



Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide

Peter Del Tredici

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Characterized by an abundance of pavement, reflected heat, polluted air and contaminated soil, our cities and towns may seem harsh and unwelcoming to vegetation. However, there are a number of plants that manage to grow spontaneously in sidewalk cracks and roadside medians, flourish along chain-link fences and railroad tracks, line the banks of streams and rivers, and emerge in the midst of landscape plantings and trampled lawns. On their own and free of charge, these plants provide ecological services including temperature reduction, oxygen production, carbon storage, food and habitat for wildlife, pollution mitigation, and erosion control on slopes. Around the world, wild plants help to make urban environments more habitable for people.

Peter Del Tredici's lushly illustrated field guide to wild urban plants of the northeastern United States is the first of its kind. While it covers the area bounded by Montreal, Boston, Washington, D.C. and Detroit, it is broadly applicable to temperate urban environments across North America. The book covers 222 species that flourish without human assistance or approval. Rather than vilifying such plants as weeds, Del Tredici stresses that it is important to notice, recognize, and appreciate their contribution to the quality of urban life. Indeed their very toughness in the face of heat islands, elevated levels of carbon dioxide and ubiquitous contamination is indicative of the important role they have to play in helping humans adapt to the challenges presented by urbanization, globalization and climate change.

The species accounts?158 main entries plus 64 secondary species-feature descriptive information including scientific name and taxonomic authority, common names, botanical family, life form, place of origin, and identification features. Del Tredici focuses especially on their habitat preferences, environmental functions, and cultural significance. Each entry is accompanied by original full-color photographs by the author which show the plants' characteristics and growth forms in their typical habitats. *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast* will help readers learn to see these plants-the natural vegetation of the urban environment-with fresh appreciation and understanding.

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