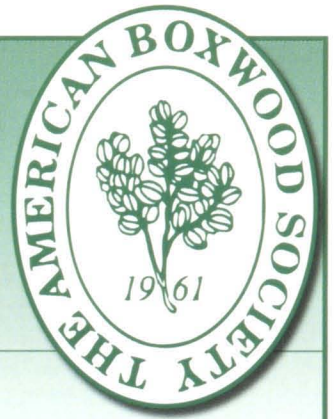


THE BOXWOOD BULLETIN



A quarterly of the American Boxwood Society
devoted to our oldest garden ornamental

Vol. 48 No. 1

July 2008



AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY
APRIL 24-26, 2008
Charlotte, NC

The American Boxwood Society

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Charlotte, North Carolina Boxwood Symposium

by Hugh Crump

The 48th Boxwood Symposium and Annual Meeting were held by the American Boxwood Society in Charlotte, North Carolina during April 24-26, 2008. This event presents the best opportunity to visit old acquaintances and to make many new friends who all share a common interest in boxwood. The program includes speakers, who are renowned experts in their specialty, perfect weather, local public and private gardens which were carefully manicured for our visit, and the great southern hospitality for which North Carolina is so famous.

The program began with a tour of the private garden at the Schwab Residence. The garden was designed by Ben Page in his classic style which is noted for his exquisite attention to detail and, of course, boxwood. The gar-

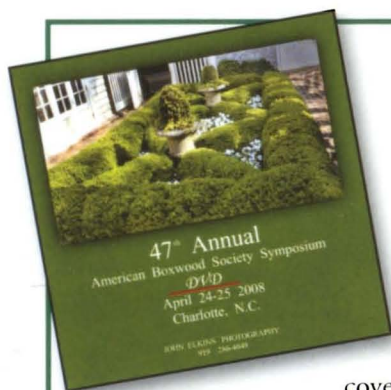


Schwab's garden

den highlights include a knot garden and an overall beautiful setting with a shady canopy of mature shade trees.

The tour continued with a rare opportunity to tour the Morrocroft Estate. As we entered the beautiful designed wrought iron gates, we were

DVD and Group Photo of the Charlotte Symposium and Annual Meeting Are Available!



John Elkins, a professional photographer, took hundreds of high quality photographs at the Charlotte Symposium and Annual Meeting. The

cover of this issue of *The Boxwood*

Bulletin, and those appearing in the accompanying article, were generously provided by John Elkin.

John Elkins also produced a 21:30 minute DVD, with about 255 photographs, of the North Carolina meeting. It is a unique and enjoyable journey which illustrates and preserves all the beautiful gardens, events, people, banquets, and boxwood that the participants had the opportunity to enjoy.

Both the DVD (\$15.00) and an 8x10 group photo (\$15.00) are available — please add \$3.00 shipping & handling. They can be obtained by writing to: John Elkins, Photography, Inc., Northgate Mall, Suite 223, Durham, NC 27701.

Editor's Note: Even though I had attended this meeting, I was pleasantly surprised by the many scenes John Elkins had so beautifully composed on this DVD. It is easy to recommend this DVD to everyone who attended this Symposium and even those who wish to learn about the many enjoyable activities that occurred at the Charlotte Symposium and Annual Meeting. A portion of the total sales will be donated to support the American Boxwood Society.



Morrocroft

greeted by Mel Graham, the owner of Morrocroft. He was generous with his time, and provided an interesting and entertaining history of the property which included both his and his wife's love of gardening. As we toured the expansive and beautiful grounds, Mel sought boxwood cultural tips from Lynn Batdorf.

Our next tour stop was the home and garden of the Coopers. Sallie Cooper warmly greeted us at her front door and invited us to begin by viewing the gardens from indoors in order to gain a better understanding of the design and function of the gardens. Sallie is best known for her hospitality, her generous support of

various charitable causes, and her love of gardening. Sallie was a most gracious and fascinating hostess with a beautifully-maintained expanse of gardens. Ron Danise of Southern Organics was our featured guest speaker and he provided a unique and educational perspective on the benefits and advantages of using a fully organic approach to plant care. Additionally, a tasty box lunch was provided and everyone took the op-

portunity to eat outside and enjoy both the garden and the delightful weather.

Next the group visited and toured the garden of Lindy Wilson, which is perhaps best known as the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden. The garden was carefully developed as a plant collector's garden with a rich and interesting history that Lindy shared with the group. It is work of Lindy that carries on the renowned legacy of Elizabeth Lawrence who wrote the books, *A Southern Garden* and *Through the Garden Gate*. To learn more about Elizabeth Lawrence, visit: www.elizabeth-lawrence.org/lab.html.

Walking only a few hundred yards, we arrived at the public garden Wing Haven, where we were hosted by Jeffery Drum, Garden Curator. We began our tour with a video documenting the history of the garden and its founders, the Clarksons. The exciting and informative story of a couple in love with nature and especially birds and gardens, was well presented. In 1970, the Clarksons gave the gardens to the Wing Haven Foundation.



Cooper's garden



Wing Haven's walkways permit one to tour numerous gardens and fountains



The garden centerpiece is the bronze sculptures of the Dooley's daughters

Today, it has a series of paths and walkways that permit one to tour numerous garden rooms (each with its own theme), fountains, and the wooden bird sanctuary. The Wing Haven staff provided an hors d'oeuvres and wine reception in the garden which refreshing everyone. Wing

Haven is a botanical treasure tucked away in the middle of a well established residential neighborhood.

The next day began by travelling to the Foxcroft neighborhood to tour the detail-oriented and meticulously-maintained gardens of the Dooleys. The garden center piece is the bronze

sculptures of the Dooley's daughters, which include a water feature. This garden featured numerous specimen plantings and an incredible array of seasonal flowers in full bloom.

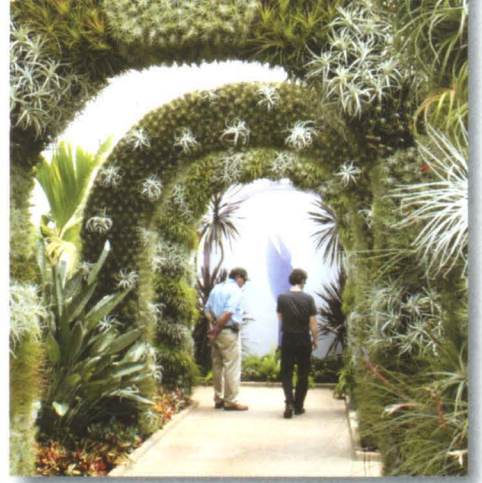
Next, it was off to the Whitley's home, which is situated on a beautiful mature tree-lined street known as



Wing Haven



Whitley's garden



Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

Duke Mansion

Queens Road West, one of Charlotte's premier treasures. The home and garden is so notable, they have been featured in many magazines, most notably *Southern Living*. The home has many features which include a seamless addition, the garden, and the great outdoor entertaining areas.

The final garden tour stop found us at the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. Opened in 1999, with its 450 acres, it has quickly developed into a world-class botanical garden. Its many features include: the Orchid Conservatory, with 8,000 square feet it has an impressive 116-foot tall Tropical Canvas of epiphytes; children's Willow Maze covering an area

of 3,000 square feet which utilizes 600 linear feet of hedging; numerous interactive fountains; and impressive perennial borders. In 2004 (only five years after opening), the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden was named one of the nation's "20 Great Gardens" in the *HGTV Flower Gardening* book. Lunch was held in the Pavilion where Lynn Batdorf presented an informative program on boxwood culture.

The 2008 Boxwood Symposium concluded in high style with an elegant evening at the Duke Mansion. We were hosted by estate horticulturist John Neville, who provided a history of the estate and a guided tour of the gardens. We moved to a garden

terrace for refreshments and appetizers (graciously provided by our site chairman, Hugh Crump), followed by the traditional Boxwood Auction. The auction proved to be a great success and was highlighted by the hand-crafted child-size boxwood rocking chair donated by ABS Board Member Clifford Hoffman. The evening concluded with a southern banquet dinner in the Grand Room of the Duke Mansion.

Editor's note: It is important to note the tireless, kind, and generous efforts of our host, Hugh Crump. Everyone in attendance would agree that, due solely to the efforts of Hugh Crump, this symposium was a great success.

