

The

April 1981

Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



photo: Tom Ewert

**American Boxwood Society Memorial Garden
Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, Virginia**

Boyce, Va.

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EDITOR — MRS. CHARLES H. DICK

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BOXWOOD DISEASES

W. H. Wills and R. C. Lambe

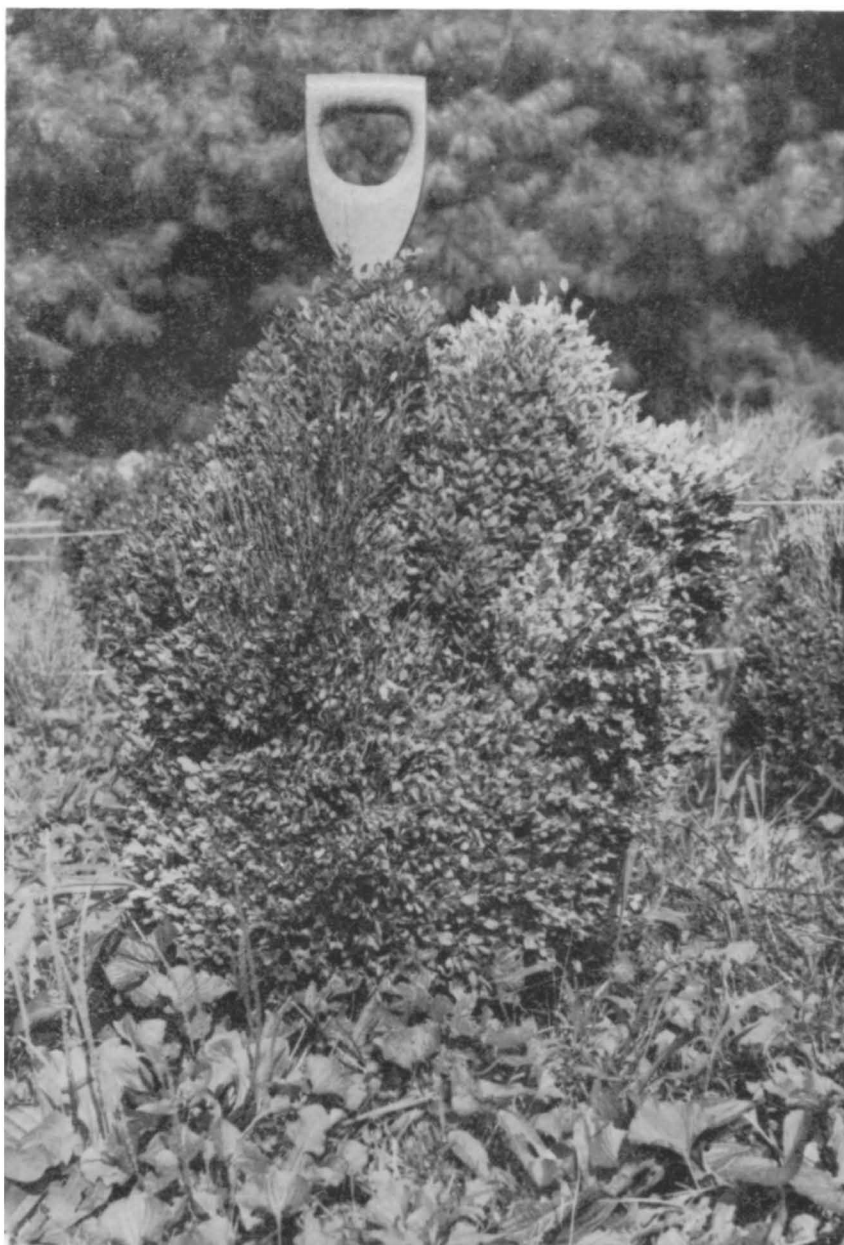


Photo: Wirt Wills and R. C. Lambe

Early stage of English boxwood decline.

One of the attractive features of boxwoods - - *Buxus sempervirens*, American boxwood; *B. sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*, English boxwood; *B. microphylla* var. *japonica*, Japanese boxwood; and *B. microphylla* var. *koreana*, Korean boxwood - - is their relative freedom from diseases and pests. Although diseases of boxwood are few, three root diseases can cause considerable loss of plants from nurseries and landscapes under certain circumstances. Those three are *Phytophthora* root-rot, nematodes and English boxwood decline. Many American and

English boxwoods are produced under field conditions, and soil borne diseases can be very damaging. Most of the Japanese and Korean boxwood that are produced in containers are susceptible to *Phytophthora* infection.

Phytophthora root rot

Phytophthora parasitica Dastur (*Phytophthora nicotianae* var. *parasitica*) causes a rather typical root rot and blight on American and English box-

wood. It was first reported from Washington, D.C. in 1933 but was not studied further until 1961 when Haasis reported it from North Carolina. It has been found commonly since then in Virginia and North Carolina on *B. sempervirens*, *B. sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*, and occasionally on *B. microphylla* and *B. harlandii*. Symptoms include a general root necrosis in which the roots are brown and water-soaked, eventually sloughing the cortex from all but the large woody roots. Typically the basal part of the stem(s) turn chocolate brown to black for several cm above ground level. The foliage becomes wilted, twisted and dry. The color progresses from a normal glossy dark green to grayish-green, bronze, and finally brown to straw-yellow if exposed to direct sunlight, before ultimate defoliation. Usually the foliage of the entire plant is wilted simultaneously, in contrast to the partial effects seen in the decline disease of English boxwood.

environment for the roots favor this pathogen, and one of the best preventive measures is to maintain plants on well-drained sites or in well-drained media in containers where there is no standing water. The pathogen is favored by warm temperatures. Artificially inoculated plants may die within 6-8 weeks; it is not known how long it takes for disease to develop in nature. A warm soil, about 30°C (85°F), and prolonged high soil moisture favor disease development.

The best control for nursery and landscape culture is to avoid wet soil conditions. Healthy, rooted cuttings put into clean potting mix in new or disinfected containers in a well drained medium are not likely to develop *Phytophthora* root rot. Some systemic fungicides offer promise for chemical control when they become available for use. Do not replant in the landscape where boxwood have previously died.



Photo: Wirt Wills and R. C. Lambe

Advanced stage of English boxwood decline
(note foliage in various stages of discoloration)

Infected and colonized plants may be expected to die, with colonization limited to plants grown in poorly drained soils in generally warmer areas of the range of boxwood. The fungus is easily cultured from decaying roots on *Phytophthora*-selective medium. Culturing the pathogen is necessary for a firm diagnosis.

The fungal pathogen is a water mold. It reproduces primarily by motile spores formed in microscopic, pear-shaped sporangia, and released in the soil where they swim in films of water, spreading through the root system of a plant very quickly. Irrigation practices which maintain a constantly wet

English boxwood decline. English boxwood (*B. sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*) is grown principally in an area which includes eastern New York to North Carolina, roughly in a circle around the Chesapeake Bay, extending to the Appalachian Mountains, an area to which it seems to be best adapted. In the last decade there has been a severe reoccurrence in this area of a decline of landscaping plantings of English boxwood. The symptoms superficially resemble, in individual plants, the symptoms caused by *Phytophthora parasitica* on boxwood. Distinguishing features of this problem, however, are its restriction to English boxwood, its rather vague etiology, and its geographical limitation to

certain parts of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Symptoms of decline include a slow death of plants over a period of about two years, one branch or part of the plant dying at a time, with a resultant mosaic of foliage coloration. The foliage changes color successively from glossy dark green to dull gray-green, to bronze, to orange and to straw-yellow if exposed to full sun, and finally to brown. Ultimate defoliation produces a gray skeleton of branches which may persist for years if not removed. At the earliest detectable stage of foliar discoloration advanced root decay can be detected if the plant is uprooted. A chocolate brown discoloration of the large roots and trunk extends uniformly for only a few cm above the soil line. The brown color may extend in a discontinuous pattern any distance up the main branches of the shrub. In contrast, stem discoloration caused by *Phytophthora* is continuous and limited to a few cm above the soil line.

common associated nematodes. The disease can be induced in the greenhouse by artificial inoculation with *P. buxi* alone.

When dying English boxwood plants have been replaced with healthy English boxwood the replants have died within 2-3 years. American boxwood is unaffected and may be used to replace English boxwood. Japanese and Korean boxwood may be used to replace English boxwood also.

Although some retardation of symptom expression has been obtained with fungicide drenches and sprays, no satisfactory chemical control has been developed. By the time a decaying landscape plant has been identified from foliage symptoms the root system is so far advanced in decay as to be impossible to save, hence therapeutic fungicide treatments are not likely to be effective in any case. At present, the only recourse is to replace diseased plants with other shrubs.



Photo: Wirt Wills and R. C. Lambe

Phytophthora root rot of English boxwood (note root discoloration and sloughing of bark at base of stem as well as general wilting of leaves)

Phytophthora is never isolated from plants suffering from decline. The fungus *Paecilomyces buxi* (Link ex. Fr.) Bezerra, formerly known as *Verticillium buxi* is rather consistently isolated. Other fungi, including isolates of *Fusarium*, *Phoma*, *Rhizoctonia* and *Pythium* and nematodes of the genera *Pratylenchus*, *Helicotylenchus*, *Tylenchus*, *Xiphenema*, and *Meloidogyne* have been associated with declining English boxwood plants. *Pratylenchus* and *Helicotylenchus* were reported to be the most

Nematodes on boxwood. Boxwoods have been recognized as hosts of nematodes since nematodes have been known as plant pathogens. Several genera of nematodes have been identified from boxwood in the Southeast. Meadow nematodes (*Pratylenchus* sp.) have been the most destructive parasites of American and English boxwood and root-rot nematodes, the most destructive of Japanese boxwood (*B. microphylla* var. *japonica*). Nematodes which also may be of importance in damaging American



Photo: Wirt Wills and R. C. Lambe

Phytophthora root rot of American Boxwood.
 (Note wilting of leaves and loss of roots on plant on right as contrasted with healthy plant on the left.)

and English boxwood include spiral, ring and stubby root, as well as other species of minor importance. Most reports of nematodes on American and English boxwood have come from Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, whereas reports of root-rot on Japanese boxwood, originate most frequently in the more southern part of the range of this ornamental.

