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Book Review: *Invasive Plants: A Guide to
Identification, Impacts, and Control of Common North
American Species* by Sylvan Ramsey Kaufman and
Wallace Kaufman

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Invasive Plants: A Guide to Identification, Impacts, and Control of Common North American Species. By Sylvan Ramsey Kaufman and Wallace Kaufman. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2007. 458 pp. Color photographs, bibliography, index. \$39.95 paper.

Invasive nonnative species are responsible for more than \$120 billion dollars in economic costs in the United States each year. Ecological impacts are equally severe but difficult to quantify. Sylvan and Wallace Kaufman profile about 200 nonnative plant species in the first field guide to the invasive plants of North America. Many of these have invaded the southeastern United States, particularly Florida, but more than half of the species described occur in the Great Plains.

The authors place the invasive species problem in context prior to providing species descriptions. The first three chapters offer background information on how invasive species become established, their impacts, and an overview of approaches to controlling problem species. The fourth chapter consists of a general key for identifying and locating unknown plant species. The majority of the field guide consists of profiles of individual species, including information on taxonomy, identifying characteristics, habitat, geographical range, ecological effects, introduction pathway, management strategies, and additional references. Most species are accompanied by at least two color photos, including a full view and a closeup, that illustrate identifying characteristics. The volume presents unique information not found in other books on invasive species, which tend to be either general case studies of a few species or technical monographs. The portions on ecosystem effects and management strategies are distinguishing characteristics of the book and especially useful. The authors have created a reference guide that is well written, easily understandable, and accessible for both scientists and amateurs.

The book is not without limitations. It is national in coverage, and thus many species listed do not occur in the Great Plains, primarily species from the southeastern U.S. Additionally, some invaders of the Great Plains are omitted. The species key provided is too basic to be particularly useful, and distinguishing nonnative versus native congeners is not always clear (e.g., buckthorns [*Rhamnus* spp.]). Differentiating between similar species may be

difficult for some genera and for plants not in flower because the images are limited to photographs of leaves and flowers.

Although too basic for a specialist, *Invasive Plants* will be a valuable resource to anyone interested in a colorful, general field guide to the major invasive plants of North America. It is a practical tool for scientists, weed managers, and for landowners wishing to know more about invasive species and their management. The book is compact enough to take into the field, yet packed with relevant information. It is a pleasure to skim through and serves its stated purpose well. **C.R. Allen, A. Alai, A.C. Kessler, T. Kinsell, A.L. Major, K. Nemeč, School of Natural Resources, and B.J. Stephen, School of Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska–Lincoln.**