



The Checklist of the Naturalized Plants in China

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Editors in Chief

Xiaoling YAN Zhanghua WANG Jinshuang MA

Vice Editors in Chief

Huiru LI Jing YAN



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Preface

Naturalized species are defined as those occurring outside their natural range and beyond that into where they have reproduced themselves without human intervention. Most plant species from other parts of the world are likely to find a suitable habitat somewhere in a country like China since various climate and ecosystems exist here.

Plant introductions have a long history in China, especially along the “Silk Road”, “Tea-Horse Road”, and maritime trade routes and inland tributary systems in the past, and in the present since China has opened her door to the West since the 1980s. Some introduced species have become naturalized in China as important grains, medicinal plants, and economic crops, playing a positive role in the development of agriculture, economics, construction, and the improvement of living standards. However, a large number of less useful naturalized plants have become invasive species, bringing with them enormous effects and losses to the local biological diversity, economy, and human health.

Naturalized species have been considered the primary stages of plant invasions; therefore, studies on naturalized plant species could generate insights on possible invaders and invasions. China has suffered from insufficient basic data about naturalized plants for a long time, and the related knowledge of naturalized plants is also very lacking. Therefore, it is necessary to launch a nationwide investigation on naturalized species and compile the basic data to identify the invasive species and put forward effective management strategies. However, the statistical data regarding naturalized plants in China can vary according to the research methods, and the definitions of the word “naturalized” are not in common use. Wu et al. (2010) estimated that China had 420 naturalized species in 273 genera and 84 families, while Jiang et al. (2011) reported 861 species in 465 genera and 110 families. However, data from the former study were incomplete because they did not cover Taiwan in their statistics, and the latter study may have treated some native species as exotic.

The purpose of this book is to provide the basic information for naturalized plants in China. Based on observations during field investigations and identified herbarium specimens, as well as a survey and validated literature, the naturalized plant species are listed as the text. Some native species which have been treated as exotic are listed in Appendix I since they were reported as naturalized before, and some cultivated plants are listed in Appendix II since they are not naturalized yet or just occasionally escaped. A number of species were considered as invasive or naturalized by some references without their exact distributions in China, and they are not included, such as