query, Access presented the records in the appropriate order. Sorting in a form is very similar, but there's no sort cell.

Let's look at a quick example using your Plants form. The form sorts the records by the CommonName field because that field is the primary key for the Plants table.

When you assign a primary key, Access automatically defines an index for that field and an index sorts the data according to the field's data type. For instance, if the field is text, the data sorts alphabetically.

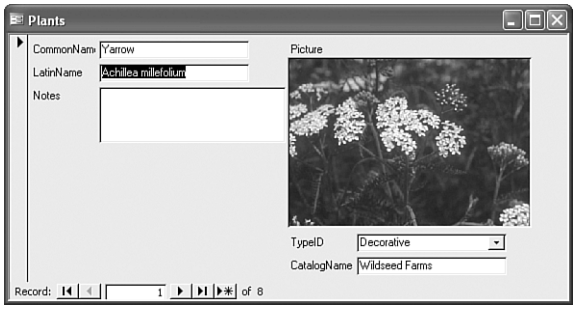
Let's temporarily rearrange your plant records by sorting them by their LatinName entries. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Select the **LatinName** control for any record.
2. Click the **Sort Ascending** button on the Form view toolbar. Figure 8.19 shows the results. As you can see by the navigation controls, the first record is no longer Black-eyed Susan; instead it is Yarrow. If you browse the records, you'll find them in alphabetical order according to the LatinName entries.

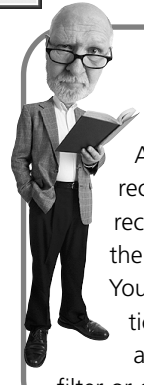
caution

Don't assign a primary key just to sort data. From our discussion in Chapter 4, "Planning a Database," you might remember that a primary key's function is to uniquely identify a record—sorting is just a by-product.

FIGURE 8.19
Sorting the records by the LatinName entries.



Sort tasks are temporary, unless you save the sorted form. In that case, Access remembers the new sort order the next time you open the form. To remove a temporary sort you've saved, select **Remove Filter/Sort** from the Records menu.



tip

A quick sort can filter records. It doesn't limit the records, but it does group the records by the sort field. You can then browse a particular group without first applying a more complex filter or query.

Using Filter by Selection

The Filter by Selection feature in forms is similar to the table feature you learned about in Chapter 5. You simply select a control and apply the filter—Access does the rest. The main difference is that the Filter by Selection feature limits the records it displays by eliminating all records that don't match the entry in the current control.

Now, let's suppose you want to browse only the decorative plants. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Select the **TypeID** control in the first record (or any record that displays `Decorative` in the TypeID control).
2. Select **Records, Filter, Filter by Selection**, or click the **Filter by Selection** button on the Form view toolbar. Figure 8.20 shows the results of the filter, and five records match the selected control (Decorative).

FIGURE 8.20
Use the Filter by Selection feature to limit the records in your form.

Notice that the navigation bar has updated the number of records. Specifically, there's a total of five records instead of eight. In addition, the toolbar now displays the text `(Filtered)`. That way, you know you're looking at an incomplete set of records. To remove the record, click the **Remove Filter** button or select **Remove Filter/Sort** from the Records menu. Do that now to return your form to normal.

Using Filter by Form

The Filter by Form feature is similar to the Filter by Selection feature but more complex. Using this feature, you can specify the actual value that Access will attempt to match, instead of relying on existing data. You can also refer to more than one control.

Let's illustrate this filtering feature by finding the medicinal plants you purchased from Wildseed Farms. Do the following:

1. Select **Records, Filter, Filter by Form**, or click the **Filter by Form** button on the Form view toolbar.
2. Access displays the filtering form shown in Figure 8.21. Access remembers the last filter, which is why an entry exists in the TypeID control—that's a left over from the Filter by Selection exercise in the last section. You should clear any existing filters before you apply a filter by clicking the **Clear Grid** button on the Filter/Sort toolbar.

