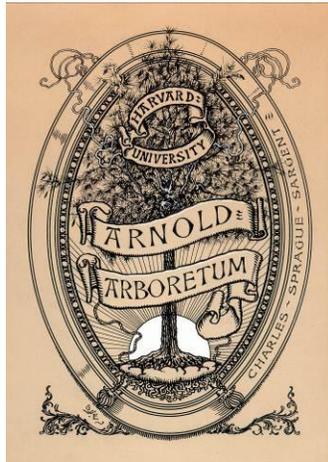


Archives II A-22

Alexander E. Lawrance (1886-?) papers, 1932-1935: Guide.



The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

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II A-22

Alexander E. Lawrance (1886-?) papers 1932-1935: Guide Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University 125 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

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Descriptive Summary

Repository: Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Call No.: II A-22

Location: Archives

Title: Alexander E. Lawrance (1886-?) papers, 1932-1935

Date(s): 1932-1935

Creator: Alexander E. Lawrance

Quantity: 1 Folder

Language of material: English and Spanish

Abstract: Alexander E. Lawrance collected herbarium specimens from the mountainous Boyaca region of Colombia in the 1930s. He was focused on collecting orchids but between 1932-1935 Lawrance also sent herbarium specimens of woody plants and wood samples to the Arnold Arboretum.

Note: Access to Finding Aid record in [HOLLIS](#).

Preferred Citation: Alexander E. Lawrance papers. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

Additional Material: The list of specimens collected by Lawrance for the Arnold Arboretum can be found online in the Harvard University Herbaria [Index of Botanical Specimens](#).

Processing Information

2011, Sasha Freese. Revised 2023-2025, Larissa Glasser.

Acquisition Information

Provenance: This collection was transferred from the Arnold Arboretum's departmental holdings to the Arboretum's Archives in 1984 when the Archive was established. Moved from ARCHIVES III C-1 AEL in March 2025.

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Biographical Note

Alexander Earnshaw Lawrance was born on July 23, 1885, or 1886, in Kinlochmoridat, at the east head of Loch Moidart in Highland, Scotland. He immigrated to the United States in 1908 with his first wife Kathleen, and worked as a ranch hand in Salt Creek, Wyoming. He met his second wife, Thelma Olive *nee* Powell, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and claimed Canadian residency as he travelled between Ireland, Canada, the United States, and South America. Lawrance spent much of the late 1920's and 1930's in South America collecting plants for various institutions, including the Arnold Arboretum, the New York Botanical Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens in Surrey, England and Yale University.



While collecting for the Arboretum he worked in various areas of Colombia and concentrated much of his collecting in the Boyacá, in the north central mountains of the country. His main focus was collecting orchids; however he also collected woody specimens and wood samples for the Arboretum. While [Lawrance collections](#) at the Harvard University Herbaria date from 1932-1935, there are A.E. Lawrance collections at other institutions dating from 1927 collected in Venezuela. Little is known about Lawrance, he did however attach the birth announcement of his first child, born in Colombia in 1933, to one of his letters to Alfred Rehder. In his correspondence Lawrance indicated he was returning to Venezuela in 1935. The last record of a border crossing made by Lawrence from Mexico to the United States was in 1940 at age 54 or 55.

Scope and Content

Most of the collection consists of correspondence between Alexander E. Lawrance and Arnold Arboretum staff. All 33 letters are summarized with a selection of transcribed excerpts. There are also newspaper clippings, and receipts for shipping costs and insurance policies.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in one series