Nematode feeding on boxwood results in chlorosis and bronzing of the foliage, reduction in leaf size and eventual defoliation. Meadow nematodes produce root lesions which girdle the small roots and cause sloughing of the cortex below the lesion. Proliferation of new roots above the necrotic roots result in a dense mass of roots near the soil surface subject to easy desiccation during periods of drought. Growth is retarded and the plants remain stunted and gradually decline. Root-knot nematodes cause typical galling of the roots with ultimate root decay

and stunting and decline of the host. Damage from nematodes is difficult to assess since the principal form it takes is slow decline. The loss is sustained largely in landscape plantings. Nematode damage is probably a contributing factor in decline of landscape plantings which results from interaction of nematodes, fungi, winter injury and other stress-inducing environmental factors difficult to define.

Commercial production of boxwood should be in soil free of damaging nematodes or in soil treated with a fumigant before planting. Chemical treatment of established plants is also possible.

Volutella blight. Volutella buxi (Corda) Berk. is a fungus which produces conidia in easily detected pink masses on the surface of twigs or leaves of boxwood. These characteristic spore masses are salmon to pink in color and produced in great

abundance on dead and dying tissue, especially under conditions of high humidity. The fungus *Paecilomyces buxi* may also produce superficially similar masses of spores on twigs but they are snow white rather than pink. Microscopically the sporodochia resemble a pin cushion in which slender orange spines (setae), project like needles from the surface of the cushion. The spores of *P. buxi* are not produced in cushions and no setae are formed, helping to distinguish these two fungi from each other.

Symptoms of *Volutella* twig blight include death of twigs, in which black discoloration precedes the actual death of the twig. It is usually restricted to the soft tissue of the current year's growth. Discoloration and necrosis may in unusual cases extend well down into woody tissue of the previous year's growth, producing a stem canker. Where colonization by the fungus is extensive the discoloration below the bark may be discontinuous as in the case of colonization by *P. buxi*. Twigs or leaves kept in plastic bags in cold storage for longer periods of time almost invariably develop colonies of *Volutella* at the surface; therefore, diagnosis should be made promptly if damage from other causes is to be distinguished from blight actually caused by *Volutella*. Twig blight occurs among all types of boxwood, perhaps more commonly in American boxwood. Frequent rains or light syringing of the foliage has been observed to predispose plants to *Volutella* leaf and twig blight. Wounds on the twigs caused by heavy pruning may become infected by *Volutella*. The only control that can be recommended is pruning of the diseased tissue below the affected stems.

Macrophoma leaf spot. The so-called leaf spot caused by *Macrophoma candollei* (B. et Br.) Berk. et Vogl. is more properly a leaf blight in which the entire leaf turns yellow. The fruiting bodies (pycnidia) of the fungus appear as elevated black dots on the surface of the affected leaves. The rather large hyaline, single-celled ellipsoidal conidia are produced in great numbers in the pycnidia and ooze out when placed in water.

The fungus frequently colonizes dead or senescent leaves or injured stems or on plants damaged from other causes. It is probably a secondary invader or weak parasite. Root damage or stem injury should be suspected when *Macrophoma* pycnidia are observed on leaves of boxwood.

Remove dead leaves for cosmetic purposes. Fungicides are not recommended for control.

Miscellaneous disorders. American and English boxwood are sometimes observed with foliage problems of unknown cause. A rather common disorder is characterized by the bright yellow marginal chlorosis of the leaves, especially in clusters of leaves on terminal branches. The result is usually a green part of the leaf lamina surrounding the midrib and a distinct yellow border. The entire leaf may become chlorotic. Involvement of the foliage of a single plant may be minimal or extensive. A single plant is often the only plant affected in a large

planting. The cause is unknown and plants usually grow out of the condition.

A more rarely observed disorder of boxwood foliage has been seen on both English and American boxwood in which young leaves are slightly chlorotic and characterized by irregular brownish blotches on the upper surface. The twigs tend to be bunched and the terminal leaves tend to be abnormally small. There is also a tendency toward downward curling of the edge and some twisting of these small leaves. Some leaves turn purplish black to olive in color. The twigs are not involved. The cause is unknown.

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Biographical Note:

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ENGLISH BOXWOOD CULTURE IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA

William A. Gray

Introduction.

Although there are many varieties of European and Asiatic Boxwood under cultivation, nearly all plants grown in Virginia are the European box, *Buxus sempervirens*, originally native to limestone regions extending from Britain to the Caspian Sea. The common species plant *Buxus sempervirens*, generally called American Boxwood, can be used as an ornamental when a medium-sized shrubby tree is appropriate. The more popular dwarf variety, *Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*, generally called English Boxwood, is a more versatile compact shrub. Both are very long-lived.

Planting *suffruticosa*.

Boxwood is tolerant of a wide variety in soil, but the extremes of overly coarse sand and heavy clay should be avoided. Never plant in a low wet spot. English Boxwood is naturally symmetrical with fine-textured evergreen foliage. Its formal shape should be used to enhance, not conceal. Traditional uses include edgings for formal gardens, borders for paths, dividing hedges, foundation or entrance plantings, and accent groups.

Allow ample clearance when planting. Although a dwarf variety, *suffruticosa* in one or two centuries will become eight feet high and ten to fifteen feet across. Prepare a broad shallow planting hole, spading in a generous supply of composted organic material, some dolomitic (high magnesia) limestone, and a bit of 10-10-10 fertilizer. In our clay soils, always plant high, so that the top of the root ball is a few inches above ground level. Fill back with the previously improved soil to provide best conditions for root growth. Cover bare ground with a couple of inches of coarse organic mulch. Water well.

Cultural Practices.

The slow-growing *suffruticosa* should receive only light applications of fertilizer. Established plantings of adequate size may be fed every few years or when needed. When maximum rate of growth is desired, an annual light spreading (20 lbs/1000 ft²) of 10-10-10 in March is recommended, followed by a lesser amount of 5-10-10 in June. When boxwood is given either chemical or organic nitrogen fertilizer, a generous application of dolomitic limestone is recommended, preferably spread the previous winter.

Renew the coarse mulch covering annually in the spring. Water new plantings regularly for the first two seasons, and established plantings during any extended dry spell. It is most important to remove dead leaves and debris from the center of all *suffruticosa* plants; a thorough hosing of the interior with a pistol-grip nozzle during some dry period in the late spring is suggested.

Prune English Boxwood to thin, by removing 5" to 10" twigs from the more crowded parts of the plant. Early December is a good time to do this; the clippings provide excellent material for holiday decorations. Never shear *suffruticosa*; this unfortunate traditional custom eventually requires considerable labor and is a source of future plant problems.

Good cultural practices are intended to enhance the ornamental virtues of a landscape planting and, perhaps more importantly, to maintain continued plant vigor by avoiding the causes of undue plant stress.

Problems.

Compared to most popular ornamentals, *suffruticosa* is normally trouble-free. If a problem arises, the first and possibly most frustrating step is that of diagnosis: is the cause environmental (winter damage, poor location, too much or too little water, nutrient deficiency), insect damage, or disease? Specific corrective measures will depend of course on the underlying cause, but general approaches would include appropriate cultural practices and some degree of remedial pruning.

In the event of disease (root rot, stem canker, or boxwood decline) no fungicide or other chemical treatment has been proven effective; about the only suggested remedy is severe pruning plus any other step likely to encourage plant vigor. The best solution to disease is prevention through proper cultural practices.

The very few insects that attack *suffruticosa* (mainly the psyllid, the mite, infrequently the leaf-miner and, rarely, a scale) can be controlled by insecticides, but such treatment should be directed only at the problem area. A general preventative spraying program is likely to do more harm than good by eradicating those useful predatory insects that inhabit *suffruticosa* - spiders, ladybug beetles and the praying mantis. When control of the pest insects seems necessary, a contact poison such as Malathion is effective when the adults are active and vulnerable. Cygon, or one of the other systemic insecticides, is effective at other times as well and therefore may be more useful for many situations.

Biographical Note: Mr. Gray is a frequent contributor to the *Boxwood Bulletin*. His most recent article, "The Suffruticosa Mini-Farm", along with fuller biographical information appeared in the *Boxwood Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 2, October 1980.

BOXWOOD AND THE GARDEN CLUB AT BUZZARDS BAY

South Dartmouth, Massachusetts

HISTORY OF BOXWOOD

Mrs. Thomas Plowden-Wardlaw

My subject is Boxwood, man's oldest garden ornamental. I want to talk about its place in history, literature and legend, some of the uses, in addition to the aesthetic, to which it has been put, and finally its culture. From antiquity, box has had an honored place in the countries where it has been grown either indigenously or by introduction. It has been valued in its dual capacity as an ornamental plant serving an aesthetic purpose and as a commodity of many uses.

Where did the words "box" and "boxwood" come from? Naturally enough, and quite simply, they had their origin in one of the many uses they have served. The ancient Greeks called a small chest or box, *pyxus*, especially the carved and polished boxes which held perfumed unguents, and when they began to make the little boxes from the hard and beautiful wood of a common shrubby tree, they named the tree *pyxus*, from its use. To the Romans this became *buxus*. Many years later when the shrub was transplanted to England by the Romans, it became readily known as "Box". *Buxus* is now its generic name.

One of the most interesting facts about box is that its culture is international and intercontinental. It is indigenous to southern Europe, part of North Africa, the coastal regions of Asia Minor, Balkans, the Caucasus, Iran, Afghanistan, China and Japan. It has been successfully introduced in England and North America. Thus its endurance and vitality are apparent. So, also, is its popularity. We are not talking about an esoteric plant; we are talking about a plant at once common and hardy. Perhaps one proof of its hardiness and survival qualities is that it has withstood royal opposition. Queen Anne in 1703 found its aroma intolerable and had it uprooted from the gardens of Hampton Court. Benighted as she surely was in this instance, I am told that otherwise she was held in high repute and that her reign was a glorious one.

I turn now to the place boxwood has in history and literature, and I want to start at the earliest time where we find any reference to box. And it is early indeed, for fossil remains have been discovered in the Pliocene deposits in southern France, the time during which modern plants and animals developed.

