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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.

Research Department
Tela, Honduras
April 2, 1962

Dr. Paul A. Zahl
Natural Sciences
National Geographic Society
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Dr. Zahl:

The following localities where Nepenthes plants have been observed may serve some useful purpose in getting started in this fascinating field, but must represent a miniscule fraction of the habitats that must exist, since they are plants of sandy barrens, acid ridges and steep roadside banks throughout Borneo, Malaya and much of Indonesia.

North Borneo: Mount Kinabalu, on steep slopes above 5000 ft. This locality can be reached fairly easily on a good road from Ranau, where there is a Government Rest House. The finest plants are reported from the rockier parts on the trail to the summit, which leaves the main road a mile or two from Kundasang. Rafflesia also exists in this general area, and you can be guided to a good colony about two hours from the Ranau Guest House by a local Dusun named Angau, who is known to the Rest House cookie.

Ridge road above Sandakan, on way to steel tower. Plants are mostly on steep, bracken-covered ridges on the left hand side of the road, as you ascend, with the best specimens on the top of the ridge, well buried in the dense mass of fern.

Sandy barren, south of Sipitang, on way to Mengalong River. A fairly good dirt road crosses this tract, which is alive with Nepenthes, growing in fairly open situations where they can be photographed easily.

Best contact in this area would be Dr. W. Meijer, Forest Botanist, Sandakan, who has an intimate personal acquaintance with the plants of the entire Colony.

Sarawak:

Santubong peak, at the mouth of the Santubong-Sarawak River, about 40 minutes run by motor launch from Kuching. This is a classic locality visited by Beccari, and I believe, Wallace, and can be reached by a fairly good trail from a fishing village at the foot of the mountain.

Malaya:

Thousands of plants cover roadside banks in the Cameron Highlands, on all sides of the golf course, and within five minutes walk of the principal hotels. A wonderful place to photograph all stages of development.

A large and evidently old colony is to be found on low roadside banks in the state of Johore, on the road from Johore Bahru to Mersing, particularly near the junctio

with the road which goes westward to Kluang, and for a short distance into the forest reserve along that road.

Penang Island has some good plants, particularly on wet, rocky slopes on the road that passes along the N.W. face, on the way to the clove gardens, at a pass and bridge over a rocky cascade where a large water supply pipe ascends the right hand bank.

Best contact in Sarawak would be Mr. J. A. R. Anderson, Forest Botanist in Kuching, and in Singapore Mr. H. M. Burkill, who is Director of the Singapore Botanic Garden. Burkill knows the Johore locality mentioned above, and the drive from Singapore can be made in under two hours.

I frankly don't know as much about weather as I should, but December through March have a reputation of being very wet months in Sarawak, rendering river travel (about the only kind of travel there is, north of the Kuching area) difficult or impossible. This can be really serious, in some places, with sixty and seventy foot rises following heavy rains. This may not mean anything more than being marooned in a Dayak longhouse for two weeks, but I would personally get tired of the dogs before that time.

You will possibly have gathered that my travels in the Far East had some other objective than Hepenthes, from the random nature of my notes, but the local contacts at least may be of some help. My work in the Philippines, Borneo, Malaya and Indonesia covered a period of about two years, and had to do with the assembling of a comprehensive banana collection, as part of a breeding program for the United Fruit Company.

With most sincere regards,

Paul H. Allen, Director
Lanostilla Experiment Station

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH

To: Putnam Payne

Copy: My file

Date: April 22, 1961

From: Paul Allen

Place: Singapore

Subject: General.

The long delay in answering your several recent communications and in acknowledging your continuing kindness in the form of chores done and errands run has been occasioned by my absence in Kelantan and Trengganu, plus the follow-up jobs of preparation and shipment and the recording of bits & pieces of information picked up in the field. This last always seems to take up an unconscionable amount of time, but is the only way that I know to have anything accurate to report when the whole thing is done. Quite a number of strange banana names have been located in old Malayan agricultural journals, mostly from as yet unvisited areas in Perak, Negri Sembilan and Malacca. It will be interesting to see what these are when we get there, or even whether they are still in use in the half century or more since their publication.