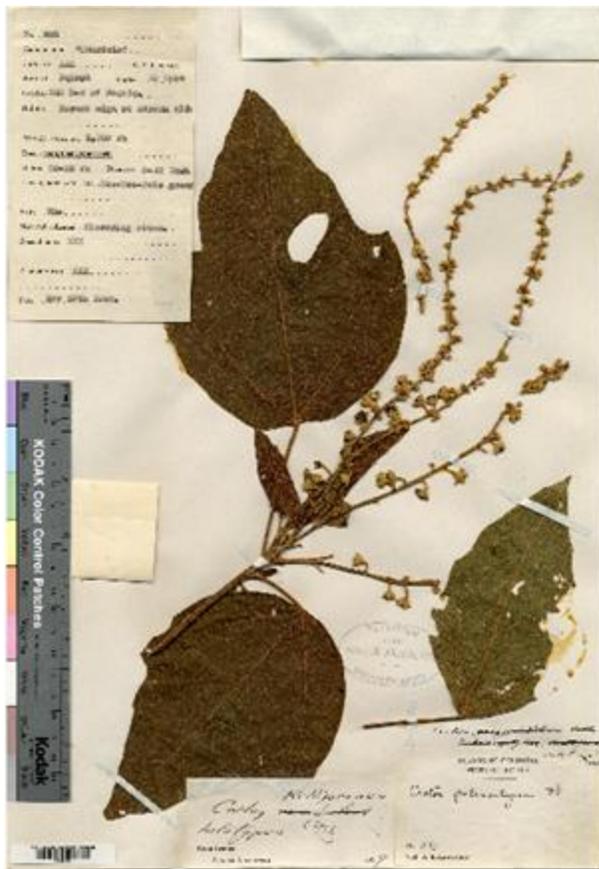
Series I: Correspondence

Folder 1: Correspondence 1932-1935

- A.E. Lawrance to Oakes Ames, Arnold Arboretum, regarding offering orchid and "trees-shrubs-herbs-vines-creepers" specimens from Colombia. 10/12/1932
"This letter is being written to ask you if you would be interesting in purchasing from me dried specimens of the [Orchid flowers](#) that I have collected in the forests of western Boyaca – Flowers that are of interest on account of their Botanical structure only."
"My present camp which is my central camp is situated in that zone from which comes those fine Cattleya species Cattleya Gigas Sanderiana and Cattleya Gigas var Imperialis. My Party consists of my wife and my young English assistant a boy of 23 years of age and myself."

"I am able to offer you for immediate delivery five specimens of most of my Trees-Shrubs-Herbs-Vines-Creepers and plants from my numbers 294-600...all these are unidentified Herbarium specimens in flower or seed or in some cases both well prepared on Herbarium sheets [2] inches by [18] inches and all protect by Naphthaline flakes..."

"As far as I can tell I shall be in this general zone for another six months at least as we have only been here six weeks now and after that I am going to a zone in the Mountains in the Cauca and after that to a zone in the Mountains of North Dantander always collecting Orchids and Herbariums as well wherever we go."



[Croton killipianus Croizat, Journal of the Arnold Arboretum v. 21, 1940, page 90](#)

Type specimen collected by A.E. Lawrence on November 18, 1932 from a streamside location at the forest edge in Boyacá Colombia, South America in the Mount Chapon region in the extreme western part of Boyaca, 130 miles north of Bogota.

