

BEATRIX FARRAND  
LANDSCAPE GARDENER  
REEF POINT  
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

October 11, 1941

Miss Anne Sweeney  
Dumbarton Oaks  
Research Laboratory  
3101 R Street  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Sweeney:

Don't condemn me for having delayed so long in returning the manuscript of your preliminary talk. I have wanted to go over it with considerable care for many reasons: first, because you and I are engaged in a very important sort of enterprize which we want to make a real success; second, because Mrs. Bliss will undoubtedly hear repercussions of your guide service and we want them to be entirely favorable and, as you and I both know, she has a mercifully wise and critical mind. I am therefore returning you your manuscript very much rewritten and altered and don't know whether the changes will be possible to decipher or not. If I had had more time and if Mrs. Stover had not been away on a short vacation, I would have rewritten the whole script for you.

You must be very sure of the correctness of your statements. In the first place, you are wrong in saying *Acer saccharinum* is an imported tree. It is an American and therefore can't be called "introduced". Rehder will show you the correctness of this statement. (see later in this letter, page 4)

Also be very sure you have the references correct as to the origins of your plants. *Rosa rugosa*, for instance, comes from North China, Korea or Japan. *Pyracantha* is a "cousin" of the thorn (Rosaceae) but not a barberry at all. The Kentucky Coffee Tree is its name, not the Kentucky Coffee Berry Tree.

The fastigate shape of the tree is named from fasti, a peaked gable, and the flame shape is merely the shape of the candle flame, but not the <sup>the origin of</sup> name of it.

To go on still further, on page 4 are you sure that the *Forsythia* is *suspensa*? My impression is that it is one of the intermedia X *spectabilis* types.

On page 7 you had better verify as to the ~~Beardless~~ *Iris* coming to us from China. My impression is that many of the parents are European, such as *Florentina*, *Plicata*, and so on.

In fact, go over the script with a tooth comb and catch any further like inaccuracies which have escaped my eye. It won't do to have us telling people that the silver maple comes to us from China when the learned know that it is an American tree, to be found in many a moist woodlot.

It would be also wise policy to mention our Prairie Rose (*Rosa setigera*) as it is the parent of some of the most promising new hybrids.

With regard to calling the University just "Harvard" without any other qualification, I should suggest I think that you try to work in, as on page 6, "naturally the Harvard authorities wish to have the garden visitors".

On page 8, it might be well to digress and say that the Yews are a very interesting family, allied to the conifers, very ancient in their origin and having this peculiar fleshy envelope to their little seed.

You might mention the fact also that Taxaceae are found in fossils together with the ginkgo and the great mosslike trees which survive today in the little club mosses.

It might be well, on page 9, to mention the fact that the apple spoken of in the Garden of Eden is in all likelihood some semi-tropical desert fruit and was called "apple" by the translators who did not know the English equivalent for the Hebrew plant, just as the Lily of the Field is thought to have been the *Anemone* of Palestine rather than our garden lilies.

You will find that your talk is a little too brief so that a little padding of this sort will be useful and can be fitted in on separate leaves which can be used for different groups at various seasons. It might be wise for you to keep a series of these separate slips with comments on the different seasons as you observe them. For instance, this talk of yours will not be of very much use in the winter, when you will need to speak of winter buds, branching, and the characteristic shape of the trees.

On page 10, the whole rose talk and John Champney is excellent and will interest almost everyone, and few will know this particular item.

I have not looked up the Chinese quince tree but you had better be sure that this is the correct name. I know that the quince has gone through two or three alterations in the last fifteen or twenty years.

