

## The Blue Jay Bookshelf

**WEEDS OF CANADA AND THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES.** By F. H. Montgomery. 1964, The Ryerson Press, Toronto. xxviii + 226 p. Illus. \$4.95

Easy to carry in the field (5½ in. x 7½ in.) and simple to use, this little handbook will be a valuable tool for the layman trying to identify weeds in Canada and the United States north of latitude 36°N. About 365 weeds are described, 255 of them also being illustrated with black-and-white line drawings.\* This book includes many weeds with rather restricted distributions and some that are abundant only in a few localities, as well as those of very widespread distribution.

The keys for identifying weeds are simple and straightforward. They rely mainly on vegetative characters but, where necessary, flower characters have also been included. Technical terms are kept to a minimum and the short glossary adequately defines the few which are used.

The reader with a plant to be identified will begin with the general key on page xxi and choose the section which agrees with his specimen. Ultimately he is guided to a scientific name, an English name, occasionally also a French name, a description and usually an illustration. If these correspond with his unknown plant, his determination of it is verified. If they do not agree he must return to the general key and re-examine every pair of choices to find where the error was made.

The illustrations are generally adequate in size and accuracy of detail. Unfortunately there must have been a problem in reproducing some of the figures because a few, e.g., wild barley and dog fennel, appear to have lost detail through fading or diffusion during printing. The scale of each illustration is indicated and it is accompanied by a figure number. Substitution of the name of the plant for the figure number or inclusion of both with each illustration would have made this useful book even more useful. It would have helped when scanning illustrations looking for one which resembles a plant in hand.

In the Introduction Dr. Montgomery described why there is no clear-cut definition for the term "weed" and goes on to discuss the characteristics, origin, economic effects and general methods of control.

There has long been a need for an authoritative book combining keys, descriptions and illustrations of weeds, yet couched in layman's language. This little book fills that need and it is recommended to all who are interested in learning to identify weeds.—*Jack F. Alex, Regina.*

\*See example on p. 94 of this issue of the *Blue Jay*.

**WILD PLANTS OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES,** by Archibald C. Budd and Keith F. Best. 1964. Publication 983, Research Branch, Canada Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. 519 p. \$3.00 paper bound, \$4.00 cloth bound from Queen's Printer, Ottawa.

This is a second edition, revised, expanded and updated, of the senior author's book published under the same title in 1957. It includes about 1200 species of ferns and flowering plants that occur in a region roughly circumscribed by Winnipeg, Prince Albert, Edmonton, Waterton Lakes and the Canada-U.S.A. International Boundary. Keys consisting of successive pairs of contrasting statements guide the user in identifying his unknown plant through class, family, genus and ultimately to its species and common name. Each species is described and its habitat and distribution is indicated. About 160 species are illustrated by full-page black-and-white line drawings. Technical terms are used only where necessary for accuracy and there is a good glossary accompanied by numerous illustrations of variation in types of leaves, inflorescences, flowers and fruits. As stated by the authors, this book ". . . is meant for agricultural representatives, field men, weed inspectors, school teachers, farmers, ranchers, and wild-flower lovers in general." All would find it a very useful volume if seriously interested in identifying the common wild plants of the Canadian Prairies.—*Jack F. Alex, Regina.*