

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER
REEF POINT
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

September 4, 1944

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss
1537 28th Street
Georgetown
Washington, 7, D. C.

Dearest Mildred:

Very neglectfully the question as to growing vegetables at Dumbarton Oaks was not answered in my last letter. This subject is one which is constantly brought up by Mr. Thacher as he seems to feel much inclined to at least try omitting vegetable growing for a year. Mr. Thacher feels there is considerable work entailed and that the expense in labor is not worth the return in kind. Bryce also confesses that the vegetable garden, while useful, does mean a considerable amount of work, and taking all of these various elements into consideration it would seem to me wise to omit vegetable growing for one year at least as an experiment. If the Quarters costs rise appreciably as the result of not having home-grown vegetables the question will be answered, but otherwise I feel there will always be the uncertainty in Mr. Thacher's mind until there is actual visible proof in the account books. It is of course understood that Bryce and Kearney would be given permission to grow vegetables for themselves in their own over-time, but this is a very different undertaking from producing the amounts needed to feed the students.

A nice letter has just come from Van Rensselaer saying he is so glad that you and I together are going to review the pamphlet. He says undoubtedly the publication of this pamphlet is going to meet opposition therefore he suggests that the material be forwarded through you and "the sooner the better", so let me know whether to interrupt your holiday by the revised draft or to let it wait until you return.

The draft for the article for Landscape Architecture will probable go to Mr. Thacher on Wednesday. I wonder whether he need bother you about it or whether you would actually like to review it before it comes back to me for final correction.

When Mr. Judd was here a couple of weeks ago he spoke of the idea you and he had discussed of making a book to correspond for the California and Pacific region to Rehder's Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs. This project would be one which would redound to the credit of the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens, and as it is a really serious undertaking Mr. Judd asked Dr. Merrill to make a statement regarding the possibility of compiling such a book, ~~and~~ ^{he} has sent me Dr. Merrill's notes. A copy goes to you so that you may look at it and see whether the enterprise seems to you worth while. It seems to me as though such a project would come within the scope of the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens and that its collaboration would be thoroughly worth while from both points of view.

Yours ever and always

Beatrix Farrand

3 Mrs Bliss
August 22, 1944

Memorandum.

The California situation in relation to introduced cultivated herbs, shrubs, vines and trees is a peculiarly complicated one. Introductions have been extensively carried on for the past seventy-five years, material originating in various parts of the world, particularly Australia, New Zealand, North and South Africa, the Mediterranean region as a whole, China and eastern Asia in general, and various parts of South America. In many cases the species were apparently not correctly named when introductions were made without names. In many cases the original records are lost. The result is that very many of even the more commonly cultivated species are currently known under erroneous names, or the names are quite unknown.

At times in the past there has been some more or less desultory work on the problems of identifying these introduced species, but there has been no really continuous work on a large scale. The project is peculiarly complicated in that whoever works on the identification of these introduced species should have access not only to a very complete library and a very large herbarium, but they should have a reasonably good working knowledge of the floras of the exotic regions whence most of the species came. While facilities are reasonably good in a few California institutions, as to the library and herbarium situation, these are by no means sufficiently ample for a project of the scope of that under consideration, and there are no west coast botanists who are familiar with the floras of these foreign lands except in a most general way. As a matter of fact, even the larger eastern institutions are not too well equipped -- in library facilities, yes, but in reference herbarium material, no; and furthermore there are very few botanists anywhere in the United States who have any working knowledge of the floras of such regions as Australia, New Zealand, Africa, the Mediterranean region, etc. Generally speaking, American herbaria are weak in reference collections from outside of North and South America, for their curators, with few exceptions, have not been interested in acquiring large collections from Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia and Malaysia. The Arnold Arboretum is the best equipped, but even in its collections there are many lacunae, and of course its herbarium is limited to woody plants.

If a project can be financed, my suggestion would be that the task be assigned to some really good west coast botanist; that he should first of all initiate work on the assembling of herbarium material from all possible sources, such collections not to be limited to individual specimens, but in all cases several duplicates of each number being prepared. The reason for this is obvious. To secure correct identifications in critical groups, of which only Eucalyptus, Acacia and Leptospermum are mentioned as examples, it is absolutely necessary that duplicate botanical specimens be available so that material may be sent to specialists familiar with a natural group or to resident botanists in the regions where the species originated who are thoroughly familiar with their local floras, whether these be Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mediterranean region, or any other part of the world. The California project has so many ramifications that it is essentially a world problem, whether we deal with Australian Acacia or Eucalyptus, Chinese Rhododendron, Mediterranean Cistaceae, or other groups.

With the material once assembled, with ample collections in duplicate, the specimens as far as possible presenting both flowers and fruits, then the basis is available for an actual comprehensive descriptive project. In California one could secure wide cooperation from the horticultural and botanical public once a

project was launched for many people would prepare and send in specimens. Whoever "heads up" a possible project should, however, be in a position to make extensive trips to collect specimens at certain seasons, for everyone realizes that specimens representing rarer species are widely scattered, so that residential lots must be considered as well as such obvious sources as city parks, nurseries, large private estates, and the grounds of large public and private institutions.

The preliminary work on the assembled material may be done at some well equipped California center, preferably one where there is a very large library and a reasonably large herbarium. But when this preliminary work is finished, or the project carried as far as California facilities may permit, then work should be done in a very few of the large eastern botanical institutions where much more extensive library and herbarium facilities exist than is the case in any institution in California.

Essentially, however, the basis of the project should be in California, for if started, whoever directs the work will be in a position to give it wide local publicity and being on the ground can act in accordance with seasonal developments as individual species come into flower and fruit. Such a project cannot very well be directed from an eastern institution because of geographic factors. Of course, if sufficient funds were made available, such a task could be done at an eastern center, just as the Brewer-Watson Flora of California was prepared at the Gray Herbarium. In this case very extensive field work was prosecuted in California, but all of the material was brought east and the actual preparation of the text was done at the Gray Herbarium, the only place in the country where sufficiently ample library and herbarium facilities then existed.

It is a curious fact that very few competent and widely experienced systematic botanists are interested in cultivated plants. Unfortunately, the professional botanists have to a very considerable degree left the problems of identification of specimens too largely in the hands of horticulturists who, in general, are deficient in botanical knowledge. Collectors in the field are almost as bad as the professional taxonomist for they, being interested in the native flora, very seldom take the trouble to prepare specimens to represent plants that are found only in cultivation; they become interested in introduced species only when certain of these become spontaneous and naturalized.

There is one institution in the United States that is predicated on a taxonomic study of cultivated plants and that is the Bailey Hortorium in Ithaca, New York. Dr. L. H. Bailey is an exception to the general rule, for he is not only a widely experienced horticulturist, but is also a very productive systematic botanist. He is, of course, too advanced in years to undertake such a large project as the one here discussed, but it is not impossible that Dr. Munz, who recently left Pomona College to accept an appointment at the Bailey Hortorium, might be a logical man, but Dr. Munz would have to develop far beyond being a specialist in one family and even if the projected herbarium work might be centered in Ithaca, he would have to do a great deal of herbarium and library work in Boston, New York and Washington, because the library and herbarium facilities at Ithaca are by no means sufficient for a project of this nature.

It might be possible to develop some kind of a cooperative project wherein representatives of several well equipped institutions might take a part, preferably including one in California and perhaps two or three in the east. Here much would depend on the present commitments of various institutions and projects to which various staff members are now assigned. Because of very numerous complications involved, this is no job for a tyro.

E. D. Merrill