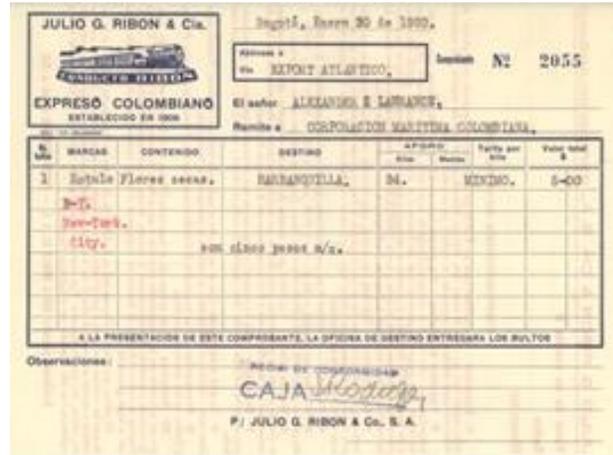
Harvard University Herbaria 00047325

- Curator of the Herbarium [Alfred Rehder] to A.E. Lawrence regarding offering to buy one set of ligneous plants and orchids, 11/25/1932
 - "The Arnold Arboretum wishes to buy a set of ligneous plants (trees, shrubs and woody vines) and of Orchids which you offer at 20 [cents] per sheet, but we do not want more than one set of specimens. We should like to have also wood specimens which should correspond to herbarium specimens, under the same number and taken from the same trees and shrubs as the wood samples."
- A.E. Lawrence to the Arnold Arboretum regarding cost of shipping to New York, information regarding his latest shipment and undertaking collecting plants, 01/30/1933
 - Insurance policy: number IO3427, for \$3.99, 01/30/1933²

- Receipt: transportation from Bogota to New York City, \$5.00, 01/30/1933
- Receipt: insurance policy, \$3.99, 01/30/1933
- A. E. Lawrance to the Arnold Arboretum regarding invoice for the 575 herbarium sheets sent on 01/30/1933 and where to make payment, 01/31/1933

"I take pleasure in herewith enclosing my Invoice for the 575 Herbarium sheets which I despatched (sic) yesterday. I have sent you most of my early numbers as well because I don't believe you have them, I may be wrong.

With regard to the wood samples I have sent you 22 of them I am going to let you place your own valuation upon these and I have purposely (sic) left this space blank in the Invoice so that you may yourselves fill it in, I had these on hand when I received your esteemed order, when I received your order I was in fact at that time pack for the trip to Bogota to which city I had not been for six months."



- Curator of the Herbarium [A. Rehder] to A. E. Lawrance regarding payment for the 01/30/1933 shipment, 03/17/1933

"Moreover, I find that you included in the collection you sent us your number 1-230, of which we had already bought a set from Dr. Gleason of the New York Botanical Garden. These early numbers are of little value to us except as exchange material. When I wrote you asking to send up your collections, it did not occur to me that you might have some more material of these early numbers, since Dr. Gleason offered 13 sets of which the last ones were very small. As we paid 15[cents] a specimen for the earlier numbers, it does not seem fair to pay 20[cents] for duplicates for the same numbers."

"The wood specimens you sent are of very unequal value, most of them are rather small and slender branchlets and some consist only of bark which is of little value to us, only 4 or 5 are specimens of fairly good size; for the latter we are will to pay 50[cents] apiece, and for specimens out from the trunks with bark at least on one side, we would pay up to \$1.00."

- Curator of the Herbarium [A. Rehder] to A. E. Lawrance regarding labels, 4/05/1933

"Dear Sir:

In going over your collection we find that of nos. 295-355 and of 304, 306 and 316 we have received no labels. Of the earlier numbers 1-294 we received the labels separately and have added them to the specimens. Will you kindly send us the lacking labels. I suppose you will also send us a list of determinations, as soon as your numbers from 295 up have been determined. I trust you have duly received my letter of March 17.

Very truly yours,
Curator of the Herbarium"

- A. E. Lawrance to the Arnold Arboretum regarding the boat sinking that held his specimens, letter also has small newspaper clipping of the birth announcement of his son attached, 07/10/1933

"It has always been one of my great ambitions to have a new Orchid named after me – would you kindly tell Professor Ames this for me in case I might send along something new some time."

