

BOOK REVIEW

ERNEST SMALL. 2009. **Top 100 Food Plants**. ISBN-10: 0660198584, ISBN-13: 9780660198583, pbk.). NRC Research Press, 1200 Montreal Road, M-58, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R6, CANADA. (**Orders:** phone 1-877-672-2672, info@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca). \$34.95, 656 pp., 250 illustrations, 8½" × 11".

This book reviews scientific and technological information about the major food plants and their culinary uses. It is illustrated with black and white photographs and more than 250 illustrations from the masterpieces from the golden age of botanical illustration as well as contemporary illustrations. Most of the book consists of 100 chapters dealing with one of the food crops, either a specific species or a group of species. Each chapter follows the same format. An initial section entitled "Names," a "Plant Portrait," "Culinary Portrait," "Curiosities of Science and Technology," and finally "Key Information Sources" which includes a subsection entitled "Specialty Cookbooks." There are more than 3,000 literature citations in the book. I particularly appreciate having the citations included with the species that is being discussed rather than having to wade through a comprehensive listing which could be a tad confusing with as many sources that have been cited in this book. Another nice touch is the inclusion of the "Specialty Cookbooks" subsection in the main body of the work. Not everyone is a cook so it is easy to read right over it but if you are a cook then it is there to be devoured and to be used.

All categories of food plants are covered and information is provided on scientific and common names, appearance, history, economic and social importance, and food uses, including practical information on storage and preparation. The book is intended to be a reference guide for specialists in agricultural areas, with thousands of literature citations backing up the information provided. However, the general public should also find this volume appealing, because of the hundreds of attractive illustrations included, and the huge interest today in the subjects of gardening, cooking, and human health in relation to diet. The author received the Land Anderson Award in 2009 for this title published in Canada.—Gary L. Jennings, *Librarian, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 1700 University Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76107-3400, U.S.A.*