

The Correspondence of Peter Collinson and John Custis

From Custis letter-book,⁴⁵ verso of page 22, and page 23.

1725

Mr. Robt Cary⁴⁶

I recd all my goods you sent, by the *Burwell* safe and yors of the 10 of Nov: with the cornation seed; should be very glad of some layers of good flowers I know they will live in [?] if the master takes care of them because I have had them come safe but I believe it will bee safest to put them in a wooden thing because potts will be apt to break; I have a pretty little garden in which I take more satisfaction than in anything in this world and have a collection of tolerable good flowers and greens from England; but have had great losses by their coming in partly by the carelessness and ignorance of the masters of the ships that [?] brought them; and sometimes by the ships coming in too late. I had 100 roots of fine double Dutch tulips sent me from one [?] a gardiner at Battersy, but the ship came in so late that most of them split themselves; 2 or 3 came up which are now fine flowers; any roots that are bulbous will come safe if the ships come in early; if you send any layers order the captain to put the box that contains them in the ballast of the ship and now and then give them a little water and if it layes in your way without to[o] much trouble should be glad of a few double tulip roots which may be kept dry in the cabbin.

From Custis letter-book, page 27.

1726

Mr. Robt Cary

I have recd yours by Capt Belcher, Bolling and Cant; and return you many thanks for your pretty present in Bolling; who has acted a very unkind part both by you and me. I have never seen anything you sent me by him.⁴⁷ The garden truck were carelessly put in the steerage; where as I am informed a dog tore all to bits; the cornations

and auriculas; so that they all perished; the box and gooseberry trees; some of them lived, but the gardener you mentioned, under whose care you put them I believe to be an ignorant knavish fellow; for he has carried those few things which escaped with life to Secretary Carter's which is a long way from me and should have them as soon from Jamaica;⁴⁸ I have never seen Boling nor the gardiner; Boling ship lay several days nigh me and he was in town but never so kind to call on me nor knew nothing of the matter till Mr. John Randolph told me my [?] were all dead;⁴⁹ Boling pretends he did not know who they belonged to in fine I have been ill used and it has given me more uneasiness than if I had lost 100 times the value in any thing else; had you sent them in any of Mr. Perry's ships I should have had them safe;⁵⁰ his masters being a set of men of the most humanity of any of the Fraternity; the *Micajah* always rides just by me; and come in as soon as Boling and have an interest in all concernd with Mr. Perry; the things should have been put on the ballast of the ship and then they would have all lived; with a little water once a fortnight; I have had an abundance of garden [?] come Safe so; especially if they were put into carefull hands. [Remainder of letter is on business.]

Letter to Robt Cary, 1727 in part, on page 35 of Custis letter-book.

[1727]

I must now give you thanks for your kind present of layers of Cronations & auriculas; they all perished as [Captain] Bradby tells me by the long passage & bad weather. [He has] A tub of dirt, but not the least sign of a layer. I am sorry I have given you this fruitless trouble twice. Of those for the future [give over?] the thought of having any such thing sent for I find it is in vain; nothing comes safe but bulbous roots, and these [not which] ignorance and carelessness can destroy; I should have been very proud of those had they come in; but the obligation is the same to you.

Part of letter to Robert Cary. At top is 1719, but this must be 1729, because the letters that follow are in 1729; verso of page 39 of Custis letter-book.

[1729]

I come now to thank you for your kind present of the yellow jessamine & ever flowering honeysuckle but I have my old [frets] they were all

dead by ignorance or carelessness. They were put on the deck and I suppose the spray of the salt water came on them and killd them, they should have been put in the balast.

Letter to Mark Catesby, June, 1730; verso of page 43 of Custis letter-book.

[1730]

Dear Sir⁵¹

Yr kind and most obliging letter I have recd with your pretty present; there is nothing that you could have thought of could more highly oblige me, I will put them into frames and glasses and keep them in memory of you; and shall always esteem them as a very valuable part of my furniture; you are pleased to compliment me concerning my garden which I assure you no ways deserves it;⁵² my greens are come to perfection, which is the chief fruit of my assiduous endeavors, we have had 3 or fo[u]r very hard winters, and hot and dry summers, which demolishd all my flowers, and a great many of my best greens so that I am out of [mind?] of endeavoring anything but what is hardy and Virginia proof; [Thos Jones & I?] hertyly acknowledge your kind offer;⁵³ and if you will please to let me know in anything I can serve you here I shall cheerfully do myself the honor of [serving?] you; I have given Mrs. Holloway some catbirds for you; and send you some young dogwoods from the old stump at the French ordinary the tree is dead therefore are cyons that sprung from the old root;⁵⁴ I have 2 more in my garden but they are 4 or five feet high; I dought this is in ill time to move them; but our ships never going from hence in a proper season must be glad of any, you have much the advantage in sending all manner of trees & flower roots because the ships come there in the winter, but go from hence in the summer, but we can send all manner of seeds and the like safely because they may be kept a w[h]ile; I shall allways be glad to hear of your welfare and assure it A great favor as often as you are pleasd to address me with A few lines.

The first letter to Collinson begins on page 56 of the Custis letter-book, without date of month.⁵⁵

1734

Sr John Randolph and Capt Isham Randolph⁵⁶ acquaint me that you are desirous of the mountain cowslip which is a beautifull out of the way plant and flower. I have but roots in the [?] and have sent you half

my [por n?]. It is very difficult to get the seed, but I have made a shift to get enough plentifully to put you in [part?];⁵⁷ how long it will be before it blows from the seed I never experiencd; but from the roots it will soon blow; I am very proud it is in my power to gratify any curious gentleman in this way; being myself a great admirer of things of that nature; I have a garden inferior to few if any in Virga [?] in which and in good [?] my whole delight is placed; and have had for several years evergreens flowers [etc?] from England but the Masters of ships are so ignorant and withall careless that it is rare to get anything safe;⁵⁸ except bulbous roots which seldom or ever miscarry; the fibrous are difficult to preserve but even those may safely be brought if with a carefull person; the ships coming to Virginia in a good time of year; but return in a very difficult season to preserve anything but seeds or bulbous roots ews [phillyrea?] and [gilded?] hollys; come safe to me and thrive very well; indeed any tree may be transported if carefully put in dirt and carefully minded; I thank you for the horse chestnuts [you?] [sent me?] which tree I never saw, tho I was bred in England;⁵⁹ they were all dry rotten; they should have as soon as gathered bin put into a [stif?] mould; otherwise all nuts of the [?] will never come up; and by that method may bee covered to the [end?]. I have had experience of our chestnuts and chicopine which is a pretty small nut of a pyramid shape and much of the nature of A chestnut but a much pleasanter nut and could never preserve them by any other method; a little worm getting in them if kept any time out of dirt; I hearty wish what sent may come safe to your hands; have put them under Mr. Robt Carys care who is one of my correspondents and am sure will safely deliver them; if any thing of this country growth or produce will pleasure you none shall be more ready to serve you than

Yr most obedient servt

J. C.

London October 20th: 1734⁶⁰

Kind Friend

Mr. John Custis

I am Infinitely Oblig'd to you for your kind present But what much Enhances the Obligation, on my side, Is that being an Intire stranger you shou'd take so much pains to Gratifie Mee. I can't Enough commend the Methode you took to Convey this Rare plant to my hands by

sending the seed by one ship & the plantt by another the seed came safe & the box with the plant.

It wou'd have given you pleasure to see the Contending passions of Joye and trouble Exert themselves by Turns. You may be sure I had Joye Enough to hear the box was Come but when I rece'd It & not one remains of a Leafe appear'd How my heart sunk & all my hopes Vanish'd but then again when I turn'd the mould out, to see such a fine sound root, what an Exult of pleasure. How often I survey'd It and anticipated the Time of its growth, by Imagineing what Class & what sort of Flower, & Leafe, such an odd Root must produce.

You'l Excuse this Wast of your time & paper on these sallies but as they are the Natural Effects of one that is a fond Admirer of all plants from your Country I cou'dn't help giveing you a specimen of my Tast, I have now only one Request to make to putt it in my power to Gratifie you with any thing our World produces. As a small token of my Gratitude for your Favour I desire your acceptance of a Box of Horse Chesnuts, why this Name is Imposed on this Noble Tree I can't saye for no Horse that I ever heard will Eat the Nutts or Delights more in Its shade then any other Tree tho' I am told in Turkey from whence they came they give the Nutts in provender to Horses that are Troubled with Coughs or are short Winded but I have not heard that it has been used Here. The Botanicall Discription Is that It hath Digitated or finger'd Leaves. The Flowers which consist of five Leaves are of an Anomalous Figure opening as it were with Two Lips, there are Male & Female upon the same spike which when fully Blown make a specious shew being a Noble Beautifull Large spike of flowers and always Stand at the Extremity of the Branches the female Flowers ar succeeded by nuts which Grow in Green prickly Husks.

This Tree makes an Early Noble shade it putting forth in february & March & is the first Green of any Timber Tree here. Its Growth is singular for the whole years shoot is commonly produc'd in Three Weeks. There is a great Regularity in its Growth their under Branches being Naturally Extended the succeeding ones Decreaseing Gradually to the Top do forme a Natural obtuse pyramid, the Flowers being att the End of the branches are very Conspicuous & yeild a Delightfull prospect. Rows of these Trees planted before your Houses next the street att Williamsburgh woud have a fine Effect. I hope you'l Excuse this prolix account but as this Tree is a stranger perhaps it May not be Unacceptable & the subject I am upon draws my penn further then I Design'd. They

are very Good natur'd Trees. Grow in any soil and in any place. Sett some nutts where they are to stand to Grow to Maturity soone as for the Rest plant them in Quarters to be Removed. Plant the nutts about 2 feet assunder for the Leaves are Large & Require Roome. Please to give a few to my Good Friends Sir John & Mr. Isham Randolph to whome pray my Respects & If the whole Quantity come Good to my good friend Colonel Byrd.⁶¹ I thank you for both Your Obligeing Letters and am with abundance of thanks for your kind present with much Respect

Yours

P. Collinson

Sett the nutts as soone as they come to hand, There is In the Box besides some peach stones of the Double Blossome peach which att the time of flowering is a most beautiful sight and att the Top is some Almondes. They make Excellent Tarts which a pinn can be thrust through them. First stew them, then putt them in Crust with sugar. The Green shell, & Brown shell & Cornell being all Tender have an agreeable Rellish together. There's Two or three plants in your country I should be glad off viz the Dogwood Tree⁶² & a sort of Laurell⁶³ or Bay that bears bunches of Flowers not much unlike the Laurus Tinus it is by some Improperly Called Ivy and if the sheep Eat It Kills them.

If Three or 4 of Each of these plants about Two feet high was Collected & then provide a Box Two feet square & Deep, make Large Holes in Bottome to Lett out the Water. A foot Deep in Earth is sufficient to Cover the Roots. Water them at planting and send them by some of the Last ships, for if they come Over in the Summer Months they are Generally Burnt up for want of Water. And if it is Convenient send by any of Mr. Hanburys' ships who is my Intimate Friend.

I shall be oblig'd to you as soone as this comes to hand if you will procure these plants & sett them as above advised, then sett the box in the shade giving it Water as wanted & send by Autumn ships.

Please to Putt some Chinquapin Nutts in the Earth in the Box, sett it full, but if you have roome Left then please to putt 3 or four Young plants in their stead with the Dogwood & Flowering Bay, Laurel or Ivy.

I have sent severall sorts of seeds I wish they may be acceptable and if nott please to Lett Mee know what will.

Yours

P. Collinson

Pray have you in Virginia, no spring or summer flowers with Bulbous Roots. Pray putt some in a Box of Earth for Mee against another year. Another flowering shrub which grows with you which I very much Want Wee-call it heare the Fringe Tree for the Flowers are white and so Lacerated they seem Like a Fringe or shreds of Holland or narrow scraps of white paper.⁶⁴ I have seen it Flower In England but it is scarce Here.

From verso of page 60 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. An incomplete letter. Believed to be March 25, 1735.

1735

Kind Sr.

A curious painter may nicely delineate the features and air of a face, or the pleasant prospect of A Landscape etc.; but no human skill can describe the passions that attend us, this is the work of A more skillful artist; therefor it must bee a very lame account I can give you of the superlative pleasure your kind Letter gave me especially when it was the messenger of your pretty present if you will please to figure to your self any passionate joy beyond the reach of expression; you may have a faint idea of my satisfaction; and do assert if you had sent me 20 times the weight of the seeds etc. in gold it would not have bin the 20yeth part so acceptable to me, but why do I dwell on A thing I am not able to demonstrate

I am very glad the root and seeds got safe to you; the leaves were dead before I durst take the root up; I do not doubt but you have long since had it in bloom; from the root; how long it will be from the seeds I cannot say; it being a new thing amongst us; and wish it may not have the fate of A celebrated beauty; which is apt to raise an expectation of some thing extraordinary; but when it comes to be thoroughly v[i]ewed flags the fancy; which otherwise would have bin very well [liked?] and pleaseing; it is an out of the way plant and flower and much esteemed here; but if it is acceptable to you I [herewith ?] [send it]; I am at

From the verso of page 63, and page 64 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be July 3, 1735.

1735

Kind Sr

I writ to you by the *Williamsburgh* Capt Crane since which am favord with yours of March the 31; with your obliging present but they

came so late that I was afraid to venture to sow them except the cypress and juniper berrys; which I immediately put in the ground knowing the long time ever greens require to come up; hope the rest will keep good till next spring; am glad to hear that the root I sent you has blown and that you like it; but admird [i.e., wondered] it bore but 3 blossoms; I hope the seeds of that plant are come up; how long it will bee before the[y] bloom I know not; the seeds you were so kind to send me first; but very few came up; crysanthamum arabian stecus; and 2 or 3 Hollihocks and 2 chery seeds came up and the laburnum all the rest never came up; I should have bin glad of the double honysuckles and roses especially the yellow province rose which I suppose was amongst them; but not one appeard; have sent you by Capt Friend⁶⁵ some young Laurells which I find the smaller they are the better they live; I put up severall about 2 & 3 feet high; but they died notwithstanding my own hands constantly waterd them. This ship lies very ill convenient for me; otherwise should have sent you more trees; ivy, pearl tree, fringe tree, and many more which I design to send by some other ship if I can; thes[e] ships go from hence in A very unpropitious season and few of the Masters care to carry tubs or casks of dirt on their decks; but I will get you in case of failure of th[ese] trees all the seeds and berrys I can; as fast as they ripen and them I can send safe; and wish I could tell what would bee most acceptable; have now sent you some sweet locust pods,⁶⁶ persimmons or Indian plumb;⁶⁷ yoppon or Carolina tea,⁶⁸ Indian iris;⁶⁹ which are all I could at present get; till time of year permits; Capt Friend promises me to take a deal of care of everything; and is my good friend; my choicest respects attend you and shall allways think it the greatest happiness to do any thing that can in any ways pleasure so obligeing a friend and am in great truth

You are pleasd to tell me you sent me some chestnuts by [Captain] Boling. I never recd any from him. I had some by [Captain] Whitesides,⁷⁰ but were so rotten that but 5 came up, among so many.

From page 65 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be August, 1735.

1735 [to] Collinson

Dr Sr

I writ to you by Capt Friend and sent you some seeds that were ripe in that season a cask of young Laurells which were carefully put up some other trees; which I doubt their [safety ?] by reason they were

put up by A person that is utterly unacquainted with any thing of that nature; but I have now supplyd them myself carefully put up in strong cask no: 1 is fringe tree and red bud;¹ 2, Ivy with blossoms and seed in the cask; 3 the pearl tree; which is prodigiously grown in the cask; 4, some chincopin nut trees and red buds; tis a very improper season to send them; but I must send when I can, for I assure you it is difficult to get any Master to carry them; under the difficulty of shiping them; Capt Cant is my particular friend and have presented [it to ?] him to carry them, and has promised a great deal of care of them. Had I slipt him would have been difficult to have got any other oppertunity. The ships in generall go from here in an[d] all seasons but if the trees fail comeing to you; I will endeavor to get the seeds and berrys of them; and they will come safe; I never saw the berry of the fringe tree ripe this year; it is now green; what color it will bee when ripe I know not or how long first the tree that bears them is 40 miles from me in a swamp of my own; I have given my people a strict charge to mind them, I know not if the birds or any thing else will eat them; as for dog woods these in my garden are blossomd white which are much more beautiful than the other; and can not satisfy my self if they bee not both the same; only some decay in those that look reddish which is but a small blush; however have mark[ed] A great tree which I find in the woods; and will send you some of the berrys when ripe, which will bee late in the fall, as severall other seeds and berrys will as they ripen will get them and send them to you as soon as I can; I wish the trees may come safe; they go from me in A flourishing condition; but being jumbled up and down in the ships may injure them, shall bee allways pleased to do any thing that may bee acceptable to you and am

London: December: 15th: 1735

My Worthy Good

Friend

Mr. Custis

Before mee are your Many kind Letters In which you have taken a world of pains to Informe mee, Great Trouble you have had in makeing Collections to Enrich my Garden, & very Courious presents you have sent Mee, when I sum up all these repeated Instances of great Friendship, the Ballance Due on my side is so great, the Obligations so many that when I Reflect on them I am Confused & att a Loss What Returns

to Make I am really Asham'd to receive when I cannot Equally Give, these are my present Circumstances & unless you'l be so Indulgent to Compound with Mee, I must soone Become a Banckrupt but that I may not prove the Worst of Debtors, I wou'd gladly make some Composition In hopes of future Credit. For this End & purpose I have Committed a Case of plants to the Care of Captain Bowling [Bolling] who has promised to Carry them in the Cabbin. Inclosed is a Catalogue I have Endeavour'd to send such as I believe are not Very Common in your Gardens.⁷² I wish they may Come safe & prove worth Acceptance.

