

After writing to you on the 19th, I held the letter until I could complete studies of several of the specimens represented by material in alcohol. In the meantime your letter of the 14th September came in. I am sorry that the check for the September payment has not been received. The last check was held up a few days in order to have it a draft on New York, and the Bursar sent it off by regular mail. I am afraid that this same thing may have happened with the Sept. check. I will call at the Bursar's Office when I go to Cambridge on Monday and ascertain what has happened. There is no reason in the world why you should at any time be short of funds. Indeed, we will send larger amounts way ahead of time if the history of the last payments is repeated.

With regard to *Catasetums*: Dried material is almost useless, although quite necessary to complete specimens. I am wondering if it would not be well to allow the flowers to soften in boiling water before putting them in press, and to use very little pressure. The specimens sent have been carefully drawn from the alcohol material and the drawings placed with the dried specimens. But the dried flowers are simply broken fragments. This is not a criticism, because the same thing happens with other collectors, although now and again we come across specimens that are not broken. Stuffing the lips with a little cotton is sometimes tried, but even then breakage takes place after the specimens are mounted and inserted in the herbarium. *CATASETUM* is an evil genus. In some species the male and female flowers are so different from one another that the unsuspecting

man would throw them into two different genera. Lindley did this before he saw both male and female flowers borne on a single plant. The male flowers when the antennae are touched eject the pollen. The female plant does not eject the pollen. Sometimes when the sexes differ, the male flower may have an expanded, fringed or otherwise modified lip, while the female flower is a fleshy slipper-like, or helmet-shaped cup. Then again the colors may vary in the sexes. WHEN YOU FIND CATASETUMS, be on the lookout for indications of two sexes. I enclose a sketch that may make my point clear. And in your notes be very explicit with regard to the colors of the different organs and the nature of the colors, whether spots, dots or lines, etc., etc., etc. I recommend to you a deep study of this genus in the field. We are pretty nearly helpless with regard to the genus in the herbarium. The separation of the sexes makes the going doubly hard. A careful field man should remove a little of the difficulty. He might remove a great deal of it if he should go about his business with a carefully planned effort. Apparently you are in a region where two or three species of Catasetum grow, one of these species at least being represented by differences in the sexes. Can you obtain evidence that will be of use to me in my work of separation? Close observation is indicated.

The little Pleurothallis species are fine. One criticism, (and I realize that one does not find acres of these little fellows in glorious and abundant bloom) several plants in alcohol would make studies and drawings easier. If I destroy a plant in dissection, then there is nothing left for the artist. And sometimes, several dissections are necessary in order to arrive at sound conclusions.

I am sorry the postal operations are giving difficulties. Any obstacle to the steady flow of the orchid stream fills me with grief.

Very sincerely yours,



Ames, Oakes. undated. "Ames, Oakes undated [to J.B. Edwards]." *Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium correspondence files*

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