

**BOOK REVIEW**

*Weeds of Queensland*. H. E. Kleinschmidt and R. W. Johnson, (1977). Queensland Department of Primary Industries: Brisbane. 469 pp. \$A14.

This book is a welcome addition to our still somewhat meagre library of technical publications which help us to get to know our plants. Weeds are ever present and, as the author points out, identification is the first step in controlling a weed, understanding its reason for being there or preventing its occurrence.

The book is clearly written and well presented. It should appeal to the rank amateur as well as the botanist, ecologist or agronomist. It commences with a chapter on weeds and weed control giving us a thumb nail sketch of the form and function of weeds followed by a discussion of weed control methods, which, although not confined to, is dominated by chemical methods. An important omission to the weed control arsenal is the use of sown perennial pastures. Next comes a chapter on legislation concerning both noxious weeds and chemicals which is useful because much of the general public is unaware of it. This leads into chapters dealing with the preparation of material for identification, if this cannot readily be done on the spot, and then the use of keys to identify fresh or dried material. The key is simple and uses characters and terminology which are both easily recognisable and understandable. The groupings produced by the key are illustrated with a set of excellent colour plates of group representatives. It is a pity these could not have been used throughout the text. The species within the groups are then enumerated with distribution details given for each one based on pastoral districts.

The main section of the book follows, describing and illustrating 369 weed species which are cross referenced to the keys. The descriptions are brief but informative, being a short technical description with some ecological and other anecdotal comments and finally details of control measures. The line drawn illustrations of Margaret Saul are excellent and it is a pity that the black and white plates are in many cases rather inferior. However given the inherent limitations of monochrome photography for this purpose most illustrations are diagnostically useful. The last chapter deals with native woody weeds, perhaps the most important weeds of the native pastures, and although briefer than the body of the book, it is most useful.

Although I have not yet had time to test the keys exhaustively, I have not encountered any serious errors, which is commendable for the first edition of such a work. As a scientist I would have liked a slightly fuller discussion of weeds and weed control with some bibliographic information to help me into what literature is available in Australia. These comments aside, the authors are to be congratulated on a concise, eminently useful and practical contribution. Not the least is the fact that you can acquire all this in hard covers for only \$14 post free from Information Branch, D.P.I., G.P.O. Box 46, Brisbane 4001.

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