

D. M. REYNOLDS
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST BLDG.,
LOS ANGELES

June 18, 1942

Mr. Paul Ecke
Encinitas
California

Dear Mr. Ecke:

During the last war the undersigned was an executive officer of the Council of National Defense in Washington and in the present emergency I have been assigned to many specific problems on this coast. One has to do with rubber.

I have made an examination of a good many so-called processes for agricultural production of rubber. I have examined the milk weed, grains, and other possible sources. It might be interesting for you to know that we took a certain amount of the poinsettia juice - bled the plants - made the rubber in the laboratory at the California Institute of Technology and reported the recoveries to the War Production Board in Washington. I have those analyses here in the office.

While we probably could not produce enough rubber from the poinsettia plant to set the world on fire, a certain amount of material could be produced. Now, as far as I know, you are the only man in America with whom I would like to pursue this matter if additional examination is to be made, because there is no need of building up competition against your business when you are, as I understand it, the largest poinsettia producer in America. I may be wrong in my understanding of your business, but I am told you produce a great amount of cut flowers, but that your real business consists in raising poinsettia plants and shipping them to florists throughout the United States for sale during the holidays. It may be that the shortage of cars will interfere with your business during the next season, and maybe we will have some sort of outlet for your plant. If they are of real value we might be able to take everything that can be given up.

As I understand it, you grow your plants from slips and could get two crops of poinsettia plants (not flowers) a year if you force the growth. That would be twice as much as I could get from the milk weed and I understand that if beauty is sacrificed to quantity and plant that you could increase your foliage and green stock rather rapidly if you do not let the plant go clear to flower.

I know very little about this. I do know that after the milk has been extracted from the plant and coagulated that of the coagulated material, on a dry-weight basis, approximately 76% (as per previous tests) has been resin, 18% rubber, and 6% protein.

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