

No. 50

| 50 | EJM Corner

15 The Parks,
Gr. Shelford
Cambridge
25th July 1911

Dear Mr. H. H. Krum,

You may care to stick
these on the garden's copies of
Symington's "Manual".

Yours sincerely

J. H. Corner

P.S. Do not bother to
acknowledge.

Botany School
Downing St.
Cambridge.

4 Feb. 1951

Curator, Herbarium,
Singapore

Dear Sir,

The wooden box of Ficus-specimens in spirit arrived here last week in safe condition. The specimens were excellently packed & none had been damaged. I am very much obliged to you.

Regarding the 7 outstanding jars, if they contain specimens of Ficus sect. Synocia (see Gard. Bull. S.S. Vol. X), ~~then I shall not need them.~~ or of F. sect. Neomorph

Covellia (from Malaya) (see Mal. Br. R.A.S. 1932), then I shall not need them.

I shall also look forward to the rest of Carr's New Guinea sp.

I must say, in regard to the last paragraph

of your letter of 8th December, that you would.

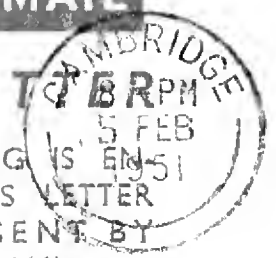
do well to think before you write.

2-4
over study
H. J. P. Connors

BY AIR MAIL

AIR LETTER

IF ANYTHING IS WRITTEN
CLOSED THIS LETTER
WILL BE SENT BY
ORDINARY MAIL.



Curator, of the Herbarium
Botanic Gardens
Singapore

First fold here

Second fold here

To open cut here

Sender's name and address :-

H. J. P. Connors
288 Main Street
Cambridge
Massachusetts 02142

To open cut here

Popular Names of Plants in Malaya

B.M.B. C. talk by E.J.H. Corner, Botanical Gardens, Singapore

The Rain-tree, the Angsana, the Durian, Vanda Miss Joachim and Bougainvillea Mrs. Butt! I think you all know, without doubt, the plants ^{which} ~~that~~ I mean. And if I were to talk of kapur, chengai, nébong, or bakau, our minds would also turn to the same subjects. But, if I were to tell you of the Mengkulang and Ghelagi trees round the padang at Kota Bahru, in the shade of which rickshaw-pullers and peons loll, would you picture the Bunga Tanjung and the Asam Jawa, as the trees are called in most parts of Malaya? And if I were to tell you that Buah Pisang is collected from large shady trees 60 feet high at Kuala Trengganu, you ^{would} ~~will~~ think me just an ordinary, mistaken traveller who has spent but a few hours ashore gleaning tit-bits for a novel. You may learn that Jambu Gajus is eaten in Singapore, Jambu Golok in Malacca, and Buah Keterek in Kota Bahru, but you might not be able to discover so easily that they were merely local names for the Cashew-nut. The Custard Apple which I saw last month in a garden in Johore was smooth and brown. How can that be, you say, because our Custard Apples are green and knobbly? I am afraid we have ~~fall~~ fallen into a bad habit in Malaya and have muddled up the English names for these West Indian fruits, for what we call the Custard Apple is really the Sweet Sop or Sugar Apple ~~xxx~~ and the true Custard Apple or Bullock's Heart is seldom seen in our markets. Likewise there may be confusion over the Flame of the Forest. If we have any listeners in India, they will think not of the feathery foliaged trees which we know so well, but of the Dadap-like tree called Butea frondosa which is not grown in Malaya. In India, our Flame of the Forest is called the Gul Mohur or Flamboyant. The other day, too, I was reading in an Agricultural report from New Guinea about some varieties of Yam and Keladi which were recommended as vegetables. The popular names of these plants were quite unknown to me but I could hardly believe that we had not got the same plants, or some very like them, in Malaya, especially as Mr. Burkill, a former Director of the Singapore Botanical Gardens, had made an extensive study of tropical Yams and had collected together living plants of a great many varieties, the better of which have since been distributed over the country. Nevertheless, to satisfy my curiosity, I asked the Director of Agriculture at Raboul in New Guinea to send me some tubers that we may grow in the Botanical Gardens, for comparison.

The further afield we go in the study of plants, the more uncertain do we become of their identity because of their different popular names. The conclusion is often reached that it is little use employing popular names; and how botanists have overcome this difficulty by their system of scientific nomenclature, Dr. Furtado told you in his talk a fortnight ago. But there cannot be a living code of scientific names for reference without a great deal of botanical research and unless a large staff of botanists is maintained to interpret and perpetuate botanical science, such as there is in Soviet Russia and the United States. In tropical Asia we are very far from the attainments of these countries. The flora has been studied by few botanists and its very richness renders it so much more complicated than a temperate flora. As a sidelight on this difficulty I may recall the remark of Sir Joseph Hooker, who was the Director of the Royal Botanic at Kew in England and was one of the botanical pioneers in the Himalayas: to be capable of studying a tropical flora, Hooker said that a botanist must memorize the names and diagnostic characters of at least 4000 species of plants. Hooker was thinking mainly of flowering plants and ferns, and nowadays we must add the host of fungi, of which there are probably between twenty and thirty thousand species in Malaya. Names we must have and names uniformly applied. And where there are no botanical names or for sundry reasons they cannot be discovered, we must use vernacular names. Thus it happens that Malay, Tamil, and Chinese names acquire unwonted significance in the East, particularly in the study of economic plants. Moreover, who but botanists will trouble to remember scientific names, and they only when they cannot reasonably use popular ones? I have forgotten the botanical names of the pear and the apple, the walnut, the cricket-bat willow and the liquorice plant, but I could look them up in a dictionary at the Botanical Gardens and very quickly discover a host of information. In Malaya, despite the research which has been done, only in comparatively few cases will a popular name lead one to a correct identification. What is Pak Choy? What is Keladi Pinang? What is Trong Pipet or Daun Kechubong? What is Urd Dhal or Mung? What is Kedeleh, Kechapior Setul? Only too frequently we cannot reply unless we have a specimen to identify. I have imagined a great index wherein all these vernacular names are correctly set against their botanical equivalents, so that the answer can be given without even setting down the telephone receiver.

Now I do not mean to say that we have no such indexes to consult in

Malaya for we have Watson's book of Malayan Plant Names, Burkill's Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula, and several other smaller works of great value. But these works are pioneers to be enlarged and amended as knowledge increases, indeed to be maintained and built upon, and as yet, they touch only the fringe of Tamil and Chinese vocabularies. Moreover, it is known, and it is inevitable, that through mistakes in the collecting, and labelling, and identification of specimens, many recorded names have been assigned to the wrong plants. I am sure that anyone who has studied the subject will agree that at least seventy per cent of the recorded names must be carefully checked. Some of the mistakes we can rectify at the Botanical Gardens because the labelled specimens, dating from 1870 onwards, are preserved in the herbarium, but by no means all. These specimens are the true foundation of any index of vernacular names, because they are always at hand for reference, and therefore, we are trying to enlarge our collection of plant specimens with authentic vernacular names. There must be several listeners tonight who can help in this task. I know there are many popular names of plants used among the various communities in Malaya of which we have no record and which we would like to render current as common knowledge, for many will fill troublesome gaps in our nomenclature. A few years ago, when I was taking classes in Nature Study for teachers in Singapore, I learned too how important it was to have English names for use in the English schools. That, I was told, was, of course, Old Ladies' Nightcaps; and I, poor academician, knew as Angelonia. Then we found Good Girls and Naughty Boys and I dared not say it was really Asystasia coromandeliana in its two varieties. I have always remembered Evoe's quip in Punch, when he was relating of a round of golf with a botanist. "And that, said the botanist, is Renunculus ficaria, the Lesser Celandine." "Ha! said Evoe, Ficus a fig! Do men gather figs of the Lesser Celandine?" On another occasion, when staying at Cluny Estate near Slim River in Perak, we came upon a beautiful yellow-trumpeted forest herb in great profusion and we christened it the Cowslip of Cluny, for though it is a specimen of Didymocarpus, goodness knows what its full botanical name should be. I cannot but believe that there are many of you who have unscientific names for the plants which you particularly fancy or cultivate, and I would ask that you should send labelled specimens for record to the Director of Gardens, Singapore. The specimens can be rolled up in a newspaper and, if possible, should have flowers and fruits as well as leaves.

During our scientific moments, nowadays, at the Botanical Gardens we are studying particularly the local varieties of Keladi, Bayam, and Terong or Brinjal. These are plants of villages and agricultural land for which names are constantly needed, but for which we have no adequate nomenclature. We rely therefore mainly on the vernacular names. We are growing as many varieties as possible so that we can have a full knowledge of the plants and can compare them as they grow. In this matter we have received great help from Agricultural officers, especially in Perak and Kedah, who have sent material, and we will welcome reliable information from any source. I may say that I am looking for a large-fruited thorny Brinjal: it seems that these thorny varieties are grown in temperate countries but apart from the small fruited thorny Terong Perak none has yet been collected in Malaya. Needless to say we have already made numerous discoveries because very little of such detailed work has been done in tropical Asia.

it only

10/10/19
17/1/19

When the vernacular names have been collected and rightly assigned to the botanical ones, then comes the task of selection and standardisation for general use. Many plants have more than one Malay, Tamil or Chinese name and ~~it is~~ one must decide not merely which is the commonest but which is the most appropriate, and one must also ~~consider~~ ^{consider} the vernacular names which the plant may have in other countries, and whether ^{for instance} it would not be better for us to adopt their names, ~~for instance~~ ^{as} Queensland Acornroot for Canna edulis which Malays call ganyong. Several common names, which are applied to ^{ingest} ~~ingest~~ many varieties unrelated plants ~~we must also be~~ ~~carefully~~ ~~selected~~ ~~and~~ ~~some~~ ~~of~~ ~~them~~ ~~coupled~~ ~~with~~ ~~some~~ ~~distinctive~~ ~~epithets~~, thus the names Pisang, Pudong, ~~Chempaka~~ Merliman and Chempaka, ~~the~~ ^{just} English Spinach, Bean and Yam correspond with the miscellaneous English names like Spinach, Bean, Yam and Rose. I will mention ^{a few} these instances in which this selective work has been done, to the great benefit of all persons who may be concerned. There is ⁱⁿ the Forest Department's list of botanical Malay names for the timber-trees of the country. There ~~for~~ ^{are} there are

When payments are made by Public Officers for Petty Expenses for which it is not practicable to obtain Under-Receipts, following Certificate must be signed by such Officers.

7.4.38	" settlement of bill to Mam Kee for 20 pieces fern roots	10 cts each	2 00
14.4.38	" settlement of bill to Season Day & Night Studio		6 20
TOTAL			

I HEREBY certify that the above service has been duly performed, and that the prices charged are

RECEIVED this _____ day of _____, 193____
 in payment of the above account, the sum of _____

(NOTE.—No signature should be written or stamped here until payment has been actually received).

Witnesses to marks and payments made in our presence.

The English, Malay, Tamil and Chinese names of vegetables in the Department of Agriculture, recent books on vegetable growing in Malaya. And there is one the English and Malay names of common trees and shrubs in the book on Wayside Trees of Malaya issued from the Botanical Garden. Recently the problem has received a new ^{time} value because Food Supply Officers in fixing the prices of vegetables, fruit and so on, have to publish lists of vernacular names and thus help to standardize their use. In Singapore we have lists of Chinese names for vegetables, with their English equivalents, published in the markets. How important is this problem of the correct uniform application of popular names in all matters concerning plants so can be recalled from the list issued about twelve years ago in England of the preferred popular names for plant-diseases in the British Empire, such as Crown Rot of as Dato, Yellow Rot of Barley, Black-leg of Potatoes, and Stem-Rot of Tomatoes which ~~compare with~~ the Brown and Root and Red-Rot of and ~~Rubber-trees and the Brown Rot of the Rubber-tree.~~ Brown Rot, Mildew and so on of the Rubber-tree.

If we can get on with this compilation of popular names, however slowly in Malaya. The next generation of botanists, agriculturists, foresters, planters and horticulturists will be spared an immense amount of ~~balance~~ book-works and uncertainty because students will issue from schools and colleges already ~~are~~ acquainted with the correct use of popular names and will not have to struggle with the mass of ~~doublets~~ which problems which their predecessors met

DUPLICATE

(G. O. 148)

G 10

The Colonial Government of the Straits Settlements

Head of Estimates Botanical Gardens, Other Charges,

Sub-head Laboratory, Purchase of Apparatus, p. 66. it.

Dr. to Director of Gardens S. S.

I certify that the charges marked thus, amounting to \$, have been actually incurred and PAID by me.

DATE	DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE OR ARTICLE	RATE	AMOUNT
10-3-38	To settlement of bills to Medical Hall for chemicals etc. for Laboratory		4 60
Authority			TOTAL 4 60

When payments are made by Public Officers for Petty Expenses for which it is not practicable to obtain Under-Receipts, the following certificates must be signed by such Officers.

Dollars, Four and cents Sixty only.

I HEREBY certify that the above service has been duly performed and that the prices charged are fair & reasonable

Witnesses to marks and payments made in our presence.

RECEIVED this ... day of ... 193... dollars, Four and cents Sixty only.

in payment of the above account, the sum of

(NOTE.—No signature should be written or stamped here until payment has been actually received)

Soybean

Glycine max

(= G. soja, & G. hispida)

Chinese name Shu

supposed to have been derived from G. ussuriensis which is
with in S. Asia

Soybean-curd is called Tou-fou

Huang Tou - yellow soybean

黃
豆

黑
豆

Hei-tou - Black Soybean

豆
油

Soybean oil - Tao Yu

Soy sauce - Tao Tsung

(gives a general account, history, uses, analysis etc of
soybean)

Fair Copy signed by

27/11/28

BOTANIC GARDENS
Name.....
No. of.....
No. of.....

Dear Sir,

Your letter addressed to the Superintendent, Zoological Gardens, Singapore, has been delivered to me in the absence of any zoological garden in this city. There was formerly a collection of animals here but ^{I suspect that it} was disposed of more than 20 years ago.

As far as I know, the only zoological garden in the Straits Settlements is in Penang. This is a privately owned institution, managed by Chinese, and has a very interesting collection of animals. The address is Ayer Stam Road, Penang.

Yours faithfully
 [Signature]

The Managing Editor,
 Natural Zoological Review
 2101 Sixteenth St.
 N.W.
 Washington D.C.
 U.S.A.