



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1873-02-22

Letter from John Muir to [Asa] Gray, 1873 Feb 22.

John Muir

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referred to the thick creamy sungold of the tropics

They know ⁴³ little of the character
of a pine tree who see it only
when swaying drowsily in
a summer breeze or when
balanced motionless & fast
asleep in hushed sunshine
our Laurel was in flower
a month ago, so was our
winter wheat (*Lilaccedrus*)

We are grandly snowbound
& have all this winter
glossy of sunlight &
storm shade to ourselves
Our outside doors are
locked, & who will disturb
us?

I call your attention to the two
large yellow & purple plants
from the top of Mt. Lyell, above
all of the pinched & blinking dwarfs
that almost - justify Darwin's
mean ungodly word, "struggle"
They form a rounded expansion upon
the wedge of plant-life that slants up
into the thin lean sky, they are the
noblest plant-mountaineers I ever
saw, climbing above the glaciers into the
broody azure & flowering in purple
& gold, rich & abundant - as ever

Dear very cordially Yrs John Muir

17 Muir

Yosemite Valley
Feb. 22^d 1873

Dear Dr Gray
Your letter
of Jan 4th arrived just
before our trails were
snow blocked,
The seeds I sent in a
letter envelope are *Lilac-*
cedrus decurrens
As for the express charges
on the primula box
I have not got the receipt
by me & cannot tell
what they amounted to
but you must remember
that you gave me money
sufficient to prepay
all such boxes for
a year to come
Next summer I will
find a new genus &c.

half dozens of new species
 for that generous embalm-
 ing; wh. you propose,
 Did I tell you that
 our very *Prinula* grows
 upon the Hoffman Range a
 few miles west of Mt Hoffman
 & also on the E slope of
 the Sierra, between Mts
 Lyell & Ritter? —

Here are a few plants
 wh. I wish you would
 name for me,

Our winter is very
 glorious. January was
 a block of solid ungold
 not of the thin frosty kind
 but of a quality that called
 forth butterflies & tingled
 the fern coils & filled the
 mountainside with a dreamy
 hum of insect-wings
 On the 15th of Jan. I found
 our big *Phacelia* in full

bloom on the N side the
 valley about 1000 feet above
 the bottom or 3000 above the
 sea. Also at the same
 sunny nook several bushes
 of *Arctostaphylos glauca*
 were in full flower, &
 many other plants were
 swelling their buds & breathing
 fragrance & showing that
 they were full of the thoughts
 & intentions of Spring.

This month up to present
 date has been profusely
 filled with snow,
 about ten feet has fallen
 on the bottom of the valley
 since the 30th of Jan.

Your *Prinula* on Clouds
 West must be covered to
 a depth of at least 12 or 15
 feet. I wish you could
 see our pines in full bloom
 of soft snow, or waving in storm.