

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 24, 1922.

Mr. Oakes Ames,
355 Commonwealth Avenue,
Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Ames:

We are forwarding by prepaid express a box containing 350 specimens of orchids, 293 of which are sent as an exchange, and 57 are those which I obtained this year in Central America.

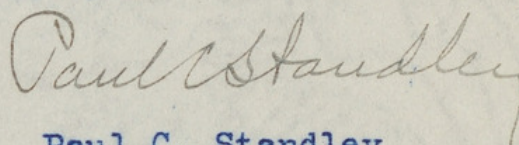
In the case of the latter you will no doubt be greatly disappointed, as I am myself, but I certainly made every effort to hunt out the plants of this group, and the only reason for the insignificant number obtained is the fact that more could not be found. In one of my earlier letters I stated that I did not find many orchids, but I fear that the statement may not have been taken quite so literally. In Guatemala all my work was done upon the coast, where few orchids can be expected, and in Salvador the climate is too dry for them, to say nothing of the fact that everywhere the mountains have been cleared off in order to plant coffee. The best localities for orchids and other epiphytes are also the best places for coffee plantations, which often extend right up to the summit of the volcanoes. It is superfluous to state that I deeply regret my lack of success in collecting this group of plants, but even now I do not see how I could have done any better. Most of the orchids seem to blossom in the wet season, and then it would probably be possible to get more species in Salvador, especially those which drop their leaves after the rains cease.

I am hoping to go to Central America again next winter, and then I hope I may find a more favorable region for orchid collecting. As yet I am uncertain as to what part of the region I shall try to go. Honduras and Nicaragua are the countries from which we have the smallest collections, but Mr. Maxon is inclined to believe, as I do myself, that the most remunerative results could be obtained in Costa Rica. Although so much collecting has already been done there, it seems that the flora has scarcely been touched, for every collection that comes in contains new species, and I believe that we have in the herbarium several hundred awaiting description. For that matter, it is immaterial in what part of Central America one collects, for no portion is at all well known at present. Collections obtained recently around Guatemala City, the most easily accessible and longest known portion of Central America, contain new plants of various groups.

Mr. Oakes Ames-2.

In order to compensate to some extent for your disappointment in the orchids of this collection, I have just gone over the material of the Orchidaceae of the Buchtien Herbarium with considerable care, and it is from that collection that there have been taken the 293 specimens forwarded in exchange. About a hundred of these are Old World collections, and the remainder American. I have divided all the South American collections that could be divided, and this has been possible in nearly all cases.

Sincerely yours,



Paul C. Standley
Assistant Curator,
Division of Plants.

P. S. I should have stated above that we shall appreciate having your identifications of the Central American orchids when it may be convenient to send them. Doctor Calderón and myself are expecting to publish in the near future a list of the plants known from Salvador.



Standley, Paul Carpenter. 1922. "Standley, Paul Carpenter Nov. 24, 1922 [to O. Ames]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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