Buxus bartlettii in the Chiquibul Forest of Belize

Henry F. Frierson, Jr., MD

On August 11 and 12, 2007, fellow ABS member, Helen Cathro, M.B.Ch.B. and I explored the Chiquibul Forest in the Cayo District, Belize's largest forest reserve. This area includes the Forest Reserve, the Chiquibul National Park, and the spectacular Caracol Archaeological Reserve. We hoped to find *Buxus bartlettii*, which initially had been collected in 1931 by University of Michigan Professor H. H. Bartlett, who discovered the boxwood along the river bluffs in the Cayo District. The plant was later described and named by Paul C. Standley of the Field Museum of Natural History (now Chicago Natural History Museum). As this boxwood also occurs in Mexico, I had observed it on a trip there in 2001 with Professor Egon Koehler and Mark and Elizabeth Braimbridge. More recently, *B. bartlettii* had been identified in the Chiquibul Forest in 2003 by Lillis Urban for the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Belize is part of Mesoamerica, which comprises less than 0.5% of the world's land area, but yet supports 17% of all terrestrial species of plants. The Chiquibul Forest

Reserve was first designated as such in 1956, and this area in Belize is part of the "Maya Forest" of Mesoamerica. The Chiquibul Forest, along with adjacent protected areas, forms one of the largest remaining tracts of tropical forest in Central America. Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) have long been important as timber resources in the Chiquibul Forest. In addition, non-timber forest products harvested in significant amounts but not after the 1950s included the fruits of allspice (*Pimenta dioica*), used as a food flavoring, and chicle, tapped from the tree, *Manilkara zapota*. The name "Chiquibul" comes from the chicle tree. For the past 10 years, the Chiquibul Forest has been the site of the illegal collection of the leaves (xate) of the understory palm, *Chamaedorea ernesti-augustii*, by Guatemalan xateros, who export them to the United States and Europe for use in floriculture.

The Chiquibul Forest contains many Mayan ruins and is home to the archeologically impressive ruins at Caracol (Fig. 1). The Maya Mountains, located at the



Fig. 1. The ancient Mayan city, Caracol, occupied nearly 40 sq miles and consisted of about 36,000 structures that have been identified. Between AD 650 and 700, approximately 150,000 people lived there.



Fig. 2. The educational building at the Las Cuevas Research Station had been constructed in 1994.

southern and eastern boundaries of the reserve, have a major impact on the climate of the tropical forest. The chief vegetation types within the Chiquibul Forest include the broadleaf deciduous forest, broadleaf seasonal forest, broadleaf high evergreen forest, semi-evergreen forest, riparian forest, gallery forest, and savanna.

While in the Chiquibul Forest, we stayed at the Las Cuevas Research Station, first constructed in 1991 by the Belize Forest Department and the Natural History Museum (London). Botanical collections from the Chiquibul Forest had been made for many decades in the 20th century. *B. bartlettii*, collected by L. Urban, was listed in *A Preliminary Checklist of the Vascular Plants of the Chiquibul Forest, Belize* by S. G. M. Bridgewater, D. J. Harris, C. Whitefoord et al, 2006, an article which was the source of much of the above information on the Chiquibul Forest. In our quest to find *B. bartlettii*, our guide and a manager of the Las Cuevas Research Station, knew that L. Urban had largely collected plants from three areas in the forest. The specific location of *B. bartlettii*, was not known to us, however, so on the first day we searched for it in one of the three areas to no avail. On the second day, most of which was rainy, Helen and I set out on the trail for the Monkey Tail Branch, a river located about 4.5 km

from Las Cuevas. We finally located a small group of *B. bartlettii* at the end of the trail, growing among limestone rocks at the river's edge. The tallest plant measured approximately 1.5m in height, and had a very open habit and few branches. The glabrous, smooth leaves were elliptic with an acute tip. They measured up to 2 inches in length, and the internodal length was medium. It was not possible to map the distribution of this boxwood along the Monkey Tail Branch, as we had no guide at the time, access, or machete. In addition, a heavy rain commenced, and we slogged back to the Research Station, soaked and muddy. Indeed, the distribution of *B. bartlettii* in Belize is not known to this author, but its growth among limestone rocks along the river's edge was not unexpected, and was reminiscent of what I had observed for *B. sempervirens* in the Greater Caucasus.