I shall take Notice of your obligeing Letters In Order & begin with yours of march 25th. As you desired I sav'd some Double Tulips till I could keep them out the Ground no Longer the ships going so very Late, & they was sprouted so Much I was obliged to plant them, those that was In the Ground have shot their Green Leaves above the surface but I hope to take the Chance of some Late Ship & send them, Our Tuberoses are not yett Arrived from Italy, but I shall take the First oppertunity. In South Carolina the Italian Tuberoses Increase prodegiusly as no doubt They will with you, & if planted pretty deep in Good Rich Mould & in the Winter Cover'd with pea Halm or straw to keep them from the Frost.

The Jerusalem Cowslip is a plant In very Little Request in Our Gardens, which Is Reason I can't att present procure it to send It.⁷³ Your pretty Mountain blew Cowslip is of the same Family there being a great anology between them. With the Tulips I will send some Gurnsey Lillies.

Now my Dear Friend I come to Consider yours of July 3rd: & thank you for the Tub of Laurell plants, the boxes of pocoone⁷⁴ & silk Grass.⁷⁵ The Laurell was in tolerable Case but severall seem'd rotted with too much Moisture for want of Holes in the Bottome, the Boxes wanted Holes yett the Pocoone & silk Grass Roots was in good Case for Captain Friend took great Care of them, I know the great Difficulty that attends sending plants on board strange ships but if it was suiteable to you on any of Mr. Hanburys ships I can be well accomodated being known to all the Captains & his Intimate Friend. I can have the priviledge of the Cabbin which is the only place to Convey Our Cargo In with safety. But this I shall submitt.

The parcell of seeds was very acceptable In particular the Yoppon or Carolina Tea, I have Two plants in my Garden but I have more Friends to Oblige, Locus, Red Budd, Persimmon of all these I have

Large Trees in my Garden but they do not seed with us, but the Persimmon I never saw bear Fruite before In England till this year but the seeds of all these plants was very acceptable for It Furnish'd Mee with an opportunity to pleasure my Distant Friends In England, Holland & Germany. I shall be obliged to you for more of the yoppon, & if the other sorts can be procur'd with Little Trouble please to add some of the Rest for tho' I have Enough already myself, yett I think there is no Greater pleasure then to be Communicative & oblige others. It is Laying an obligation & I seldome fail of Returns for Wee Brothers of the Spade find it very necessary to share amongst us the seeds that come annually from Abroad It not only preserves a Friendly Society but secures our Collections, for if one doues not raise a seed perhaps another does & if one Looses a plant another can Supply him by this Means our Gardens are wonderfully Improved In Variety to what they was Twenty Years agon. The seed you Call Indian frill Wee call Cana Indica or Wild Plaintain or Bonana from some Resemblance in the Leafe.⁷⁶ With us it is perannuall by securcing the Roots from the Frost & Comes up Ev'ry Spring.

I have 3 sorts of pecoone in My Garden One with a Verry small Flower One with a Large single Flower & One with a Double Flower but I was glad of yours perhaps it may prove a Variety.

Now my Dear Friend yours of August by poor Captain Cant is before Mee no Doubt but have hear'd He has a sad Turbelent passage & in a sad Condition putt into Ireland.⁷⁷ All the Fine Cargo that with such pains you had been Collecting are all Loss'd. The Fringe Tree may be raised from the Verry Good seed you sent Mee and perhaps the Laurell Butt the Ivy never Will the seed is so fine & small that it will not keep Heither. It would have Rejoyc'd my Heart to have seen it in Flower. What the perle Tree is I don't know. Chincopins I never could raise from seed but now you have taken an Effectuall Method to do It by sending the Nutt in sand. I have Receid one Large Box of Hickerys Honey Locust, Ivy & Laurell seed & One small One by Captain Spelman for which you shall have my particular thanks & Notice as your Kind Letters come in Course.

I have a Strong Inclination to think Pistacioes Nutts will grow with you they grow in Many Gardens In England for some years, [torn]. You may Try them in 2 or 3 Aspects in shelter'd places, when the severe or sharp Frosts approaches cover them the First year or Two with pea Halm or pea straw which I find best of all covering for it Lies Hollow & Light.

I have sent you some Dates for a Tryall. In the West of England near the sea they will stand in the Gardens. Sett the stones in the Warmest place under some Wall or pale in a south Aspect & shelter in the severe Weather.

Mr. Catesby tells Mee there is a very pretty plant that He calls a sorrell Tree that Grows between Williamsburgh & York.⁷⁸ Some seed will be Acceptable.

I had Lately given Mee a Cone of the Cedar of Lebanon the Tree it was gather'd from was 36 feet about. I have Divided it In halves & sent you one the other to a Curious friend in Pensylvania.⁷⁹ Thee seed lies between the Chives which must be carefully pull'd off with a Knife if it is soak'd in Water a few Hours it will open. Sow the seed in fine sifted sandy Mould not exposed to the Midday sun & hour or 2 is sufficient in the Morning. I have procur'd a Root of Jerusalem Cowslip & Double Rockketts to be planted with the Rest in the Box. I have yours of Sept. the 5th, 10th, 25th & 26th which shall have my particular notice by the first oppertunity. I am my Friend with Great sincerity & Truth

Yours

P. Collinson

From verso of page 66, page 67, verso of page 67, and page 68 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be July 29, 1736.

1736

Dear Friend

Your severall letters are now before me; which I now answer in course; it would be difficult if not impossible to say how much I think myself indebted to you for your pretty presents; and cannot express the grief I labord under when I found your kind and most obliged endeavors fruitless and destroyd, the box by Bolling were the greatest part dry rotten, but had I saved the Chili strawberry and the yellow rose it would have made a very great attonemt for all the rest;⁸⁰ nothing was alive but 4 althea; 4 Laurells, which I had very plenty of before, one red rose, one guernsy Lilly; and 5 small bulbous roots like hyscinths; which I know not what they are; and all the horse chestnuts were sound but the[y] were packt in so little room that the sprouts twined in one another like so many worms; and I believed injured the other things; I planted them all and some are come up; but I believe the gardiner or whoever

you entrusted to put the things in the box deceived you for the box was entire and am satisfyd a great many things you mention in the inventory never were put in (viz) but one guernsy Lilly; you mention 2; you mention 6 white double rocketts, Jerusalem cowslips 1 doz; [?] polyanthus; striped Lilly's; none of these were ever put up, because if they had I should have seen some sign of them if they had bin ever so rotten; altho the strawberrys were rotten; they were like whole and visible. One striped box has some life in it; I should have bin glad of it; being a great admirer of all the tribe striped gilded and variegated plants; and especially trees; I am told those things are out of fashion; but I do not mind that I always make my fancy my fashion.

Yours of 7br [should be December] 15 expresses so much kind acknowledgements for so little received; that the best answer I am capable of making, is to assure you that nothing [can ?] please me more [than to] have to report that I have used my utmost endeavor in some small measure to gratify so curious a gentleman and so kind a friend; and heartily wish I could accomplish any method to rivet your everlasting esteem and friendship; what shall I say, or rather what shall I do? Why; I will endeavor, and if it bee my hard fate to fail in the attempt; I shall have this comfort that it shall not bee my fraut [i.e., fault] but my misfortune.

I am very sorry the trees &c I sent by [Captain] Cant were lost; they were so flourishing when they went from me; that I had great hope of their continuing so; I am glad the chincopins got safe;⁸¹ I hope they will come up; they are A hardy tree and thrive best in poor sandy ground; as for the ivy seeds I did not know their nature; and am sorry they failed; but you may depend I will send you some trees; every year of my life; till some hitts because I perceive you are very desirous of them; I have planted the pistacious Nuts; and thin shelld allmonds; I have allmond trees that thrive well; but the[y] blow so early that it is not once in a great many years but the frost kills the blossoms; this has bin the severest winter that ever was known; and kept the spring back so that I had some trees very full of Nutts; I have planted the dates; but I doubt they are to[o] tender to do well here; I have planted the seeds of the cedar of Lebanon; but I suppose they will not come up till next spring; most of the seeds you sent last year never came up; the larch tree came up but one seed and that died a way the Laburnum came up well and are of the quickest growth I ever saw. I have severall trees 4 or 5 feet high allready; the stecos came up; but all that I could do could

hardly save it from the severe frosts; I have some of it living; those you sent this year never came up; but the reddish; cabbage⁸² and Spanish sage trees⁸³ I recd [torn] tob: seed living in A tob: country but I did not know but it might bee a fine sort so I sowed it; but it never came up; as for those peas you call Italian beans wee call them black eyd indian peas and I make yearly hundreds of bushes [or bushels] of them and ship them to the West Indies;⁸⁴ w[h]ere some times they answer well; I should have bin glad if the yellow everlasting flower seeds had come up. Wee have the flowers from Mindora but could never get any of the plants or seeds; I know not how it happens; but the seeds in generall wee have from England very often never come up; I believe it is often the faults of the seeds men; and sometimes they get hurt in the ship; especially if put in the hold of the ship; the grape seeds sent last year 4 came up and in spite of the most severe winter have preservd them and are now in a flourishing condition; the cutings sent last severall of them are put out do not doubt of their health; but grapes and plumbs do not do well in this hot country.⁸⁵

You are pleasd to express in one of your kind Letters that if I should again think of sending you any thing you desire the white flowering bay; I suppose you mean what wee (tho improperly) call Ivy;⁸⁶ I shall allways think of sending any thing that I can so much as dream of will bee acceptable to you, and shall never think it the least trouble, the greatest difficulty is to know what to send, but nothing shall escape me that I can get or procure by any means; will send you some of the sorrill tree if the tree bears any; I never minded it; I shall send in Mr. Handburys ships or any else that I can; what care they will take of any thing I must leave to chance, I am glad the seeds sent by Capt. Colwell were acceptable; will send you more as they ripen. I get these things the other side the bay of great Chesapeake, w[h]ere I have plantations; the tuberoses by Capt Amerdown came safe they were very fresh and sound and sprouted; I put them immediately in the ground under a south building and am in great hopes of their doing well but you are misinformed that wee have plenty of them here; I never saw or heard of any being here before and wish I knew the management of them whether the[y] must be taken up every year and planted again or not; the dwarf apple trees [?] stocks came well and put out leaves; they were very acceptable; I beg you will in my behalf give Mr. Handbury a thousand thanks for them; but I well know that you were the mainspring of this movement; because Mr. Handbury is a stranger to me.

From page 72 of the Custis letter-book. No date. Sometime between August 5 and September 23, 1736.

Mr. Collinson

Our generall Assembly sitting leave scarce a minutes time to scribble these few lines to you;⁸⁷ have by Capt Friend sent you what seeds I could get ripe; viz; yoppon which you desird me to send you some more and I think you desird some more persimmon seed; our Virga: Bay berrys; white Mulberry seeds;⁸⁸ it is a hardy tree and will grow like a weed any w[h]ere; some Angola peas which you must plant in the spring when frosts are gone in hills 2 or 3 in A hill; the pea grows in the ground; wee have them from Angola a place in guinea I am told when dryd as you do coco they make a rich chocolate; I never tryd them⁸⁹

London November: 12: 1736

Mr. Custis

Dear Friend

I am much Oblig'd to you for your kind Letter of July 29th. I am glad the Case came to hand but am concern'd for the Condition of the plants, but accidents of this Nature I am us'd too, such Cargos rarely Escaping Damage but the great Missfortune is that plants going in the Spring soone come into the Warm Latitudes which setts them a growing, and for want of Water, and a Little Tendance they are soone Lost. It would have given you pleasure to have seen the Condition they was in when I Left them att Gravesend, as to the hint you gave that you thought I was Imposed on, from some Circumstances you might conclude It, but this I will assure you that there was so many polyanthus, Lillies, Rocketts and Jerusalem Cowslips with all the Rest They was all as Fresh & Green & had been planted some months in the Box and had sprouted fresh Green Leaves that you would have been Delighted to have seen them, as I said above, I saw them safe to Gravesend and gave perticular Directions for the Voyage there was Mr [?] and another passenger I recommended the Case in perticular to their Care thought it might be a pretty amusement for them to peep & Look after it—but in short there is no confideing in anybody. But there is very Little Chance in Herbacious plants, a Long Voyage & a small Neglect ruins them. Wee should have a much better Chance if a ship went from hence in the begining of October, plants will preserve themselves much better then on the other side Christmas. But as you have saved the Altheas you

have Little Cause to regret the Loss of the Rest for they make a Glorious show in the Garden in Autumn. If the Box is alive itt will when its Leaves are arrived to Maturity Discover their stripes. This may be Increased by Cuttings in Autumn in a Moist shady place not overhung with Trees. And then my Good friend to somewhat alleviate the Misfortune you tell Mee some of the Vines are alive these are Rarities much to be Valued and to my Apprehension must come with you to better perfection then with us. The Methode I think they would succeed best in is to Run them up to cover an High Arbour or Trellice or run them up Cherry Trees or any other Trees of small shade, and Carefully prune them Evry year. Being Rais'd above the Too Great Reflection the Fruite will come to better maturity but Arbours I Like best, being the practice of Spain, portugall & Italy. And the Advange is This, as the shoots spread and cover the Wood Work, the Leaves rise upwards and the bunches by their Weight hang down Underneath and in such situation are shaded from the sun by the Leaves above & the shade they Make, prevents Reflection from Below—which must ripen them to Great perfection. The White Grape & those raised from seed are very Firm Fleshy Grapes, that will Endure the suns Heat, possibly they may do well on the East End of some Building for the Bunches weighs some pounds and require to be supported, the East, with you, I think preferable to the south or West which are more Exposed to the suns Fervour but all this I submitt to your better Experience.

I am glad the almonds was acceptable I apprehend if both sorts was buded or Grafted on Peach stocks it may Retard their flowering, but you do not tell Mee that the Pistacios are come up. If they do not I will send more. If they are planted in a well sheltered place I persuade my self they will succeed.

The Laburnum's will please you well being planted att proper Distances grow to pretty Large Trees and bear a profusion of yellow bunches of Blossoms the same Figure & shape of your Common Locust or Accacia.

That great number of seeds fail'd is what very often happens, I could offer many Reasons for it to tedious here to Mention there is no Certain Remedy but to continue Hitt or Miss Lucks all.

The spanish sage Tree bears a singular odd Blossome I wish you may preserve it, it stands well in our Gardens. I doubt not but you will have seed from the Everlasting Flower, but for fear I hope to send you some More, it is a beautiful plant and makes a fine show in the Garden, I wish

I could hear the China Aster came up & flowered. I shall send you some more seed.

It gives Mee great pleasure that the Tuberoses proved a new Acquisition to your Garden. I admire you had them not, when they are on both sides of you in south Carolina & Pensilvania, my friend⁹⁰ from Last place writt Mee he had last year 149 flowers on one single Flower Stalk which is very Extriordinary but I have heard the Like from Carolina where they Stand in the Ground and Increase amazingly there is no Nicety in their Managem't, take them up when done flowering & the Green Leaves decay in Autumn, & Dry them in the Shade, then putt them up in a Dry place where the Frosts can't come att them, & then plant them in the spring and as the Offsetts grow Large take them off & plant by themselves. I hope to send you a few More this year for those that Flower'd Last are not certain to flower again the Next year, I would have you try some of them in the Ground next year under a south wall or pale plant them Deep the better to secure them from the frosts and if where they stand is Cover'd with Litter or Pea straw in severe Weather it may awnswer your Expectation. As Capt. Whitesides goes on a sudden & my Business being very pressing att this Time a year I have not Oppertunity to provide the plants I intended but he shall not come Quite Empty handed I shall send some Double Tulips tho it is rather of the Latest but Lett them take their Chance with sundry seeds. But I am a Little att a Loss Least I send what you have already, I wish att your Leisure you'd give mee a Cataloge of your Garden I should then steer with more Certainty.⁹¹

But I designe Early in the spring to plant a case of Trees etc against the Autumn for they have Twice the Chance when they have stood and taken Root, then Wee are sure Wee send none but what have struck Fresh Root and are alive. they remove better then those fresh planted.

I have had a strong Root of Chili strawberry that has been 2 years in pott this with a pott of Houtboys I intend to send by Captain Whitesides. I have great hopes as the season is Early they may have a Chance to Come safe to your hands. Since the above my Mind is alter'd for Cap. Whitesides Leaves his great ship for the present & sails in a small ship of Little Roome, and the arrival of Captain Friend who says all your kind presents are well on Board. I think it better to send the strawberries by Captain Friend who sayes he will bee particularly Carefull of them. It is well I am confin'd by the paper from Tiring you further I will only add I am you affectionate Friend.

P. Collinson

Permitt Mee to make one Generall Observation in sowing seed, for by sowing to Deep many seeds are lost & can't find their Way out of the Ground. After the mould is Loosen'd the smallest of seeds are sown on the surface and as they are Larger proportionably sown Deeper.

A great many Chinkapins are come up and Indeed most of the others, the Toothach Tree is come up is a great Rarity,⁹² but the fringe Tree has not yett appeared, but shall Expect it the next spring for the seed was fresh & good. The Ivy is to small a Dusty seed ever to Expect to raise it, but you have sent plants which the Captain tells Mee are very fresh & Well. The ship is not yett come up.

Captain Friend was att the Exchange the 18 Instant.⁹³ He had a Letter from you but forgot to bring it. The Cedar Lebanon & [?] generally come up the first year. The first Cones I can gett I will send you for the Cedar is a Hardy Tree, Hedge Hog Holley [?] and others I shall Endeavour to send you with yellow Rose etc the first ship next autumn for reasons in this letter.

Pray my Respects to Sir John Randolph

London December 4th 1736

Mr Custis

As I know you are a Lover of Rarities it always gives Mee pleasure when I think I can oblige you that Way or Indeed in any other.

I have Just now rece'd from the professor of the Botanic Garden att Petersburgh the Inclosed seeds.⁹⁴ They appear to Mee very Fresh and I have known by Experience that Mellon seed will keep Good 3 or 4 years and Wee Esteem 2 years old the best for sowing being more productive of Fruite than New seed.

