

The *Boxwood* Bulletin

A quarterly devoted to Man's oldest garden ornamental



Prestwould, built by Sir Peyton Skipwith in 1790-1795, will be featured on the ABS annual tour. The oak at right is said to predate the house by several hundred years. See story on page 39. (Photo: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton)

IN THIS ISSUE

Eleventh ABS Tour is Planned for May 8-9, 1993	39
ABS Annual Meeting Scheduled	41
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> at Cairngorm Farm, <i>Sigrid G. Harriman</i>	42
A New Look at a Once-Fashionable Boxwood, <i>Mary A. Gamble</i>	45
<i>Buxus sinica</i> var. <i>insularis</i> 'Tide Hill', <i>P. D. Larson</i>	46
Correspondence	48
Notices	50
ABS Mourns the Passing of P. D. Larson	Inside Back Cover

The American Boxwood Society

The American Boxwood Society is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1961 and devoted to the appreciation, scientific understanding and propagation of the genus *Buxus* L.

Officers:

PRESIDENT:

Mr. Dale T. Taylor Wenonah, N.J.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton Fredericksburg, Va.

Mrs. Malcolm L. Holekamp Webster Groves, Mo.

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Joan C. Butler Winchester, Va.

EXECUTIVE TREASURER:

Mrs. Katherine D. Ward Deerfield, Va.

REGISTRAR:

Mr. Lynn R. Batdorf Colesville, Md.

DIRECTORS:

Mr. Lynn R. Batdorf (1993) Colesville, Md.

Mr. John W. Boyd, Jr. (1994) Alton, Va.

Mr. Richard D. Mahone (1995) Williamsburg, Va.

Dr. Alex X. Niemiera (1993) Blacksburg, Va.

Mr. Tom Saunders (1994) Piney River, Va.

Mrs. Tyra Sexton (1993) Fredericksburg, Va.

Dr. Stephen D. Southall (1995) Lynchburg, Va.

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr. Edward F. Connor Boyce, Va.

BULLETIN EDITOR:

John S. McCarthy Webster Groves, Mo.

Memberships:

Memberships for the year May through April include \$12 for four quarterly issues of *The Boxwood Bulletin*:

Individual	\$15	Sustaining	\$50
Family	\$20	Life	\$250
Contributing	\$30	Patron	\$500

Non-member subscriptions for groups and institutions, such as botanic gardens and libraries, are \$15 by the calendar year.

Available Publications:

Back issues of <i>The Boxwood Bulletin</i>	(each) \$ 4
<i>Boxwood Buyer's Guide (3rd Edition)</i>	\$ 8
<i>International Registration List of Cultivated Buxus L.</i>	\$ 3
<i>Index to The Boxwood Bulletin 1961-1986</i>	\$10
<i>Index to the Boxwood Bulletin 1986-1991</i>	\$ 4

Contributions:

Gifts to the Society are tax-deductible and may be undesignated or applied to:

Boxwood Handbook Fund
Boxwood Memorial Garden Fund
Boxwood Monograph Fund
Boxwood Research Fund
ABS Blandy Capital Fund

Correspondence:

For address changes, memberships, dues, contributions, or to order back issues or publications, write:

Treasurer, The American Boxwood Society
P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620

For general information about the Society, advice concerning boxwood problems or cultivar selection, write to The American Boxwood Society at the same address. You are also welcome to write directly to the President:

Mr. Dale T. Taylor
105 S. Princeton Avenue
Wenonah, N. J. 08090

Call for Papers:

Technical articles, news, history, lore, notes, and photographs concerning boxwood specimens, gardens or plantings are solicited for possible publication in *The Boxwood Bulletin*. Photographs should be suitable for reproduction and fully captioned. Suggestions regarding format and content are welcome. Material should be submitted to:

Chairman, Bulletin Committee
1714 Greenway Drive
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401

Material to be returned to the sender must be submitted with a self-addressed envelope carrying suitable postage. Every effort will be made to protect submittals, but the Society cannot be responsible for loss or injury.

The Boxwood Bulletin (ISSN 0006 8535) is published quarterly for \$12.00 per year by The American Boxwood Society, Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, Va. 22620. Second class postage paid at Boyce, Va. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Boxwood Bulletin*, P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620. The *Bulletin* is printed by M-J Printers, Fredericksburg, Va.

