

BOOK NOTICES

JOHN CARDINA. 2022. **Lives of Weeds: Opportunism, Resistance, Folly.** (ISBN-13: 978-1-5017-5898-0, pbk). Comstock Publishing Associates, An Imprint of, Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State St., Ithaca, New York 14850, U.S.A. (**Orders:** cornellpress.cornell.edu). \$24.95 US, 282 pp., 8 b/w illustrations, references, index, 6" × 9".

Of the estimated 400,000 species of flowering plants, John Cardina writes about nine specific plants in his eight chapter book, *Lives of Weeds*. This book is eight weeds: **1)** Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*; **2)** Florida Beggarweed, *Desmodium tortuosum*; **3)** Velvetleaf, *Abutilon theophrasti*; **4)** Nutsedge, *Cyperus esculentus*; **5)** Marestalk, *Conyza canadensis*; **6)** Pigweed [Palmer amaranth] *Amaranthus palmeri*; **7)** Ragweed, *Ambrosia trifida*; and **8)** Foxtail, *Setaria faberi* and *S. pumila*. Of course Cardina is not necessarily writing about the world's worst weeds, but weeds in general. The author selected eight out of many possible candidates.

As a botanist, I like weeds. As a teenager growing up on a cotton farm in sw Oklahoma, I didn't like weeds because I had to hoe them out cotton fields (and out of the garden) when it was 90 or even 100 degrees. Cotton loves hot weather and chopping cotton (hoeing weeds) was a summer activity. Teenagers today think they have it hard. My dad was my first botany teacher, and he pointed out the difference(s) between weeds and a young dicotyledonous cotton plant. Cotton was our livelihood and I needed to know my weeds as it were when it came to chopping cotton. Now, many years later (farm still in the family), I can still see those long rows of cotton and those weeds. One weed in particular that we constantly had a problem with was Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*). Another was flower-of-an-hour (*Hibiscus trionum*) a beautiful plant in the same family (Malvaceae) as cotton. Even though Cardina doesn't include Johnson grass or flower-of-an-hour in his book, these are weeds and they too have a story as all weeds do. Cardina's stories about weeds are delightful reads.

—Barney Lipscomb, Fort Worth Botanic Garden | Botanical Research Institute of Texas
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WILLOW ZUCHOWSKI. 2022. **Tropical Plants of Costa Rica: A Guide to Native and Exotic Flora. Second Edition.** (ISBN-13: 978-1-5017-6307-6, pbk). Zona Tropical, Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State St., Ithaca, New York 14850, U.S.A. (**Orders:** cornellpress.cornell.edu). \$34.95 US, 543 pp., 820 color photographs, 120 b/w illustrations, references, index, 5" × 8".

Having been to Costa Rica a couple of times prior to when even the first edition of *Tropical Plants of Costa Rica* was released in 2007, this tropical plant guide would have come in handy for plant identification. The format of one species per page with photographs and/or with illustrations is nice and easy to use. There is the occasional two page spread for a species, e.g., *Theobroma cacao*. Unlike many guides that organize plants alphabetical by families or Latin names, *Tropical Plants of Costa Rica* is organized for the non-botanist. General categories are **1)** Painted Treetops, **2)** Other Common Trees, **3)** Roadside and Garden Ornaments, **4)** Fruits and Crops, **5)** Living Fences and Reforestation, **6)** Special Habitats, **7)** Typical Tropical Groups, and **8)** Conspicuous Grasses. The photographs are sharp and colorful and generally include flowers and/or fruits for identification.

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