

May 16, 1973

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Dear John:

Your letter of May 2 inviting me to attend a workshop on "paramutation" this coming September was much appreciated. I wish that I might attend but already my commitments for the next few months are so many and so demanding that I dare not add to them.

I am truly sorry not to attend as I recognize the degree to which many aspects of my reports are not comprehended by many of those working with my materials or with similar or related ones. Much of this is my fault. I stopped publishing detailed reports long ago when I realized, and acutely, the extent of disinterest and lack of confidence in the conclusions I was drawing from the studies. With the literature filled to the exhaustion of all of us, I decided it was useless to add weight to the biologist's wastebasket. Instead, I decided to use the added time to enlarge experiments and thus increase my comprehensions of the basic phenomena. The time has come, however, when a more detailed exposition could be effective. At least it would indicate the quantity and range of the studies that have contributed to summary statements appearing in my reports. I had hoped that these summary statements would suffice, at least for a time, but they did not in most instances.

All of the above is not intended as a complaint. Rather, it is to let you know why I stopped publishing detailed accounts after 1953, and also and particularly because I wish you to know how much I have appreciated your careful considerations and your thoughtful comprehension of the substance of these summaries. Such comprehension has been rare, indeed. It is understandable, however, as your capacity to comprehend and to integrate is conspicuously demonstrated in your antirrhinum studies. They are sharply focused, clearly executed, and they come right to the point--no fuzziness!

All good luck with the conference and thank you for inviting me.

Sincerely,



Barbara McClintock