If you Look into the Map and see the Northern Latitude of Petersburg or Muscow one wou'd reasonably conclude such Delicious Fruites are not to be expected in that Climate. They are Indeed beholden to a more Souther situation for their production, being brought in the seasons by Water up the Wolga from Casan and in particular the Water Mellons from Astracan which Lies near the Mouth of the Wolga on the Caspian sea. These Water Mellons are much Famed, I wish the seed may prove Good that I may have your Opinion of them and if they are any Ways Different from those you have already and some seed. The Calmuc Mellon seems to be an uncommon sort by its Length. I beg Your Observations and some seed of Each sort for you have Tenn Times the

Chance of their coming to full Maturity, then Wee can Expect. If the Cucumber is Different pray send some seed.⁹⁵ I would advise to sow half the seed att one sowing and the other half a Little while after for fear of accidents. I wish you may Raise one of the Siberian Cedars, But is more a pine by the seed, I had a sight of the Cone, it is the figure of a Midle size pineapple or annanas, and has att the Head of the Cone a Brown Hard Excessence in Imitation of the Crown on the Fruite of the pineapple I mean the sort growing in the West Indies which are now grown very plentiful in most Curious Gardens with us.

I have taken the Very next ship that sail'd. Hope these will gett early enough to be sown the first of the season

I am my Dear Sir

Yours
P Collinson

3 sorts of Muscovy Mellons
1 sort of Muscovy Cucumber
1 sort of Calmuc Mellon with fruite 2 feet long
1 sort of Astrican Water Mellon
Siberia Cedar or pine
Affrican Mellon seed
Italian Melon
Sir Charles Wagers Melon

Lond. December 25: 1736

Dear Mr Custis

I take this oppertunity to thank you for your Kind presents. The 2 Boxes of Seeds came safe & Well and are very Acceptable. The Tub of Ivys came in Exceeding Good Order please to suspend your obligeing Disposition to send More of these trees for I have hopes these will do & prevent you further Trouble on that affair. I also thank you for your Two Kind Letters.⁹⁶ Inclosed is some seed of the Spanish Broome it makes a fine Large shrub & Looks very pretty when full of yellow Blossoms.⁹⁷ Sow some where they may stand for they are Difficult to remove with safety

My dear friend I wish you health
and am Truly yours

P. Collinson

I hope you will Receive my other letter and seed, Roots etc by Captain Whitesides.

London: January 25th: 1736/7

Dear Mr Custis

I hope mine & the Little Box by Whitesides and my Letter with Foreign Mellon seed came safe by Captain Loney. Your kind present of Ivy came safe and in Good Condition by Captain Friend who is a very obligeing Good natur'd man and takes care of what you send. I shall send by Him who will sail soone Two Potts of strawberries—the Chili & Houtboye.

I now send you in a Little Box some Italian Evergreen Okes, in sand. It is possible they may be sprouted in the sand, but Turn the Box upside Down and they will receive no Damage, they Grow Tall and make a fine Hedge beare Clipping very Well. Sett them where they are to stand for they will not bear Removing. Pray does any of the Horse Chesnutts Grow. If they do not I will supply you this year. I have sent some More pistatio nutts if you plant them in a Box, Case or pott, you may take them In Doors in severe Weather, but after 2 or 3 years plant them against any south pale or building and I doubt not but they will grow and Beare as they have in England. I never knew our Frosts kill them. Plant the Dates in potts &c to House in the Winter they make a fine Tree att plymouth which Indeed is warmer then Wee are Here I saw a Tree which had stood abroad many years. If I can I will send you some Fresh Tuberoses, either by Captain Bowling or by Captain Friend, there is some Come but not yett gott ashore. It is a great Chance but there is the Evergreen Oke whose Bark is the Cork wee use for Bottles. I wish att your Leisure you'd send Mee a Cataloge of your Garden, both of Trees & Flowers and then I should the better know what to send. I have gave Directions for another Box of plants the sorts you mention'd and some others to be now planted, to be ready against the First ship in the Autumn, for I have found when they have stood and struck Root, Wee ar Certain whats alive and may be with more safety be Remov'd when they come to you

I am my Dear Friend with
abundance of thanks for all your Favours
Your affectionate friend
P Collinson

Pray be so kind to send Mee a Walking Stick of the sorrell Tree. I hope from Your great Industry In procureing so much seed some will Grow. The Chinquapin came Exceeding Fresh by takeing the First

opportunity & your Methode of packing. The Ipacacuana⁹⁸ is new to Mee hope some will grow but I think I have had seed & Raised plants of what you call Rattle Snake Root.⁹⁹ I take it to be a species of Eringo or sea Holley.

Please be so good to Remember some more Chinquapins swamp Cypress Cones or Balls, this always Drops its Leaves in Winter with us

Cones of sweet White Flowering swamp Bay

Acorns of narrow or Willow Leafed Okes

Cones of Flowering poplar or Tulip Tree

Burrs of sweet Gum

Fringe Tree

any of these as they happen to be Come att with Ease will be Acceptable

I have Increased your First kind & Generous present the Blew Mountain Cowslip to 3 potts. I will save you Variety of our Peach Stones but I have ordered a Tree of the Nutmeg peach to be putt in the Box.

There is in the Little Box

Italian Ever Green Okes

Damosins

Bullice

Sloes

Bay Berries

Pistacia Nutts

6—Tuberoses—att the Approach of Winter take these up and Lay the Roots singly to Dry in a Roome, when well Dry'd putt them in straw in a Roome where you keep a Constant Fire. In the spring as soone as the severe Frosts are over plant them in the Ground.

If you have any Correspondents in Philadelphia there is Two of my Friends viz Doctor Witt att German Town and John Bartram on Skulkill both places Near Philadelphia,¹⁰⁰ these Friends of mine have gott from France the Double Flowering China or India pink. If you send to Either of them in my Name I doubt not but they'l readily send you some seed. It is an Elegant Flower but Rarely Ripens seed with us. Mr. Catesby Desires to know if you have the Red flowering Dogwood. I should be Glad of the Red of [or?] White Moccasin flower and your White Flowering Laurell or sweet Bay, but all these Must be sent in a Tub of Earth.

The Mountain or Orange [Clove ?] Flower was very Acceptable I have formerly had it. Its Bottanic Name is Dogs Bane, being a Deadly

poison to that Animal, Wee call it Apocinon,¹⁰¹ with narrow Leaves & Orange Coloured flowers it is a pretty plant. There is great Variety of this species.

London: March 21st: 1736/7

Dear Mr. Custis

I have the pleasure to tell you that the seed of the fringe Tree is now coming up & your Mountain Cowslip is now in flower. These are Living Memorials with many others of your great kindness. The Chinquapins You sent last year by the help of a Little Art are a finger high & yett I beg your further assistance this year for it is a Tree Wee are in great Want off amongst our Curious plants and you above all others are so very happy In packing them up & sending so Early that Wee never had such Lucke before for by Long Experience I know this to be the most Ticklish seed to bring from your part of the World & pray some Acorns of your Narrow Leafed Okes, Cypress Cones &c.

It is a Detriment to the Cargo of strawberries (there is a pott of Chilli and one of Hautboye) going so Late, the Captain is very anctious to Carry them safe I have given Directions to Water them Once or Twice a Week which if He does & gives them Air, I am in hopes they will come safe, if not Wee will have the other Tryall next year.

I am Truly your affectionate friend

P. Collinson

A few Days agon I received the Inclos'd Mellon seed from Africa. If it is to Late this year it will keep till Next.

The Oriental Persicary is a Noble Annual Grows 7 or 8 foot high makes Glorious show with its bunches of Cherry Colour Blossoms. Pray have you Mr. Millers Dictionary which contains a General Systeme of Gardening and the Culture of all sorts of plants.¹⁰² It is a Work of the Greatest use and no Lover ought to be without, all Drawn from the Latest Experience. The Author is Gardner to the Physick Garden att Chelsea and Exceeding well Qualified for the Work.¹⁰³ It is in folio, about [?]. If you are Inclin'd to by it, pray Lett Mee gett it for you, for there is an appendix & some has it not.

There is besides the Culture of the Kitchen Garden after the Newest Methode. Indeed there is everything you can ask & think

P

From page 75, verso of page 75, page 76, and verso of page 76 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be May 28, 1737.

1737 [To] Collinson

Dear Sr

The severall letters this year came safe to hand which I will endeavor to answer. Your first was Novemr 12 1736; w[h]erein you are pleasd to show your concern that the box last year by Bolling miscarried; few of these sort of people have any taste of things of that nature containd in the box which is one reason they take so little care of them; I dare say Capt Bolling never troubled his head about them; he is a man of pleasure; and as for the passengers; it might have bin presumd it would have bin a pretty amusement; but as you Justly observe there is no confideing allmost in any body; indeed a great deal is owing to the ill time of year; that ships come and return from Virga: but it is much better when they come from England than when the[y] return their coming being in autumn or some time in winter; but they generally return in the summer or late in the spring than which no time can be more unseasonable; your next is Nov: [should be Dec.] 25 [1736] wherein you tell me the acceptable news that the box of seeds and tub of ivy came safe to hand; there are few such men as Capt Friend I mean skippers; he is a man of great humanity care and industry, and what crowns all of sterling honesty; and if there were more such; wee should stand a good chance to send anything safe if the unlucky seasons did not intervene. Your next is January 25 [1736/37] wherein you tell me you have hope your box and letter by Capt Whitesides came safe. When he arrived I demanded by virtue of your letter the box; he answered he had no such thing I showd that paragraph of your letter which he seemd to think very strange but still said he knew of no box, so I gave it over; thinking your mind might alter and send it by another ship; but whenever I saw him I was tormenting him to make a narrow research and to put on his considering cap and at last about a fortnight afterwards he sent me the box and said it came on board unknown to him; I opend the box immediately; and was very proud to see the tulips fresh and sound; and in some just the appearance of A sprout; I immediately put them in the ground; but to my great surprize but 3 came up; and but one of them blowd which proves A single one; I still waited with patience but seeing no appearance I grappled the bud and found all the rest rotten; the first time I ever knew a bulbous root fail; the reason I guess is wee had had the severest winter that ever was known in the memory of man, 16 weeks constand

hard frosts; the last winter was severe but this far exceeded it; then the spring continuall heavy rain which has killd abundance of cattle and killd abundance of things notwithstanding I took are [i.e., all] the care immaginable to preserve them. Amongst the rest it killd a great deal of my dutch box edgeings which is as hardy a thing as any; this was the ruin of my poor tulips you sent; I should have been very proud of them because I have few or no double ones; I have taken a deal of pains and care of the variety of melons and cucumber seeds you sent planting them at different times [forcing?] some with glasses; others with out but not one ever came up except Sr Charles Wagers; the melon which you are desirous of some seeds from its pretty color and scent, has bin very plenty in this country my negros used to make multitudes of them but finding them unfit to eat; and by most thought a disagreeable smell; left of[f] planting them; and tho I have made a generall enquiry to get some of the seeds, can not hear of any; the 4 beans you sent came up; and are growing but I cannot perceive any difference in them and my other beans; the 3 peas are growing but I must think with you that your friend was out in his reckoning concerning their increase. The Siberian cedar and larch tree have not yet made their appearance, perhaps they do not come up till the second year; the seeds by [Captain] Whitesides some came up yet others never appeard have made some [?] [illegible] [of them and sent?]; I immediately sowed them when recd; the Amaranthodes I rubbed carefully myself; but could not see the least appearance of a seed but I sowed it but never anything appeared. It is an utter stranger to me so should have bin glad of its acquaintance. The seed vessels of the different sorts of lilacks I carefully rubbed but could not see any seeds; do believe they drop[t] their seeds before they were gatherd; should have bin glad of them because I have no sort but the pale blew; which is the hardiest tree in the world; I recd the tuberoses sent by Bolling; those sent last year all came up and blowd well; I tryd severall projects with them some I put in pots and placed them in A warm cellar, they all rotted; some I carefully dryd single in a room and when dryd put them in the drawer of a desk and stood in my chamber w[h]ere was allmost a constant fire; they all pery[s]hd; and some I let stand in the ground and coverd them with peas straw they all lived, and came up well; so I find that is the best way to preserve them. There were other roots in the box by Whitesides which were all rotten. The Italian acrons were all rotten and the pistacio nuts Damosins Bullice and sloes all sound, the seeds of the strawberry tree I sowed they have not as yet made any appear-

ance,¹⁰⁴ but [low?] this tree was not extant when the scripture was writ, which accounts Mustard seeds the least of seeds; but there is no comparison between these seeds; the strawberry tree seeds are so small that I am not sure whether I saw any or not when rubbed to pieces; I will send you all desired when time a year approac[h]es to get them if any ship is then left in the country that I can anyways come at. I have severall horse chestnut growing after their fashion but it is so slow; that a man had need to have the patience of Job and the life of Methusala to wait upon them; as for the account of the Rattle snakes charming the squirrel it is a received opi[ni]on here, but I cannot attest the veracity of it having never seen a live one in my life;¹⁰⁵ they are very scarce in the part of the country w[h]ere I live to our great comfort. I have ask[ed] severall people about that account but could never meet with any one that could testify it on their own knowledge; I mean persons of understood credit; I have often heard our woods men chatter strange things of the bewitching eyes of that animall but I allways made the same allowance for them as for other travelrs. I will if possible get you some roots of the Mocassin flower; they are very scarce;¹⁰⁶ I have sometimes by chance come across some and planted in my garden; but they never would continue above a year; according to your desire have sent you an inventory of the trees and flowers that at present are inhabitants of my poor garden;¹⁰⁷ which are hardly worth your notice. Now comes in course yours by Capt Friend March 21, 1736 [1736/37]; I am very glad to hear the seed of the fringe tree is come up; yours I very believe was the first seed that ever was saved of that tree; I have used my utmost endeavor ever since to get more but never could; I no ways doubted the Mountains cowslips thriving am glad you like it which is the height of my desire; I am glad the chincopins are come up and since they are acceptable will send you more; but tob: being plenty the ships will soon get full and go early so am afraid it will bee to[o] soon for them the[y] being not ripe till Sepr: I will save some [and] pack them up as well as I can; but cannot promise wither they will keep till next spring or summer to send by the first ship; they are a very ticklish thing; the live oak acrons do not grow in parts w[h]ere I live but am promisd some this autumn and will preserve them if I can and send;¹⁰⁸ I am now very sorry to tell you that the Chili strawberrys perishd comeing over; one or two of the strawberries were alive and I planted them and shaded them and took a deal of care of them but could not preserve them they were so weak. Capt Friend killd' them with kindness giveing them so much

water that rotted them and since such a carefull man as Capt Friend cannot bring them I shall dispair of ever having any come safe; it is very difficult to bring anything of the herbacious species; or fibrous roots and unless they can bee had from the seeds of the strawberry it is in vain I believe to give yourself further trouble with things of that nature. I have a plant you sent last year that bears a [flatt ?] stalk full of white long hollow blossoms. I forgot the name; that and the sage tree were the only things that braved our intolerable hard frosts and do believe they would live in Greenland; should be glad to know the name of the long white hollow flower.

From page 79 of the Custis letter-book. No date of year or month. Believed to be August 28, 1737.

[1737]

[To] Collinson

Dr Sr

By Capt Friend I send you everything I could get at this time of year, he sailing to[o] soon for other things I designed; particular the chicopins. Enclosed is an inventory of what I sent; wee have had the greatest dry season that ever was known in the memory of man; I was obliged for severall weeks to keep 2 lusty men all day long to draw water and put in tubs in the sun to water my garden and notwithstanding a great many things perishd. The dutch box edgeings that survived the sever[e] winter; perishd in spots in the borders which had been establishd many years; but what is worst of all wee have A melancolly prospect in most parts of the colony the want of bread the corn being in many places burnt up; and a very short crop of tob: will bee made. God keep us from famine; I thank God I am as well off[f] at my [slave] quarters as most people; the seeds of the long cucumber you sent me; I planted but none came up; I gave my son 3 seeds which all came up; and notwithstanding the excessive drouth he had one more than 3 feet long; to the astonishment of many; severall people rid many miles to see it; he lives 40 miles from me [in New Kent County]; I never saw it the season being very hot; and [I] not [being] very well he has saved the cucumber; and would have sent you some of the seed if I could have come at it in time; but will send you some; there are more people begd some of the seed; than 10 cucumbers can afford; the tuberos[e] you sent last blowed well, with abundance of

watering; I lost most of my polyanthos, and abundance of that kind of plants notwithstanding all the care and trouble I took the sun was so violent hot that scorchd every thing; what I saved was by shadeing them in the daytime and some perishd notwithstanding. As you are a very curious gentleman I send you some things which I took out of the bottom of A well 40 feet deep; the one seems to bee a cockle petrefyd one a bone petrefyd; [this?] seems to have been the under beak of some large antediluvian fowl. Wish they may bee acceptable. Some of your water-mellons seeds came up but I can see little difference between them and our[s]; if any [ours] have the preference; the same of the muskmellons. Have sent you some of the seeds because you desired it

London December 5th - 1737

Dear Friend

I am sensible of the Great pains you have taken to Oblige Mee In yours of May 28th ultimo. I confess I would not willingly be behind hand with You If I could be Equally as Entertaining.

I am sorry poor Whitesides so forgot himself as not to Deliver the Box att his Arrival, but a sudden Fever has taken Him From us—and Wee have the Good Fortune to have Our Worthy Friend Captain Friend In His Roome, the Just Character you gave Him helps to Confirme Mr. Hanburys good Opinion of Him and Indeed all my small Interestt with Mr. Hanbury was devoted to his service I hope for the Friendship you Owe the Captain You will be so good for His sake to Make Mr. Hanbury some Consignm'ts.¹⁰⁹ He is a Gentleman of Great Integrity & Honour and to my knowledge spares no pains to Do the Best for your Interestts & if the Captains Friends will be so kind to Exert themselves In his Favour it will Lay a Lasting Obligation On Mr. Hanbury to be allways his Friend which I am persuaded from His own merrits, the Captain will Always Deserve—but it is a Common and known Maxim that Interest Governs the World.

