

# American Association of Nurserymen, Inc.

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May 8, 1970

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**Dr. Joshua Lederberg**  
Genetics Department  
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Dear Dr. Lederberg:

The possibility that many urban ills can be traced directly to a specific biological need, which typical urban surroundings arouse in the city dweller, is suggested by the authors of the enclosed reprint from Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

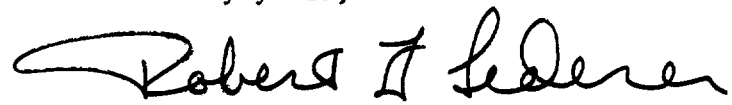
According to the authors, the basic cause of maladjustment is man's deep-rooted longing for the type of surroundings in which his forebears lived, on the savanna, at the dawn of human history. Drs. Iltis and Loucks, and Mr. Andrews, conclude that man is "genetically programmed" to require the presence of warm, humid air, green plant life, and even the animal "companions" which were part of the scene on the high plains of Africa from which man emerged.

As horticulturists, the members of the American Association of Nurserymen wish to determine the nature and extent of the role of green things in the psychological adaptation of man to his environment. The contribution of the nursery industry to the improvement of urban conditions might be affected measurably by the substantiation of the Iltis-Loucks-Andrews thesis.

Our immediate interest is to obtain an evaluation of the soundness of the conclusion stated in the article, "Criteria for an Optimum Human Environment," with particular reference to the need for research in depth to test the validity of the assumption on which the Iltis article was based.

Your own established reputation in a field of science which relates to the subject in question would make any comment you might wish to volunteer most welcome to us.

Sincerely yours,



Robert F. Lederer  
Executive Vice President

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RFL: gb  
Enclosure