In 4000 B.C., and dates at this time must be approximate, the garden of an Egyptian nobleman presumably included box, for the garden was

described in a detailed formal plan on his tomb. Greek gardens, like all gardens in ancient times, were a combination of the utilitarian and the decorative. They were chastely classic and rectangular in form in keeping with the severely plain houses they adjoined. The garden of Alcinous is the best known of these, and it must have been what Homer called "A splendid gift of the Gods" with its fountains, fruit trees, and marble arbors. This is the earliest record of a box hedge which had been shaped and carved, and since it was the work of the Greeks, it must have been handsome and of fine proportions. In the *Iliad*, Homer writes that in the Trojan War, the yoke for the steeds driven by Priam, King of Troy, was made of box.

Also we find reference to box in the Bible and specifically in the *Old Testament*. We read in *Isaiah* the glorious promise of the Lord, "I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine and the box tree together. . ."

Theophrastus, a Greek horticulturist who lived 372-287 B.C., has probably the earliest recorded botanical notes on the subject of box. Loudon, the British horticulturist in 1844, is my authority. Both Virgil and Ovid allude to the use of boxwood for musical instruments.

The first Roman gardens were reflections of the garden customs of the earlier one. Romans were not innovators in this field either. The gardens were terraced, as were the hanging gardens of Babylon. Cypress and box were widely used, and marble statues, water jars, and benches, often brought from Greece, were conspicuously set before the dark green background.

Of all the early Roman gardens, Pliny's (23 A.D.) is the best known. His villa overlooked the sea at Laurentium, a little southwest of Rome, and was readily found by visitors if you "quit the high road at the 14th stone."

The Roman estate always had three head gardeners, a *villians* who attended to weeding, transplanting, etc.; a *topiarus* who wielded the clippers; and an *aquarius* who tended to the watering. Obviously topiary had come into vogue and box lent itself well to this form of art. The results were fantastic. I should like to anticipate at this point and cite one use to which box was put in an understanding age. The Moors in Spain often hedged their harem gardens with box which was as fine a testimonial to the density of its foliage as could be asked.

However, the Prophets, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Moors were not the only people to love box. The English loved it too. While it is legendary to associate the Druids with the shrubs, it is a fact that box was one of the finer refinements the Romans brought to England. It grows wild today on Box Hill in Surrey, not too far from Colchester where the Romans first settled.

The garden in England that I want to cite is that at Hampton Court. The palace was built by the great Cardinal Wolsey, a gentleman of taste not only in the affairs of Church and State, but in architecture and landscaping as well. He sought the professional services of Lenotre, the greatest landscape architect of his day and the creator of the Versailles and Vatican gardens, to design the Hampton Court gardens. Lenotre used box to help express two of his basic ideas; one that a garden should have areas of privacy; and another, that it should have vistas. Hampton Court has had vicissitudes: I mentioned Queen Anne's uprooting of the box earlier; Wolsey could not enjoy his creation, for he had "to give" it to Henry VIII in 1526. The box has been replanted.

Let us now turn from these boxstones of European history to the story of box in America.

We know that the English settlers brought their institutions with them. Our political, judicial, religious, and economic systems are basically of English origin. So also they brought many intangibles; a love of freedom, individualism, and a sense of beauty. I suspect it was this latter attribute which led the English in coming to Colonial America to bring with them plants and cuttings of box. These would not take up an inordinate amount of space on the tiny ships which brought the colonists here. As a matter of fact, the cuttings were inserted into potatoes and the potatoes kept them green and moist. And these plants would be a part of Old England which for sentimental reasons our ancestors would cherish.

The first record of boxwood here occurs in 1652. In that year, Nathaniel Sylvester came to Long Island, built a manor house, and soon thereafter "set plantations of box around it." I believe this garden can still be seen on Shelter Island today. In succeeding years, box was brought in and imported to all the colonies, and dwarf box was used as a border plant in gardens from Boston to Charleston. Today's gardens at Williamsburg, Westover, Stratford, Shirley, and Mount Vernon, to mention a few, are faithful replicas of colonial gardens, as they portray the beauty of box in all its forms and varieties. If these gardens are considered elaborate, we should remember the place box occupied in the small and austere kitchen gardens of the Puritans. Box was appreciated by high and low alike.

Fittingly, perhaps, we should give a few details to the history of box at Mount Vernon. It is here that we have specific references to cuttings in somewhat unusual circumstances. Washington, after the Revolutionary War and before his election as first president, was engaged in structural improvements and landscaping of his property on the Potomac. Many of his friends, learning of his interest, sent him seeds and plants.

Washington's head gardener, Mr. Baxter (Villiens, Topiarus and Aquarius combined), was the man responsible for the care of the box in 1787. He was a very good gardener but legend says that he drank too freely in the little white house by the garden where he lived. Washington, reluctant to let a good man go, made an agreement with him, a bond formally drawn up, to the effect that he would give certain money and clothes to Baxter. The quid pro quo was that Baxter "would do certain daily work, and permitting him to be drunk just four days and four nights at Christmas, two at Easter, and two at Whitsuntide." And so truly had Washington judged his man that this contract was effective, and it is to the care of old Baxter during his sober days that we owe much of the glory of the Mount Vernon garden. As there is no topiary at Mount Vernon, perhaps we can assume from this fact, also, that Baxter honored his contract.

So much for the history. Although, as we have seen, box was primarily used decoratively in gardens, the wood itself has been used for many purposes from ancient times to the present. Boxwood is very hard, and has a fine uniform grain. It has been likened to ebony. It is heavy, and the only European wood which does not float. It takes a very fine polish and is greenish-yellow in color. It does not split easily and can be handled almost like ivory. All these physical characteristics led to its wide use in wood crafts and arts. From Albrecht Durer down to modern times, wood engravers have found it an unrivaled medium for their art, as it is capable of a finish as sharp as metal and is superior to it in taking the ink. The first wood engravings using boxwood offer food for thought: books of devotion and playing cards. The earliest boxwood engraving now extant is of St. Christopher carrying the infant Saviour. The date is 1423.

While the use to which the Moors put it, described earlier, may be the most important use, there have been others. Shuttles, spoons, combs, mathematical instruments, chess men, wind instruments — the flute and flageolets — have all been carved of box. Cabinet makers used the wood for inlay marquetry and ornamentation. In more modern times when the Industrial Revolution began in England (c. 1750) with the development of machines which led to the building of the great textile mills, boxwood shuttles became so great, the available supply of box was virtually exhausted and thereafter, there was

no boxwood for commercial purposes. There was no thought of conserving natural resources in those days.

Finally on this subject of the use of box, we must include its medicinal use. Fear and superstition surround it. Besides rating box low in medicinal value, Dodoens, a Dutch physician and botanist of the 17th century, warned of its possible harm, especially to the brain. In the days of Queen Anne, it was still thought that one's mind might be affected even by smelling box. It has a very pungent aroma which is to many, pleasing, and to others, obnoxious. It is today, moreover, classified as being slightly poisonous because of the alkaloid buxine which is found in the leaves and bark. Cattle and horses usually will not eat it because of the smell and taste. Those which do so may sicken and die. It is also said that when bees draw nectar from the tiny flowers of box, the honey is spoiled. Thus it never could be popular as a medicine. However, in the days of therapeutic superstition, and which days are not, various parts of the boxwood plants were used as cures for rheumatism, malarial fevers and epilepsy. Taken internally, the leaves acted as an emetic and purgative. If it kills the horse, I don't know why it didn't kill man, but this is what I have read.

As in the case of most of our common trees, a number of curious legends and superstitions are attached to the box. A custom at one time prevailed in England's North Country of using sprigs of box in connection with funerals.

A related custom pertained to French practice. There, branches of boxwood were strewn over new graves, and after a hedge of dwarf box enclosed the grave. Occasionally tall box was planted and clipped to form a cross of living green.

Perhaps one reason for its association with death was the belief that no ghost could rise from a grave lined or hedged with box. More likely and possible, dating back to the ancients who had dedicated the plant to Pluto, it was the evergreen leaves which symbolized life everlasting for the loved ones who were gone.

A legend is recorded in relation to the Monastery of St. Christine in the Pyrenees. The workmen who were employed to build the monastery had the greatest difficulty in finding a suitable foundation. One morning they saw a white pigeon flying with a cross in its beak. The bird perched on a box tree, and though it flew away on their approach, they found in the branches the cross and believing this to be a good omen, built the monastery on the spot where the box tree had stood.

The poet Herrick mentions the old custom of replacing all Christmas greens on Candlemas Day with boxwood boughs, which kept up until Easter Eve —
"Down with the Rosemary and Bays
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of Holly now upraise
The greener Box for show."

In Holland and Belgium, box is still used on Palm Sunday in processions instead of palms. The first recorded lighted Christmas tree was a box tree and for those of you with Scottish ancestry, it will interest you to learn that common box is the badge of the clan McIntosh and its variegated variety that of the McPhersons.

For believers in dreams, to dream of box denotes a long life and prosperity and a happy marriage.

(Courtesy: Home and Garden Bulletin, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - The Story of Boxwood by Clare S. McCarty).

SPRAYS AND SPRAYING

SPRAYING *

Mrs. George Knowles, Jr.

1. *Meticystox* — used by nurserymen — not available over the counter. Our GCBB Boxwood is sprayed first mid-May and second spray two weeks later. Just this controls LEAF MINER; maggots that mine in the under side of leaves. Gives blistered effect — is most serious.

2. *Isotox* Systemic — Use with discretion around edible plants.

3. *Orthene* — Biodegradable. Either No. 2 or No. 3 can be purchased and used per plant.

4. *Common Marigold* gives slightly, safe, inexpensive control of *Nematodes*. Roots produce slowly a chemical that kills *Nematodes* — sharply reducing the

population of these root-feeding microscopic earthworms for several years.

5. *Sevin* can be used for *Psyllids* — sucking insects causing leaves to "cup" or "turn up," giving a lime green, spotty appearance — no permanent damage results. Control by using *Sevin* as leaf bud opens and new growth develops.

Boxwood Mite: deterioration of leaves — control insecticide mid-May.

When spraying, be careful not to "hit" other material.

Wiltpruf in February — advisable.

* Note:

Spraying materials choice of locale and users.

FERTILIZING

Mrs. Arthur Buckley

In order to insure the proper growth and continued health of boxwood, a schedule of fertilizing must be maintained. Boxwood is a heavy feeding plant and will grow rapidly if liberally fertilized. Neglect of this step often results in nonvigorous plants.