It gives Mee Great pleasure that Captain Friend is Like to be the First ship, for I have Two Choice Cargoes For Him, the One a Case of plants some the sorts you desir'd and others that I thought would be Acceptable. I had them sett in the Case Early In the Spring and they have all struck Root & Shot finely as they stand in the Case which I take to be Twice the Chance of their doing Well as if they was Removed Directly out of

the Ground & planted In the Case & then sent on board, for these having all survived their First Removeing there is Less Hazard in their Second. When you Remove them it will be best to knock the Case all round to peices & then you will with more Ease and safety Come att them. The other Cargo is a Box of Bulbs planted in the Case that convey'd your first present to my Hands this contains a great Variety not Mention'd in your Cataloge & I designe to add Two potts of strawberries. I am sorry the Amaranthoides fail'd it is a Charming flower & holds a great While in Blossome & Gathered in full flower and hung up with the heads downwards, will keep their Colour for many years. I shall send you some more seed of this & some Lilacs &c. I am surprised the Tuberoses should rott. Wee keep them all the Winter without any Care but only takeing Care they are well Dried, but I shall send you some More for it is a pittty you shou'd be without so fine a flower.

The White Flower by your discription I take to be the White Fox Glove. I am glad you have it, for it is a rare flower with us and in fewe Gardens. I sent the seed without hope but on Experim't for it will not keep Long unsown—but as you are so Luckky to have it make much of It—it generally sows itself which generally makes the best plants.

As to the strawberry seed it is Indeed small but the Evangelists were Inspired Men in Religious Matters, yett I presume were no great Naturalists they represented things of that Nature, according to their knowledge in those Matters & suiteable to the Ideas of their Country Men.

That the Horse Chesnutts are so slow in their Growth is very surprising to Mee for with us they are Trees of the Quickest Growth & will Bear in five or six years. I presume by their Roots being so complicated a number of their Fibres was Broke by disengageing them & it may be sometime before they Make new ones, but I think to send you some nutts out of Earth to see if better Luck attends them.

That the Crown Imperial should not flower is very strange they are the freest with us of any flower and Increase Very Fast I have sent you Two Large Roots of yellow ones which if they Come safe I doubt not but they will flower. When You Receive the Box of Bulbs Turn them all out at once & seperate them as well as you can for I apprehend the Roots are pretty much Matted, there is no safe Way of sending these sorts of Roots but In Earth. I planted them in the summer & a many are Come up that usuall show their Leaves in the Winter as Blew & White Hyacinth of peru & yellow asphodel, white moley double yellow pile Wort &c.

I think as your sun is so Hott if you raised tall Hedges of Quick growing plants & then sett our European plants in Rows behind them, Hedges of your Cedar may be very proper for this Work, which will Run High & may be kept clip'd or Hedges of Phileria or Yoppon Bays or Laurell which Last may be Easily Raised from slips or cutting a foot long & planted in a Moist place in september they take freely with us. Phileria is Raised from Layers, but Laurus Tinas may be Raised from seed, Layers or Cuttings at the same Time.

I am very much oblig'd to you for your present of sorrel Tree Canes. They are very pretty. Your Liberality has furnish'd Me & my friends thereby. I must beg you to plant some Sorrel Tree plants in a Tub or Box but pray make Large Holes in the bottome to Carry off the Water for want of this many plants are Lost by over Moisture.

I have saved you Variety of Our best Nectarines & peaches, but I am told a peach stone Continues Two Years in the Ground before Coming up I meane does not come up till the second spring. If you have any you Esteeme fine pray send Me a few—I ask pardon for putting an If—I assure you I would not putt an affront on Virginia, which is reported to have the finest peaches in the World.¹¹⁰

I have Sundry other of your Kind Letters which I shall answer in Course. I have your box of Seeds safe. The Umbrella is a Great Rarity, but I am afraid of the seed for it will not keep Long out of Earth. What I have to request Is that next year you will sow some of the seed In your Garden or In a Case with holes in bottome & that you may Raise some young plants which in 2 years will be fit to send us, & that the next seed you will take out of the Cones & putt them in a Little Box of Earth & nail it up only boreing a few Holes about it to give Circulation of Air & then I Doubt not of Raising them. This & the Fringe Tree are Two Rare plants & in few Gardens. Pray where & in what part of the Country does the Umbrella Tree Grow. It is a Noble plant. A friend of Mine has one of them. Wee had this year & for some past the Great Carolina Laurell Leafed Tulip Tree flower with us in the Natural Ground it bears a Large White flower about

[next line of Ms mutilated]

Much More I have to say but I will tire you no Longer but only to assure you that I am Your sincere & affectionate Friend

P Collinson

There is another Letter for you in Mr. Hanburys Box of Letters
Please send some More Yoppon & Chinquapin Seed

London December: 24: 1737

Dear Sir

Dont be surprised if a down right plain Country Man—perhaps he may be a Quaker too Into the Bargain & you know they are said to be an odd sort of a People but this makes mee call to mind an old proverbe the Devil is not so Black as painted. Now if such a Medly Composition should come alltogether, Dont be startled. That you may not Mistake the Man He will bring a Credential From Mee. I so much persuaded my self of such an Interestt in your Friendship you'l not Look att the Man but his Mind for my sake. His Conversation I dare say you'l find compensate for his appearance He is well Versed In Nature & Can give a good Account of Her Works. He Comes to Visit your parts in serch of Curiosities In the Vegitable kingdome perhaps you'l find him more knowing in that Science then any you Have Mett With. He is Employed by a Sett of Noble Men (by my Recommendation) to Collect seeds & specimens of Rare plants, and he has been very successful in this affair which proceeds from His thorough knowledge in these Matters. Be so kind to give him a Little Entertainm't & Recommend Him to a Friend or Two of yours in the Country, for He does not Value rideing 50 or 100 Miles to see a New plant. Pray Direct Him to the Umbrella Tree, this plant or Tree will make Him think his Journey worth Comeing. I have a further Desire in his waeting on you, the Gardens of pensilvania are Well furnish'd with European Rarities possibly He may assist you with some plants that you Want & you may assist Them for I presume you have Vessills passing too & fro Often from one province to the Other.¹¹¹ His name Is John Bartram.

Your Friendship to Him will be a singular favour to your
Affectionate friend
P. Collinson

London February 20th: 1737/8

Dear Mr. Custis

As Captain Bowling is the Last ship that I can depend on for safe Conveyance I shall Trouble you further & thanke you for yours of August 28 by Captain Friend with the Box of seeds which was a Choice Cargo—and am Greatly Obliged to you for It.

I have yours of September: 20: by bowling with Box of Chinquapins I have hinted before of the Disaster that befell them by pernicious Insects. Please to Renew them another year.

Yours of October 4 by Captain Moses came safe to hand with the Box of Chinquapins which was In the same Circumstances with the Other.

But I am confounded with shame att what you Mention about sending so farr for the sweet smelling Mellon It gives Mee great uneasiness that you should take so much pains & Trouble about a thing of no Real Value but Curiosity it will make Mee Cautious what I ask for the Future, I Beg you'l Make this a Rule, that whatever I mention (for I confess I don't know what I ask) that what Ever cannot be procur'd with Little Trouble that you will Omitt It for I am not Ignorant that plants have their particular places of Growth very Wide and Distant from One another that if they are not to be Mett with in your Neighbourhood or in yours or Your sons Quarters that you will Omitt them.

I shall Bearly Mention what seeds will be Acceptable and if they can be had on the Terms above Mention please to send them if not pray Leave them.

I intend if possible to send you a few Tuberoses. I beg you'l Excuse the many repetitions, & Impertinencys In These Long Scrawls
& be assur'd of the sincere friendship
and affection of your

Real friend

P Collinson

P.S. Mr Catesby Gives His Humble service and is und'r Great Concerne for fear the Race of that Curious peach colour'd Dogwood is Lost, without you have One in you'r Garden. He says most of them that He had Transplanted from the Mother Tree Into Mr Jones Garden was Destroyed by Fire,¹¹² but He Thinks One or Two was saved & He brought and planted In your Garden. There is many flowers when In Decaye in particular the White thorn with us will Turn Redish but He says this open'd of a Red Colour att First.

Pray have you never Observed a sumach that produced Tufts of a Very Bright scarlet most Lovely to Look on,¹¹³ I see this year seeds or Tufts of such an One, sent Here by Mr. John Clayton of Gloucester County.¹¹⁴

These if Easie to be had will be acceptable Black Haws¹¹⁵
 Toothach Tree
 Fringe Tree
 Sarsifrax
 Umbrella
 Chinquapins

Some plants of sorrel, I believe it will be Late this year to Remove them so please to Defer till Next. The seed of a plant with a pretty Lemon Colour'd flower Is what the Botanists Call anagra, Wee in common Call It Virginia Tree primerose from its growing high the flowers In smell & something In figure resemble the prime Rose.¹¹⁶

What the Wild Larkspur is I Long to know, pray send some more seed Least this should fail.

Pray have you 2 sorts of Passion flower because the seed Is in Two parcells, how are they Destinguish'd.

From verso of page 81, page 82, and verso of page 82 of letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be before July 18, 1738.

1738

Dear Sr

Yrs of the 5 of Decemb 24 of Decem and 20 of Jany [20 of Feb.?] are now before me; I observe what you so kindly say of Capt Friend and am persuaded he deserves the best of characters in his way; I would willingly oblige both you and him in makeing a consignmt to Mr. Hanberry who is an utter stranger to me; but I believe when you hear my reasons; you will pardon my not complying with your request; Mr. Cary has allways treated me with the greatest respect and best of usage; and I should be guilty of one of the greatest offences (viz) ingratitude; if I should alter my consignmts; besides it will bee much to my prejudice to send tob: to a man I have not a penny in his hands; to clear my tob: and being allowd the discounts which is very considerable; it has ever bin my principle to bee stedfast to my old friends, and was never fond of new faces. If by any means I should alter my consignmt at any time; Mr. Hanbury out of respect to you should bee the man; so beg you will not take it amiss at present; you were pleasd to hint that Capt Friend would bee the first ship but Mr. Cary had a ship some time arrived here before Friend came out of England; I think Mr Carys ship arrived early in Novembr or sooner; and wish you and I had the good fortune to have had your kind

present come by her, which would have bin the best time that could happen. Friend did not arrive here till Aprill and was some time in the country before he could send up my garden cargo; which turnd out very poorly; the Chily and hautboy strawberrys rotten as dung; would not have you give yourself any more trouble to send more; for it is but a folly; I should bee glad if you could send me some of the strawberrys and perhaps the seeds might come up the bulbous roots were most of them sound except the double tulips; lilly of the valley and some of the crown imperialls all rotten, and some others; that I could not make what they were; the double yellow rose dead which I was very sorry for and severall other trees; the strawberry tree was the freshest and the silver holly; the gold holly dead to the graft; the double blossom peach cluster cherry were also but very sickly; the striped box alive and persian lilack; I put them all in the ground with the [case ?]; and made a shade over them; but cannot tell whit[he]r I shall save them or not; please to give me leave to say that I am persuaded the ill time of year I recd them being so long about the ship and the worst of all being put to[o] many things together in a small case was the occasion of so many of them perishing; I have had silver and gold hollys yews philereus &c come flourishing to me three feet high, the balls or standards having heads as big as a peck and the pyramids in full shape and are at this time flourishing in my garden; but these every individuall tree was put into a basket with earth and the basket and tree buried together the basket soon rotted so that the tree was never stunted in the least; and tis great odds if another method will ever do; this I speak by experience; I planted the soft shell allmonds; but am afraid the mole has eat most if not all of them and all of the other nuts; but I have half a dozen of the soft shell almonds trees above three feet high which you sent me two years ago; I am very choice of them; the seeds I sowed immediatly but as for the amaranthoides; I got a magnyfyng glass but neither I or anybody else could perceive any thing like a seed; however I sowed all together and the few seeds in a paper but none ever appeard; the fox glove thrives very well; and blossoms very full; the strawberry tree seeds I believe were unknown to the Evangelist; otherwise they never would reckon the mustard the smallest of seeds; the seeds you sent I immediatly committed to the earth but few or none have come up; except the India pinks and 2 of the stone pines and 2 of the larch tree; I am very choice of them especially the first wish I may save them have made shades over them to protect them from the violent heat of the sun; wee have had a very hot dry May which might

occasion the seeds not appearing and some may not come up the first year. I assure you I put a great value on all if it were for nothing else but coming from you. The gentleman you desired me not to be surprizd at [I] have as yet heard nothing of him; and do assure you nothing suits my humor more than down right plainness; and as for his being a Quaker will not in the least lessen my esteem of him;¹¹⁷ I have allways bin a friend to that persuasion and think them a quiet, zealous, intelligible good natured people; I mean the sensible part of them and if the gentleman comes where I have to do shall show him the greatest respect for your sake and assist him in his errand as much as in me lies; shall answer your obligeing letter by Bolling who has not bin long arrived after a tedious passage and shall send you by Friend all that is in my power to procure and let me intreat you not so much as to dream that I shall ever think anything a trouble that I can by any means oblige you in; I have at last got some seeds of the sweet smelling Mellon and have planted some which are come up well; I hope to raise some for you but in the mean time have sent you part of the seeds I got from a gentleman's quarter a good distance from me.¹¹⁸

From verso of page 82, page 83, and verso of page 83 of letter-book. No date of year or month indicated, but placed here because it follows the preceding, dated 1738, in the Custis letter-book. Believed to be July 18, 1738.

[1738]

[To] Collinson

Dear Sr

I writ fully to you by Capt [Seabrook ?] and answered the favor of all yours I have recd; since which I have recd yrs; by Capt Bolling: I am sorry the chincopins were destroyd by insects; the reason I take to be this: I was obliged to beat off[f] the bushes when they part or [when the] shock was scarce open and the greeness of them made those maggots breed in them; they should have dropt off[f] themselves but the opportunity would not stay so long; what I formerly sent were in that condition; and so got safe to you; it is difficult to get an opportunity in the late season which is late in 7br; I will send you more if I can have an opportunity when they are ripe; it is A folly to send them otherwise and I doubt I shall not be able to keep them till the next shipping; as for the peach colord Dogwood Mr Catesby mentions; I had two in my garden but they never bloomd; I sent them to you by Capt Cant with some

other trees; but it was his hard fate and ours to have the ship overset the voyage; and so lost all; I have not only made diligent search myself but I have enquired of all our woods men and offerd a reward but could never see any myself nor could any of those people that often range the woods; they are all of the same opinion as I am that it is the common dogwood in decay which makes them look reddish; I heartily wish I could get any such thing; the sumach does not come to maturity till late in the year; I will save some and send you if I can preserve them. There are 2 sorts of passion flower but there is but a small difference;¹¹⁹ the sorrell trees grows commonly single; and in moist poor ground; the next fall or spring I will get some young ones if possible and plant them as directed; some in a tub; and some in my garden; and if I can raise them up will surely send you some; the globe [thistle ?] blowd very well and shot up 4 and five foot high; it is an out of the way plant but our excessive dry season made them perish before the seed I doubt came to maturity; it was excessive dry last summer but not to compare to this; wee had no rain in many places to wet the earth from the first of May to the latter end of June. All the acceptable seeds you sent me never came up except a very few which came to nothing notwithstanding I kept 3 strong Nigros continually filling large tubs of water and put them in the sun and waterd plentifully every night, made shades and arbors all over the garden allmost; but abundance of things perishd; notwithstanding all the care and trouble, so that my garden is very much impaired. I had 3 or 4 of the stone pines come up but all that I could do could not save them; the very air was so excessive hot and dry that it [coddled ?] everything; our poor country grows more unseasonable yearly; the feed was so burnt up that our cattle were ready to perish in many places; as for the possum it was a very great curiosity; the 6 young ones and old ones were very well when they went from me and might have bin easily kept so, it being a very hardy creature, but I suppose being confined made it somewhat nasty and by that means the poor thing was neglected and perishd. It is very rare to find them with their young on the teatt. I think it is the greatest miracle one of them in nature the false belly is w[h]ere the youngs are put to having no seeming communication with the belly that receives the food;¹²⁰ and I believe it is past the skill of the greatest naturalist to account for it; their natural food is persimmons; indian corn when they can get it; they are great enemys to our corn fields; hen roosts; they love poultry any [kind of] guts or any sort of fresh meat; apples or allmost any [fruit?], any thing so that considering

the naturall hardiness of [torn] them they might be very easily kept but are a nasty creature when confined and are great night walkers; they generally sleep all day and ramble about all night to get their food; they are generally very fat and very delicious food roasted very much like A fat roasted pig. Have sent you some seeds; severall got last fall; the sweet gum and poplar sent you were I find gatherd before they came to perfection; those now sent are full ripe

London: December: 26th 1738

Dear Mr. Custis

I am greatly Indebted to you for your several Obligeing Marks of your Esteeme & Friendship I shall begin paying due Honour to them in Course.

What you are pleased to Observe on the Affair that I hinted is so very Just & reasonable as will not admitt of the least Reply.¹²¹ The Great regard that you pay to those Noble Sentiments of Honour & Gratitude, cannot be Enough admired & commended. I must beg leave to add, happy is the Man who has such a Friend, who will not forsake Him and can Distinguish Merrit & reward It as It Deserves.

I was in great Hopes the Vegitable Cargo would have Come better to hand, as the Trees had stood a whole year In the Case and was Rooted. To be sure the Ships going out so Late is one great Cause. Mr. Careys ship I did not heare of, and then Captain Friend told Mee he should go soone which happened otherwise & prevented my Looking further. If some does but survive I shall be Glad. I Intend to Look out Next Autumn if Mr Carey has a ship goes, Early, for to send them by strangers will I believe be to Little purpose.