I am happy to hear that permission has been granted to visit Java, since I continue to feel that we may be in a poorer position later on for a visit to this potentially important area than we are now. I can't promise any such spectacular results as those obtained by John Womersley during his visit, since he presumably missed the only mature collection available, but I would like to see this, and the other collection which he mentions as having been recently replanted, and if possible some of the wild *acuminatas* in the field. We should at least be able to form some sort of impression as to how far afield we could get and what practical problems we would have to find solutions for. We might, with luck, even make a few friends & influence a few people. Womersley's trip, and your prompt follow-up with letters of thanks to key people there should get us off to a good start.

Quite aside from the possibility of finding a seeded Ambon, I can think of a number of technical problems that can only be solved by a personal visit. *Musa acuminata*, which is our fundamental taxonomic unit, was described as a seedless plant from the island of Amboina. Rumphius' illustration, which I have seen in the Singapore Botanic Garden library is too diagrammatic to give one much to go on, so that we can only speculate on what he actually saw. Later workers have chosen to assume that he had to deal with a seedless mutant from a wild population, but this is far from proven, and I should think even unlikely, on the basis of our experience with wild *Musas* to date. If it could be found it would for the first time put the name *acuminata* on a firm footing, and if it does not occur, or if the Rumphian plant should prove to be something already described from another area we would have to fall back on the name *zebrina*, a chance introduction into Europe from Java. John Womersley has written me that he felt pretty confident that he had seen *Musa zebrina* in Java, and it would be of considerable interest to get collections. He at the same time reported that the Javanese *Musa salaccensis* looked remarkably like the Malayan *Musa gracilis*, which would throw the latter name into the synonymy if established as true. Much of this is a mere juggling of names, but we have found that the local variants and geographic races are precisely the forms that are important to us, so that we may find something of considerable practical importance in following what might sound like a rather theoretical problem. In any case, I should think that we can have a pretty fair idea in a week or two as to whether potential results would justify the expense, or not. If this is to cover all of Indonesia, or any considerable part of it, I would much prefer to do it with Womersley, but would be quite happy to try sampling a few of the more promising areas on my own.

My next two trips in this area are to Malacca, Negri Sembilan and southern Perak, which should pretty well wind up field work in Malaya, with the possible exception of a quickie to the east coast of Johore, which will by then be the only remaining part of the country that I have not seen. I would like to do a preliminary check list, like those prepared for North Borneo and Sarawak before leaving Singapore, and before the pressure of new events crowds too much of the minor, but perhaps pertinent detail out of mind. My present plan is to go to Bangkok by rail from Singapore after returning from Java. This is partly to save transportation costs on our not inconsiderable load of personal effects, office equipment and field supplies, but partly to try to size up the country north and south of the Kra Isthmus, with the possibility of a future visit in mind. The parts that I have seen could only be compared to the cotton growing parts of Texas for sheer, lethal dullness, but one never knows.

While I have my pen in hand, so to speak, I would like to thank you again, if I have not already done so, for your much appreciated help in the matter of the drain spades for Womersley and myself, and for the parka, polyethylene bags and U.S.D.A. quarantine tags. Each of these is indispensable, in its own way. I can assure you that life would become tremendously more complicated for us if we could not depend on you for things unobtainable in this part of the world. You will find my check for \$7.98 enclosed (all mentioned in your memo of March 29). Are you sure that this covers everything?

Many thanks too for seeing the chest of Bornean and Malayan souvenirs off to Honduras. I hate to saddle you with personal things of this sort, but I can drag the stuff around with me, and haven't any permanent base excepting Honduras. I sometimes wonder if we will ever see any of this junk, or even Honduras again, with the world in such a disturbed condition, but then I have days when it seems a shame to pass up a few reminders of countries that we have visited.