The committee working with the heaths and heathers last year found that a solution of organic seaweed was highly beneficial, and so this same formula was used on the box cuttings planted here and at the Nonquitt gardens this spring. The results were highly successful with very few plants being lost. The organic seaweed may be purchased at local nurseries and should be used as directed.

Newly planted box cuttings should *not* be fertilized, until new growth appears, as the potting soil has enough nutrients in it to sustain the plant until this time.

On the more mature box, an acid fertilizer is recommended, grade 10-10-10, and can be applied in the spring after the ground has thawed or in *late* fall just before the ground freezes. Fertilizing in the early fall may delay the maturing of the shoots and may promote second growth, which will be subject to winterkill. Apply one or two pounds per 100 square feet of soil surface.

Gypsum may be used as a mulch, but it is not a substitute for fertilizing.

Care should be taken when working around box, as the plants have shallow roots which can be damaged very easily.

Boxwood requires a lot of water, in fact the equivalent of about one inch of rainfall every 10 days. You can be safe in watering plants thoroughly every 10 days from spring to mid-summer. Water heavily just before freezing.

PROPAGATION

Mrs. Peter Milliken and Mrs. Julian O'Leary

We will show you four or five ways to root new Boxwood cuttings. It's easy and fun, but do make sure that you root more cuttings than you will need, because some "take" and others don't.

The same soil mixture is used for all the methods. It is:

- 1/3 sand
 - 1/3 peat moss
 - 1/3 loam
 - trace of lime and bonemeal
 - vermiculite to lighten the soil —
- The soil should feel light but have body.

For all the methods of rooting, take a sprig of the box (new growth) about 4-6 inches long. Gently take the leaves off the bottom 1½ inches. Strip a little of the outer stem off, so the Rootone will be

absorbed more easily. Dip the end in water, then Rootone, then plant it in one of the following ways:

1. Flats in the greenhouse or house. The soil mixture should be 3-4 inches deep. Make a hole in the mixture with a long pointed object, such as a nail or pencil. Insert the cutting, press soil very firmly around cutting to eliminate air pockets, and water it. The whole flat can be covered with plastic with the edges tucked in, so that frequent watering will not be necessary.

2. Another method is the bottomless pit.

Nail four boards together to form a square with no bottom. Choose a shady, out-of-the-way spot in your yard, and loosen the soil to a depth of one foot. Place wooden box in this spot, and fill it with 3-4 inches of pine needles. Stamp them down and water it, and leave it alone for about a week. Do this twice more. After 3-4 weeks, some rotting

will take place, and the resulting warmth will provide good bottom warmth for rooting cuttings. Add 4-6 inches of soil mixture on top of the pine needles, and then plant the cuttings in the same manner as in the flats. Put a piece of fine wire over the top to give a little shade and to hold out leaves and sticks.

We are now going to discuss briefly several methods of propagating at home with little or no expense, not much effort and great results. It is fun to be able to give these small boxwood plants, which are almost immediately attractive, to your children, grandchildren or guests. They are always delighted! The first way was called the "Bell Glass" method, but this way is so old that bell-glasses are almost extinct. Any glass jar will do, however such as peanut butter, mayonnaise or your Ball canning jars. One of the best areas to try this in October is under your shrubbery surrounding your home, as the warmth of the house helps the cuttings and the shrubs provide needed shade. At the base of a north wall is another excellent spot, but be sure that they get no more than a little filtered sunlight or it will become too hot under the jar.

Hoe up at least three inches of soil, and water thoroughly the day before planting. Plant cuttings in usual way and place a jar over each, pushing jar firmly into soil, without disturbing cutting, so that there is no space between jar and soil. Ignore until late spring, at which time you should place a small wedge under jar to begin to let in a little air. By the end of June, you may remove jar altogether. At this time, you may water occasionally with organic seaweed fertilizer. In late August or September plants may be put in pots or garden and the whole procedure started again in October.

Another way is to take a six-inch pot — put a piece of crockery over the hole in the bottom. Fill with potting soil, and place a two-inch clay pot in the middle. Place cuttings in the soil around the two-inch pot. The cuttings can be kept moist by filling the center pot with water. This method seems to develop very strong roots and is an excellent way to start additional house plants.

At the discount store, a plastic shoe box may be purchased for \$2.47. Put a layer of pebbles on bottom, then about 3 or 4 inches of potting soil. Plant cuttings in usual way and then put cover on and forget. This is also a great way to start seeds of difficult plants, such as azaleas, rhododendrons, ferns, etc.

NOMENCLATURE

Mrs. Charles Beckman and Mrs. Waldo Howland

Boxwood belongs to the genus *Buxus*. Four species are: *B. sempervirens*, *B. microphylla*, *B. harlandii*, and *B. balearica*, which is fairly scarce. In the 18th century, Carolus Linnaeus classified all known animal and plant life into genus and species that we still use today. Species are subdivided into varieties, which are usually developed in nature from seed and given descriptive Latin names, or cultivars, which are developed in nurseries or greenhouses, and since 1959 have been given a capitalized name. There are more than eighty varieties or cultivars: *B. sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa* is what is known as English Boxwood and *B. sempervirens* 'Arborescens' is what we commonly call American Boxwood.

Genus	Species	Variety or Cultivar
<i>Buxus</i>	<i>sempervirens</i>	'Arborescens' (Common box)
		var. <i>suffruticosa</i> (English box)
		'Vardar Valley'
		'Elegantissima'
	<i>microphylla</i>	'Argentea Marginata'
		'Fastigiata'
		'Curly Locks'
	<i>harlandii</i>	var. <i>japonica</i>
		'Kingsville'
		var. <i>koreana</i>
<i>balearica</i> - scarce		



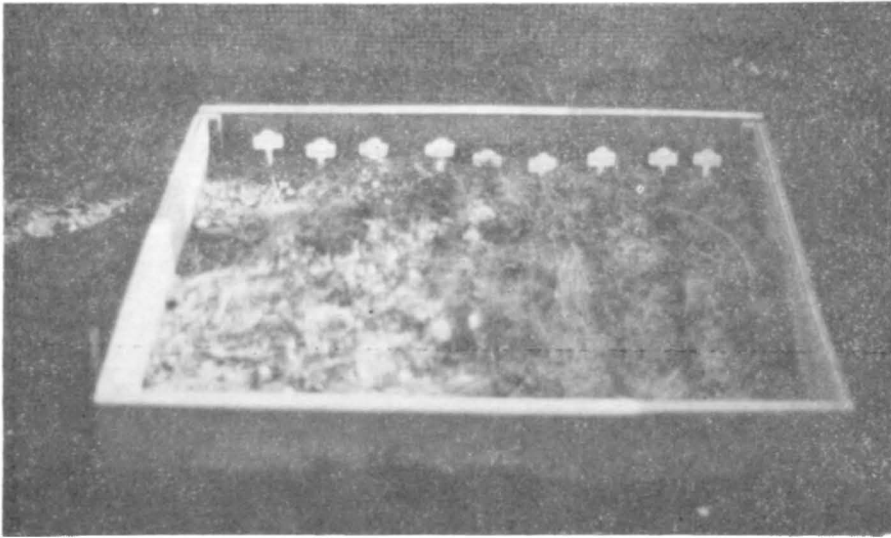


photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
Bottomless pit: 1979 Planting

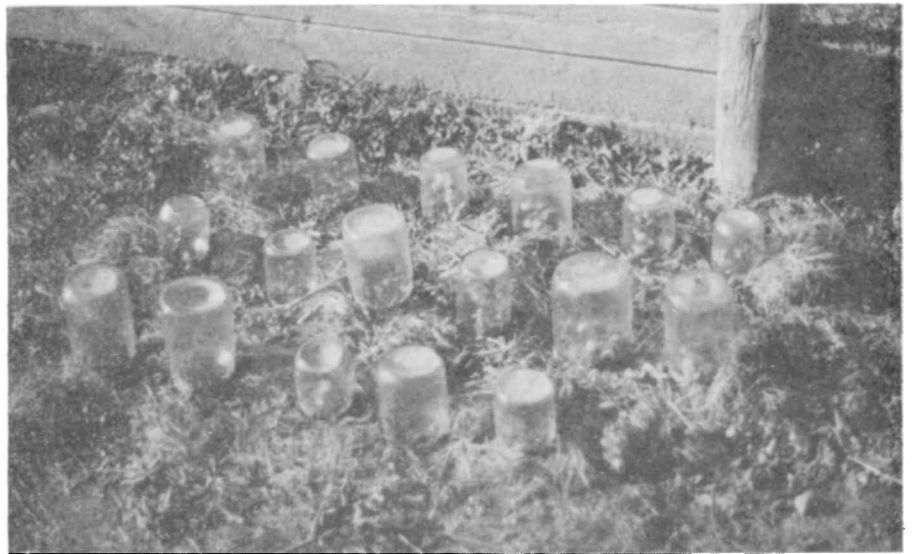


photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
Bottle miniature greenhouses.



photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
Garden Club nursery on member's property.



photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
Eight year olds grown in lathe house.

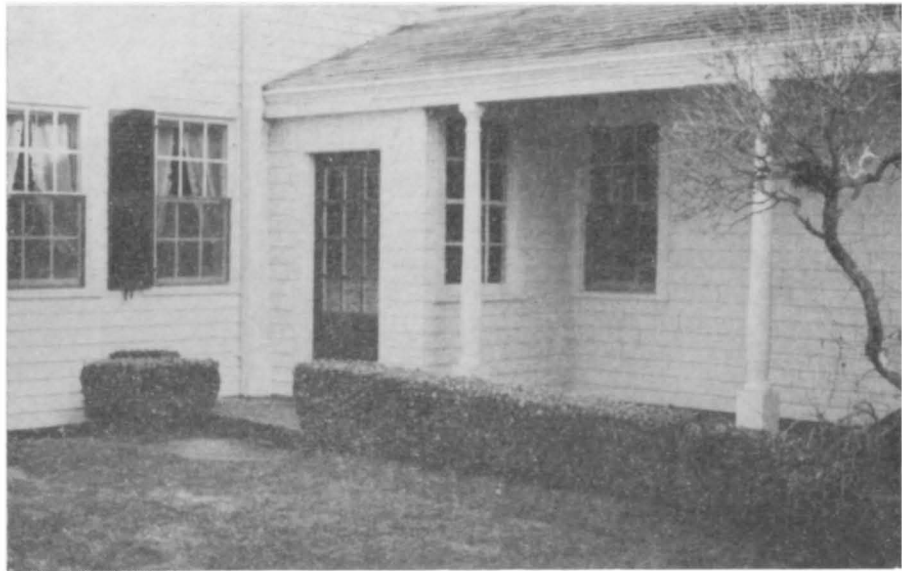


photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
B. sempervirens 'Aurea Maculata' hedge.



photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club
Member's boxwood.

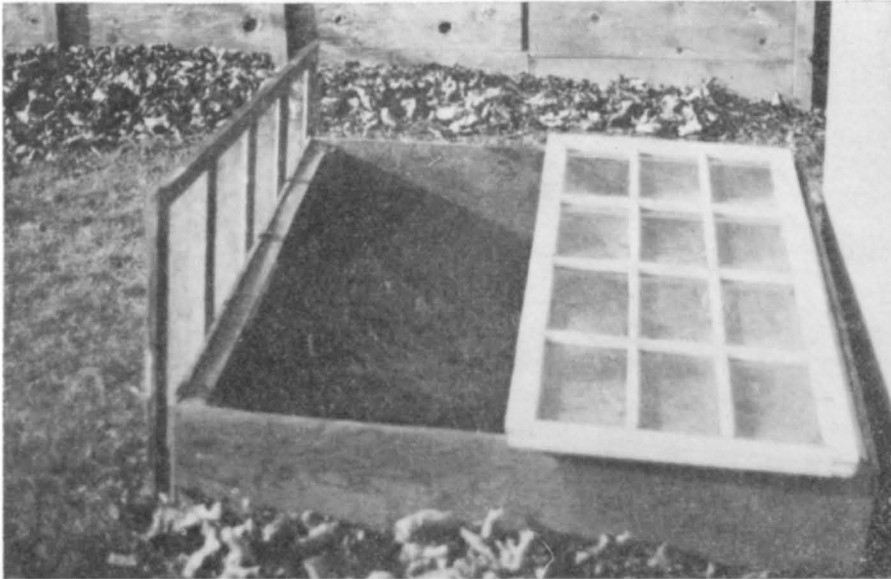


photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club

Small potted plants kept in cold frame, Pine needle mulch:
Sold as gifts.



photo: Buzzards Bay Garden Club

B. sempervirens and *B. sempervirens* "L"

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. To control the size of my dwarf boxwood hedge and to give it a formal appearance in my parterre garden, I shear the plants every year with electric clippers. Recently I read that this practice of shearing could be harmful. Please advise.

A. Controlling the size of boxwood year after year with hedge or electric clippers can be detrimental. This is especially true if no effort is made to do some "plucking" or thinning each year to let light into the crown of the plant. When the interior has adequate light there will be a green center and

leaves will be found all the way up the stem. It is also important once a year to clean out leaves or twigs that have accumulated in the center of the boxwood plants.

(Editor's Note: Readers are encouraged to send questions about boxwood to the chairman of the Bulletin Committee, Mr. Scot Butler, P. O. Box 184, Bluemont, Virginia 22012. The Committee does not guarantee to answer all questions but will do the best they can, invoking the help of other more knowledgeable members when necessary.)

PRUNING

Mrs. Bayard Tuckerman and Mrs. George Knowles, Jr.

Box tolerates any amount of pruning but looks equally well as gently pruned billowing dense bushes. The final shape and size depends on the species.

Pruning may be done in spring or fall. When starting out with boxwood, pinch rooted cuttings several times before planting out. This encourages growth at the bottom and makes a sturdier plant. If used as a border or hedge, prune it tightly for at least three years to develop density.

Established bushes, specimen, and older hedges should be thinned at the top. It is critical that they be pruned once a year by thinning some of the branches in the upper portion so that the center may receive air and light. Prune by hand with sharp clippers. Do not shear, but reach in and thin. The

sides may also be pruned by clipping, but again do not shear. It leaves ugly stubs. Neglected box can be rejuvenated by this interior thinning and by severely cutting back the top. This drastic pruning should be done during winter or early spring so that new growth can cover the cuts and soften the abrupt "recently cut" appearance.

Entire branches die back sometimes from various diseases. The minute you see a patch of leaves has turned pale green or yellow, reach in and cut the branch back to healthy dark green growth. Cut out every trace of wood that shows discoloration inside or that has sunken patches or blotches on the bark. Dip pruners in disinfectant between cuts. A solution of Mercuric Chloride (poison) 1:1000 is good or 70% alcohol.

PLANTING

Mrs. William Barker and Mrs. Russell Knowles

The demands of boxwood are minimal. It does well in shade, partial shade, or full sunlight. It thrives and seems content in a wide variety of soils. If planted properly, most varieties will survive our winters. The important thing to remember is that the soil in which it is planted must be *well drained* and *aerated*.

In planting, follow the normal procedure. Using a spade, rather than a shovel, make a good sized hole to accommodate the root ball. If the soil is hard and lumpy, use some good loamy friable topsoil in filling the hole. Add a handful of *bonemeal* to the soil. Stamp out all air pockets. Remember, boxwoods will not flourish in poorly drained soil. If the planting site has no natural drainage, box can be "planted high." That is, the hole for the root ball can be made shallower than the depth of the root ball. Earth can be built up around the protruding root ball to provide a sloping surface. This improves drainage around the base of the plant.

It has been pointed out that many of the best boxwood plantings are located near other trees and shrubs where the root systems of these neighboring plants create channels in the soil for good drainage. Frequently one finds fine boxwood specimens in old churchyards or cemeteries which are usually located on high ground where the drainage is good and where the plants are not handicapped by excessive tender loving care which boxwoods do *not* need.

In our northern climate, more attention should be paid to location where there is some protection from winter sun and wind. Boxwood leaves keep giving off moisture all winter, and the loss of this moisture is increased by the action of strong winds and bright sun. As the ground is frozen, the roots are not capable of replenishing the moisture as generously as required by the leaves, which leads to winterkill.

Extra protection is desirable the first winter after planting by mulching lightly with leaves, straw, shavings, sawdust or straw manure. Cover with evergreen boughs or shield with burlap.

It is important that the plants have adequate water just before freezing sets in. More damage is done to boxwood by dry soil than any other cause. If the spring or summer is very dry, hose for several hours once or twice a week — not just a few minutes a day.

Boxwoods have been referred to as the "Queen of the evergreens." It is the most popular of the shrubs grown for the beauty of the foliage alone. Effective plantings of boxwood blend perfectly with other shrubs and seasonal flowers. With the growing demand for low maintenance, green gardens are of interest and boxwoods are the key to a garden "where maintenance decreases as beauty increases." In making your selections for planting, it is important to select varieties appropriate for the site.

Boxwood Species and Varieties Available in Garden Club of Buzzards Bay Nurseries

Buxus harlandii - China - with elongated yellow-green leaves, round ended. Affected by icy cold extreme temperatures - prefers warmth.

Buxus microphylla - China - Korea - Japan. Round ended leaves, relatively small - usually a low bush, but forms can grow to 8', medium to very hardy.

'Curly Locks' - Compact - somewhat yellowish with curling growths.

var. *compacta* - Dwarf plant, tiny leaves, slow growing. Developed by Henry Hohman - Kingsville Nurseries.

var. *koreana* - Korean Boxwood is found in two distinctive forms (in older American plantings) as a wide-spreading dwarf (or 'Garden Variety') and as a much taller plant with smaller leaves and open habit which is very cold tolerant. The latter introduced by Wilson and the Arnold Arboretum in 1919.

var. *japonica* - Tall, large, round yellow-green leaf form - wide climate range. Specimen shrub, free standing. Vigorous upright habit.

Buxus sempervirens - Common box - From Europe to West Asia. Leaves dark green, usually pointed and broadest below the middle. Very variable in habit from dwarf to spreading to 30' or more in height.

'Arborescens' - Tall shrub or small tree, dense foliage. Valued for trimming to shape - topiary.

'Arborescens Aurea Pendula' - Large shrub or small tree. Elegant, droopy and somewhat spreading in habit. Leaves edged creamy yellow specimen plant.

'Rotundifolia' - Slow-growing form. Loose open habit - large spreading shrub of heavy appearance. Deep shining green, round leaf.

'Handsworthiensis' - Large erect shrub, strong leathery olive green to grey-green leaf, becomes shiny green when shaded. Narrow upright habit. Ideal for large hedge or screen.

var. *suffruticosa* - English Box Dwarf - must have good drainage. Compact and rounded habit maintained by regular clipping. The "Edging Box" of England for beds and borders or formal hedge useful in geometrically designed gardens. Bright, shiny green, rounded leaf. 'Aurea Maculata' - Well formed shrub which in time can grow tall. Leaf, medium to large, dark green, variously striped and splashed with yellow. Worth growing for spring foliage which is bright shiny yellow; encouraged by annual pruning. Attractive hedge.

'Argenteo Marginata' - Strong, erect form; stiff. Dark green leaf edged white. Good large hedge. Reverts easily.

'Elegantissima' - Dense, compact rounded habit. Small to medium leaf, dark green with splashed white margin. Specimen plant. One of the most attractive.

'Fastigiata' - Narrow, upright type tall. Leaves dark green - dense foliage. Specimen plant.

'Vardar Valley' - Low spreading habit 3' to 4'. Dark green, medium to large leaf. Distinctive.

'Inglis' - Firm, compact. Leaves have blueish tinge. Specimen plant.