Basketts are Certainly best for a Mid Winter passage Because att that Time little Watring is Required—but then it must be In Large ships where there is Roome to Stow them. But my good Friend you have forgot to Tell Mee (those plants that came So well) Was they uppon Deck or between Decks, and how was they protected from or against the sea Air & Water. This if you'l please to do soone it may come Time enough to Regulate my Next Cargo.

I am glad to Heare you have the soft shell Almond; if it is Right you may perceive a Difference between the Verdure of this and the Hard shell, they Grow well Here but do not Beare. It is very odd that the Amaranthoides Should not come up Even those few in the paper which

I picked out of the Rest of the seed that came with It and is the very same seed from whence I raised this year a great Many. But since it will not keep from England I hope if J. Bartram has been to wait on you, He if Desired will send some from Pensilvania, where I am informed they have it In plenty. I was In hopes to have heard that the Arbutus seed was come up, from the same seed Thousands & Tenn Thousands has been Raised this Year. There is many other seeds much smaller then this, but as I observed before, the Jews was but poor Naturalists, (Moses & Solomon Excepted)—and spoke of things within the sphere of their own Knowledge.

Your very Dry May must certainly be a great Detriment to Our seeds, Coming up which require frequent shores of Rain to plump the seed for Vegetation.

Your Intended Kindness to J. Bartram on my accountt is an Act of Real Fr'ship, which I hope ever to retain a gratefull sence off, and the disintressed regard, you profess, to all Men of probity & Ingenuity argues a Brave & Generous soul, truly becomeing a Xtian. We may with as much reason quarrel about our Different complections & Features as about the Various Casts of Our Minds, the Divine principle Wee profess if strictly regarded, will Lead Us practice all those aimable Quallitys You are pleased to Esteeme us for. I hope it may not be unseasonable if I attempt to Cultivate this good understanding by makeing my Dear Friend a present of a Book;¹²² which may help to Sett our Way of thinking in so Clear a Light, as to be found neither Repugnant to Scripture & sound Reason. I do assure you I Intend no Convert; for I sincerely Believe, & hope that there is Honest Good Men of all persuasions, but more Conspicuous in the Church of England, then in any other society Wee Dissent From, & I hope I may say (& when you have read the Book, will find;) that Wee agree in Essentials which are the substance of Religion—and Dissent In Ceremonials which I Esteeme Matters of Indifference, Especially if by Using them a Man is not made Better:

As Wee proceed with Honest Minds and sincere Intentions to serve God according to the best of Our understanding, Do all the Good Wee can, and shun all Evil, I doubt not but Wee shall be accepted, which that it may be your Happy Lott as well as Mine, is the Earnest Wish as well as firme

Hope & Beliefe of your
Affectionate Friend

P Collinson

PS

I am Extreemly Obliged for Two Boxes of seeds which came in good Order and was very Acceptable. I am concern'd so much pains was taken to procure the sweet smelling Mellon it being Matter only of Curiosity,

I hope To have the Mulberries in Two Basketts to send by Captain Friend, as they are not out in Leafe with us till May I hope they will come In some Tolerable Order to you.

I also Desire thy Acceptance of a Box of Garden seeds, I have great promises that they are fresh & Good. If any particular sorts are wanting pray Lett Mee know. There is some Stones of Our Best Peachs & Nectarines, as You have Ground enough pray give them a sowing perhaps they may produce something Good.

Pray send somè Long Cucumber seed I shall write per Bowling.

I have sent more Arbutus seed & [?].

What Seed I planted or sow'd.¹²³

The Larch tree
Stone pine
rose colored fox glove
Spruces & silver fir
Strawberry seed
White Currants
tall coxcombs

What was last year
Arabian jessamins
Persian Lilack
[?] Hedghog holly

To send for martigons of all sorts
Striped crown imp(erial)

London January 25th 1738/9

Dear Friend

Tho I am greatly Hurryed in Business Yett I can't with Justice neglect to Acknowledge your Kind Letter of July 18th:—and hope not to forgett procureing you some seed of the Chili strawberrys. I am concern'd for the pains you have taken to procure the Red flowering Dogwood—I wish it may be in My power to oblige you as Farr.

I can truly Sympathize with you nay even feel the concern that you must be under to see Your Languishing plants, that all your pains could not Revive this has happened to Mee Here Once or Twice in my Memory. The Methodes You took was right but there is one or Two that would save you a great Deal of Watering & repells the Heat of the sun, (besides your artificial shades). For small Herbaceous plants such as polyanthus & Auriculas etc. cover the ground all over thick with green Moss only Just Leaveing a peep Hole for the Leaves of the plants this once watered after sunsett will keep Moist for several Days and preserve the plants green & Lively; and in the Dryest Weather, this Moss is to be Collected from Boggs & springs in shady Woods. For Larger plants I lay Green fern Leaves thick round the Roots, first Watering the Roots well then Lay the Fern Leaves & then water again and this will Retain & Keep the Earth moist under them for a Week or More in Hottest Weather and the more Violent the Heat the Thicker the Covering—and sometimes Moss att Bottome & Fern over it will keep the Earth Moist & plants vigorous a Long While. I know our Heat or Droughts in England are not comparable to yours Butt Yett some thing of art may assist and save the plants as well as the pains of Watering no doubt but you will Improve these Hints and the best way is to do it Early but I wish You may not have the Occation again.

I am Obliged to you for your Account of the Possum. Had I known so much before I doubt not but That, Lady Wager¹²⁴ had sent, might have been alive now Had Wee known its Food, but had yours come alive it would have been a much greater rarity haveing the Young att the Teats. As you will observe the Manner this Creature produces and supports Her young is a Miracle in Nature. I should think that with you a Male & Female might be procur'd and kept in suitable place paled in with high pales and be so Situate as to be Near Dayly Observation & Inspection and soone after Copulation be dayly Examined by some person Skilled in surgery and anatomy and if necessary be Desected and Examined, to see if there was any Ducts or Vessells Lead from the Uterus to the Teats, for it is highly probable they First received their Formation and Vivification in the Womb and in their Minutest State by proper ducts be conveyed to the Teat but all this is conjecture it may amaze and confound us, but can't satisfie us, it may help to Abase & Humble Us, when Wee look and Consider our own Formation & that the Great Wise Creator has bestowed such wonders on the Beasts of the

Field whose Natures and Formation is beyond our Search or Comprehension. I shall putt a few more seeds for You in Captain Bowlings Box—which I hope will prove Acceptable.

I shall be glad to Heare the Box of Seeds & Book & Mulberries came safe by Captain Friend. I wish the Mulberries may please for really I could not go to the Gardners to Choose them, it being 6 miles off on the River. I bid Him putt in Each Baskett with the Trees 2 Double Blossome peaches.

I have the pleasure to tell you that I have Receed your Two boxes by Bowling. The Chinquapins came Exceeding fresh & Well I dont perceive One Eaten, pray take the same Methode next year, the sand was Dry & yett sufficient to Keep them plump and Yett not so moist as to make them grow.

I thank you for the Variety of Peaches but our Climate is not so propitious as yours. What comes from us may Improve with you but that can't be Expected from yours However We Will as Foreigners treat them kindly and give them a warm soil & situation.

I sent you a print of the Great evergreen Laurel, Magnolia or Tulip Tree.

You have a smaller sort grows with You in the Swamps,¹²⁵ some Cones or seeds will be very Acceptable, and of the Umbrella Tree but pray observe if they are to be near Elce the Trouble you Take In procureing will give More Trouble then the seed can do pleasure

to your Affectionate Friend

P Collinson

I thank you for Redbud seed.

Pray some more seeds of Each sort of Passion Flower and anything Elce that can be had with Ease scarsly any thing can come amiss. Please to remember the Sorel Trees but if the Layers are not taken Root Wee must stay till next year.

Pray Remember some Long Cucumber seed of the sort I sent you mine is all Lost and possibly you may be so fortunate to Meet with the Fring Tree seed this year.

I must not forgett to thank you for the Huming bird It pleased Mee:¹²⁶ and yett I cou'd not help being concerned for its Fate—& I must now again than[k] you for the Curious Fossils that you sent Mee last year. I must tell you that I universally admire all Gods Works—and adore

his great name for Enriching this World with so many Wonders; if Below; what may Wee hope above.

I can't but think your Fox grape would make a noble Generous Wine, if you had patience to stay till it Had worn off that rancid Flavour, (whilst new).¹²⁷ It is a species of Frontignac, which for their high rank Tast please Few in Grapes:—but yett their Juice in Wine is Deservedly Admired off all.

From page 84, verso of page 84, and page 85 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month stated. Believed to be August 12, 1739.

1739

[To Collinson]

Yr friend Mr Jno Bartram has made me a visit;¹²⁸ but it was my misfortune to bee just crawld out of the grave so had not the happiness to go about with him. He stayd with me 2 nights and a day and could by no persuasions keep him longer; he is the most takeing faceitious man I have ever met with and never was so much delighted with A stranger in all my life; I have had A letter from him since he got safe home; with his kind offer to send me some dutch white currant bushes which would bee very acceptable but it is more than a hundred to one if ever he meets with an opportunity no vessells ever coming from that place hither; but I take the will for the deed; I have bin very ill all the last winter; so ill that no one expected I should ever get over it, and am affraid shall never bee perfectly well more; tho in company I put the best leg foremost, no one knows so well w[h]ere the shoe wrings as he that wears it, my good athletic constitution is destroyd; and dayly find as much alteration in me as if I were new born; had I youth of [on?] my side I might have some hopes; but am on the margin of 62 years old; and infirmities attacht to that age; affords but small glimpse of hopes; I have allways bin a regular moderate man and never was drunk in my whole life; but even all that will not do. I am incapable of manageing my concerns as usual. I have never bin free from the headach ever since last Sepr: sometimes it is intolerable, pains in my knees and sometimes all over me; the hot weather much befriends me; I expect to be housed the greatest part of the winter, with abundance of care and pains I may loiter a few years; but God only knows that to whose will I cheerfully submit; the greatest pleasure I find is in my garden, and sometimes even that is insipid; I am sorry to tell you that I cannot gratify you with some sorrell trees; I was

not able to go myself but sent my gardener early in the spring and took up severall young trees; and a few of the fringe tree; put them carefully in earth waterd and shaded them but they never made the least appearance of putting out leaves but all died; if I live till next spring will have the other tryall if I am able; I doubt it is impracticable to lay them; they grow very untoward and in very rooty ground; shall send some what I can get by Capt Friend. He came in so late that all the seeds you sent me I doubt will come to nothing. I did not get those papers of seeds by Bolling till the letter and of ma[n]y all the nuts and roots were rotten; some of the seeds I sowd and some I have kept till next spring, especially the peas and beans for which and all the rest I return you my unfeignd thanks. The strawberry vines perishd; I sowd the seeds of them and the white cedr; but nothing appears; our sun is so hot that no seeds will do unless the ship could arrive sometime in February; Mr. Cary has commonly A ship here by Christmas or soon after; Capt Dansie who commands one of his ships will take care as far as he knows and is capable of anything you entrust him with; if you please to give him directions I should bee glad to raise the silver fir; the spruce fir we have in great plenty trees and bulbous roots are the first to come to Virga seeds very seldom, but if they come up the very air is so hot that before the[y] have time to radicate they are parchd to death unless wee have a wet summer which sometimes happens; I have planted the stone pines and larch tree seeds and shaded them put them in severall positions but I doubt all in vain. The Mulberry trees came in alive and I hope will continue so; you need not trouble yourself to send me any tuberos[e] roots; I can raise them in plenty here the[y] being of a great encrease and agree with the country very well; the mischeivious mole destroyd a great many of them yet have enough still; that pernicious animall ruins almost everything wee can hardly preserve our corn fields from them, the[y] being innumerable and to[o] often make a sad havock in our gardens; I have had traps from England but never could catch any; they do not run with us in the hillocks as with you but take an unlimited ramble all over our grounds; I have raised 10 fine horse chestnut trees but the hares eat off[f] the tender tops and buds 2 years runing; I moved them in Feb: last and I never saw trees easier to bee moved in my life, not one of them in the least flagd, and this summer have made prodigious shoots. I was obliged to defend them from those mischeivious vermin by enclosing them round with boards; those are all I ever had come up; and if they do well will be enough to satisfy my curiosity; the thin sheld

allmonds thrive very well; I have a dozen trees very healthy 2 or 3 10 feet high; hope they will blossom next spring. Those that blossom plenty it is odds if our spring frosts do not nip them and destroy them but amongst the things you sent the year before last I have 9 little trees come up this spring; the[y] look like a cherry tree and I believe you call them the cluster cherry; if it bee our wild cherry you mean, wee have a plenty of them and have formerly sent you some of the stones; I never could have one of the rose seeds you sent me make the least appearance; should have bin very glad of the yellow rose; wee having none of them; I believe they are a tender thing; you sent me one bush amongst the box of trees but it was dead before I saw it; I have preservd the persian lilock; and the arabian jessamine; and that was all that lived in the box sent by Friend the last voyage but this; the strawberry tree which I thought was dead has this spring shot out a succor from its root; will use my utmost endeavor to preserve it if I can it being a great rarity; I thank you in particular for the nutmeg peach stones; I shall bee very proud if I can raise but one tree of them there being none in the country; if the mole does not destroy them expect the[y] will make their appearance next spring. I had this spring a lemon color'd crown imperiall you were kind to send me; which was lookd on as a great rarity; I have two roots of the orange color'd; if I remember right I think I have seen striped ones in England; should be glad of a root or two of them with various sorts of martigons; I had 3 red ones you sent me come up this spring; if the ship comes early they will keep dry in a small box; and so will any bulbous root; you were pleasd to tell me I forgot to inform you w[h]ere those trees were placed that came in so well in baskets indeed do not know w[h]ere but I believe in the cabbn or in the hold or the ballace, but anyw[h]ere the spray of the salt water does not come to them and if they are placed in sight they will not be forgot to have a little fresh water gave them once a week or so as occasion offers; but in the winter a little watering is required. I thank you for your kind present of the book you sent me;¹²⁹ shall keep it as long as I live in remembrance of my good friend, I have read it; the author appears to bee a man of letters and one that has read a great deal to give you my opinion of him in a few words I think him unanswerable; it pleases me not a little that the 2 boxes of seeds got to you in good order and that they were acceptable; shall never think any thing pains or trouble that will in the least oblige you; in pure respect to you have give[n] Mr Hanberry;¹³⁰ (who I understand is your particular friend) the trouble of a small consigmnt; the

gentleman is an utter stranger to me; but I depend he is a man of honor and probity otherwise you that understand mankind so well would never have listed him in your friendship; have drawn a bill to him on Mr Perry for £130: to pay the duties of my tob: it is a crop that does not interfere with that I generally send to Mr Cary; Mr Perry used to have it but I bore with indifferent usage a great while from the gent. giving me little for my tob: made me leave him off[f]; if Mr Handberrys uses me well if I live we may have greater dealings.

London January 31st: 1739 [1739/40]

Dear Friend

It on the one hand gives Mee pleasure to heare of the kind Reception J. Bartram rece'd under thy Roof.¹³¹ He was much Delighted with thy Garden which is the best Furnish'd & next John Claytons of any He Mett With—in all that Journey.¹³²

Butt on the other hand I feel a mixture of passions, concerne for your late Illness and Gladness for your Recovery. Take new Courage you[r] Temperance has laid solid Foundations, that may be shaken but not Easily Overthrown. I take It your late Illness was an Effort of Nature to Discharge & overcome some Malignitys that may have been Latent for some time—Humour Her, take Gentle Exercise Moderate Light, Easie Dyet Broths etc Refreshing Drinks Milk Morn'g & Even It warm from the Cow. If your advances are but slow they will be sure and I doubt not but you'l find a sensible renovation and by Degrees find the happy Effects of your Regular Life which will work wonderfully for your Reliefe.

I have observed Many att or near your years have had almost Bent and then run on a Long Easie Race to above fourscore. My Grandmother was a Remarkable Instance, Sir Charles Wager is another who had so severe Illness att 70 that he had Tenn blisters on Him att one Time and it is generally allow'd that to the Effects of Temperance His Recovery was principally owing that now He is as Jolly Strong & Hearty as any Man of His years and Continues strictly to Drinking Water and moderate meals.¹³³

So my Good Friend You see there is much in your favour. If you find Yourself Hippish or Low Spirited Endeavour all you can By Gentle

Exercise and a constant applycation to something Diverting to Disperse those Mists & Clouds for the Mind Effects the Body.

I am att times Intolerably afflicted with the head Ach but a Gentle Vomitt is to Mee an Instant & most Effectuall Cure.

I am very Much Obliged to you for your Case about the Sorrel Trees—I apprehend if they cannot (be) Laid down to take Root the best way wou'd be to take up a Bush of them and Lett it be planted in your Garden. There it may first take Root, then Cutt it Down to the Stumps which will make it shoot Vigorously, and these Branches may conveniently be laid down.

As you Express'd a Desire for the silver Firr, White Currants Larch Trees Yellow Rose with many other Curious plants—Mr. Hanbury happening to heare Mee Read your Letter Desired Mee to procure them for you and Indeed it was in the nick of Time for the ship was gone Down to Depford and next tide to gravesend but Luckky for us (tho otherwise for the ship) but a Contrary Wind sprung up and kept Her there 2 or 3 Days so had Just Time to gett your Cargo on Board. The plants Look'd Exceeding Well and Captain Harding had Mr Hanbury strict Charge to Carry them all the Way in the Cabbin. Being att the Right season I have great Hopes they'l come finely to hand. Now I shall proceed further to take Notice of yours of the 12 August Last. If Moles are so numerous and troublesome, I should think it would be worth somebodys while to Sett up Mole Catcher in ordinary to your province. Wee have Variety of Traps for them in England Butt patience & the spade are Mine, for In the Morning & Evening I wait till I see the Earth Move att that Instant I strike in the spade Behind Him & so Turn the Mole out, who then is Easily kill'd, many a One has Mett with its fate this way.

I am glad to heare the Horse Chesnutts grows. They are great Shooters with us and flower in a few years. To be sure the Hares Eating them has sett them back More then one would think, for they are a Tree that cannot beare the Knife or the Ax & Removeing them is a Check besides.

Perhaps if the soft shell'd Almond was grafted or Buded on some of your Wild plum stocks, may retard their Early Flowering. Here we graft or bud all on plum stocks and if these Trees was planted Close to the sides of Woods or Groves might protect them from that Quarter where the Wind that Brings the Frosts come—or if they was planted in Groves or Thicketts of Trees of their own size of Growth may do as Well. There is great Benefits rec'd from these Artificial helps and was I with you I should have Twenty projects.

The nine Little Cluster Cherry Trees are what Wee call the Cornish Cherry it is a pretty Flowering Tree and very Different from yours and is a pretty ornament to our Gardens & Wildernesses.

The persian Lilac is a sweet flowering shrub and Flowers Freely with us is but a Low plant so very ornamental in a Flower Garden.

I am glad the strawberry Tree shoots from the Bottome I think then there is no fear of its growing. It is a Beautifull Evergreen and what makes it the more admired is its Flowering & Ripe Fruite so Late in the Year. That you might not want this fine Tree I sent you another in the Last Cargo it was full of Blossomes when I saw it on board.

The Yellow Imperial is indeed a Rarity I hope as that is come up the other Bulbs sent with it will in Time show themselves. There was variety of Martigons yellow & white Asphodills and other rare flowers—however I hope to remember them over Again.

It Delight Mee Much and I must give you Joye on hearing the Two Trees with the Mulberries are alive they should be both Double Blossome peaches grafted on plum stocks. These are in my Opinion One of the most Beautifulle Flowering Trees in the World and some years bear very Good Fruite.

I take that to happen by some semy-double Blossomes—Graft or Bud this as soone as you can on peach or almond stocks on which they may Thrive better with you then on plum stocks, you'l be Delighted with it when you see it in Blossome against a Wall. I have seen its flowers neare as Large as a half Crown but in Common Larger then a shilling. I am glad to heare the Tuberoses thrives so well with you to be sure your Climate must be very natural to them being Like their own.

My Dear Friend I heartyly Thank you for the Black Haws. I wish I had a plant that bears Fruite of this Tree, the Berries are a pretty Fruite to Eat, by some are call'd Indian Sweetmeat being as I am told a Usuall present from the Indians to their Guests. The seeds was very Fresh and so was the Shomake which being so fine a Colour must make a beautifull Shew. You take great pains to Oblige Mee with Cucumber seed so much that I am ashamed of It.

I must not forgett to Acknowledge the great Mark of Friendship shown Mee in giving a Consignment to my Worthy Friend J. Hanbury whose Diligence and Industry in His Business in not to be match'd. I Doubt not but he will give you satisfaction.

I thank you for the pretty Huming Bird. Now my Dear Friend I come to thank you for yours of August 23rd—and For your acceptable present

by Captain West He very Courteously sent it Mee. The seed was very fresh & Good the Laurell seed was a Choice Cargo and in fine Order. These will Ever be Welcome to yours.

Yours of September 2nd being a further mark of your Favour with the very Valuable present it contained deserves nay requires the Thanks of us all who Love plants & Botany. The Umbrella is indeed a great Curiosity and the seed was so plump shineing & Fresh that my Heart Jump'd when I saw them haveing Never seen such a Quantity before.¹³⁴ I had 1/2 doz. seed gave Mee some Years ago and Rais'd Two Fine plants—but very few Gardens have the Curious Tree. The Ground Cherry is a pretty plant.¹³⁵ You are Exceeding kind to think of Everything, this you may be sure, not anything comes amiss to Mee from the Hysop to the Cedar.

I was Really much Concerned for the Box of Autumn Flowers for it is rare to Meet with a ship in the Summer Months to bring them—Butt I am glad to find they are come to hand but what surprises Mee Ex-tremely is that you should find no Guernsey Lillies, I trusted no body but myself in this affair. I took them out of the Ground myself I told them as they Lay & I Immediately putt them into the Box myself this can Aver Bona Fide—How they should be Houcus pocuss'd away and not the Rest is very Extriordinary.

The Great Roots are not the Narcis of Naples but an Autumn Narciss with a yellow Crocus Like flower if I remember Right as you'l find from the catalogue. You'l be pleased with it Its fine shineing Green Leaves makes a pleasant show all Winter. I hope the spring Acconite will oblige you this spring with its pretty yellow Early Flower it appears with us in December. Pray Lett Mee heare a particular acco't of the others. If you had not the Cyclamens you must be pleased with them.

I apprehend the Vigorousness of your soil & Climate is the Reason Veriagated plants recover their Native Verdure for it is a manifest Decay & sicklyness in the Original plant that Occations Veriagations so that it may be recon'd in a Comsumptiye state but your fine Country is a Meare Montpellier to their Natural Complection.¹³⁶

I find you have Extreams of Wett & Dry. Wee have att this Juncture an Extreame of Cold a sharp Frost began the 26 December and has continued Ever since till Last Week Wee had no Relaxation—but it thaw'd pretty much in the Citty but Little in the Country but now it Continues. The Thames is full of Ice and att sundry Times has been Cross'd by numbers of People & Booths on It, but the spring Tides Frequently

breakes it Into Islands of Ice & then all Retreat. This is a Trying Time to Our Gardens & south Country plants I have been Obliged to keep Constant fires In My stove & Green House by which Means I am in Hopes I shall be but a small sufferer but those that would not take the pains are quite Demolish'd the frost was so very sharp & severe—the Like has not been known since the 1715/16 or 1709.

In the Autumn if any Convenient Oppertunty I Intend to try if I cannot send you some Good kitchen garden seeds—but I wish I knew which particular sort would be most Agreeable.

I find you can't well bear Rideing then pray gett a One Horse Chair—and if you can Ride Morning & Evening Once a Day att Least.

Now my Dear friend I must take my Leave of you not knowing when there will be another Oppertuney for a few Days agon an Embargo was Laid for 3 Months—but nothing shall prevent Mee Assureing you that I am with sincere Wishes for your Health & Welfare

Your Affectionate Friend

P Collinson

From page 86, and verso of page 86 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be May 22 or May 24, 1740.

1740

[To Collinson]

My dear Friend

I recd two letters from you the one dated Oct: 12 the other Oct: 24 with an invoice of trees sent by Capt Harding;¹³⁷ had the ship come directly for York river, I believe they would all have come safe; but being obliged to go to Rappahannock with these [or their?] vile convicts it was severall weeks before I recd them;¹³⁸ and I believe the Capt being busied about the sale of these people neglected to give the trees water, the dirt being as dry as powder when they came to me which destroyd the greatest part of them viz: the gilded [in the] first [place] which I should have bin very proud of stone dead; the larch trees dead, the rose trees dead except one monthly rose, the monday rose; both of which I have great plenty; one yellow rose seemd to have life in it but have little hopes of it; the Moss province¹³⁹ and other yellow rose dead; the arbutus dead; all the honey suckles dead except the two dutch which are alive; the white currants are come of[f] the best of anything, they being in good health and currants on them; but the learnd here think them to bee red

currants, which time will discover; the Catherine peach alive which I am very proud of; the governors lady¹⁴⁰ tells me it is the finest peach in the world; I am a stranger to it; the Nuttmegs peac[h]es are alive a little above the graft but seem to bee in an ill state of health; the double blossom peach alive; should bee glad of some stones of each especially of the Catherine peach if you cannot conveniently send trees; thus I have given you a tragy comedy of the fine cargo you sent by Harding; Coll Byrd tells me their trees are all alive from which I infer he is the more lucky man; a gentleman of my acquaintance for his pleasure took A ramble to the mountains last fall and brought me his pocket full of the right horse chestnuts;¹⁴¹ and tells me the[y] grow in great plenty there; I have some very thriving trees from the Nutts you sent me; the Persian lilock you sent me t[h]rives very well; and have got some suckers from it; please to know what sort of flower it bears; and how long before it bears; I went myself into the woods this last February and found a swamp w[h]ere great plenty of sorrell trees grew and got fifty fine young trees; I have filld two large boxes and the basket you sent my trees in with them and are now in my garden in full health and glory; I design one box by Harding; the other two by two other ships and hope the enemy may not meet with all of them; I perceive you are very desirous of them; and will never cease sending them till you get some safe this war time will make our correspondence difficult.

London: February 2nd: 1740/1

Dear Friend

I am att a loss what Returns or acknowledgements to Make you for your Many Favours. Earth & Sea has been Ransack'd to furnish Mee with It's Spoils & productions I think You have left no sence Ungratified so Indefatigable & various are Your Collections, to Use the Old Phrase you have left no stone unturn'd to give Mee pleasure & Delight and Indeed you may Assure yourself of this satisfaction att least—that your pains & trouble has not been In Vain for I have had high Entertainment in makeing my Remarks and Observations on so many wonderfull productions.

With your Leave my Dear Friend, I will Take them In Order tho vastly streighten'd for Time being now In Our Greatest Hurry as you may perceive by this scrawle but I will Borrow from sleep to testifie the many Obligations I am under to you. In particular for your Favours

of May 22nd. & 24th. the First presents gives Me no pleasure tho I am glad some are Alive, I hope the Currants will prove white Elce I am Deceived. This Cruell Warr Disconcerts all Projects of sending for the present more growing plants for sometimes the ships will stay for Convoys & sometimes not, this uncertainty makes it Quite Precarious. As long as the peaches are but alive above the Graft there is no fear for your soil & Climate will soone make them shoot that you may be able to Budd or Graft from them, perhaps Layers May produce sooner for My Notion is all Trees may be Increases by Laying down their Branches—some will do It in one year others In 2-3 or more our patience Is Great to Increase a new plant. Captain Harding Had the strictest Charge from Mr. Hanbury in my Hearing that what Ever He did to take Care of your plants & Deliver them the very first Oppertunity—so I would hope he paid some Regard to his Masters Orders.

My Dear Friend—as you Desir'd I have not fail'd to send stones of Our best peaches & Nectarines all I could Collect this Last summer was sent in the Box of Garden seeds which I hope are Come safe to hand as well as the Box of Boulbous Roots by Captain Loney which if they come In tolerable Order will make you Rich for tho there may be many that you have I am persuaded there will be Many that you have not.

The Horse Chesnutts that you Mention that was Brought you by your Friend I know very well. Wee have Large Trees of them In some Curious Gardens and is undoubtedly a species of those I sent you but when they come both to Flower you'l find the Eastern, much to Exceed yours. This presumption you'l pardon in a Cockney who Lives in a Wilderness of Chimneys and yett shall pretend to tell you the Nature of Trees growing in yours. The First planters Call'd your Horse Chestnut Deers Eyes—from some similitude they Imagin'd in the Flower to them. It is one of the Finest sights in the World to see our Horse Chesnutt 50 or 60 feet high 14 or 15 feet in Girth in a pyramidical Form Cover'd all Over with Long pyramidical Clusters of Flowers which Exceed the finest Hyacinth. Some of the First Trees that was brought from France I have Measured their Girth of the Above Dimentions.

It pleases me greatly to hear that the Double Blossome Peach Flowers with you and was it on a free peach Stock the Blossomes would Improve in magnitude. Some Curious people Here have planted it against a south Wall for the sake of its Beautifull flowers and I do assure you I have seen them Little Less then half a Crown, the Blossoms being so Improved by Vertue of that situation—but I would advise you as soone as

possible to gett all our Peaches grafted or Buded on your peach stockes ours being all Buded on Mosele plum stocks which I am—¹⁴²

[This letter is apparently incomplete or a fragment.]

London March 5: 1740/1

Dear Friend

Mr Hanbury has communicated the state of your Case which I have carefully Perused¹⁴²—And do really think it a very hard one and According to the Nature & reason of things. To be sure it was never Intended that you should be Answerable for Other Debts then in Virginia & Engl'd. How farr the Lawyers without Equity & Concience will stretch the Words—all my Debts—Time may Discover. I both pitty & would help you if it lay in my power—I am really Concern'd for the Event. Take the Words Litterally they may Extend to all parts—but take them Intentially its plain to Mee they was Limited. It is really a Vexacious thing to be called to account for Matters so unreasonable in Themselves I hope providence will Favour the Justice of your Cause (Frett not yourself) but do all in your power to Assert your Rights, trusting In God who Rules the Hearts of Men that He will Influence the Jury with the Justness of your Cause so I hope you will Obtain a Verdic in your Favour.

I must beg leave to Renew Our Request for some Berries or seed of the Cassenna which grows in plenty on your Island¹⁴⁴—this Wee are the more Desirous off because this is the most northermost spott what this shrub is found growing, so more suitable for our Climate. If an oppertunity offers pray send some Chinquapin Nutts, Fringe Tree, Honey Locustt Toothach Tree, Umbrella any of these kinds will be Acceptable or any other you think well off.—Wee had good success with your Last seeds.

I here Inclose a part of a Broken sea shell a sort I have not seen perhaps if it is sent to your people on the Island they may find some of the same sort. I am greatly obliged to you for those you sent there is many that I had not before and yett my Collection was no small One but for want of marking I don't know which are those shells that was found so Deep when you was Makeing the Mill Dam.¹⁴⁵ As any thing of this kind happens in your way be so good to think on Mee—for Wee are Here confined & know but Little was it not for persons of your Curiosity & Distinction sending us foreign productions—which surprises us with wonder and Raises Adoration in Our Minds to the Great Author of them.

I shall be glad to hear the box of Bulbs & Box of seeds came safe and in good Time & prove Good—I did all I could for It. My Dear Friend I heartyly thank you for all Your Favours, not forgetting your Rich Cordial. I writt you att Large by the ship that brings all the Goods from Mr. Hanbury for his Virginia friends.

I salute you with much Love
and Respect and am your
Affectionate friend

P Collinson

From page 88, verso of page 88, and page 89 of the letter-book. No date of month. Believed to be April 20, 1741.

1741

My dear Friend

The other day looking over your kind letter wherein you so passionately wish my health, and at the same time give rules to preserve it, and encourage me to hope for a continuance of it, by my sober regular life; which in all human reason and probability might have entitld me to an easy old age; but to my great sorrow; I find the sobriety temperance and regularity; I have allways bin accustomed to little avails me; I have lain under as severe an affliction as ever poor mortall did; in latter end of 8br: last, I was taken with pains in my shoulders and knees which dayly increased an[d] a Christmas [eve or even?] my pains were from head to feet not one place clear; my feet were so full of exquis[it]e pain that I could compare it to nothing more like than a red hot awl running through them that I had not rest night or day and the use of all my limbs taken from me with the excessive pains that for some months I could stir nothing but my eyes; was carried to bed and taken up like a child and could not turn myself or any ways help myself; I broke out all over me with large dry red firy ring worms which itchd intolerably and very sore which I believe saved my life; in this condition lay confined till March; all the doctors wee have could make nothing of my ailment; and I believe if all the doctors in the universe had bin with me it would have puzzled them all, and what was most surprizing all the while in perfect health otherwise and had a voracious appetite; but often such pains in my jaws and teeth that I could not eat anything but such something that was liquid everybody that saw me did not think I could live many days. I thank God my pains are tolerable easy but doubt [but that] I shall bee a

cripple all the days of my life which has bin a very great burden to me and have often wishd for death; it would bee more tedious than allready, to tell you half what I labord under. I recd yrs of Sepr: 25 and yrs 1 ult: as for Capt Lony he is a sorry fellow and has used both you and me very basely; he arrived as I think in Novm: when I recd yours I writ to him to send the box of bulbs and am sure he had my letter but took no notice of it; and notwithstanding his promise to you to send the box to some convenient place I never got it till the last of February; and then by a mere accident not at all owing to him a friend of mine going on board his ship found the box, directed to me, and brought it me otherwise it might have lain there till this time. When I had the box open did expect all was destroyd but it proved better than I expected, the roots were very much withered all but the 21 early tulips; and crown imperiall the ranunculus and [syringa?] quite rotten. I had them immediately put in the ground; the tulips are come up and the crown imperiall, the root not yet made any appearance and I doubt never will; if ever you send me any thing if you cannot send it in a ship that goes immediately to York river; or to James river convenient, but to bee put on shore at Coll Burwells,¹⁴⁶ the Naval officer,¹⁴⁷ I shall get them safe; but to Rappahannock [river] they will come as soon to me from Jamaica; therefore my good friend if neither of these ports suits your conveniency do not send at all; for you will only loose your labor and disappoint and fret me; Capt Dansy told me he offerd his service to you to bring me anything;¹⁴⁸ he or any of Mr. Carys Masters will be glad to oblige me; indeed at present I have little taste for anything my garden is the chiefest pleasure I have besides reading which if I did not delight in should have run mad. Wee have had the most severe winter that ever was known in the Memory of man which has done great spoil to everything; severall people froze to death; severall vessells lost, cut to pieces with the ice and sunk with their ladeing; a bristoll ship at the head of James river carried with the ice and excessive high tides cross a great tree and broke her back; great numbers of cattle and sheep perishd with extreme cold and hunger; the very trees killd, the peach trees which are very hardy abundance killd; it has made dreadfull havock in my garden, most all my Philereas quite destroyd, nay even the yoppon or Cassena trees, notwithstanding; natives of the country came off[f] but poorly; cedars and yews and Hollys stood it; if I were a young man I would never plant any trees that would not endure our winters because I would not make myself uneasy for the loss of them. If it should suit your conveniency I

should be glad of some gilded firs and larch trees which are natives (as I take it) of the Alps and must needs endure our winters if anything will; Capt Dansy [will] take care of them; but do not put yourself to any trouble about them or anything else for it is ods if I live to enjoy them; but w[h]ilst I do live would amuse myself a little with my garden; I planted the peach stone you sent me but should be glad to know what sorts they are; the two Nutmeg peach trees and the Katherine peach you sent me have stood the winter under a warm wall this spring put out some blossoms which I am very proud of; I am glad the sorrell trees by Harding got safe to you and hope those by Bolling and Friend with the other things got safe; I shall send you what you desire if I am well enough to get them towards the fall which is the season to; have sent you some candle myrtill berrys¹⁴⁹ and cassena berrys; I recd the box of seeds by Capt Harding for which please to accept my gratefull acknowledgment; the drassenis lookt the best of any thing in the box; and think if Lony had let me have them on time all would have come well; I see no sign of their coming up; thus my dear friend have I tired your patience with this long scrawl which has taken me severall days in writing my hands being so weak that I cannot write much at a time; but in all sorts of conditions whilst I have breath shall take leave to assure you that I am

Yr sincere hearty friend

J. C.

From page 93, and verso of page 93, of the letter-book. No date of month.
Believed to be after letter of April 20, 1741.

