Before reading those debates therefore, it is wise to scan the pages of *Garden and Forest* for an idea of what was meant by “horticulture” in late nineteenth-century America. Today’s general reader could assume that the term referred first and foremost to ornamental horticulture, as it does now. But in 1888 horticulture, which had piggybacked on agriculture since the days of colonial settlement, was still concerned with fruit and vegetable gardening to a very large extent. In 1888, the late Elisabeth Woodburn, an authority on horticultural literature, wrote an addendum to a new edition of U. P. Hedrick’s *A History of Horticulture in the United States to 1860* (originally published in 1950). Tallying books published on various “horticultural” topics between 1861 and 1920, she arrived at the following ranking, from highest to lowest in number:

**HORTICULTURAL EDUCATION.**

In a recent number of this journal it was held that the study of horticulture and agriculture in their scientific aspects has a distinct value as a factor in furnishing exercise for certain powers of the mind. Every one admits that the natural sciences should have a place in the curriculum of colleges and schools as elements of wholesome intellectual development . . . but the fact should be emphasized that the mental exercise and discipline furnished by horticultural education in its broad sense is equal, and perhaps superior, to that furnished by the study of any other science. No kind of mental application will be more effectual in forming habits of careful observation and comparison and in securing those orderly methods of thinking which are of the greatest use in the examination of many of the problems which confront us in our daily life.

In an article in a recent number of *Science* on Horticulture at Cornell, we are glad to see that this view is set forth with considerable fullness by Professor Bailey, who contends that horticulture as studied at that university is capable of adding much to the value of a course of liberal academic training. Professor Bailey illustrates the merits of horticulture as a science by showing some of its uses and applications in discussing the theory of evolution, which is perhaps now the most important conception with which the thinking world has to deal. In supporting the hypothesis of evolution, horticulture shows the development of life in actual operation. More than six thousand species of plants are cultivated, and most of these have been broken up into varied forms by the touch of man. Some species have produced thousands of distinct forms, and the methods of the production of many of them are on record. In place of arguments as to the probable influence of climate upon plants the horticulturist cites definite cases, so that there is no conjecture about the matter. Instead of speculating upon the transmission of acquired characters the horticulturist furnishes proofs of such transmission. Paleontology brings disjointed evidence in regard to the influence of selection and probable changes from environment, while the horticulturist brings examples before our eyes to prove that he can modify and mould vegetation at his will. The horticulturist creates new species and shows you numbers of cultivated plants of which no one knows the original form, because the ones with which we are acquainted are so unlike the type that the two can never be connected. This is only a single line of inquiry, and other illustrations quite as striking can be given to show that there is an abundant field for scientific research and profound thought in horticultural science as such . . .