



Handbook on the Morphology of Common Grasses: Identification and Characterization of Caryopses and Seedlings

Dhara Gandhi, Susy Albert, Neeta Pandya

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The grass family is one of the largest and most diverse families in the plant kingdom and is of great economic value. Grasses provide human beings and domestic animals with the main necessities of life, add diversity to the landscape and stability to the ground surface, and also provide ornamental and amenity value. The present handbook is a pictorial resource guide to the identification of different common grasses in their early growth stage. In this book, 100 of the most common grasses (palatable and unpalatable) growing in the grasslands have been characterized on the basis of the vegetative characters of the seedling. A key to the identification of the grasses at their seedling stages is provided to help easily identify the grasses at their early stage of development.

Many of the grasses described in the book are cosmopolitan, and many grow worldwide. Terms used to describe a grass seedling are used with help of photographs. Different diagnostic features of the seedling—such as growth habits, types of vernation, nodes, internodes, leaf laminae, leaf tips, leaf sheaths, ligules, auricles, and collars—have been used for their identification. The descriptions and photographs enable users to successfully and easily identify these species in a field environment.

The book has been divided into two main sections. The first section covers the characteristic features of the caryopses. It includes light and scanning electron microscopic features and a diagnostic key to the identification of the species. The second section deals with grass seedling morphology and provides a key to the identification of the species on the basis of early vegetative features. Each of the sections includes an introduction, materials and methods, and results, supplemented with microphotographs representing the features of identification.

This handbook is the first of its kind to include so many grass species that can be authentically identified with the help of pictorial diagnostic features of the seedlings and caryopses. The identifying features are solely on the basis of morphological, micromorphological, and morphometric characters.

This handbook will be an important reference book of value to students in basic grass taxonomy or ecology classes as well as to academicians, researchers, pasture management practitioners, as well as professionals working in grassland restoration.

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