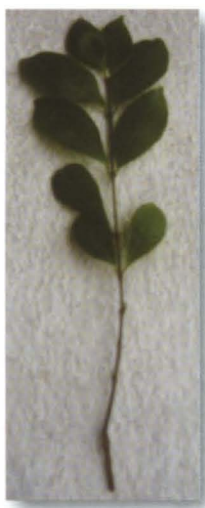


Fig. 3. The leaves of *B. bartlettii* are elliptic with acute tips.

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The Question Box

Q: I just recently had my first house built. We tried really hard to have it designed to replicate a "true Southern home" back from the plantation era. I seem to have noticed a distinct smell of formal gardens at old Southern homes. It appears that the specific smell is from boxwood. I know this is hard to describe very well by E-Mail, but my attempt to describe it would be a strong, bland but bitter, stale smell. Does this sound familiar? What would have been the most prominent boxwood on old formal Southern Estates creating this type of "formal garden smell?"

A: Undoubtedly, the fragrance to which you are referring is from the leaves of English boxwood, *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'.

Q: I would like to start some boxwood cuttings so that I can use them to line the edge of eight 4-foot beds that curve to form a large circle. I would appreciate any advice you might have as to how many to start, (I was guessing 64) and how to start them.

A: Boxwood propagation by cutting is a common and effective method. Stem cuttings can be successfully taken from July to December. During this period, the cutting has a chance to harden off, which will prevent wilting before a root system grows. Taken later in the winter, the cuttings are slower to root. The cutting procedure is quite easy.

Cuttings are taken from one year old branches. For example, if using *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa', English

boxwood, the cutting would be about 2½" (6.5 cm) long; if using *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* they ought to be about 4" (10 cm) long. Cuttings are best if obtained in the cool early morning hours when the stems have the greatest concentration of water. Once collected, the leaves are removed from the bottom 1" (2.5 cm) of the cutting. This bottom portion can be treated with a rooting hormone. Nearly equal results are achieved in treatment or non-treatment with rooting hormones, which are intended to induce the cutting to develop a root system.

There are several media mixes that promote more rapid and vigorous rooting. They are: an equal portion by volume of pine bark and perlite; coarse, sharp builder's sand; and perlite. The cuttings are then placed in flats or trays. Nearly any type of container can be used as long as it is able to hold the media and provide drainage.

Rooting usually occurs in two to three months. During this time, environments with high humidity consistently result in superior rooting. Frequent watering with a spray bottle to mist the cuttings provides satisfactory results. After rooting, the plants can be transplanted into their own container. Grown outside in a protected location, the new boxwood will be ready to be planted into the garden within a few years.

Q: Is the Boxwood Handbook by Lynn Batdorf still available in all three editions? And if so, would each edition be \$25.00?

A: No, both the first edition (1995) and second edition (1997) of the *Boxwood Handbook* are out of print. Only the third edition (2005) is available. It is ordered from the American Boxwood Society at: www.boxwood-society.org. It is \$25.00 postpaid.

Q: I'm wondering if boxwood shrubs can be grown from seed? If so, where can I obtain them? I have a huge yard and plan to use them to edge most of my garden.

A: Yes indeed, boxwood can be grown from seed. The fifth edition of the *Boxwood Buyers Guide* lists several suppliers of boxwood seed. While seed is inexpensive, it takes many years or decades to grow to any size and the population will be variable - that is, they will have different sizes and shapes from plant to plant. This attribute is probably not desirable if using them to edge a garden.

As an alternative, rooted cuttings are still quite inexpensive, will provide far less time to mature and will be identical (in characteristics) to the parent plant.

Q: I'm a horticulturist in a part of the country with a relatively small urban population and academic research community that nevertheless requires unique plant material for its homes and municipalities. As such it's been a lifelong pursuit of mine to locate and trial as many new (or "newish")-to- horticulture trees suitable for the arid southwest that I can sanely manage.

