July 28, 1921.

Mr. Walter Deane,
Shelburne, New Hampshire.

Dear Mr. Deane:

Your letter of July 23 enclosing another specimen of Danthonia has been received. I did not save the other plant but as I recall it it was just the same as this. I was mistaken in referring it to D. compressa. Sometimes in the rush of identifying 7000 to 8000 plants I have named things without verifying my identification. It is an inexcusable thing to do. Reexamining this plant I think it is the same form as one I collected in 1916. I am sending you several specimens with notes. The Danthonia teeth show in Gray’s Manual are, I think, shorter than usual for the species. I tried to get about the average of the short-toothed form for the figure in Hitchcock’s Genera of Grasses (page 120).

Danthonia is very much in need of a thorough revision. The genus is small enough to be handled without many years of work, and I wish someone would undertake it. There is such exceptional opportunity here for agrostological work that it often troubles me that more students do not come here to study groups of grasses. The herbarium is kept in order up to date, is geographically arranged, and there are numerous notes by Dr. Hitchcock or myself, calling attention to characters or to
2—Mr. Walter Deane.

differences. These would be the greatest help to anyone revising a genus. We have always welcomed visiting students and have always responded to requests for help of any kind by mail. For this reason I felt when Wiegand's Revision of Echinochloa came out that he was basing the work on insufficient material and study when he neglected to consult much the richest herbarium in the country. I was particularly struck by a remark of his to the effect that the species referred by Dr. Hitchcock to E. sabulicola was "probably not Panicum sabulicolum Nees" because Nees described the species from Montevideo which is "outside the range .... as known to the writer! If the writer had consulted this herbarium he would have found the species ranging to Argentina. In so difficult a genus as Echinochloa with species so variable it seems to me that any work to be published should be based on all material available for study. Dr. Hitchcock saw Nees' own specimen of the species in question, made notes upon it, and was allowed to take a fragment of it which was deposited here and which Mr. Wiegand could have seen. I wanted to write a review of this paper, which is astonishingly bad in many ways, but if I did so, I am afraid it would give the impression that we resented it if other people worked on grasses. Of course, those who know us know this is not true, that we do all we can to encourage others to take up groups of grasses and are only too glad to turn over
to them any notes that we have on the subject. Our card index to species with many cross references, and the almost complete agrostological library here, as well as the types which are indexed, would make it possible for a student to do some really good work here.

If you know any enthusiastic young student "looking for trouble" in the way of real critical work in systematic botany, please divert him into grasses. Now that Dr. Hitchcock and I have both passed the half century we are anxious to train some conscientious younger people in agrostology.

I should be delighted to have the photograph you speak of of the humming bird. Following your suggestion, I have put out tumblers of sweetened water on the posts outside the screened porch but I am not there during the day so I do not know whether the humming birds come or not. I hope they do. I have seen them on Sundays drinking from the Phlox. My second nest of wrens is getting very noisy. So I suppose in a week more they will also leave the nest. The wren is almost my ideal of a family, but they are not good members of society, at least those in my yard are not. The wren who first preempts the first nest will not allow any wren to nest in the yard. I finally took out the second wren house and next year I shall put it up in the front yard on the tulip tree. I hope the young neighbor's little wren will not object to that!

Sincerely yours,

Agnes Chase

Acting Systematic Agrostologist.

I dictated to save time and dictating is not an art I have mastered. From my letter you
might wonder why I do not revise Sautonius myself! I am still working on Despallum
and its relative Apocryptus in such time as I can get from routine work. In the an-
annual report I made up recently the identification
added up to 793. As many are sheets of rusts
and other diseases, seeds or other incomplete
material that it consumes a great amount
of time. I try to keep the herbarium up to date. So
when Dr. Wiequard or Dr. Melz (who is much more)
cite specimens I look up and annotate all we
have. Dr. Melz recently named over 70 from
South America, and all in Paniceae and I
have put in all the time I could get for it
these sweltering days, trying to guess what
his species are. Some of the specimens teete
we have and they show that he is very
likely to omit the most conspicuous char-
acter of the plant possessors. The Berlin people
kindly offered to send us fragments I all
they have which we lack. Since I have
several new Despallum in case myself
it is essential that I be quite sure Melz's
new ones are not the same. Some are
and I have no objection as long as I
know what they are. But his descrip-
tions are so inadequate that unless we have one of the specimens cited I can not tell what he may be meaning. With two avalanches of this kind from Meg. Urban weary when I had to spend a lot of time on Wiegand's work. I am delighted when a new work enables me to revise put in order some group, such as Puccinellia after Ternald and Weatherby published on it. (I think, though, they should have asked for the material here for study). As Dr. Stapp's work on Tropical Africa appears I have an interesting time straightening out our African material. More than fifty percent of the species in Stapp are new so it is not surprising we had to leave so many of the Roosevelt Exped. grasses "indet." Dr. Hitchcock does not approve of publishing isolated species that we cannot identify — and I fully agree with him. Dr. Stapp is most kind, too, in sending us authentic material, as were Dr. Urban and Dr. Pilger of Berlin. But even Berlin can get no satisfaction from Dr. Meg.(J. Halle). Heamil t
Washington, D. C.,

I am quite satisfied to base his work on inadequate material. In civil life I believe in cooperation instead of competition (for all deference paid to it as a stimulus to initiative by old-time economists) and emphatically so in the pursuit of scientific study.

Dr. Hitchcock told me how com-fortably situated you were with Miss Brown to look after your comfort. I hope you will enjoy the summer in your beautiful part of the country. I do not mind the heat as much as most people. If I could take a vacation I would use it to work on Paspalum!

With best wishes,

A.C.
Chase, Agnes. 1921. "Chase, Agnes (née Merrill) Jul. 28, 1921." Walter Deane correspondence

View This Item Online: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/159666
Permalink: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/288754

Holding Institution
Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by
IMLS

Copyright & Reuse
Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the Biodiversity Heritage Library, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org.