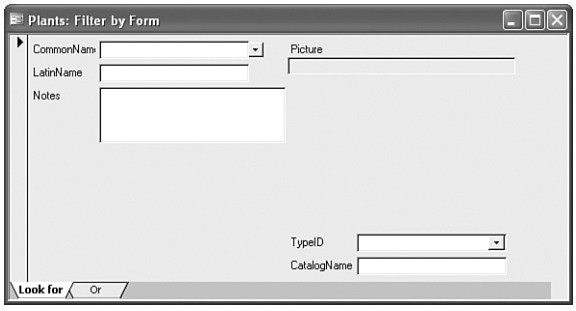
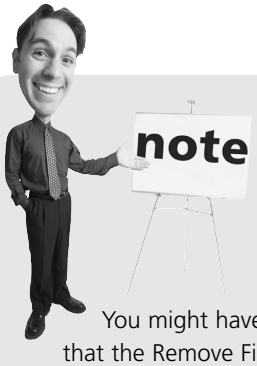


FIGURE 8.21
Using the Filter by Form feature to find all your medicinal plants purchased from Wildseed Farms.

3. Select **Medicinal** from the TypeID control.
4. Select the **CatalogName** control, and Access displays a drop-down arrow to the right. Click it to display the possible entries by which you could filter. Then select **Wildseed Farms**.
5. Click the **Apply Filter** tool on the Filter/Sort toolbar to display the filtered set of records. The form shows only medicinal plants from Wildseed Farms.

The filtered set contains only one record—Purple Coneflower. To remove the filter, click the **Remove Filter** button on the Form view toolbar or select **Remove Filter/Sort** from the Records menu. Remove the filter now.



You might have noticed that the Remove Filter and Apply Filter buttons use the same icon. Don't let that confuse you because you can't make a mistake by clicking the button at the wrong time. The buttons perform the appropriate task.

Using the Find Dialog Box

So far, you've sorted and filtered. You can also search for a particular value in a record using the Find dialog box. This feature is similar to the Filter by Selection feature, but it doesn't filter the results and all the records are still available to you. Let's use this feature to find the record for purple coneflower. Follow these steps:

1. From any record other than the record for Purple Coneflower, select the **CommonName** control. Then select **Find** from the Edit menu or press **Ctrl+F**.

2. Enter `Purple Coneflower` as the data to find.
3. Click **Find Next**, and Access displays the record shown in Figure 8.22. You might need to move the Find and Replace dialog box to see the results of the search.

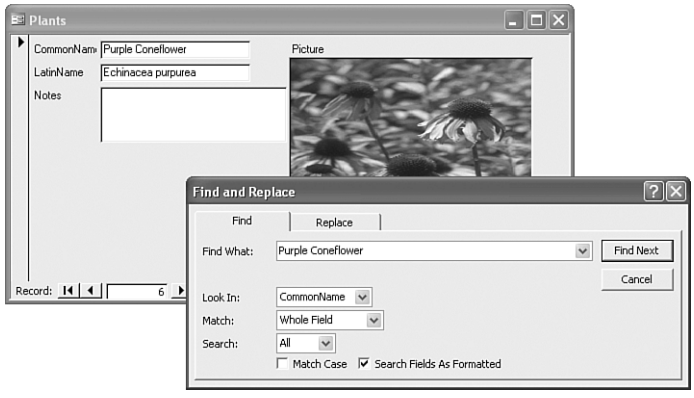
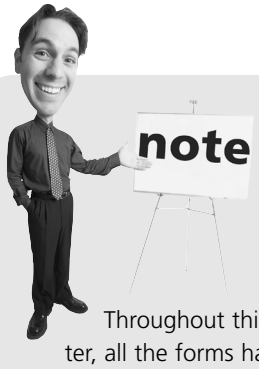


FIGURE 8.22
Access displays the first matching record when you click the Find Next button.

The record you see in Figure 8.22 might not be the only record that matches your entry. In this case it is, but if it weren't, you'd click Find Next again to see the next matching entry and continue doing so until you found the record you were searching for. Close the Find and Replace dialog box when you're done searching.

The Find and Replace feature lets you qualify a search by specifying the field you're searching, specifying just how much of the entry you want to consider, determining the direction of the search, matching the letter case, and considering any formatting.



Throughout this chapter, all the forms have been based on tables, but don't forget that you can also base a form on a query. Doing so provides a permanent means of filtering and sorting the form's data. Eventually, you might find that you seldom base a form on a table and that you rely a great deal on queries to provide the data for your forms.

THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM

Storing data may be the purpose of a database, but it's your job to enter and maintain that data. Forms are the best way to enter new data, modify existing data, and even delete unwanted data. In this chapter, you learned to do the following:

- Create forms using wizards
- Navigate forms and enter new data
- Modify existing data
- Sort, filter, and search records