*Cydonia sinensis*



On page 12, add more as to the Buttercup family, speaking of the other garden favorites which are members of the family, like anemone, delphinium, meadow rue, aconite, globe flower, etc. It might be well also somewhere in the talk to add a little aside, mentioning how many of the garden flowers we owe to our own country, and speak of phlox, coreopsis, rudbeckia, most of the lupins, and the others from Mexico like ageratum, dahlia, salvia. Another aside would allow you to tell your hearers that it is thought that the great reservoir of the Rhododendron species probably lies northeast of the Himalayas between China, Tibet and India, as many hundred sorts have been found in this particular neighborhood, both growing in the tropical forest and dwarfed to the size of creeping phlox on the mountain tops. All of these odds and ends interest people, even though they may not apply to Dumbarton Oaks itself.

You might also make a further aside on the contribution of the rose family with its fruits,— cherry, pear, apple, plum, quince, strawberry, blackberry— and its flowers,— spiraea, cotoneaster, thorns, mountain ash.

Then it might be worth while to make a sort of little gallery of portraits of the different trees so that you can vary your talks. Give your description of *Acer saccharinum* and mention the fact that its name is easily confused with that of *Acer saccharum*, and here you can say how confusing some of the nomenclature is, as names were bandied about in the early days, sometimes from one plant to another. For instance you might mention the Douglas spruce, and its various names and transformations. See in Rehder the list of synonyms. Its name now, as you know, is *pseudo tsuga taxifolia*, but look, in the description following its name, at the different names it has appeared under!— at least five and I think a good many more. Then you might also very wisely tell people why the Latin names of plants are essential to accuracy and mention this same Douglas spruce. In the northwest it is called fir, sometimes red, sometimes white. In England it is called Douglas fir. In the old days, it used to be called hemlock. In the east, it is usually known as the Douglas spruce.

You speak, on page 14, of the Bamboos and say they are native to Japan. They are native, not only to Japan, but to a very large realm of the southeast Asiatic tropics and they are the staff of life without which many of these races simply could not live. They make containers, mattings, thatches, houses, cooking utensils, implements, boats, hunting implements, whereas here in this part of the world we meet it mainly in the shape of porch furniture.

On page 14, one of your best paragraphs is the one about the ~~pink~~ ginkgo.

Another portrait study would be one of the American elm, its association with New England, its incomparable fountain form, and men-

tion the present diseases which now endanger its life. Mention its approximate length of life, which is not supposed to run over a hundred and fifty or two hundred years, in comparison with the oak life-span which will run perhaps to six or seven hundred.

My impression also is that your *Tilia* is not *Europaea* but *vulgaris*. I think the one we have at Dumbarton Oaks is *cordata*, as it definitely is the small-leaved sort. Then also you might like to notice in Rehder that evidently the *Tilia Europea* appears to be a hybrid tree.

Again on page 15, be very sure you make it clear that the Buttonwood (*Platanus occidentalis*) is not the same tree as *Platanus orientalis*, the tree of which Egyptian mummy cases were made.

In speaking of *Magnolia denudata*, I don't think you are correct in saying that *conspicua* is a variety. I think it is a synonym (a former name).

Also it might be worth while to mention the peculiarity of so many Chinese plants, which show their flowers before the leaves, *Magnolia denudata*, *Forsythia*, some of the plums and I think some of the pears. There must be some physiological reason for this flowering before the leaving, but it is worth mentioning as a characteristic of plants in certain Asiatic regions.

When you speak of the white oak, you are confining it to the northeastern United States, whereas I think the tree runs pretty well into the south central states also. Rehder gives it as running from New England to Florida, west to Minnesota and Texas, so that the northeastern United States is only one of its habitats. The same remark about "introduced about 1724" can hardly be applied. Although Rehder gives this, it would mean that it was then introduced to cultivation. Evidently my remark is wrong about "introduce" not being applicable to a native as Rehder bears you out, and he is the final authority.

Don't think I have gone over your talk with an unkindly comb. I have tried to add any such scraps here and there as might be useful and give variety, and the criticisms I have made are the ones that you would wish me to make in the interests of accuracy for the University as well as for yourself.

Please forgive so very long a chatter.

Yours very sincerely,

Beaury Tward

Let me know how your moving progresses and when you get settled in the underworld.