

Bedford Co., Va.
July 18, 1867.

Prof. Gray

Dear Sir - Your favor of the 6th. inst. was duly recd., and I am greatly obliged to you for determining the plants I sent. The grape was quite immature when I wrote, so that I probably did not describe it very correctly, but as it matured I saw plainly that it was a Festuca, from the adhesion of the grain to the palea, &c. I was surprised to find the little plant (Helianella) to be a member of the Rose family. I could not locate it, of course, not being able to discover any stamens whatever. I shall endeavor to obtain spec. of P. C. wrightii for you, but ~~think~~ it is extremely doubtful whether I shall be able to do so. Possibly I may find it here, and I shall request a friend of mine at Alex's

grow to perfection only in deep shade. The one, the Harlem Virginicum, is scarcely less remarkable for its singularly shaped & colored flowers than for its large and cordate evergreen leaves. These are elegantly marked with white (lactea caladivum) or with red in Winter, & when scattered in tufts up the side of a hill, with the flowers peeping from beneath, they present no beautiful a sight as a botanist can desire to see.

The other is still more beautiful, the Gulax aphylla. It sends up, from its running rootstocks, masses of long-petioled, round, and remarkably lustrous green leaves, & slender spikes of pure white flowers. Like the first, it is an evergreen, though not mentioned as such in the Manual.

But I fear I am digressing from business. You will receive with this, if the mail does not serve me as it

to look for it there, but as he is not
a good botanist he will probably
mistake some other common
species for it. As to the *Carex intum-*
escens?, I think we shall have to
abandon that for the present.
I remember to have sent you what
I took to be early and late states
of the same species. The early one
was certainly peculiar, but the
other, I think, was nothing but
the true *C. intumescens*. The plant
I mentioned to you as growing here
was identical with the latter form,
and I concluded, therefore, at the
time of its maturity, that it was
not worth collecting, and after
I read your letter it was of course
too late. — In the course of my
botanizing here, I have observed
& noted down from time to time
various points for remark or inqui-
ry concerning the plants I have

found here, and I will now mention
some of them. I would have sent
you the specimen of *Sarothamnus*
before this, but concluded to
wait till I heard from you again,
as I might after that need to
send other spec. Would you like
more than one spec. of *Sarotham-*
nus? It will give me great pleas-
ure to supply anything you wish
spec. of any plant I have. The
Boronia is much less ornamental in
fruit than in flower, the pods
(glaucous-black & white-fringed,) ~~being~~
being quite conspicuous & unsightly.
We have many very beautiful
plants here, the *Silene Virginica*,
Chamaelirium, *Viola pedata*, &c.,
being among the commonest. But
above ~~them~~ all others I value two
in particular, which would be
conspicuous ornaments in any con-
servatory; but, unfortunately, they

I found the *E. Virg.* at Alex'a, & it cannot be
the other species, for the leaves are not so
linear, certainly, but quite broad. Before
the stems appeared I took it to be a *Sage*,
but ~~the~~ from its general appearance, & but the
leaves are not fleshy, only thick - waxy,
and fringed with minute bristles. In this
connection I would mention what appears
to be an omission in the description of *E. Vir-*
ginicum, i. e., that it has root leaves differ-
ent from those of the stem, - long-petioled,
oblong lanceolate, obtuse, venose, or very
slightly crenate. - I meant to have mentioned
before that the common Sweet-Brier of this
country seems to be the *R. micrantha*, it
having all the characters given in the descrip-
tion of that sp. The *Ailanthus* seems to have
escaped from cultivation here (I have not
seen any cultivated tree of it, however) &
is quite common along road-sides, &c. within
a mile and a half of the village. It does not
grow over 12 or 15 feet high, but I have
seen it full of fruit at that height. The
flowers are all perfect, with 10 stamens & 5
pistils in all I have examined, & odorless.
- I found a tree of *Fraxinus Amer.* with
polygamous fls., the two sexes about equal-
ly divided in the panicles. I have observed
several trees of *F. pubescens*, & find the No.
of leaflets to be about equally 5 & 7, never
have counted 9. There is a plant rather
common here which I suppose to be a form
of *Silphium trifoliatum*, but the leaves are
all opposite, the lower often coarsely serrate, &
thinner than in the common *S. trifol.* I think
too that the cilia are not much toothed.
But I have not observed it closely yet, nor gathered
spec. of it, nor of the *Corynephorus*. Please tell me
what you think of them. *Corynephorus arifolia* is
common here, & I see that the leaves are often all
simple, sometimes merely lobed, very variable.
Please excuse my lengthy letter, & write me soon.
Very truly - A. B. Courtes.

did the last time, a small pkg.
of specimens, including the *Draba*
brachycarpa, & *Galium* — in
fruit - larger spec. of the latter.
It seems to prefer the vicinity of
roads. When among grass it trails,
& sometimes attains a length of 18'; &
perhaps more sometimes; when it
grows in open spots, it is erect,
& from 1½' to 4' or 5' in height.
The flowers are minute and brown-
ish cream-color; petals smooth,
obtusely or barely acute, not bristle-
tipped. In flower through June & July.
I have been especially interested
in five varieties of *Senecio*, four of
which are quite distinct from the
ordinary swamp form, and from
each other. As the distinction is in
the root-leaves I have sent you
one of each, but if you think any
of them particularly noteworthy I
can send you entire specimens.

If in writing you wish to distinguish any of them, I will recognize them by the terms *Spatulate*, *Oval*, *Oblong*, *Large lanceolate*, & *Small lanceolate*. All but the first (the yellowish leaf, without a petiole) are similar in height and size of corymb. That I found on a wooded hill-side - only one plant. It was only 7' high, had but two heads of flowers, & the stem leaves were very small - the lower scarcely $\frac{1}{2}$ ' long. None of the five were woolly except at the base (at the time of flowering) except the one with the small, lanceolate leaves. This I found at Alex's, & it was somewhat woolly both on the stem & leaves. The most peculiar form - the long, lanceolate leaf - I have found in two places here. It has remarkably long & thick (almost coriaceous) leaves, both to the root & stem, is a larger plant than the others & has a larger corymb.

The one with oblong thin leaves & gathered from a rock. It is but slightly different from the common form (which I have found here in our place). The leaves are oblong, oval, or round, & taper into the petiole. - I am now collecting the late Southern Grasses for the first time, & I am puzzled in determining some of them. I send small spec. of three. The coarsest one differs in several respects from *Echinochloa* - as described, the *Paspalum* I cannot reconcile with *P. setaceum*, & I cannot decide whether the *Eragrostis* is *E. pilosa* or *E. Purshii*. I also send a leaf of a *Cirsium*, which I have found out of flower. I suppose it to be either *C. Virg.* or *C. pumilum*; if the latter - too far South. It had one large, but not bracted, head, & was 2'-3' high. - There is a kind of *Eragrostis* now in flower here which I am sure is not described in your Man'l.



Curtiss, Allen Hiram. 1867. "Curtiss, Allen H. July 18, 1867." *Allen Hiram Curtiss letters to Asa Gray*

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