

355 Commonwealth Avenue,

Boston, Mass., May 2d, 1925.

My dear Mr. Standley:

As I intend to devote the greater part of my vacation this summer to a study of the genus *Stelis*, I set out for the mounter the whole of your Costa Rican collection, yesterday forenoon. I have never before handled such a well preserved set of *Stelis* specimens. It will be a pure joy to work on your material, and through its unexampled fullness, to clarify some of the dim spots in the Central American representation of the genus. To you it may seem that the same species is too frequently represented, but for my purposes it is essential that there should be numerous examples of everything. Up to the present time we have had to depend too much on single specimens, in studies of the Central American orchid flora.

When you receive the list of numbers you will be surprised at the small number of specimens that cannot be given a name. But I must warn you that fruiting material in the orchids is next to valueless until one is becoming very familiar with a special flora. In vegetative habit, numerous species of *Stelis* and *Pleurothallis* simply repeat a pattern, while florally they are extraordinarily distinct through great differences. To determine the plants that are sterile, one must have a large and almost complete

over.

representation of the genera of a region, and laboriously compare the fruiting specimen with every one of its allies. This, as you know, is a time consuming task and as a rule is hardly worth while. For this reason, I usually warn collectors against fruiting specimens.

Your Costa Rican collection is the largest one received all at one time that I have ever handled. The clerical work connected with such a collection, for a small private laboratory, is of overwhelming proportions. I am delighted to see the end of the work coming quickly into view!

By this time you must know whether another expedition to Costa Rica is an indicated necessity. If your thoughts are turning toward another expedition, I am ready to help pretty substantially with contributions to the war-chest. In my opinion, it would be well to take the field at a different season of the year. A month earlier than last time would catch many of the specimens in flower that you found in fruit.

What is cocobola? When I was in San José I picked up a cane made of the wood. I want to know what the plant is that yields the wood.

I sent to Brenes, \$150.00, to pay for his collection. He is as dumb as a turtle and has responded in a similar way to stimulation.

Yours faithfully,

Oakes Ames.



Ames, Oakes. 1925. "Ames, Oakes May 2, 1925 [to P.C. Standley]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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