PLANTING REFERENCE

ACCENTS:

Low: *Buxus microphylla* var. *koreana*
Buxus sempervirens var. *suffruticosa*
Buxus microphylla var. *compacta*

Column Accent:

Buxus sempervirens - 'Handsworthiensis'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Fastigiata'

SPECIMEN PLANTS:

Buxus microphylla - 'Argenteo Marginata'
Buxus microphylla - 'Elegantissima'
Buxus microphylla - var. *koreana*
Buxus sempervirens - 'Arborescens'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Arborescens Aurea Pendula'
Buxus microphylla - var. *japonica*
Buxus microphylla - 'Curly Locks'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Rotundifolia'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Aurea Maculata'

HEDGES:

Low: *Buxus sempervirens* - 'Aurea Maculata'

Buxus sempervirens - var. *suffruticosa*

Low Bushy for Borders, Parterre:

Buxus sempervirens - var. *suffruticosa*
Buxus microphylla - var. *koreana* 'Garden Variety'

TOPIARY:

Buxus sempervirens - 'Arborescens'

RESIST COLD:

Buxus microphylla - var. *koreana*
Buxus microphylla - var. *japonica*

RESIST HEAT:

Buxus harlandii

ATTRACTIVE FOLIAGE:

Buxus sempervirens - 'Aurea Variegata'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Elegantissima'
Buxus sempervirens - 'Aurea Maculata'

**SPECIES AND VARIETIES OF BOXWOOD
NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESENT TIME**

Buxus balearica

Large leaf, tall growing, scarce.

Buxus sempervirens

'Glauca'

Robust habit, leaf medium to large, dark almost black-green with conspicuous glaucous bloom, especially when young.

'Latifolia Bullata'

Large, heavy spreading tree. Dark, round, green leaves. Curious rather than attractive.

'Longifolia'

Erect form with slender, densely arranged stems. Leaf medium to large, narrow stiff dark green, 10'-15' high.

'Salicifolia', tall, slender, lax habit.

'Myosotifolia'

Erect, twiggy bush; compact habit. Leaf dark green, small to medium, slow growing. 5' after many years.

'Mvrtifolia'

Leaf arranged in fan-like spray; copper tinted in winter. Attractive dwarf shrub. Slow growing.

'Notata'

Tall; leaf medium dark green-yellow tip. Not one of best; not stable.

'Prostrata'

Open in habit, slender branched, filling out to large spreading bush, horizontal branches, lax habit; medium leaf, dark shiny green, dull at first. Low shrub. 2'-3' high.

'Pyramidalis'

Tall erect cone, shape widens as it matures. Leaf medium, dark, shiny green. Good screen, pruning lateral growth tends to increase height of hedge or screen.

'Rosmarinifolia'

Dwarf and very small leaf, dull grey-green. Neat, slow growth. 5'-6' after many years.

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Mrs. George B. Knowles Jr.
Numquid Farm
Box 126 P
South Dartmouth, Mass. 02748

American Boxwood Society
Boyce, Va.

Dear Professor Beecher,
Enclosed: A copy of the Symposium that the

Boxwood Committee of the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay compiled and published for our members and interested people.

We started our project in 1961, with cuttings from the Green Garden of Mrs. Ferris Francis, Quisset, Mass. mother of one of our members. These cuttings from 22 varieties were rooted in the hardwood propagating box in the Greenhouse which our club members have available for their use.

In 1964, Garden Club of Buzzards Bay started mailing Boxwood cuttings to those who answered our "ad" in the Garden Club of America Bulletin. In 1965, 14 varieties were sent to 28 states; about 2500 cuttings in all. In 1968, Boxwood plants were offered for sale. The Committee decided not to do that again, as the packaging and shipping was extremely difficult. Cuttings were offered and shipped in 1969, 1970, and 1971. An Inspector from the Department of Agriculture, Waltham, Mass. inspected all gardens from which cuttings were taken, and gave us stamped mailing tags.

If any of your members should be in this area, we extend an invitation to visit our project and plantings.

Most Sincerely,
Edith P. Knowles
(Mrs. George, Jr.)

August 21, 1979

Editors Note:

The Garden Club of Buzzards Bay, South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, since 1961 has been actively engaged in growing boxwood and assembling information on varieties; history and culture of boxwood. A report was compiled by the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay when they held a Boxwood Symposium in September of 1978.

We are grateful to Mrs. Knowles for granting permission for us to share the Symposium Report in the *Boxwood Bulletin*.

DUES ARE DUE!

Annual (Regular), per year	\$ 5
Contributing, per year	\$ 10
Sustaining, per year	\$ 25
Life (no further dues)	\$100
Patron (no further dues)	\$500
Honorary (conferred)	None

Contributions are also welcome for:

The Research Fund

The Boxwood Memorial Garden

The Boxwood Handbook Project

Membership dues or gifts for special projects should be sent to: American Boxwood Society, Treasurer, P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Virginia 22620. Please correct your address if it needs correcting.

Boxwood members are reminded that contributions are deductible in computing income taxes in accordance with the provisions of the Revenue Act.

BOXWOOD AT AGECROFT

Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale



photo: Courtesy Agecroft Association
Agecroft



photo: Courtesy Agecroft Association
Agecroft Formal Garden

One of the most beautiful gardens we have seen in America or in England is the garden at Agecroft Hall in Windsor Farms, Richmond. Because we visited this garden in late November primarily to write up the boxwood, there were no flowers in bloom but the landscaping was lovely.

Agecroft is located on a high hill above the James River, and is four thousand miles from its original 15th century site on the banks of the Irwell, near Manchester, England. The late Thomas C. Williams and his wife rescued Agecroft Hall from destruction by the encroachment of industrial buildings in 1925 and reconstructed the 15th century Manor House at 4305 Sulgrave Road in Windsor Farms, Richmond, Virginia.

The front of the house faces the river and is planted with boxwood, chiefly *Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*. From the side entrance the steps lead down to the Little Pool Garden which is copied from a very old garden at Hampton Court in England. However, we visited that garden in 1963 and the Agecroft garden is much more beautiful. The steps lead down to a sunken garden with a round pool in the middle, an edging of small boxwood around the pool. Larger specimens of *suffruticosa* mark the four corners, and all around the garden very large boxwood are planted as a background. There are lovely statues placed in many niches of the garden.

Continuing our tour we walked up a few steps and found a gazebo with a table and bench. From this point we could look over the garden we had left and obtain a view of another garden in front. After walking down some steps we came to the Formal Flower Garden. A lovely sundial was centered here, where beds of many blooming flowers highlight their seasons. Surrounding this garden are many large boxwood.

An herb garden (developed by the Agecroft Association) is an adjunct to the formal flower garden. Many of the country houses at the time of the

erection of Agecroft Hall during the late 1400's had herb gardens. In this new garden are various types of herbs that were used in Elizabethan times for their scent and their medicinal value, as well as for flavoring in cooking.

Another path led back to the house which was bordered with large azaleas as the "smaller plants"; the trees included large magnolias, crape myrtles, and others. Periwinkle was the predominant ground cover. On the back road leading away from Agecroft there is a hedge of trimmed *Ilex opaca*.

Although Richmond started more or less on Church Hill near the historic St. John's Church, the Williams' farm was "in the country" until the city pushed outward. Agecroft was built on land which was originally Mr. Williams' "farm in the country".

The writer went to work at Virginia House in November, 1930, and was there 42 years, remembers that in the early days the Weddells, who owned Virginia House, planned and planted a wild garden down the hill as a memorial to Mr. T. C. Williams with an inscription carved on a huge stone near the river. The garden has unfortunately become overgrown but the beautiful boxwood and Agecroft Hall are a continuous reminder of what the T. C. Williams family contributed to Virginia. Agecroft is an illustration of what can be done to preserve our heritage. Also, it was one of Mr. Williams' close relatives who helped initiate "Historic Garden Week in Virginia".

Editor's note: The author of *Boxwood At Agecroft* is Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale of Ashland, Virginia, who worked as a hostess at Virginia House for 42 years. She is a Charter Member of The American Boxwood Society, and a member of The Garden Club of Virginia. Her husband, Arthur A. Dugdale, is a retired nurseryman who continues to write a weekly horticultural column entitled "Gardening in Virginia" which appears in the Richmond News Leader newspaper.

"BOXWOODING IN ENGLAND"

Betty Whiting Flemming
Leesburg Garden Club

Many of you knew my dear mother-in-law Helen Whiting, of Winchester. She was a long time member of the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club. She edited the *Boxwood Bulletin* for many years with love, intelligence, and a sense of humour.

In the fall of 1972 we spent a lovely month in England; our stated purpose was to photograph boxwood in the gardens there, but that was only a part of our many adventures.

Mother Whiting had a fantastic mind! She was interested in everything. She searched out and read everything while absorbed in a particular subject. As we approached a place, she would come out with a wealth of information; who built it, when, why, how, what took place there over the centuries, who murdered whom, and who ran away with the governess. She was an avid reader; read everything from the heaviest to the most frivolous, and years later could recall what she had read on the subject at hand.

Instead of hotels in the cities, we chose to stay in inns in villages and small towns, from which we could take in two or three points of interest in that area. After three or four days in one vicinity, we moved to another.

Our first excursion was from Dorking, where we stayed in a delightful 15th or 16th century inn, to Box Hill. It is literally a hillside, covering many acres, on which box grows as if wild. Jané Austin created an outing there for Emma and friends.

I won't go into detail about the many houses and gardens we enjoyed because many of you have seen them; Knole, Cissinghurst, Pennshurst, Longleat, Great Dixter (wonderful topiary), Wilton, Stourhead, Compton Wynyates (plus a lovely village church), Blenheim, Woburn Abbey, Hampton Court, Ham House (where Elizabeth I got word she was queen), Apsley House, Osterly Park (an outstanding Adams house, created from an Elizabethan one), and others. We loved the beautiful countryside, the lovely gardens, so neat and green. We envied the unbelievable roses, apparently not so susceptible to the diseases that roses suffer in our climate.

We did a thorough job investigating the Royal Pavilion, but a special find in Brighton proved to be a small museum. Not only did they have a marvelous display of Constable paintings, but several glass cases filled with antique musical instruments carved from boxwood.

On the way to Winchester, we stopped to explore the Roman ruins near Chichester. These were uncovered during excavations to build a super highway. Some of the early buildings had been paved over when someone realized construction should be halted and experts called in to take a look. Needless to say, the road took a different route from then on. Some fascinating things were saved. We found the box-lined green garden especially interesting. It was replanted in patterns discovered in long buried roots. It is said that box was brought to the British Isles by the Romans.

We often ate in tea rooms and out-of-the-way restaurants, especially for lunch, with the most delicious results. One day we found that we were too late for lunch in the only restaurant in a certain

village. We found a small bakery, bought Cornish Pastries, warm and savory. We then sought a tiny grocery where we bought milk and soft drinks. Our unexpected picnic was a treat, indeed.

We spent that month exploring houses, great and small, lovely gardens, museums, churches and cathedrals, needlework treasures, (I had to be dragged away from the textile section of the Victoria and Albert), and architectural gems.

After we returned home, we had great fun sorting, viewing, and organizing our slides and photos. Later, Mother Whiting presented a program to the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club, showing our slides and giving a delightful commentary. I was invited to share.

It was such a special time; a trip I will always cherish. Helen Hudson Whiting made my life richer, as she did for many others, and we all miss her.

BOXWOOD AND GARDEN WEEK IN VIRGINIA

Harrison Symmes

The dates for the 48th Annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia are April 18 through April 26, 1981. For nine days, visitors are invited to come and enjoy many privately owned handsome homes, lovely gardens and historic landmarks throughout the state.

Boxwood enthusiasts will have an opportunity to see boxwood used in many of the private homes. A guide book giving detailed descriptions of the homes and gardens open for this springtime event can be obtained from The Garden Club of Virginia. To obtain *Historic Garden Week in Virginia*, contact Historic Garden Week Headquarters, 12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. A remittance of 50¢ toward the cost of the postage for the large and informative book will be appreciated.

In addition to the homes and gardens open during Garden Week there are in Virginia many historic homes and gardens that are open to the public throughout the year where boxwoods are especially featured. Most of these are maintained by the State or by private foundations. A partial list of places to visit for those interested in seeing boxwood in Virginia are:

Gunston Hall Plantation — Lorton
Morven Park — Leesburg
Mount Vernon — near Alexandria
Oatlands — Leesburg
Stratford Hall — Westmoreland County
Ash Lawn — Charlottesville
Jefferson Gardens, and the Rotunda at the
University of Virginia — Charlottesville
Castle Hill — near Charlottesville
Scotchtown — Hanover County
Berkeley — Charles City
Carters Grove — Williamsburg
Colonial Williamsburg — Williamsburg

Interesting collections of boxwood varieties can be seen on the campus of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg and at the American Boxwood Society Memorial Garden at the Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce. A fine labeled collection of boxwood can also be seen just across the river from Northern Virginia at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

MINUTES OF THE ABS BOARD MEETING
March 18, 1981

The Spring meeting of Directors and Officers of the American Boxwood Society was held at Blandy Farm, Boyce, Virginia on March 18, 1981 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Albert Beecher, President. Those present were Dr. Speese, Mrs. Frackelton, Mrs. Dick, Mr. Symmes, Mr. Mahone, Mr. Hallowell, Mr. Butler, Mr. Ewert, Mr. Mak and Mr. Beecher. Also attending was Mrs. Beecher.

After welcoming Mrs. Frackelton to membership on the Board, Mr. Beecher proceeded with the business before the Board and Officers. The minutes of the Fall meeting were approved, after which Mr. Ewert presented the Treasurer's report, which included the following information: Receipts \$568.00; Disbursements - \$3239.85; Checking Account balance - \$505.87; Savings Account balance - \$2535.43; and Certificates of Deposit - \$5404.18. The report was approved.

Scot Butler, Chairman of the Nominating Committee announced that Doris Frost and Faye Gottfried had agreed to serve on the committee, and that their report will be ready for the Annual Meeting of the Society on May 13, 1981.

A discussion followed on the advisability of enlarging the Board for more member participation, and the adding of the Registrar to the Board as an *ex officio* member.

The following motions for amendments to the constitution were discussed and approved for presentation at the May 13 Annual Meeting: "The Registrar shall be made an *ex officio* member of the Board"; and "two more Directors shall be added to the Board with consideration being given to providing greater regional and functional representation to the Board." Final voting on these amendments would take place at the 1982 Annual Meeting. Mr. Symmes suggested that the President consider appointing a committee to study the advisability of limiting the terms of Board Members, thus periodically bringing new persons to the Board.

Mr. Mahone reported on the status of the forthcoming Spring Boxwood Tour to be held in the Fredericksburg area April 25-26. Thus far 45 persons have signed up for the tour. Mr. Carl Flemmer of Ingleside Plantation has invited the participants to visit his plantation and nursery at Oak Grove. The schedule has been revised in order to accept this invitation.

Mr. Symmes, Chairman of the Membership Committee, reported that an advertisement inviting membership to the Society will be placed this spring in the *American Horticulturist* magazine published by the American Horticultural Society. He suggested that we await the results of this advertisement before deciding whether to place similar ads in other periodicals. It is also important to decide how large we really want the Society to become. Membership currently is about 875, Mr. Ewert reported. The membership list has not been entirely cleared of delinquent members. Mr. Beecher pointed out that a letter would be going out on April 1st to all members describing the various types of membership and urging members to choose Contributing, Sustaining or Life Memberships. Accompanying this letter will be (a) notice of the Annual Meeting on May 13, (b) a "sign up" form for the Annual Meeting, and (c) a notice of dues

payment. There would later be a follow-up letter to those who have not paid their dues.

Mrs. Dick, Editor of the *Boxwood Bulletin*, reported that the next issue of the *Bulletin* was nearly ready. Mr. Butler, Chairman of the Bulletin Committee, explained the new practices which had been instituted to speed up its preparation and reported that he hoped to be able to include in the October, 1981 issue an up-to date list of members of the Society. His committee also plans to update the *Index* for the *Boxwood Bulletin*. The last *Index* was published in the January 1972 *Boxwood Bulletin*. The committee will be seeking volunteer help to assist with this important project.

Mr. Ewert then reported on the status of the Memorial Garden, pointing out that there are now 57 varieties of boxwood in the garden, a list of which will be available to members at the Annual Meeting. He said that the price of the plant labels or markers had nearly doubled to \$6.50. It was the sense of the meeting that Mr. Ewert should go ahead and buy the needed number despite the cost of \$400 or \$500.

Progress in preparation of the *Boxwood Handbook* was discussed and various suggestions were presented. Mr. Hallowell emphasized that the final product should be first class, of magazine size and in color, and should be one which would really "sell" boxwood. Mrs. Frackelton suggested a loose-leaf arrangement to facilitate updating. Mr. Symmes stated that since this will probably be the only *Boxwood Handbook* in existence it should be thorough and truly helpful to the reader. Mr. Ewert underlined the need to include and describe all types of boxwood and provide useful information to boxwood fanciers in all regions of the country. President Beecher directed that a workshop meeting of the committee be held at Blandy on the afternoon of May 12.

Mr. Ewert said that the agenda for the Annual Meeting was about complete. Larry Steward, of the Department of Buildings and Grounds at the University of Virginia, will present an overview of the Grounds and Gardens of The University of Virginia. Patricia Sonneborn of Ambler, Pa. will give demonstrations of flower arranging using boxwood. A panel discussion will be included, and he was in the process of selecting the panel members. A slide program and reception will be held for early arrivals on the evening prior to the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Ewert reported that the membership cards for new members and life members approved at the last board meeting have now been ordered.

In response to a recent request, President Beecher asked the Board's opinion as to whether the Society should release its membership list to companies or organizations requesting them. It was the consensus of the Board that the membership list should be made available only to members of the American Boxwood Society. These lists do appear periodically in the *Boxwood Bulletin*.

The meeting ended with a discussion of 1981 workshops. It is contemplated that there will be one at Blandy in late July or early August and one at Winston-Salem or Asheville, N. C. this summer or fall. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

Dayton Mak
Secretary, American Boxwood Society

LANDSCAPE DESIGN



Photo courtesy of the American Nurserymen's Association

A pleasing foundation planting composition is an idea for home owners. The key to creating and maintaining an attractive planting around a home is to start with a good design and to fully understand what size to maintain each plant so appropriate pruning steps can be taken at the proper time. The decision whether to prune the plants in an informal

or formal manner must also be made and this decision will depend on the original design concept.

Boxwoods can be used very successfully in combination with other plants in a foundation composition or the total composition may be made up of several different varieties of boxwoods with variations in the size of the foliage, texture and form.



Photo courtesy of the American Nurserymen's Association

21st Annual Meeting of the American Boxwood Society

DATE: May 12 and May 13, 1981

PLACE: The Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce,
Virginia

THE PROGRAM:

May 12, 1981

7:30 PM Early Arrival Get-Together in the Library at the Quarters at Blandy
Slide Presentation - "Beautiful Gardens Begin with Boxwood" - Prof. James A. Faiszt
Reception

May 13, 1981

9:00 - 11:00 AM Registration

9:30 AM Tour - Memorial Boxwood Garden of the American Boxwood Society
Tour Guides - Thomas E. Ewert and Prof. James A. Faiszt

10:30 AM Get-Together Coffee

11:00 AM Annual Business Meeting

12 Noon Lunch

1:15 PM Educational Program - Moderator - Mr. Thomas E. Ewert

An Overview of the Gardens and Grounds of the University of Virginia - Mr. Larry Steward

Questions and Answers - What Would You Like to Know about Boxwood? Larry Steward and the Officers & Directors of your Boxwood Society

"Beachcomber's Delight" combining the Treasures of the Plant World with Treasures from the Sea - Miss Patricia Sonneborn

3:30 PM Refreshments and Tour of the Orland E. White Arboretum - Tour Guide - Thomas E. Ewert

Directions

The Blandy Experimental Farm is near Boyce, Virginia, on Route 50.

If you are driving from Fairfax or Loudoun Counties in Northern Virginia on Route 50, it is about 4 miles beyond the Shenandoah River Bridge, with the entrance to your left. It will be marked.

From Winchester going east, drive 8 miles on Route 50 to the traffic light at intersection of Route 340 and 50, then 1.5 miles more to Blandy entrance on your right. Entrance will be marked.

Notes on 21st Annual Meeting

Tuesday Evening Get-Together

Tuesday Evening Get-Together: Since some of the members will be arriving late Tuesday afternoon and will be spending the night in the Winchester area, the American Boxwood Society is planning this year a special informal program at 7:30 p.m. in the Library at the Quarters of the Blandy Experimental Farm. There will be an opportunity to meet boxwood members and to chat with some of the officers and directors. A slide program will be presented and light refreshments will be served. Boxwood members living in the vicinity of Boyce are also welcome. Prof. James Faiszt will show a series of slides from his collection illustrating the significant role boxwood plays in creating a beautiful garden.

