



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1898-06-21

Letter from John Muir to [Charles Sprague] Sargent, 1898 Jun 21.

John Muir

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Martinez, June 21, 98

My dear Prof Sargent

After mailing a letter to you yesterday I received the enclosed from Miss Eastwood which shows pretty clearly that no *magnifica* flowers may be looked for from the summit station. And Mr Sonne from what I saw of the Washoe trees is not very likely to collect any, for in a day in these woods I saw not a single tree with staminate flowers even though they are ten thousand times more abundant than the pistillate. In case then that any accident should befall the box I expressed you on the 17th from Truckee I send you today another from here so much potter & potter about a small matter may seem silly but I assure you that this year pistillate fls of *magnifica* are mighty scarce there was a fine crop three years ago & last year

There was a good crop² but nearly every flower
was killed by frost & most every
leaf bud so that there was only a
few overlapped protected branches in
special hollows that are bearing
The fresh ripe staminate fls are colored rosy purple - the pistillate bright yellow -
green with a tinge of purple on the tips of the scales -
This year - " Not one tree in a thousand
has pistillate fls. & you can hardly
guess what hacking & climbing
with Scotch obstinacy was required
to get the few I have sent you
I was determined that the last Vol
of your glorious tree book should
not go forth incomplete if I could
help it. I corresponded with quite
a number of intelligent people living
in the woods but in this year of scarcity
they were of no account, & when mid-
-June came I'm glad I pushed into the road
myself. Here is a grand coniferous
generalization from Limmon - the almost
comical effort of a giant by a fairy
I had a note the other day from our

steadfast always fighting forest friend
Johnson who assured me that the
House of Representatives is immovably
in favor of the Reservations. & I see
by the newspapers that Bliss is
appointing special agents to keep out
sheep from the Reserves & Parks, but
in the meantime sheep are overrunning
everything. Mr Pinchot is opposed
to the omnibulky in the forests - Why
I don't know. Even a raw volunteer
with a U.S. Coat & musket is worth a
thousand civilians in enforcing
the forest laws. To deliberately throw
the woods into the arms of political
voters after our long experience of them
seems incredible. Bliss is no good. Every
needle in the woods trembles at sight of him.

I still hope to see you next fall
& have a good gloriously colored time
in the round headed forests of the
Alleghenies. Be sure to get Canby
the old Young curly bear & Chipmunk botanist
I wouldn't miss him for anything Ever Yours John Muir

My dear Sargent - Just as I was about to seal this letter I received yours of the 15th & I heartily thank you for the wise & kind things you say about my visit to the Eastern trees. Evidently you know just how I feel in trying to see loved trees instead of busy society people. I don't want to die without once more saluting the grand godly round headed trees of the east side of America that I first learned to love & beneath which I used to weep for joy when nobody knew me. Tell Candy he must be with us I enjoy his lively squirrelish teasing wildish naturalism last summer more than I can tell. & I think my life long silent work in the woods of the west should compel so good a man to help me see the Eastern woods in my days. ^{as for you my dear Sargent} ^{that with a thousand seducible influences you have} ^{been true to wild nature & have devoted your life to me} ^{wild trees. I congratulate & admire you & shout well done}

Ever yours John Muir