1741 P C

My Dear Friend

I answered all yours by Capt. Dansie and by him sent you a box of seeds and berrys, this [owns?] the receipt of yrs March the 5 1740/41 Know not by what conveyance it came, I thank you for the concern you seem to have of my troublesome law suit wch has been depending 24 years it has cost me a great deal of mony and a great deal more I expect it will it has bin for tryall several times and then some of the parties have died wch abated the suit; I am sued in chancery So that a jury has nothing to do in the matter, but it lies all in the Judges breast, one Charles Dunbar Surveyor General of the Leeward Islands now prosecutes me as executor of Thomas Dunbar who married the naturall daughter of Generall Parke pretends it is in behalf of Tho Dunbar's children but it is in reality to [secure?] a debt of his own; it is a horrid

scene of villany from beginning to the end, it will be finisht in England before the King and Council by way of appeal whoever gets [?] here, my antagonist seems to despair of overcoming me here but is cock sure of getting the court in England right or rong; by his great interest he pretends to have with some great men but sure there is justice in England as well as Virga and if I can but have that I think I cannot be much hurt as to such an unreasonable demand. I am not in A state of health to bear fretting and shall endeavor to take your friendly advice as to th[a]t and depend all on providence I am so [crazy?] that I never expect to live to see the end of it Chancery lawsuits are not determined in a hurry—though the suit is carried on as fast as the rules of law will permit; I hope providence will protect my son when I am gone to my long silence I shall send you what you desire if in my power when the season permits as to the shells in the small box I sent you severall of the same species only very large I take it to bee a sea snail but shall endeavor to get some as like those sent as I can I cannot readily call to mind what shells came out of the mill dam but I am sure all the large scallup shells I got at the foot of a bank 30 or 40 feet from the surface I told you the fate of the box of bulbs by Dansie and how they came to be all rotten

From page 94, and verso of page 94, of the Custis letter-book. No date of month. Believed in the summer of 1741, certainly after April 20.

1741 [to] P C

Dear Friend

I just now recd yrs of Feb: 2d [1740/41] which Capt Whiting never sent me before. I shall send Doct Mitchell his paper parcell by the first safe opportunity;¹⁵⁰ I have my hearts desire when you tell me what I have sent you is acceptable and if it were in my power would ransack the universe to gratify and oblige my dear friend; the currant trees prove white and are now very full of fruit; the Nutmeg peach trees and Katharine thrive very well and had severall peaches on them but the[y] dropt off[f], I believe by reason of the dry weather, the peach stones never came [?] up I very believe Capt Harding had strict orders from his Master to take care of the plants sent; but not only he but most if not all the Masters take little notice of such orders when they are out of sight; as for difference between our horse chestnuts and yours, I cannot expect to live to see the difference, but believe it as much as if I did, when I have it from a gentleman of your nice observation; I confess your charming

description of the trees and flowers raises great desire in me but they soon whither [i.e., wither], when I am obliged to say with that great man—tis all vanity, having no hopes of ever gratifying my senses at this time a day but am like an old coachman tho I cannot drive love to hear the smack of the whip; if I live I shall follow your advice in grafting the double blossom peach and the other on our peach stocks; the persian lilock was full of flowers this Aprill of a very odoriferous smell and pretty small flowers, I am glad the sorrell trees came in good order which I believe has pretty well supplyd you; my affairs would call me to my Islands and eastern plantations; but my afflictions are so severe that I never expect to see them more, but will give the most effectuall orders I can to get you what you desire; he that would have his work done let him send his man but he that will have it well done must go himself if he can, thus my dear friend have I answered your obligeing letter by Whiting just recd my hands are so very weak and full of pain that I can hardly scribble this.

London: October: 20 1741

My Dear Friend

No one can Read yours of the 20th of April 1741 and not be sensibly Effected but more Especially a Friend must as it were feel a share of your anxiety. Indeed I could not read your pathetic Relation which is so Movingly Express'd without a real sympathie & Compassion rising in my Breast how I might contribute to your Reliefe yett it was some Consolation that you feel some abatement of It's severities but to prevent a Return.

I read your Deplorable Case to a very Learned Physician & my Intimate Friend.¹⁶¹ He said he never mett with the Like to such a Degree but He was very sure He could Advise to something that would do you good. I Desir'd Him to do It & recommeds it as a Medicine very safe & proper for you to take. I here Inclose It with his Directions—I hope a Blessing may attend It.

It is his Opinion your attack was something of a Goutty Humour which Invaded every part which was owing to your sober Regular Life—this you'l say is very hard—Butt if you had been Intemperate, Irregular, it would of course have Weaken'd some part and there your Disorder would naturally have found Vent—but you was all alike proof so no

weak side so your whole Man was Invaded—but I am not without hopes it may turn to your Benefit in the End.

If you find Advantage by the Medecine send to Mee for More and send an account of any particular syptoms & your Age & then my Friend can Judge Better what is proper for you.

I am sorry Captain Lony was so unkind as to Detain the Box of Bulbs. What did not Appear this year I doubt not but will next for I have often found that Roots that are Detained out of season will not come up that year they are planted but will the Next. There was great Variety in the Box and if had been Deliver'd In Time wou'd have given you some pleasure.

I perceive that after the Cold had made sad Havock In our Gardens It took a Tripp over & Visitted you but Its Effects in your southern Latitude is very surpriseing. I Lost a great Number of Rare plants your Americans stood it out better then Asians or Africans—but yett my Inclination does not flagg neither do I vex, I Endeavour to remedy & procure More. Among the Loss of some Hundreds of Roots & Rare plants none I was so unwilling to Loose as a fine sarsifrax that I had about 12 foot high that flowers annually & florish'd finely—this I think was the only American I lost—but what cannot be Curd must be Endured. I am glad the Nutmeg & Katherine peaches stand It but I would Advise to Bud or Graft or make Layers of them as soone as you Can for they are on Musele plum stocks which I recon will not Endure so well with you (where Vegetation is Stronger) than with us. The sorrel Trees thrive well are pretty Curiosities—but the greatest is the Beautifull plant call'd an Ivy which you formerly sent Mee. This Flowers Annually but I Really think Exceeds the Laurus Tinus—tho it must be allow'd that the Latters flowering all the Winter gives it in that point the preheminece. I am Extreemly Obliged to You for the Box of seeds, they came in good Order. The Umbrella, Toothach Tree, swamp flowering Bay are all Valuable plants & the Cassenna. Please to Renew them again next season & if you can Add some Cypress Cones. The Two Linnen Baggs with seeds all Came safe & good for which Wee are under great Obligations & can make but poor Returns—for this Cruel Warr has putt all things out of Course for almost all shipp take Freights to Gibraltar, Port Mahon¹⁶² & the West Indies which make the Voyages Long & unseasonable that I can't hear of any oppertunity to send you the plants I Intended. Mr. Norton who knows you Well tho Quite a stranger to Mee Is so good to promise to take this Box of seeds but as

the Ship is greatly thronged with goods & all that belongs to her quite strangers to Mee there was no Oppertunity of sending plants.¹⁵³ I have consulted my Friend Hanbury his ships dont go till spring & then It will be to Late. Mr. Carys ship he says has taken Freight to some place out of the Way so that att present I see no prospect of sending anything with a prospect of success.

The first Leisure I shall answer your Two very kind Letters of May 20th.

Gett on Horse back as soone as you Can—but I think an Easie One Horse Chair would be fitter for you. Take Care of Catching Cold.

I shall Rejoice In the recovery of your Health and with True Esteeme
Your Affectionate Friend

P. Collinson

If you have the Bush squash that does not run & Ramble is in your Neighbourhood pray send Mee some seed or any other good Eating squash I much Admire them with Roast Meat. There is a species of Indian Corn or Maize that Ripens sooner then the Great common Maize, it is called Rair Ripe or Early Ripe Indian Corn,¹⁵⁴ this is fittest for Our Cultivation where our summer is short. If such grows with you pray send Mee 2 or 3 Ears and a few seeds of the Little pear or snuffbox Gourd.

I am afraid the Kathrine peach fruite Dropt off more from the Effect of the stock (then the Weather).

Wee have had such a Wonderfull Warm summer which has Ripen'd seeds to perfection so that I Doubt not but the Amaranthoides will afford Good seed for I can feel it plain. It is a Charming flower and Gather'd full ripe & hung up in the Shade will keep its Colour many Years.

From verso of page 94, page 95, verso of page 95, page 96, and verso of page 96 of the Custis letter-book. No date of month stated. Believed to be May 2, 1742. The last letter to Collinson in the letter-book.

1742

Dear Friend

Yrs of 8br 1741 I recd with a phiall of Tincture for my ailmt. I take it to bee Wilsons reumatick Tincture; and a good medicine it is for when designed well; know there is some volotill spirit in it; which I think is sal volatile; first I must allways acknowledge your dear and tender care of me; and most heartily thank you for your superlative goodness in con-

sulting an able Phisi[c]ian, but with submission to him he has quite mistook my case; which is no wonder; it is as impossible for the more learned experienced Phisi[c]ian truly to take a case by information, without seeing the patient, asking him proper questions, and hearing his answers; as it is for the most expert limner truly to paint a face without seeing the original; I have diligently studied Physick more than 40 years,¹⁵⁵ have had a large experience having not less than 200 young and old in my severall familys; which I dayly assist and all poor people that have not mony to employ a doctor, this has bin my constant practice a great many years, so that I must know something of the matter; my attack was nothing of a gouty humor; nor no resemblance to it; it is a Nigro distemper endemiall to Africk and other places w[h]ere Nigros come to us from. Some years ago I bought a quantity of Nigros of a ship who had this distemper on them; and gave it to more than 50 of my slaves,¹⁵⁶ severall have it at this time; the very same symptoms as I have; and believe I got it endeavoring to cure them; and geting cold setting on a tedious Assembly in very severe weather;¹⁵⁷ those that are young get over it; but holds them 2 or 3 years first. Those that are old are so crippled that they can only make a shift to hobble along; it kills no one and what is strange in perfect health [any ?] [there ?] were when the pains are most severe; I thank God I am in good health; but expect to bee a cripple the remainder of my days, being in August next 64 years old;¹⁵⁸ I dayly ride to my near q[uarte]rs which are 3 or 4 miles out of Town, when weather permits; but can not get on or off[] my horse, without some assistance; my horse is very gentle and will come to a block or chair, and so I get up; and when up can ride as well as ever I could; I take rideing on horseback to bee far better than in a chair; because it graduall[y] jogs and shakes the whole machine; what is my greatest comfort; I now can make a shift to walk about with a cane; when all last year I could not stir; but my feet have a continuall burning pain in the bottoms; especially when I sit still my chiefest pains are in my sholders and elbows; my hands are very weak but not very painfull; I find in rainy cold weather my pains are very severe; and in fair warm weather tolerable; I broke out about a month ago in small red spots like the measles; they were not very sore but itchd; and now if I press any part of me hard against anything, even a pillow I feel something immediately prick the part as if I had 1000 pins and needles in it; but it is but momentary; the very first day I recd the Tincture which was 26 of March that night I took it according to directions; but found no manner of effect it had;

and continually take it as directed but it has no manner of effect on me, save I am thirsty in a morning; if you will please to give me leave, I will give you a description of the first attack and the severall stages of this grievous distemper Its first attack is bumps all over the body which itch prodigiously; [?] continues for some time; then these bumps break and run into [sores ?] all over lik[e] a galld horse back, that they could neither sit, ly or stand without a deal of misery, this holds them some a year or 2 some more with grievous pains all over them but more particularly the joynts; I have seen little sucking children have it to such a degree that the blood has run out of their mouths as they sucked; I have seen the private parts so affected that they would drop off[f]; I have tryd all manner of things I could think of for their relief and found no cure all [but] purges the best, but that would often bee only pallative, and when the sores were all heald they would have dreadfull pains for 1, 2, and 3 years; those that are young get well, those that are old, if they get tolerably well are cripples. I never knew any die of it; I knew a young man that had it to such a degree that for some years he was bed rid and would cry out so with the intollerable pains that you might hear him a great distance; and a woman that came from England had some mountain flax and gave him 2 purges of it;¹⁵⁹ which has quite cured him and is as well as ever he was in his life and has bin so for more than a year; I have sent to you for some of the herb; which by God's leave I will take when I get it; and some of the seed to propagate; I am told it is common and cheap with you as penny royall. As for the bulbous roots [Captain] Lony detain'd so long, seeing no appearance I search for them and found them rotten; I do not doubt; but if they had made their appearance; they would have afforded me great pleasure; the severe; hard frost this winter has made dreadfull havock in my garden especially amongst my ever greens; I had very fine yews balls and pyramids which were establish'd for more than 20 years; and flourish'd and were very fine the south side of most of them are as it were burnt up and killd; the north east and west sides green and flourishing; which I doubt has forever spoyld the trees; I cannot account for the Philosophy of it, being according to my way of thinking contrary to reason; I am a great lover of all sorts of fine flowers; but they, like all delightfull things; are very short lived; now fine trees are not only very entertaining but permanent; so I think are to bee preferd and all variegated trees and plants most hit my phancy; I am sorry you have had such a loss amongst your exotick plants and trees, but what raises my admiration [i.e., wonder] is the loss of the sassafra

you mention;¹⁶⁰ which is reckond here the most hardy tree wee have and the young ones that over run our corn fields are hardly destroyd by fire; have sent you more seeds of that tree, such losses very much offset me and could wish I were master of part of your philosophick temper, in not being moved with such accidents; the two nutmeg peach trees you sent blow finely this year; the Katherine peach tree did not blow at all, but is full of green leaves, I raisd six grafts of the Katherine peach last year grafted the latter end of February on our common peach stocks, and to my great surprise in one summer some of them grew 9 feet high and big in proportion; the Nutmeg [peach] grafted at the same time did not shoot 2 feet and the Katherine grows more in a month than the Nutmeg in 4; I have this spring grafted a great many and gave my friends some; so that they are likely to bee very plenty with us; I never see nothing agree with the country so well; how they may bear, time must discover. The crown imperials according to custom came up very strong this spring and seemd to bee fine flourishing plants but never flowered which I cannot give a reason for; my allmond trees blow so early that the frosts allways, [blighd ?] them; I am glad to hear the sorrill trees and ivy thrive well with you. I have renewd those seeds you desired, the umbrella trees last year bore no seeds; have sent some fine seeds of the fringe tree, my son last spring by my orders rambling amongst the swamps and low grounds came across some fringe trees on my own grounds fully blowd, and got me a good quantity of the seeds; I send you half those and of every thing else; the other half shall send by another opportunity for fear; they should go to St. Sebastian;¹⁶¹ but I doubt [but that] all will come to[o] late to commit to the ground this year; the War is a great obstruction to send such things; especially trees and plants which I am most fond of; I recd the box of seeds in good order committed to one Mr. Norton's care; I admire [i.e., wonder] he should tell you he was acquainted with me; I never saw or heard of the man in my life. When I found by your letter that there was such a box I sent to Mr. Norton but never had any answer from him; some of my Neighbors had goods in the ship; and was on board for them and the mate gave the box to them, I suppose by Nortons order; but if you send any thing into York River I shall allways bee sure to have it in time; Yorktown is but 12 miles from Williamsburgh so that I can easily send for any thing in a days time; if they neglect sending it to me; in any other of the rivers it is quite otherwise; so that if it bee possible allways send to York river. I am acquainted with most of the York river Capts:

that are in the trade. I committed all your seeds to the ground as soon as I recd them last spring. I had the good fortune to have one only seed come up of the Amaranthoides; it shot out into a multitude of branches and bore more than 100 [?] flower; came out daily till the frost stopt them; I esteem it one of the prettyest things I ever saw; have sowed some of the seeds of my own saving and all which you sent; I am now to answer yours without a date by Capt Newam [Newham?]. You caution me not to spend my spirits by writing such long letters; if it gratifys you in the least; I cannot spend my spirits or time better; I am severall days awriting so that I do not write so long at a time anyways to injure myself; I recd A parcell of seeds in your letter by Newam [Newham?] which I immediately committed to the ground; as for my long lawsuit Dunbar prosecutes me with all the malice and vigor imaginable; but as wee have but 2 generall courts a year; it can go on but slowly, but they intend if possible to bring it to a hearing here next Oct: or Aprill; and from hence it will bee carried to England by way of appeal; which cannot come before the House of Lords as you imagine; all appeals from hence are referd to the King and Councill and happy is he that can prevail with his friends amongst them to attend at the tryall;¹⁶² any of the Councill that pleases may attend the tryall or not as they think fit; Dunbar depends upon his Scotch interest; I have no acquaintance amongst those honorable gentlemen; and as my cause is A very just one depend on providence and their honor to right me; if you or Mr. Hanberry has any acquaintance or interest amongst the Councill I no ways doubt but you will do the best you can for me in intercedeing with them to attend the tryall; Sir Charles Wager is one, my lord Islay another, the Chancellor for the time being; but you will know them all by enquiry; my case will be fully drawn up and sent to Mr. Handberry and Cary; who I must desire to act for me; no ways doubt your assistance; as for the shells dug out of the mill dam and well the places are at least 50 miles from the sea; which is marvellous, I shall endeavor to get a swallows nest¹⁶³ etc. Everybody destroys them with fire and smoke at the first coming into the chimneys, they scratch and pick off[f] all the projecting mortar which dammages the chimneys.

