

Noxious weeds of Victoria. W. T. Parsons. Published by Inkata Press, Melbourne and Sydney, 1973.—xi, 300 pp., 266 fig., 1 map and frontispiece. Recommended price: \$13.50.

The author of a book on weeds is always confronted with two difficult questions: firstly, what kind of information should he include in it, and secondly, how should he present this information to his readers. Mr. Parsons, in taking up both those challenges, has produced a very valuable reference work on the noxious weeds of Victoria and all landholders in this and adjacent states should find it a valuable manual and the farmer, especially, will find it indispensable.

Following a discussion on the characteristics of weeds generally, herbicides and then noxious weeds legislation in Section I, the author treats each noxious weed gazetted for Victoria in detail in Section II. The alphabetical arrangement follows a familial order and information on each species is given under a number of headings which include a botanical description, notes on nomenclature, history of introduction and proclamation, life cycle, distribution, dispersal, properties and control. The botanical descriptions are written in a simple manner and are readily understood by the botanically uninformed (there is a glossary for reference when necessary) and notes on nomenclature make interesting reading. The author carefully traces the history of introduction of many of these weeds and this information, hitherto widely scattered in literature and other records, will prove interesting to students concerned with this aspect of our introduced flora. Notes on life cycles, dispersal, properties and distribution, based extensively on the author's own observations, will materially assist those concerned with control and eradication of noxious weeds. The author deals with the question of control in a practical manner and indeed wisely sounds a timely note of caution on the excessive and careless use of herbicides. Wherever possible, alternative methods of control are given. All species have been adequately illustrated by colour as well as black and white photographs and sometimes coloured drawings have been added. Most of these are of very good quality. In some cases illustrations of seedling stages are included and these are particularly useful for identification purposes. The distribution of nearly every noxious weed is shown on a separate map and the presence or absence in each of Victoria's 1990 parishes is shown by a single dot.

The presentation of the material in *Noxious weeds of Victoria* is clear and logical and it will long remain a standard reference to these plants for Victoria and for Australia as well. The recommended price is very reasonable for a manual of this quality.

—A. B. COURT



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