- Article: "El 'Presidente' Se Perdio Con Quinientas Toneladas", 07/05/1933³
- Article: "170 Toneladas de Carga Se Pierden Con El 'Presidente'", n.d.
- Receipt: transportation cost and log with Cororacion Maritima Colombiana, Barranquilla, Colombia, \$6.52, 02/07/1933
- Correspondence: F.T. Heckman, Import Traffic Agent, American Express Company, New York, NY, to the Ethel A. Anderson, Business Secretary, Arnold Arboretum, regarding the arrive of one shipment and the loss of the shipment aboard the "Presidente," 07/27/1933



- Curator of the Herbarium [A. Rehder] to A.E. Lawrance regarding loss of goods and who to contact about the determination of material, 07/31/1933

"I am afraid that you will have to rely on the New York Botanic Garden for the determination of your material, even if they are at time rather slow. At the Field Museum in Chicago there is also considerable work done on the flora of tropical America by Mr. Paul C. Standley, but his sphere of interest is more or less restricted to Central America. At the Arnold Arboretum there is at present no one actively interested in the plants of tropical America, and our herbarium any way contains only woody plants."
- A. E. Lawrance to the Arnold Arboretum regarding the loss of items on the "Presidente" and mailing new selection of specimens, 08/02/1933

"I have to-day mailed you by parcel post my second best selection of Herbariums from my third collection in the Forests of Boyaca consisting of the following numbers but there are no wood sets..."
- A.E. Lawrance to the Arnold Arboretum regarding acknowledgement of 08/02/1933 shipment, 09/26/1933
- A.E. Lawrance to the Arnold Arboretum regarding an orchid sent on 01/30/1933, notated *Catasetum tabulare* Lindl, (response on verso), 05/03/1934

"Dear Sir:

On JANUARY 20th just past I sent you a package containing an HERBARIUM of a very fine ORCHID which was accompanied by a SKETCH & I believe full particulars also its Field sheet.

I should be most obliged to you if you will supply me with the scientific name of this Orchid & at the same time let me know if it arrived safely or not. It is

very unsettling when one goes to a lot of trouble & some expense in sending out material to one's clients & then for months & months hears nothing. I value my association with your Institution & hope that it will always be a happy one.

With regard to the big collection of wood sets lost in the Magdalena last year, would a duplicate set from other Trees to correspond be acceptable to you if collected now?.

Thanking you for a reply at your early convenience.

Yours Faithfully,

(Alexander E. Lawrance)"

- Curator of the Herbarium [A. Rehder] to A. E. Lawrance, response to 05/03/1934 letter, 05/31/1934
 - "Professor Ames informed me that the orchid you sent him on January 30 is *Catesetum tabulare* Lindl."
- A.E. Lawrence to A. Rehder, Arnold Arboretum, regarding collecting, (response on verso), 09/19/1934

"Dear Mr. Rehder:
I thank you for your letter dated May 31st 1934 in reply to mine of Jan 30th- I was very glad to get this determination indeed because it had my curiosity aroused to the highest pitch on account of this plant's great rarity (sic) - we have found only this one plant in two years of intensive search for all sorts. Am I to understand that you must have duplicate Herbarium sets from those trees which we know & can definitely (sic) return to for further duplicate wood sets which were lost in the Magdalena last year. I mean those trees from which we have already collected Herbariums & sent them to you & which you have in your possession.
Sincerely yours,
(Alexander E. Lawrance)"

 - A. Rehder to A.E. Lawrance regarding 09/19/1934 letter about duplicate tree samples and identification, 10/23/1934
- A.E. Lawrance to A. Rehder regarding determination numbers from the Field Museum, 824, *Hibiscus abelmoschus* L., and 825, *Trattinickia lawrancei* Standl., (response on verso), 04/01/1935
 - A.E. Lawrance regarding letter dated 04/01/1935 that the Arboretum had not receive 824 and 825, 04/25/1935
- A.E. Lawrance to O. Ames regarding some determinations from the botanic gardens in Kew, Surrey, England, including *Aphelandra parviflora* Leonard, *Aphelandra lawranceae* Leonard, and *Aphelandra alexandri* Leonard, 04/15/1935
- A.E. Lawrance to A. Rehder regarding a shipment sent in January and identification for some plants, (response on verso), 03/28/1935

"Dear Professor Rehder:
In January I sent you some Wood sample of *BROSIMUM* utile H.B.K. Pittier & should much appreciate hearing whether this material reached you safely or not? & I also sent to Professor Samuel J. RECORD AT Yale University some FRUITING sheets of *GOETHALSIA* & I asked him at his convenience to please

send you one of them with my compliments, this also applies to the wood samples I sent you.

