

Mr. Paul Ecke

- 2 -

June 18, 1942

We have put together a committee of the chemists of the large rubber companies to study the compounding of many of these products and the rubber companies have turned over their best men to work on this. California Institute of Technology has been working on some of the plant biology and chemistry of the operation, as far as the raw materials are concerned.

I think it might be advisable at the present time to take a ton of your poinsettia plants, cut off as close to the roots as possible; crush them; put them through an Anderson expeller or a hydraulic press; extract all the juice possible; establish the percentage of juice extracted (at different times of the year) and turn that juice over to the California Institute of Technology for preliminary test as to content of the liquid; coagulate that liquid and then turn it over to the committee of the rubber company representatives for final test and compounding. The rubber companies, you will understand, are as desperate as the rest of the Nation and standards that they would insist upon in 1940 are very much different from what they insist upon in 1942. In fact, we do believe that a certain amount of resin and a certain amount of protein can now be counted as acceptable mixtures with the latex itself.

I have so much to do that I do not want to come down and take up your time or cut into my own unless you are of the opinion that by proper cooperation with other organizations, farmers, florists, etc. we could develop a supply of poinsettia that would make some small dent, at least, in the rubber situation. I understand, of course, that you might not look with favor on the development of a large amount of plants that after the war is difficult for your present marketing scheme of things, but that might come. In the meantime, before anything is done or any stir is made, it might be a good idea for us to get together. You could tell me something about the habits of these plants, about their growth, their harvesting, the time of cutting back, when the most milk is available, how many crops a year could be forced, and whether or not there is at present enough plants far enough along to amount to a ton for laboratory purposes. Anyway, if you care to wire me, if interested, I think I could get away Saturday noon and go into the matter a little further on Sunday morning.

I have given you roughly what the problem is. You may know a great deal more about it than I do and you may be of the opinion that it isn't worth pursuing, but we are in a rather desperate situation.

Yours sincerely,

D. M. Reynolds
D. M. Reynolds

DMR:HFM

Please wire me

Care Security Trust State Bank of Los Angeles