

Weeds of South Khorassan Saffron Fields

M.H. Rashed

Associate Professor, College of Agriculture; Ferdowsi University of Mashhad PO Box 91775-1163, Mashhad, Iran

Abstract

Weed control is an effective step in improving saffron (Crocus sativus L.) yields quantitatively and qualitatively. The first step in a weed control program is the identification of the weed. In this study, a survey was made of the weeds of saffron fields in South Khorassan, which is the most important region for growing saffron in Iran and perhaps the world.

Several saffron farms in Gonabad, Begestan, Ghaen, and Birjand were selected according to their area of saffron production, Random samples of weeds in a one m² area were taken during spring and summer 1988 - 1989 from the selected fields.

The weeds were counted and visually evaluated based on their families, genera, and species. The results of the study indicated that over 184 species of weeds existed within the saffron fields, with about 20 species dominant. The most significant weeds were, for spring: Cardaria draba, Holosteum umbellatum, Hordeum spontaneum; for summer: Cardaria draba, Alhaqi cameleron and Hordeum spontaneum. Prior to the summer season, the deep rooted, drought tolerant, perennial weeds gradually replaced the spring weeds.