I can't claim any actual introductions, but I'm a heck of a booster and I've had some nice successes in getting previously scarce species more solidly into the trade that serves the Mojave desert and adjacent regions (e.g. Pistacia atlantica, several oaks including Quercus lobata and Q. cerris, Calocedrus decurrens, several eucalyptus including E. formanii and E. spathulata). I've also got a number of species planted out that have performed well enough in our wind, coldish winters, blazing summers, missing humidity and concrete-like soil that it's time to get the growers producing them for wider distribution.

I fell in love with boxwood the first time I saw full size trees around Sinope, Turkey and in northern Israel, after having only been exposed to the petite hedging forms as a young American gardener. They are truly beautiful, and I'm certain that one or more of the species I'm looking for will end up one day being used as high-quality ever-green tree material for the cities of the Southwest.

I've been following some of the reports of the expeditions you mentioned in the literature, which is in part what rekindled my efforts to seek whatever Buxus species I can locate.

A: While there are about 100 species, very few are properly identified. Even fewer are well grown in protected areas (botanic gardens, preserves, etc). All of this, results in the poor distribution which you are currently experiencing.

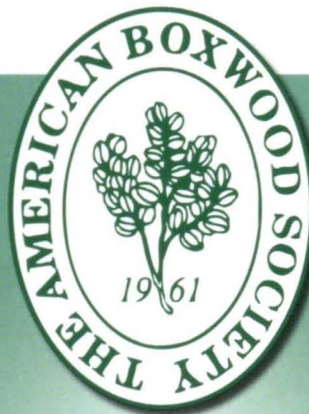
Recent and numerous plant collection expeditions in Cuba, the Caucasus and eastern Europe are attempting to correct these deficiencies. This work is costly, its results unpredictable and requires many years (even decades) to finally reach the level of a comprehensive distribution.

Thus, unfortunately, for the foreseeable future, the occasional offering (possibly misidentified) is the best that can be expected.

Q: I have two English boxwood that are about 6' wide and 6' tall. They're taking over my front porch! I'm 48 and I remember them as a child, so they must be about 50 - 55 years old. I'm afraid to prune them back and also like their large size, but not the location they're in. I'm thinking of trying to relocate them or to sell them.

If relocated, will they likely survive or will this likely prove to be too traumatic for them? As for selling them, I hear that boxwood is often used to make violin scrolls and is quite an expensive wood since boxwood grows so slowly. Do you know of any companies that buy English boxwood for such uses?

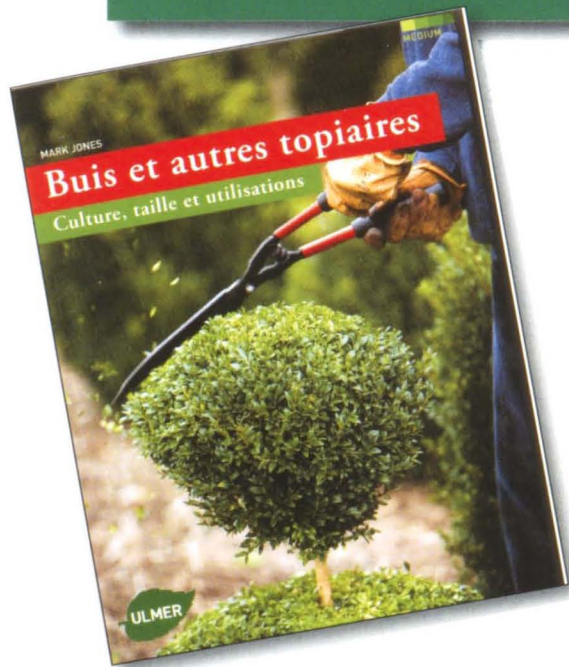
A: English boxwood are very difficult to trim back once they are large, they can be thinned and gradually pruned back over several years. You will need professional help and heavy equipment to move boxwood this size, especially if they are close to your house. As for selling the wood, even at 50 years, the stems are probably not large enough to have much value for wood, although boxwood is used in musical instruments. For additional information, you can order the newly revised (2005) *Boxwood Handbook - A Practical Guide to Knowing and Growing Boxwood* by Lynn R. Batdorf for \$25.00 from the American Boxwood Society.