Would you do me the kindness to tell me from exactly what spot in SOUTH or CENTRAL AMERICA comes the following species BUDDLEIA brasiliensis & BUDDLEIA Americana & for this information I shall be most obliged to you & thank you.

Hoping to hear from you at your very earliest convenience,

Yours faithfully,

(Alexander E. Lawrance)"

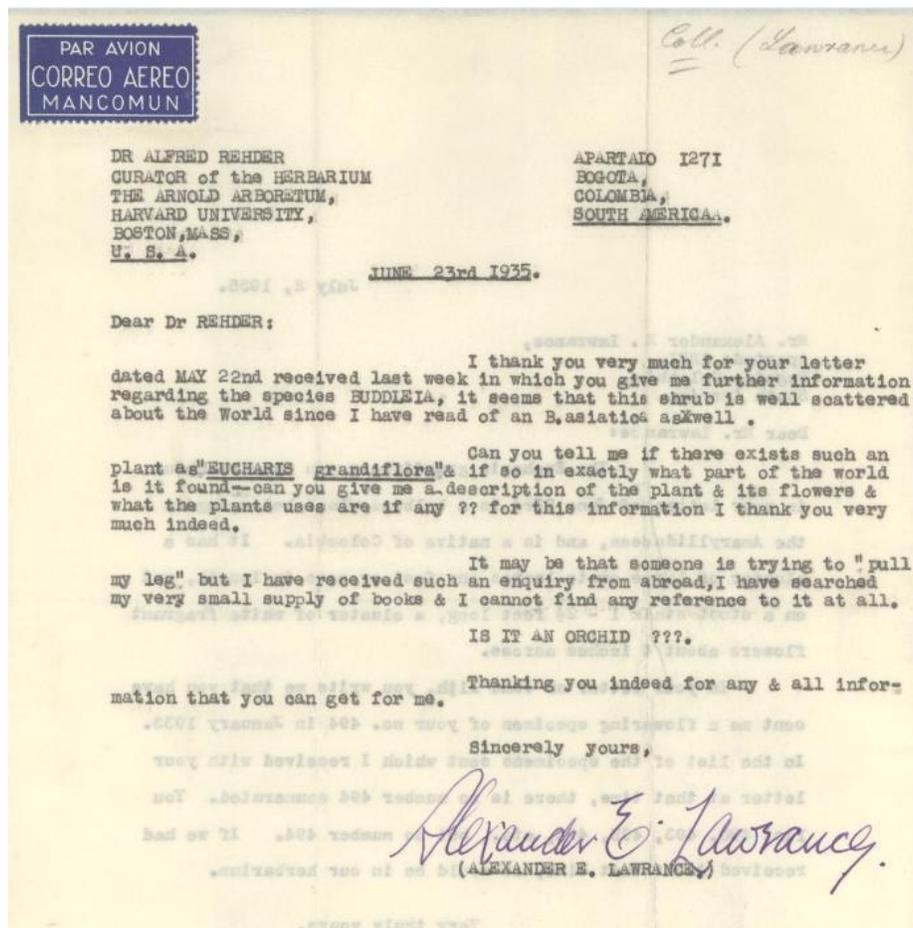
- Correspondence: to A. Lawrance in response to letter dated 03/28/1935, 04/04/1935
 - “Dear Mr. Lawrance:
The wood sample of *Brosimum utile* has been received and we are much obliged to you.
Of the fruiting specimens of *Goethalsia* you sent to Professor Record, no duplicates have yet been received here, but I have no doubt that Professor Record will send a specimen soon, since he sends us from time to time herbarium material in exchange for wood specimens; he has not sent us anything since the middle of January.
Buddleia americana L. is distributed from Mexico to Colombia and Peru, and is also found in the West Indies, while *B. brasiliensis* Jacq. Seems to be known only from southern Brazil.
Sincerely yours,
P.S. The wood samples of the *Brosimum utile* had no label. Will you please give me occasionally the locality and number, if it corresponds to an herbarium specimen. I shall send one of the specimens to Professor Record, but he lays great stress on corresponding herbarium material.”
- To A.E. Lawrance from A. Rehder regarding acknowledgement of receiving a fruiting *Goethalsia meeicantha* Burret, says that there is some debate on the genus of no. 494, with Gleason saying *Flacourtiaceae* and Burret saying *Tiliaceae*, 04/17/1935
- A.E. Lawrance to Alfred Rehder regarding herbarium 765 and the fruiting specimen from Professor Record, (response on verso), 05/02/1935
 - A. Rehder to A. E. Lawrance in response to the letter dated 05/02/1935, regarding the specimen from Professor Records and questions about *Buddleia* locations, 05/22/1935
 - “Most of the specimens in our herbarium of *Buddleia americana* are from Mexico, Central America and West Indies; the following are from South America: Santa Marta, alt. 4600 ft. Columbia, H.H. Smith 1687; Vicinity of Surata; Dept. Santander, alt. 1600-1800 m. , Columbia, Killip & Smith 16427 and 165[?]; newar (sic) Chicla, Peru, alt. 1200 ft., C.S. Sargent in 1905-6. *Buddleia brasiliensis* is not represented in our herbarium at all.”
- A. E. Lawrance to A. Rehder regarding the receipt of plants from Professor Ames to Professor Rehder, (response on verso), 05/20/1935

