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5th Floor, Hunt Library
Carnegie Mellon University
4909 Frew Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890
Telephone: 412-268-2434
Email: huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu
Web site: www.huntbotanical.org

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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

ADDRESS-REPLY TO
CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE
AND REPLY TO

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

September 24, 1958

A I R M A I L

Dr. Paul H. Allen
c/o Centro Nacional de Agronomía
Santa Tecla, El Salvador

Dear Dr. Allen:

It was a great pleasure to receive your fine letter of September 8 and I feel highly honored that you should take the time to write me in such detail. However, you are entirely too modest in speaking of yourself and quite too adulatory about me.

Naturally I am greatly interested in your new assignment and congratulate the El Salvador authorities on having the good judgment to seek your services. Let us hope this will result in kindling a greater interest among Central American peoples in their very important forest resources and in creating a demand for the perpetuation of this renewable natural resource.

As you have already demonstrated much skill in developing practicable keys to tropical tree identification I have no doubts about your success in this new enterprise-- including those arborescent pokeweed relatives that seem now to be sources of (other than skin) irritation. I suppose buds, phyllotaxy, colors, pith, etc., will all play a part in keying out the more elusive of these gentry. Even taste and odor, despite perhaps the Linnean dicta "sapor...in differentia excludatur" and "odor speciem nunquam claro distinguit." And yet, I believe, the alliaceous odor and taste are what most definitely distinguish the genus Allium. Were I younger I think I would play with punch cards more, especially if clerical help were available. One could put a lot of odds and ends on such cards, stick a needle through some particular hole and find out in an instant (from the dropping cards) how many critters have some particular thing in common. My guess is that it might facilitate key-preparation.

All my very best wishes and thanks again for your most interesting letter.

Sincerely yours,

William A. Dayton

William A. Dayton
(U. S. Forest Service retiree.
4818 24th St., N., Arlington 7, Virginia,
U. S. A.)



CENTRO NACIONAL DE AGRONOMIA
SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

September 8, 1958

Dr. William A. Dayton
4818 24th St. N.
Arlington 7, Virginia

Dear Dr. Dayton:

The inexcusable delay in acknowledging your generous sending of reprints has not been occasioned by any lack of appreciation, but has been simply due to a three months absence from Zamorano (two in Salvador investigating the commercial possibilities of Simarouba glauca for their government, and another in the United States) followed by a move to this country, bag & baggage, to accept an offer to act as botanical consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture, with the specific chore of turning out a timber utilization manual more or less along the lines of that done for the Golfo Dulce area in Costa Rica.

After the dust had settled a bit, and we had found a tiny, but very comfortable apartment, I was able to fit up one of the rooms as a sort of second office to house books and other equipment that I consider too irreplaceable to risk in my den at the Centro. Your recent sendings fall in this class, and have now been added to my treasured file of gleanings from better men's brains that I by now find to be indispensable.

You may doubtless be as astonished as I was, when the proposition was first presented to me, that any government in this part of the world would be enlightened enough to realize that it might be to their advantage to be able to identify timbers of commercial importance, and to be able to separate them from other things of lesser value, but here I am in the midst of it, having a perfectly wonderful time.

The job, of course, would be an impossible one, within the limits of my present contract, were it not for the fact that a pretty good check list, without keys is already in existence, backed by a small, but remarkably good, if badly neglected herbarium of some seven or eight thousand sheets. These had become badly scrambled over the years, and not a little bug-eaten, but I have been able to salvage nearly three quarters, and have pretty well finished naming up the roughly 50 percent of the trees, which were unidentified and have by now some three thousand woody plants ordered up, in genus covers, and am about ready to take on the collecting of isolated areas such as the Sierra de Apaneca, Santa Ana volcano, and parts of the Honduran border that were inaccessible in Standley & Calderon's time. Fortunately, the country is small, and transportation facilities excellent so that I don't anticipate any major difficulties. I plan to frame my keys on the most obvious vegetative characters that I can find, and will resort to more orthodox methods only when forced to do so. My public, in this case, will consist of intelligent, but botanically untrained individuals in the country who would like to have some practical means of identifying the various species and I am going to try my best to accommodate them. It is wonderful training, if nothing else, since a rough preliminary sorting of cards which I now have will enable me to trace odd fish like Ledenbergia and Achatocarpus. There ought to be a law agin trees in families like the Phytolaccaceae, but there,

gentlemen, is precisely the rub. Anyone can recognize Legumes & Melastomes & Rubiaceae and such, but how, please tell me, do you sort out sterile specimens of Humiriaceae & Phytolaccaceae with a standard key? & how do you tackle population studies unless you can identify at least the majority of sterile specimens?

With these famous last words I will close, excepting for the thought that I wish you were here, so that I could pick your brains from time to time, tho the reprints will help on even that. Please accept my renewed thanks for these and past favors.

Most sincerely,

Paul H. Allen

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE
AND REFER TO

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

March 5, 1958

A I R M A I L

Dr. Paul H. Allen
c/o Escuela Agricola Panamericana
Apartado 93
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Dear Dr. Allen:

Your airmail letter of February 26 is received. I am interested to hear of your recent trip to El Salvador.

It is generous of you to ask for certain of my reprints. I am flattered by your interest and thank you for taking them off my hands, as it will simplify my moving problem which must eventually take place from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's South Building. These reprints are going forward today by ordinary mail. The "Wildlife Note", unfortunately, is in photostatic form and, I regret to say, not as sharp and legible as might be wished. I have often been criticized officially for being "too facetious" and it surprised me when my stock of reprints of this little piece was so soon exhausted. I guess folks were astonished at seeing so silly a piece in the sedate Journal of Forestry. The "Important Western Browse Plants" is the last copy in stock.

In response to your meteorological comment: The Washington, D. C., area has experienced the heaviest snowstorm (about 18 inches) and the lowest temperatures in about 12 years. Zero and near-zero weather is distinctly unusual for this part of the world. Sorry to hear that your precipitation has been subnormal. I hope, for my sake, you will not be too busy on your prospective visit to Washington to drop in and see me.

With all best wishes and my high esteem,

Sincerely yours,

William A. Dayton

William A. Dayton
(U. S. Dept. Agriculture retiree.
Formerly Chief, Div. of Dendrology and
Range Forage Investigations, U. S. Forest
Service)

Home address: 4818 24th St., N.
Arlington 7, Virginia, U. S. A.



February 26, 1958

Dr. Wm. A. Dayton
4818 24th Street
N. Arlington 7, Virginia

Dear Dr. Dayton:

I have just returned from a ten day junket to the Republic of El Salvador, where I spent ten days working on a botanical problem for their Ministry of Agriculture, to find your charitable comment on the last issue of Ceiba, and your kind offer to supply reprints of some of your publications.

On checking my records I find that I already have a number of the things which are still available, but would very much appreciate having one copy each of the following, which would seem to be along lines of my own personal interests: (27) -1931 - Important Western browse plants; (67) -1943 - Wildlife note: Should plant taxonomists be controlled by an open season or otherwise, or altogether suppressed? - (78) -1945 - What is dendrology? - (98) - 1949 - The family tree of Gramineae. - (100) - 1949 - Weeds are plants out of place. - (101) - 1949 - Poisonous plants. - (103) - 1949 - Stock poisoning plants of the eastern seaboard. - (105) - 1950 - Forest types of the United States.

This is a quite formidable order, but would be a valued addition to my files. I would expect, of course, to pay the postage on such a lot, and will send you my check as soon as I hear from you as to the amount.

We hope that you have survived, in good health, what has been reported as having been a very hard winter. Our comparable season has been exceptionally dry, but otherwise about as usual. We expect to come to the United States on annual leave sometime in the late spring, and may possibly see you in Washington at that time.

With most sincere regards,

Paul H. Allen

4818 24th St., N.
Arlington 7, Va., E.E.UV.
October 23, 1956

Dear Dr. Allen:

I should have sooner thanked you for your very fine note of September 6. My only excuse is that Mrs. Dayton's automobile accident has resulted in a lot of extra homework for me and my other work is sadly behindhand. I am glad to say she has the cast off her leg and can get out of her wheelchair onto crutches. It is tough on old folks! I hope you and Mrs. Allen are well and that all goes well with you. Should I find anything more to communicate in re. your very fine book I shall let you know. I am very pleased to possess a copy.

Va con Dios!

-W.A. Dayton

September 6, 1956

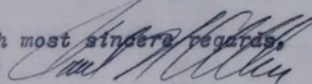
Dr. William A. Dayton
4818 24th Street, N.
Arlington 7, Virginia.

Dear Dr. Dayton:

Many thanks for your kind comments on our Costarican Rain Forest opus. Since you have worked on a similar project in the same general area, you have, at least in our time, an almost unique appreciation of the problems involved. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the turning point in the fortunes of this work dated from your examination of the manuscript, and fine letter, which did so much to help in securing financial aid from the National Science Foundation.

It is probably inevitable, in anything of this scope, that errors will have crept in, particularly since so much of the work was done far from a herbarium or adequate library. I am naturally anxious to catch as many of these as possible, on the off chance of a second printing. You have doubtless seen the very regrettable substitution of "Standleyana" for "Sandersoniana" in the Latin description of the new *Cecropia*. This was a printers error, but we just didn't catch it. I would regard it as a particular favor if you would make a list of any subsequent things which you may find, and send them to me in due course.

With most sincere regards,


Paul H. Allen

COPY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

August 5, 1954

Mr. Paul H. Allen
Director, Fairchild Tropical Garden
Box 407, Coconut Grove
Florida

Dear Mr. Allen:

It was a great pleasure to meet you on your recent visit to Washington and to have the opportunity of seeing your manuscript on the "Rainforests of Golfo Dulce", together with the pertinent beautiful drawings of Mrs. Allen and your many excellent photographs.

Having been a member of the Costa Rica forest survey party in 1943 and a joint-author of its two reports ^{1/}, as well as the author of three minor papers on the flora of Costa Rica, ² I am much interested in that country and in publications about it, especially those of a floristic nature. When I learned, quite unexpectedly that ³ was to be a member of the party referred to I bought for \$10.00 the four parts of Standley's "Flora of Costa Rica" and ⁴ paid \$5.00 more to have it bound in two volumes. This is a magnificent and invaluable reference work but, frankly, had it been available, ⁵ I would much rather have put that money into your own book as of far more practical value to the field worker.

I like your alphabetical arrangement of names, both vernacular and scientific, which is the system used in the Forest Service "Range Plant Handbook" and "Check List", in Bailey's "Cyclopedia of American Horticulture" and "Hortus" and in Kelsey's and my "Standardized Plant Names". The field characters used in the keys are exactly what field people want and precisely what the 99.44% taxonomically pure manuals ignore. And yet there is sound taxonomy, as well as valuable ecological, geographic, economic and other useful information in your full treatments of the species.

The manuscript is also noteworthy for its range extensions and additions to the known flora of North America. ⁶ There is no doubt that the information you have presented here would be useful in a far wider area than this Costa Rican region and would stimulate the preparation by yourself and others of additional field helps of this character. The inclusion of your abundant illustrations is particularly important.

With the increasing interest in tropical forests, especially those of the western hemisphere, it is highly desirable that manuscripts such as yours should become available through publication. Every effort should be made to accomplish this.

With my high esteem and all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM A. DAYTON
Chief of Research

1/ - 1. "The Forests of Costa Rica", 132 p., illus., map. Processed. Nov. 1943.

2. "Accomplishments of the Latin American forest resources project", 80 p., illus. Processed, Nov. 1943.

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