Future Annual ABS Meetings

- ❖ *Spring 2009 - Atlanta, GA*
- ❖ *Fall 2010 - Newark, OH*
- ❖ *Spring 2011 - Boyce, VA*
ABS 50th Anniversary
- ❖ *Spring 2012 - Charleston, SC*
- ❖ *Spring 2013 - Williamsburg, VA*

THE BOXWOOD BOOKSHELF



Buis et autres topiaires: Culture, taille et utilisations, was written by Mark Jones (a specialist in buis and topiary). Published in 2007, by Ulmer in Paris, it is a 6³/₄" by 8³/₄" soft cover book with 144 pages and 178 color photographs.

It is important to note that *buis* is French for "box" which is how Europeans prefer to refer to the shrub while Americans prefer to call them "boxwood". Written in French, it is easy for non-French readers to "read between the lines," and by examining the endless, well-chosen photographs, and learn a lot from this book. Slightly less than half the book is devoted to topiary - the majority of the book discusses, very aptly, practical culture.

The first chapter provides a brief introduction into the history of *buis*, that is, its use from the ancient to contemporary era. The next chapter presents 27 different species and varieties, providing brief descriptions with numerous photographs of leaves, young branches and young plants in 24 pages.

The next chapter on culture be-

gins with a persuasive understanding of the environs where *buis* naturally grows, then moves on to planting and placing *buis* in the garden. A brief explanation of cultural stress and fertilization is provided. Then a detailed section on pot culture explains display, planting, soil types, and finally site and weather considerations. Next, propagation by seed and cutting is given four pages.

The pest/disease section is very strong with great detail in text and well-chosen photographs providing important and clear information. Its comprehensive discussion covers: chlorosis, nutrient deficiencies, *Puccinia*, *Volutella*, *Cylindrocladium*, *Macrophoma*, *Nectria*, *Phytophthora*, *Verticillium*, leaf miner, oystershell scale, psyllid, aphids, mites, lichen and even adventitious roots! The text and photographs are very informative and exciting - it is the most comprehensive treatment I've ever seen on the subject! These 16 pages alone are easily worth the price of the entire book! Then, as in any European *buis* book, pruning, which really mean shearing, is given great detail with eight pages of informative text and high-quality photographs.

The next chapter, *buis* in the garden, is another very strong, informative and important part of *Buis et autres topiaires*. After learning all I could from these precious 28 pages, I wanted to see every garden and talk to very owner and gardener associated with them! It provides a spectacular tour of beautiful and unusual *buis* from breath-taking panoramic views all the way to close-up of intimate details of refined and exquisite plants! The book concludes with a nice chap-

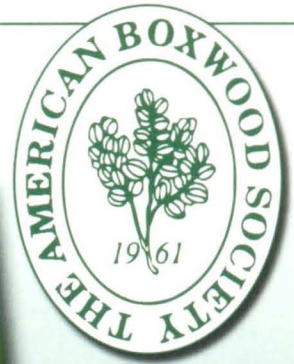
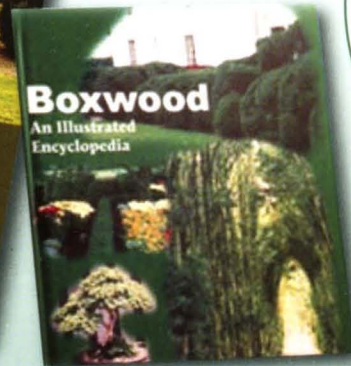
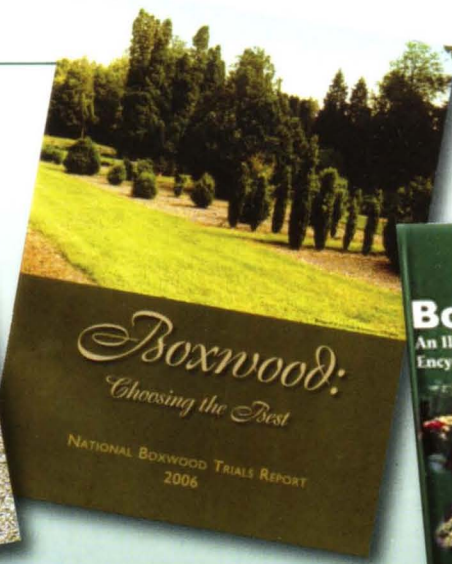
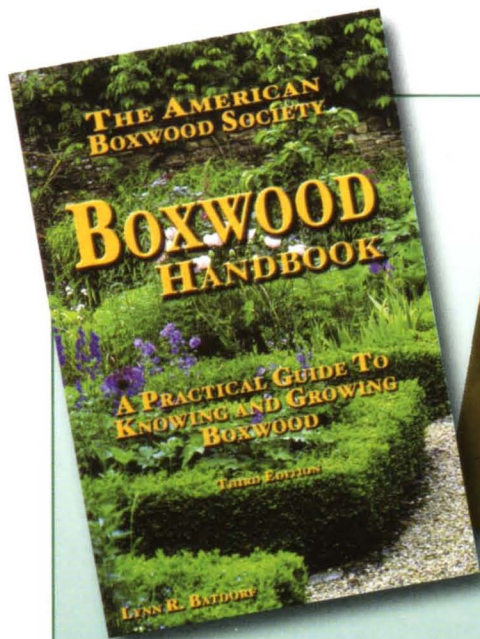
ter on the best methods to present buis topiaries in the garden. A short bibliography follows.

