

August 26, 1955

Mr. Sterling Morton,  
Santa Barbara,  
California

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KINQEER LESEIQA

Dear Mr. Morton:

I was pleased to have both your letters telling of your impressions of the Gravely outfit you are sending as a gift to the arboretum. It would seem that this machine though, not new, is practically the same as new and should give us some excellent service. I am indeed glad you have tried it out for with your experience handling your own, are able to pass judgment on its behavior better than we, who at present are inexperienced with Gravely Equipment. I have told the men in the shop about it coming and we are all eager to give it a work out. I shall contact our local dealer and get the reel mower and other items suggested in your letters. As soon as the tractor arrives I shall let you know how it came through.

I'm sorry to hear you had a little misfortune falling from a low wall while doing some trimming. I hope it will not incapacitate you for any length of time. The fact one has hit the 70 year mark probably does make a difference in his activities but certainly one would never guess you were that age. The fact you are so active is what keeps you so fit. My Dad was always so active and even after he was 80 wouldn't hesitate to dig up the septic tank lines at his cottage and clean out the roots. He got disgusted one day, when he was 82, at a laborer who was knocking out a garage tile wall and then took the sledge hammer and finished the job himself.

I well remember your father's 70th Birthday picnic at Thornhill. It was quite an affair and your father got such a kick out of it. Well Happy Birthday to you though we don't have a big party for you.

The men are really turning out a lot of work on the new building. The rest of the first floor will be poured Tuesday and then they will start the brick work at the south end while the steel men put up the frame work at the Lecture Room end. The outside of the walls are being waterproffed preparatory to backfilling.

The men are also taking down the old chimney making ready to taking off the high roof. The new boilers have arrived and they will be set in place before long.

Web Crowley and I have an appointment Monday to see the Beckman Flame Photometer equipment in Chicago. I called Dr. Carter of the State Natural History Survey in Urbana Wednesday to see if he knew whether anyone has done work along the line we propose on Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt. He gave me the name of a man, Edgar Rex in the State Dept. of Agriculture, Trenton, N. J., who had done some work but he wasn't sure how much. I wrote immediately to Mr. Rex to find out. Dr. Carter was very excited about the prospects of our nutrient studies for he said the pathologists are about convinced there is nothing much they can do for Dutch Elm Disease other than what they are doing and every other approach should be tried. I want to do all the checking I can before we buy equipment and be sure no one has already tried what we propose. I was telling Ed Baker about it yesterday and he said he recently saw a new machine that is extremely sensitive to color which detects changes in leaf structure, soil etc. and wants me to investigate to see if would also aid us in our problem.

I keep getting letters about the interest created in our work here after my talk at Santa Barbara. It is gratifying to know how interested people are in our proposed research and other varied activities here. I was going to give you a copy of my talk but forgot it so I am inclosing it.

We are getting our mowing, hoeing etc. cleaned up now that the weather is dry, and are beginning to do many odd jobs which had to be delayed during the early part of the summer. We are resurfacing the black top path from Thornhill south which has always been called Joy Path. We have just finished putting a new plank surface on the old iron bridge which used to be on the main highway and is now a part of our road system. We are building the wells where necessary for the filling experiment around trees. We are also getting the new building sites at the South Farm ready. This fall will really be active around this place.

Thanks again for sending us the tractor and attachments. We are anxious to get the shipment and put it to work.

Kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Yours truly,  
J. D. S.