

# INVENTORY OF SEEDS AND PLANTS IMPORTED BY THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN SEED AND PLANT INTRODUCTION DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30, 1912 (NO. 31; NOS. 33279 TO 34092).

---

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This is the first inventory of a new series, and the occasion furnishes an opportunity to review briefly the history of these inventories.

The first of the thirty inventories which have been published was designed by Mr. O. F. Cook, who saw the need for it during the time in which he had charge of the Section of Seed and Plant Introduction in 1899. The correctness of his foresight has been amply proved. The series of inventories has developed into a work of great value in its bearing on the rapidly developing agriculture of this country. Nowhere else, so far as known, is there an authentic record of the introduction into a country of 30,000 plant importations from various parts of the world.

The early inventories contained scarcely more than a bare record of the place of collection, the date, the name of the plant, and the collector, but this was largely due to the fact that the early introductions sent in were accompanied by very brief notes. With the arrival of the material from the Lathrop-Fairchild expedition, of Mr. W. T. Swingle's collections from the Mediterranean region, and of Mr. M. A. Carleton's material from Russia, the inventory first began to take on importance as a work on economic botany, inasmuch as the original observations of the collectors, who were termed "agricultural explorers" at Mr. Cook's suggestion, were printed in full. It is the observations fresh from the field which form one of the most valuable features of this publication.

Until 1908 the inventories were published at irregular intervals and were extremely variable in size, but since that year they have been issued quarterly, each number covering the introductions of three months. The inventories prior to No. 14, published in 1908, recorded the names of the plants or seeds received in the form in which they were given by the explorer or correspondent, but with the development in 1908 of facilities for the identification of the seeds sent in, through cooperation with the Office of Taxonomic and Range Investigations, an attempt was made to correct the nomenclature of the imported