Memorial Garden Tour

On Wednesday morning, between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., participants will have a chance to tour the Boxwood Memorial Garden. Prof. James A Faiszt and Mr. Thomas Ewert will be on hand to answer questions about the plantings.

The American Boxwood Society Memorial Garden is located on the grounds of the *Orland E. White Arboretum at Blandy*. This garden was established in 1976 as a memorial planting honoring Dr. J. T. Baldwin and Mr. Henry Hohman and to provide the membership of the American Boxwood Society, nurserymen, horticulturists, botanists, students, and visitors to Blandy a labeled collection of the various boxwood plants available within the capability of the American Boxwood Society to purchase and obtain them and to adequately maintain them.

Since the establishment of the Memorial Boxwood Garden, two other tireless workers for the American Boxwood Society, Admiral Neill Phillips and Mrs. E. M. Whiting have passed away and their names have been added to the honor roll along with Dr. J. T. Baldwin and Henry Hohman.

The overall design for the garden was prepared by Prof. Albert S. Beecher of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1975 and the actual planting and supervision of the garden has been under the guidance of Mr. Thomas E. Ewert, Director of the Blandy Experimental Farm.

The original plantings included plants from the Hohman collection that were scattered throughout the Arboretum and the plants developed or discovered by Dr. J. T. Baldwin. Additional plants are being added each year. At the present time there are approximately 57 different named varieties in the collection. Other varieties are in nursery rows, and these will be moved into the permanent garden after they reach a larger size.

Program Speakers

The moderator for this year's educational program will be Mr. Thomas E. Ewert, a director of the American Boxwood Society and Director of the Blandy Experimental Farm.

Mr. Larry Steward, of the Landscape Division of the University of Virginia, will provide an insight into the complexities of maintaining the beautifully landscaped grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The University campus is a unique blend of historically significant buildings and up-to-date educational facilities and residences. The landscaping must provide an appropriate background for the historical structures and be durable enough to withstand the everyday traffic of students, faculty and visitors. Boxwood is a natural part of the University landscape and Mr. Steward will describe the maintenance program which is followed in caring for this boxwood.

Mr. Steward will illustrate his presentation with a series of slides showing some of the beautiful landscaping at the University.

Following his discussion, he will join with some of the officers and directors of the ABS to help answer questions from the participants of the meeting. This is the time to get answers to those perplexing gardening problems — particularly concerning boxwood!

The educational program will conclude with a special treat. Miss Patricia Sonneborn of Ambler, Pennsylvania will present a flower arranging "lecture" which she calls "Beachcomber's Delight". Miss Sonneborn has presented programs at Blandy on three occasions previously, but never specifically for the American Boxwood Society. She has been so well received by the people in the Winchester area that we are pleased that she has consented to be part of the program for the ABS meeting.

Miss Sonneborn's impressive list of credits include a Bachelor of Fine Arts, cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Masters in Oriental Art from Bryn Mawr College. She was the second woman to be registered at Princeton University, where she studied Later Chinese Painting for two years as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. In 1974, she was among six students selected by Harvard University to study Tropical Botany in a summer course funded by the Atkins Foundation.

She has six times been Chairman for Old York Road Garden Club during the Christmas Tour of Historic Houses in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia.

Her arrangements at Blandy will naturally include boxwood.

Post Meeting Tea & Tour

Following the formal meeting, a tea will be held in the Dining Room of Blandy followed by a tour of the Orland E. White Arboretum. The Orland E. White Arboretum covers better than 100 acres and includes many outstanding examples of plant material. Many rare and unusual specimens of plants are within easy walking distance of the main headquarters of the Arboretum. The Arboretum is a part of the Blandy Experimental Farm which was a gift to the University of Virginia from Mr. Graham F. Blandy in 1926. Mr. Blandy left the 700+ acre property to the University.

In 1927, Dr. Orland E. White came to the University from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and assumed the position of Director of the Blandy Experimental Farm. Under his direction the Arboretum was established and an abundance of plant material was brought to Blandy for observation and research. As the number of plants began to grow, Dr. White realized the necessity of systematically planting out the new arrivals. The resulting Arboretum was dedicated to him at the time of his retirement in 1955.

Dr. W. Ralph Singleton, a charter member, and past officer and director of the ABS, was Director of the Blandy Experimental Farm from the time of Dr. White's retirement until 1965.

Mr. Thomas E. Ewert, Blandy's current Director will conduct the tour.

Registration Fee

A \$2.50 registration fee will be charged to help defray cost of the coffee hour and refreshments, transportation for speakers and other incidental expenses of the annual meeting.

Lunch Arrangements

Three plans are in operation for lunch:

- 1) Bring your picnic basket and have a picnic lunch on the grounds of the arboretum.
- 2) Reserve a catered lunch in advance (\$5.00).
- 3) Visit one of the restaurants about two miles from Blandy Experimental Farm.

If you would like ABS to reserve a lunch for you, send your check for \$7.50 per person (which covers registration fee and lunch) to the American Boxwood Society, Box 85, Boyce, Virginia 22620, (Luncheon reservations must be received by May 8th.)

Advanced Registration for Annual Meeting and Lunch Reservations

Complete and return to American Boxwood Society, P. O. Box 85, Boyce, VA 22620.

Please register the following for the Annual Meeting of the American Boxwood Society:

NAME -----

ADDRESS -----

Enclosed is a \$_____check for Registration & Lunch (\$7.50 per person)

Enclosed is a \$_____check just for Registration (\$2.50 per person)

Do you plan to attend the Early Arrival Get-Together? ----- Number who plan to attend -----

Your Support Needed

A Message from the American Boxwood Society President:

Dear Member:

I especially want to thank members of the American Boxwood Society who provided extra financial help last year by choosing Contributing, Sustaining or Life Memberships rather than the Regular Membership. A special thanks also for those who provided special gifts for the Boxwood Memorial Garden and the Research Fund. This additional financial support has helped to keep the Regular Membership fee at \$5.00 in spite of the rising costs for publishing the *Boxwood Bulletin* and general expenses for operating the headquarters office at Blandy.

April is the month annual dues are payable. The Society Membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. Boxwood members are reminded that contributions are deductible in computing income taxes in accordance with provisions of the Revenue Act.

Membership classes are:

Annual (Regular) per year	\$5.00
Contributing, per year	10.00
Sustaining	25.00-75.00
Life (no further dues)	100.00
Patron (no further dues)	500.00

Contributions are also needed for the *Research Fund*, *Boxwood Memorial Garden* and the *Boxwood Handbook*.

Research Fund. In the past the American Boxwood Society has helped support boxwood research at the University of Maryland and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. When sufficient funds become available, your Society would like to support further boxwood research.

The Memorial Boxwood Garden. Funds are needed to maintain and further develop the Memorial Boxwood Garden located on the grounds of the Blandy Experimental Farm at Boyce, Virginia. This garden has been developed as a memorial planting honoring Dr. J. T. Baldwin, Mr. Henry Hohman, Admiral Neill Phillips and Mrs. Edgar M. Whiting. At the present time there are 57 named varieties of boxwood in the Memorial Garden. Your Society needs to provide additional financial support to the Blandy Experimental Farm because they are bearing the major costs for maintaining the gardens.

The Boxwood Handbook. For many years the Society has talked about publishing a *Boxwood Handbook* and plans are finally beginning to crystallize. Funds are needed to assist in the preparation of the manuscript, the procuring of colored photographs, and for the printing.

In addition to financial support you can help the American Boxwood Society grow by inviting others who are interested in boxwood to become members. If each member would obtain one new member in 1981 we could double our membership. Please contact the Headquarters office if you would like some membership brochures. The address is American Boxwood Society, Box 85, Boyce, Virginia 22620.

Thanking you for your support.

Sincerely,
Albert S. Beecher, President
American Boxwood Society

THE AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

INFORMATION

Address: Box 85, Boyce, Virginia 22620

DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Regular membership dues of The American Boxwood Society are now \$5.00. This includes a subscription to *The Boxwood Bulletin*.

Non-member subscriptions are for groups and institutions such as botanic gardens, libraries, etc. These are \$6.00 a year, and run by the calendar year.

The Boxwood Society year runs from one Annual Meeting to the next; from May of one year to May of the next year. Those joining the Society at other times are sent all the *Boxwood Bulletin* issues for the current Society year, beginning with the July number. Their dues are then again due and payable in the following May. This was voted by the Society in order to lighten as far as possible the heavy work load of our busy Treasurer.

At the present time any or all *Bulletins* are available, back to Vol. 1, No. 1 (Vol. 1 consists of three issues only, there was no Vol. 1, No. 4.) Price per single copy is \$1.50.

Besides regular membership dues at \$5.00 per year, there are other classes of membership available: Contributing, \$10.00; Sustaining, \$25.00; Life, \$100.00; and Patron, \$500.00.

Gift memberships are announced to the recipients by boxwood-decorated cards which carry the information that *The Boxwood Bulletin* will come as your gift four times a year.

Members of The American Boxwood Society are reminded of the 1968 IRS decision that contributions to and for the use of the Society, are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code.

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

If your letter is concerned with

- Membership, new or renewal
- Payment of dues
- Donations to research programs
- Change of address
- Gift Membership
- Ordering back issues of the *Bulletin*
- Ordering Dr. Wagenknecht's List

Write to:

Mrs. Thomas E. Ewert
American Boxwood Society
Box 85
Boyce, Virginia 22620

If your letter is concerned with:

General information about the Society

Advice concerning boxwood problems or cultural information

Boxwood selection

Albert S. Beecher, President

In some cases depending upon the nature of your request, your letter may be forwarded to a member of the Board or another appropriate member who can provide the help you have requested.

You are also welcome to write direct to the President of the American Boxwood Society:

Professor Albert S. Beecher
807 Sunrise Drive, S.E.
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

If you have contributions for the *Boxwood Bulletin* - articles, news notes, photographs, suggestions of anything of probable interest to boxwood people, it saves time to direct them to the Editor:

Mrs. Charles H. Dick, Editor
The *Boxwood Bulletin*
514 Amherst Street
Winchester, Virginia 22601



BOXWOOD—

A heritage from Yesterday

A privilege for Today

A bequest for Tomorrow

