1996


Svata M. Louda

*University of Nebraska - Lincoln, slouda1@unl.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/bioscilouda](https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/bioscilouda)

Part of the [Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Commons](https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/bioscilouda)


[https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/bioscilouda/9](https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/bioscilouda/9)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Papers in the Biological Sciences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Svata M. Louda Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
WEED SEEDS OF THE GREAT PLAINS: A HANDBOOK FOR IDENTIFICATION.


The purpose of this useful 145-page book is to provide both a source of comparative information on seeds of 280 weedy plant species in the Great Plains and a means of identifying them. The region covered is the central USA, from northern Texas.
The seeds are arranged taxonomically, according to the *Flora of the Great Plains* (Great Plains Flora Association, 1986, 1992). A key of sorts, based on gross external characters, enables one to place the seed into one of 22 descriptive groups. Identification after that is by comparison of written descriptions, photographic silhouettes, and color photographs of species in the group.

Individual descriptions are clear, and I appreciated the obvious effort toward consistency. Each description contains information on seed outline, cross-section shape, form, surface texture, color, size, and general location within the Great Plains. The silhouettes are useful, especially for highly distinctive seeds. As far as I am concerned, however, the 286 color photographs are the most valuable part of the book. These photographs are crisp, clear, and highly illustrative of the subtle distinctions among similar seeds.

One change would have made the book even more useful for seed identification. The more similar the seeds, the more difficult they are to distinguish accurately. Thus, identification would be easier if the descriptions and color photographs were arranged into artificial groups by color, sheen, size and distinctive external characters, rather than taxonomically. Although some duplication of species occurs among the 22 groups, a hierarchy in the key and cross-referencing among groups within the key could have been used to minimize duplication of descriptions and photographs required. Overall, I am delighted to have this book and recommend it to anyone who needs to identify weed seeds and, in fact, to anyone fascinated by the beauty and variation among plants displayed in nature.

Svata M. Louda, Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska