

CHECKED WITH ORIGINAL  
MAILS

JB

31st August, 1911.

Mr. William Donald,

620 Timken Building, San Diego, California.

Dear Donald:

I have just heard from Blossom that the soil in which you planted the rooted cuttings and seedlings has again been acting badly. I am very sorry indeed to hear this as the expenses are still going on with apparently little result. From the beginning I asked you to start a compost heap and up to the time I left nothing had been done about it. I realize that you have a lot of things to do and to think about, but you must realize that a compost heap is one of the most essential things for plant propagation. At Seattle the very first thing we did was to make a large compost heap and we maintained it throughout the entire propagating period; that is we mixed the soil with layers of manure and fertilizer and lime and with as much leaf mould as we could obtain and turned it over every few days so as to get a fine decomposed soil.

The chemist who examined the soil stated that one of the principal things needed in the soil to eradicate the objectionable material is humus, and humus is obtained by adding manure and then allowing it to decompose. I wish you would start this pile without any further delay, just east of your greenhouse. It could be 20 or 30 feet long, 6 feet wide and 8 feet high. Build it up with layers of soil and manure and leaf mould, lime and gypsum. Then mix them up and if possible keep the sun away from it so that it will decompose more readily. I would also find some soil, even if you have to get it from Coronada, that seems to contain fibre and has been worked for vegetables or something else. It may be that you can get several loads of soil from the old Coronada nursery. This soil is probably in good condition with the exception that it needs fertilizer. You can probably learn from Mr. Scott whether it displayed any alkaline tendency, but in any get it and don't delay any longer in getting the proper soil conditions.

If I were you I would make a large lot of coprosma cuttings at once as it looks now as if we should have to use more of this plant as a background and filler than we at first thought. Be sure to keep your frames shaded with cloth as this will prevent the alkali from rising to the surface. I think

Donald - 3.

the best thing, however, is to get several loads of soil from some other place that has been used for a nursery or for vegetable ground. Do not be discouraged because of this loss of cuttings but just go on and make twice as many cuttings as before with the hope of getting the next lot and if you do get the next lot that will offset those lost recently. I should like to hear ~~from you~~ if you got any results from the small plants you put in the soil mixed with gypsum just before I left. As I remember that was the only soil in which you used gypsum.

With best wishes, I am,

Very truly yours,