London Feby. 6: 1742/3

My Dear Friend

I am under Great Obligations to you for yours of May 2nd but the Reading Effects Mee more than I can Express as well on your Account as

on the sad state of Humane Nature that is Liable to one of the Greatest Ravages that Ever was poured out from Pandora's Box. Your Pathetick Discription of the Rise & progress of this Terrible Disorder Exceeds all Imagination and my Doctor sayes is what He never Mett with in all his Reading. It is happy for Us Here that Wee know it only by Heare saye. I truly sympathize with you but by your Philosophy & your skill I see you will Triumph over this Worst of Bodyly Evills. The Course you Observe no doubt will Contribute to this End. Gentle Exercise & a proper Regimen with a Little Physick may work this Wonder and att Last give you the Victory.

I would never have Imagined but by your Information that In your Latitude you should have such severe Weather as to make such Havock amongst Hardy Vegetables. I take the Reason that your Yews are so kill'd to the south may be owing to Two Causes—if they are Clip'd in the summer, they will then make some small Tender shoots in the Autumn and if a severe Winter follows it certainly kills them for this Reason I never Clip my Yews till Michaellmas, Holleys, Bays & Laurus Tinus I never Clip till March or Aprill for the same Reason & then I dont Love to see their Leaves cutt & snip'd too peices Dureing the Autumn & Winter I think it has a bad Effect. The other reason for the Yews killed on the south side may be from a strong Warm sun a Days which Enlarges the Vessills & rarifies the sap & then a sudden sharp frost Immediately following att once splits the Vessells and Condenses the Juices & of Consequence kills the parts Effectted. This I take to be the Real Cause for the Tree to all other points, was safe & secure. If the Trees should not come out regular Again the best Way is to Cutt them in All Round in March or Aprill & they will shoot out all round New & fresh shoots, my Trees was grown very Large in their Diameters that I was Obliged to serve them all so, and in a year [or ?] 2 or 3 they was in fine order again.

My sarsifrax is finely shot up from the Roots, but I thank you for the berries they was fine and Fresh. I am pleased to hear of your success with the Peaches. It is not to be admired that the Nutmegs should not shoot with the Kathrine the first being a Meere Dwarfe by its shooting Leaves & small fruit whereas the Other one of the freest Growers & Largest Fruit We have. I have a great Notion if almond Trees was planted to the North Behind Trees or Buildings & kept from the Warm spring sun as much as possible it would prevent their Comeing out so soone and of Consequence being Later they would be farther removed

from the frosts & niping Winds and to be more likely to bear. If they Wass grafted on your Wild plum stocks this might retard them or planted on a Cold Clay soil behind Ever Green Trees but be sure not to be Driped on. Some of these means might help keep them back & Crown Imperials may succed better with the same Treatment.

You are Extreemly Good & kind in renewing our Cargo of seeds Indeed Wee are greatly beholden to you for such Rare sorts as the Fringe & pelltory. In the first Cargo the Mice had found a way into the Box and Eat up all the Last and touch'd Nothing Elce. This pretty Tree has More Enemies then One, for Our snails if once tasted of It are sure to kill It before they have done notwithstanding all My Care both by keeping them in potts & Ground in open places—they have Eat all Up, & I had Fine plants; These things my Dear Friend are Necessary to Exercise Our patience and to abate our too Earnest Desires after the Creatures, which no Doubt are Excellent in their places. I had Two fine Umbrella Trees raised from seed, and in fine Order a Mischevius Earwig in one Night scoop'd out the Eye of their buds & they never shot again, I had Rather have lost Two Guineas. My Great Consolation on these Occasions is that there is more of the species and that it is not Quite as anihilated by such accidents I please myself that some time or Other I shall have them again & the More the Mind is Exercised with Disappointments the abler it is to Endure them with patience & Resignation.

Captain West was Extreemly Obligeing in sending mee the box of seeds. I am much Delighted to heare you have your amaranthoides It is a Real & I may say perpetual Beauty. If the flowers are gather'd in perfection and hung up with their Heads Downwards in a Dry shady Room, they will keep thear Colours for years and will make a pleasant Ornament to Adorn the Windows of your parlor or study all the Winter. I Dry great Quantities for that purpose and putt them in flower potts & China basons & they make a fine show all the Winter.

I am unwilling to Mention your Law suite because it awakens an old Greife. If it comes Here I am glad it will be hear'd by the Council. I hope both Mr. Hanbury & myself have friends att that Board and the Great Friendships he has Lately recev'd from Doctor Cartaret our first Minister bespeaks He has some Interest with Him. I shall say no More but that you need not Doubt of our Endeavours.

I thank you for the rare Ripe Corn it is the only sort fitt for England. I have had 2 most Excellent puddens made of the Flower, How my Wife

manages it I can't tell but it is one of the best of puddings—pray send Mee 2 or 3 Ears next year.

There is something very Extrordinary in the Nature of the Fringe Tree seeds, & of your Red Cedar & white Cedar they will some Come up the first year some the second & some not till the third summer this is Certain and I tell all my friends of It.

I Dont recollect what I sent you by poor Harding but I hope you have gott It. These Captains are the Most Untoward people in the World they promise fair but then think no more of It.'

Pray what sort of Fruit is your Wild Scarlet plum is it more for show then Tast—what size is the fruit if could not be Improved by Grafting.

If any Umbrella Trees are Near you or any of your quarters if I had a few seed I would Try Again.

I have Long Waited for an oppertunity to send you seeds In Time but this Cruel War Disconcerts Everything. You have Variety, I hope some will turn out good for something, the [Oriental?] & China Aster [?] I should be glad to heare that you had them they are fine things. The Amaranthus Tricolor I presume if you have not you will be Delighted with its Gay show—as I am with sundry of your Curiosities which Came in fine Order by your great Care in packing. There was a very regular pretty small Birds nest without name. The swallows & Nest came safe and are real Curiosities of which more in my Next. Pray send some seed of The pretty Little Gourds, we have them not in England. The seeds are all fresh & fine the shells very Curious on sundry accounts. I hope not to forget the Least of your favours it is the Least I can do to acknowledge them Since you have spared no pains to procure them you know my Tast I am Extreemly obliged to you for Every thing. I think I have Omitted nothing in your kind Letter of the 2d May.

Not one Chinquapin sound. Take no more thought about them. Please to send 2 or 3 Ears More of Rare Ripe Corn and a Little more Guinea Corn.¹⁶⁴

I thank you for yours September 26 which I will pay Due Regard too as also to yours of August 10th.

Apples of Love are very much used In Italy to putt when Ripe into their Brooths & soops giving it a pretty Tart Tast.¹⁶⁵ A Lady Just come from Leghorn sayes She thinks it gives an Agreeable Tartness & Relish to them & she Likes it Much. They Call it Tamiata. I never yett Try'd

the Experiment but I think to do It. They putt in but one or Two att a Time, the boiling Breaks them & then they are Diffused through the whole.

I have much to say but I am so Hurried att this Time that I cannot add more but I am

Your sincere & Affectionate Friend

P Collinson

I take the Liberty to putt in a Book for Doctor Mitchell being a present from Doctor Delinaus [i.e., Dillenius] professor of botany att Oxford being History of Mosses.¹⁶⁸ Pray notice it, & peruse It. It is a surpriseng Curious Work who both Collected the Materials and Drew them very Curiously On paper & then Engraved them all Himself. Please to give Dr Mitchell Notice of It, that He may send for It as oppertunity offers

I rely on your Candor to Excuse this scrawl it was one in a Hurry.

London february 20 1742/3

My Dear Friend

I have putt on Board Captain Friend a Box of Garden seeds for you with a History of Mosses, being a present from the Botanie professor att Oxford to Doctor Mitchell. After you have perused It please to Acquaint Him with It that He may send for It, and in that box is a Long Letter which I hope you'l place to the best Account being much streightend for Time.

I have also committed to the Care of Our Good friend Captain Friend a Box of plants, which Consist of

No 1—4 Buck thorn Berries Trees

2—4 small spruce Firr

3—4 silver Firrs

4—2 Red Fraxinelloes

these are curious

5—2 White Ditto

perannual flowers

6 1 Moss Province Rose

7 [torn] York & Lancaster Rose

8 1 Double Yellow Rose

Chilley strawberrys

scarlet Martigons

Fiery Lillie

spring Cyclamens now in Flower

grow best in half sun are now in flower.

The season is Advanced to send these things, I cant say that I have much Hopes of their Comeing in Good Order Because they are Liable to so many Accidents but I was Desirous to Omitt no Occetion to testifie the Regard I have to anything that will Afford you the Least Entertainment. If they come any of them alive Water & shade are very Necessary for their Well Doing. I have given the Captain great Charge about them. In the Box is a poem which if you have not seen may Divert a gloomey thought.¹⁶⁷

I must Beg the Favour to Dispatch the Enclosed Letter to Doctor Mitchell by first oppertunity. It is now Late so must Conclude with my best Wishes for your Health.

Your Affectionate friend

P Collinson

The Love Apples are Called by the Italians Tamiata are much used by them in soups & Broths.

The name of the flower white on one side red on the other.¹⁶⁸

London January 31: 1743/4

My Dear Sir
Colonel Custis

I have only Time to Tell you that I have sent you a Box of sundry seed, for your Kitchen Garden & Beg the Box may be return'd Filled with Cones of your Common Flowering poplar or Tulip Tree—¹⁶⁹ and some Cassena Seed and any other sort you please, Pellitory in particular umbrella, papa, sweet flowering Bay.

I shall in a particular manner thank You for the Box of seeds &c all Came safe by Captain Friend and in good Order.

My Dear friend My best Wishes
Attends you from your affectionate
friend

P. Collinson

The box Comes by Captain Robinson
in the *York*

London April 2nd. 1744

My Dear Friend

I have scrawled 2 or 3 Letters which I sent to Mr. Hanburys with a Box of Garden seeds—& some Flower seeds which by his Care I hope

will come safe to hand. Tho I sent then In January, I wish they Come time Enough to sow this year so many Accidents have happend, and now we have a French Warr in Reallity I am afraid our Intercourse will be [torn]¹⁷⁰

A Little Leisure now offers which gives Mee [torn] of a more perticular Answer to your kind Letter of the 15th september Last. I am greatly Delighted to hear that you have some tolerable Enjoyem't in Life I hope with Gentle Exercise & proper Regimen it will Increase.

I take an Almond to be a Tree of Quick Growth but of no Long Duration but so soone a Decay of yours may be owing to the Roots penetrating into a Cold poor Bottom this I have Observed Here in many Instances—& Wee find no Remedy—but new planting—& Trying some other spott. I have sent Some more for that purpose if they yett in season—with my project to sow some of them & some of the Pistacio Nutts in your Island.¹⁷¹

It is a common Observation that Our Tast & that of animals is very Different for they will feed on that which is poisonous to Mankind so the [?] of the Mice is not to be Admired in prefering the pelitory seed to all others.

That your Good House Wives may be no Longer puzzled I hear send you my Wives Receipt—It is a pudding that pleases Mee & all that have Tasted It—& another pudding made of West India production I have often Eat & is much admired and Loved by all that Tast it—and that is a Cassada pudden¹⁷² made of the Poisonous Roots of a plant of that Name in all the West Indies but when that Pernitious Quality is press'd out it Makes a pretty sort of Bread, which no doubt you have Tasted perhaps may have been Brought as a Curiosity by sloops Trading too & fro from the Islands to you.

I am Glad to hear that some of the plants are alive. Neither Firr nor pine will bear Cutting in shapes but They Naturally grow in Conic Figures which looks Ornamental in a Garden. I hope the Buckthorn will grow being of Great Use—they may be Increased by Layers as well as by seed.

[torn] have the Oriental [?], you may say that [torn] one of the plants of Paradise for the most authers [torn] that this was Found by [?] in or near the spott where Eden was situated—but I presume Wee must Esteem this as only one of the Weeds of Paradise which is suffer'd to remain and is the king of its Tribe but all the most Elegant & Charming Flowers & Fruites of Paradise are Removed or Dispersed through

all the fine Countries and Climates of the World, which were they all Again Collected in one spott, would Raise our Admiration beyond Expression.

I am well Acquainted with the Bunch of scarlet Berries tho it has happen'd to Escape your Curious Discernment. I have 3 sorts of this species in my Garden. It is an Arum or Cuckow point when in Flower from its pretty Ellegant figure our Children Call them Lords & Ladys¹⁷³ My three sorts are very Different in Leafe. One was sent Mee by the Name of Skunk Weed or skunk Wort, the Others by the Name of Indian Turnips. They thrive in the shade in a Rich moist soil, but I am much Obliged to you for the seed to pleasure my Curious Friends for it seldome Ripens Here. But writing of this Brings to my Mind Two very Curious & Rare plants which if they have not found a place in your fine Garden may Deserve it—the one is a new species of Magnolia growing in Nicholas Smiths Esquire plantation in Essex County¹⁷⁴—which Doctor Mitchell Informs Mee is the only One in all Virginia and the Other is an Arbor Vitee of a very Rare sort and the Only Tree of the Kind Ever found only one Tree on or near the plantation of Isham Randolph Esq. Deceased, but the Tree is so remarkable that all know it as I am told a fine Evergreen.¹⁷⁵ This Ellegant Tree was Discover'd by John Bartram. It will take off Cuttings planted in a shady place in October sprigs of 4.5. or 6 Inches Long are best for that purpose and may be raised from seed sown as soone as Ripe.

It is very Likely the swallows whose pretty Nest is Cemented together may gather the Persimon Gum to use for that purpose—but then they dont use it as they gather it, but Digest it & then Disgorge it for that purpose for if you do but burn it in the fire or a Candle [torn] the smell Fetid Like burnt bone or Flesh and nothing Like a Vegitable production.

Wee are not Hott Enough for the Chinquapin to produce seed Here—a Trial att a proper season of a Quarter of the Quantity of the Last may be sufficient.

It is a Thousand pitties but that such Curious Gentlemen as you, Colonel Byrd, Mr. Clayton & Doctor Mitchell should annually sow seeds of the Umbrella Tree to preserve it from being Intirely Lost. Can any Tree from the particularity of its Growth & Flower Deserve better place in a fine Garden then the New Early flowering Magnolia at Esquire Smiths.

I thank you for the papaw seed this is also one of Your Rarities from the singular structure of its Fruite please to send some more seed.¹⁷⁶

I shall now Relieve you & Conclude with my best Wishes
 Your sincere & Affectionate Friend
 P Collinson

I herewith send some kernells of stone pine they are pretty sweet Eating and it is an Elegant fine Tree. As it will be too Late this year they will keep till Next. I have sent this sort before but with what success I know not—they thrive & bear well in England.

I am greatly obliged to you for the Huming Bird & Nest it is a Charming pretty Contrivance and so neatly Cover'd with Moss that it so much Resembles the bark on the Branch that it is hardly to be discover'd from it which makes it so Difficult to find, the Eggs in proportion must be very small.

Sometime agon I Inclosed a Letter for Doctor Mitchell which I hope is come to hand—I doubt not [blurred] care off It. As your summer is Longer then Ours [blurred] the pine kernells this year

Pray send some pelitory seed some Yoppon seed and any other sort you fancy.

My Dear Friend

[torn] on the Other side is a Recipe I proc[ured] [fro]m my Learen'd & Ingenious Friend D[octo]r John Fo]thergill of the Colledge¹⁷⁷ on show[ing] him thy Letter He said He thoug[ht] thy Case was not rightly understood—that He had Cur'd one under the Like Disorder with the Inclosed prscription. He further Desired if it is Consistent with any Conveniency that Doctor Mitchell of Urbana may be Consulted with It—A Gentleman whose great Abilities are well known Here. I am Deeply Engaged

so can only Assure you that I am
 your Affectionate
 Friend
 P Collinson

May 2nd 1745

[Prescription is badly mutilated.
 It is in another hand and initialed
 J. F.]

London May 12th: 1745

My Dear Friend

Colonel Custis—

I have troubled you with Sundry Letters Two by Different ships— with a Recipe in Each which I hope will prove to your Benefit. I have a Little Request to make which I hope will give you Little or No Trouble— that is to send Mee some seed of your Virginia passion Flower which I presume grows in your Garden and some Berries of Cassenna or Yoppon which Grows in your Island. Pray send by Two Conveyances for fear of Accidents. My best Wishes attends you. I shall rejoice to hear you received benefits by the prescription

I am your affectionate
Friend in hast

P Collinson

Send by any of Mr. Hanburys ships

London February 20, 1745/6

My Dear Friend

The sight of your kind Letter gave Mee sensible Joye to find my Friend Alive whome I thought to be amongst the Happy.

It is really wonderfull to Consider how much pain & distress humane Nature can Endure and it is as wonderfull that good providence has afforded reliefe, so that life may be rendred Tolerable and you may yett Live to the Comfort of your Family & Friends. As your Case was so singular and Tarr Water had been of such Benefit I with good Reason believed the Learned Bishop would be glad to see such Benefit arise from the Use of His Medecine in so Desperate a Disorder so I sent him your Letter very possible it might be of service to any of those that fell under his knowledge in such Illnessess.¹⁷⁸ I hope you'l Excuse this step, since it was taken on a principal of Humanity & to Benefit mankind and att the same Time forgive my Neglect for I omitted to take a memorandum of some seeds that you Desired & I cannot now recollect them.

I shall be glad if our Choice of the sagathee will be agreeable it is the finest & Neatest that is Made & is a strong Light Ware.¹⁷⁹ I need not say much because I perswaded you are assured of the best services of your sincere & Affectionate Friend

P Collinson

Several of my Friends Begs I would write for some Cassena alias Yoppon Berries that grows in your Island and I further beg the favour when opportunity offers to send Doctor Mitchells parcell to Him, as the Contents may give you some Entertainment when you have read It. Please to seal it up & send to Him.

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