- to A. E. Lawrence from A. Rehder regarding the receipt of items mentioned in 05/20/1935 letter, 06/15/1935
- A. E. Lawrence to A. Rehder regarding the specimen sent to Professor Record and how there is an error with the Arboretum not receiving a flowering number 494, 06/11/1935
- A. E. Lawrence to A. Rehder in response to the 05/22/1935 letter and inquiring about *Eucharis grandiflora*, (response on verso), 06/23/1935⁴

"Can you tell me if there exists such a plant as "EUCHARIS grandiflora" & if so in exactly what part of the world is it found – can you give me a description of the plant & its flowers & what the plants uses are if any?? for (sic) this information I thank you very much indeed.

It may be that someone is trying to "pull my leg" but I have received such an enquiry from abroad, I have searched my very small supply of books & I cannot find any reference to it at all.

IS IT AN ORCHID??" (*letter follows*)



- to A.E. Lawrence from A. Rehder in response to letter dated 06/23/1935, regarding *Eucharis grandiflora* and number 494, 07/02/1935
- "The *Eucharis grandiflora* you inquire about in your letter of June 23rd is a bulbous plant belonging to the Amaryllidaceae, and is a native of

Colombia. It has a cluster of large ovate leaves one foot or more in length, and on a stout stalk 1 – 2 ½ feet long, a cluster of white fragrant flowers about 4 inches across.”

- A.E. Lawrance to A. Rehder regarding letter from 06/15/1935 asking for a botanical dictionary, 07/07/1935
- A.E. Lawrance to A. Rehder regarding 07/02/1935 letter, that he sent number 494 but is travelling to Venezuela and that he would like to know what part of Colombia the *Eucharis grandiflora* comes from, (response on verso), 07/19/1935
 - Correspondence: Clarence E. Kobriski, Assistant Curator, Herbarium, to A. E. Lawrance in response to 07/07/1935 and 07/19/1935 letters, states that the best dictionary is “A Glossary of Botanical Terms” by Benjamin Daydon Jackson and that *Eucharis grandiflora* is found in Choco, Colombia, 07/30/1935
- A.E. Lawrance to C.E. Kobriski regarding thanks for the 07/30/1935 letter, /03/1935