Buis et autres topiaires: Culture, taille et utilisations by Mark Jones was released only several months ago and is very easy to obtain. In less than five minutes, via Amazon.fr, I had successfully ordered my copy, for 18 Euros plus postage, which arrived at my door only ten calendar days later! Once the book arrived at my doorstep, it is no exaggeration that I had two nearly sleepless nights where I eagerly and carefully read this book, trying to learn as much as I could!

It is very exciting to note that five French-written books on *buis* have appeared in the past 10 months! By reading these new books, fascinating and wonderful information on *buis* is now available. It has also presented me with an opportunity to bond with my collegiate daughter, who is majoring in foreign languages (to include French), by repeatedly asking her to decipher an endless variety of passages when looking for an exact interpretation.

Lynn R. Batdorf





Order Now! Essential Boxwood Reading – See Details on Page 2.

Officers:

President:

Dr. Henry F. Frierson, Jr.
602 Lyons Court
Charlottesville, VA 22902-4312
(434) 971.2033
hff@cms.mail.virginia.edu

First Vice-President:

W. Edward Goode, Jr.
1307 Old Logan Road
Sabot, VA 23103
(804) 784.2234
egoode@chchomes.com

Second Vice-President:

Kenneth Lee Hahn
203 Old Turnpike Road
Califon, NJ 07830
(908) 832.2204
khahn@corus.jnj.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Laurie Jamerson
430 Winesap Road
Madison Heights, VA 24572
(434) 929.1165
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International Registrar:

Lynn R. Batdorf
U.S. National Arboretum
3501 New York Avenue NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 245.5965
Lynn.Batdorf@ars.usda.gov

Directors:

John Boyd III
2612 Churchill Drive
Roanoke, VA 24012-2621
(540) 362.0064
Boxwood11@verizon.net

Joan Butler
107 Cottage Drive
Winchester, VA 22603
(540) 665.5879
Walter S. Carell, Jr.
47 Old Mill Road
Millington, NJ 07946-1420
(908) 647.5499
wscarellinc@aol.com

Jan S. Carter
5622 Mineral Hill Road
Eldersburg, MD 21784-6855
410.795.1605
JSCART43@gmail.com

Andrea Filippone
P.O. Box 292
Pottersville, NJ 07979
(908) 879.4066
tendenze@mac.com

Charles Fooks
31106 Johnson Road
Salisbury, MD 21804
(410) 749.5075
c_fooks@hotmail.com

Clifford L. Hoffman
56 Bonnell Street
Flemington, NJ 08822-1306
(908) 782.8866

Dean Norton
Mount Vernon Ladies Association
P.O. Box 110
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
dnorton@mountvernon.org

J. Bennett Saunders
Saunders Brothers, Inc.
2717 Tyebrook Highway
Piney River, VA 22964
(434) 277.5455 ext. 15
Bennett@saundersbrothers.com

George Schumacher
831 Daubenberger Road
Turlock, CA 95380
(209) 634.3472
deaschu@gmail.com