Eleventh ABS Tour is Planned for May 8-9, 1993

Will Visit Charlotte, Halifax and Mecklenburg, Virginia

John W. Boyd, Jr. a Director of The American Boxwood Society, is planning another ABS spring tour for May 8 and 9, 1993, to encompass the counties of Charlotte, Halifax and Mecklenburg in the southern part of Virginia. The tour will include boxwood of note and an historical area that might be considered a well-kept secret.

In Charlotte, we will visit Red Hill and Mulberry Hill. Red Hill was the last home and final resting place of Patrick Henry. According to the descriptions in recent guidebooks for Historic Garden Week in Virginia, a winding path leads to a colonial garden edged with boxwood and to the family burying ground, which is surrounded by a boxwood hedge and wall.

Earlier descriptions in *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, compiled by The James River Garden Club, edited by Edith Tunis Sale and printed in 1923, mention a mass of periwinkle blooming in the graveyard in spring. Some of the flowers and shrubs were said to have come from Mount Vernon. Unique extensive hedges of *Buxus sempervirens* rather than *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' were trimmed and maintained at 4 feet. It was reported that on a summer day, Patrick Henry would sit under a tree with a can of water and a gourd, playing his fiddle and enjoying the view of the valley to the south.

Mulberry Hill was the home of Judge Paul Carrington, whose credentials include service in the House of Burgesses, the Virginia Conventions, the Committee that framed the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Virginia Constitution of 1776, as well as judge of the first Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia. Mulberry Hill was described in *The Boxwood Bulletin*, July 1989, Vol. 29, No. 1, p. 6-7. Now owned by Mrs. J. T. Butler, a descendant, this is where Paul Carrington



At Mulberry Hill the garden is surrounded with boxwood. The are is divided into four parts by a walk down the center and out to the left and right. Each path has boxwood on both sides. The garden had an area for vegetables, flowers of many types, as well as berries, figs and grapes. (Photo: John W. Boyd, Jr.)



A venerable boxwood at Mulberry Hill measures 20 inches in diameter at a height of 2 feet above ground. (Photo: John W. Boyd, Jr.)

brought his bride in 1755. The abundance of boxwood is something to look forward to seeing. Four large boxwood were planted across the front of the house, but are located so as not to obstruct the windows. There are several "grand-daddy" boxwoods, the size of their trunks attesting to their age. Boxwood hedges act as windbreakers, separate areas and border paths.

Black Walnut in Halifax County has a true boxwood garden. Tree boxwood frame areas and aged *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' border walks.

In Chase City is the garden of Mrs. J. T. Butler, featuring boxwood, and the garden of the late Judge Hudgens, who had collected sculpture from Spain and Italy and had amassed an outstanding collection of Indian artifacts.

If time and weather permit, the tour will include the Boyd boxwood fields, where he does some of his cuttings.

Following the full Saturday tour by bus the tour group will assemble for dinner and look forward to the next day's adventure.

On Sunday the tour will be by carpool, to accommodate those who may not be able to complete the schedule or would like to leave directly from the last stop.

Berry Hill is in Halifax County, near South Boston. Known as a home of the Bruces, the land was purchased by Isaac Coles from Benjamin Harrison in 1769. Isaac Coles built a brick house and walled garden which was replaced in 1839 by a house and garden built by James Coles Bruce. Original boxwood hedges 30 feet high and old trees remained into the 1920s. Twenty acres of grounds were surrounded by a stone wall and the ten-acre garden therein had a trained gardener. It was said that at times 40 men were required to keep it in order. Mrs. James Coles Bruce collected foreign as well as native flowers and shrubs for her garden. Alexander Bruce, after the war, feeling that the garden could not be maintained, had it removed and planted trees, making it more of a park. Today Berry Hill, a fine example of a Greek Revival

mansion, is under restoration. Tradition holds that Bruce was inspired to build this temple-style mansion after a stay in Philadelphia where he saw Nicholas Biddle's home, Andalusia. Some boxwood, bulbs and other plants remain from earlier plantings.

Prestwould, the home of Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740-1805) and Lady Jean, was built between 1790 and 1795. Lady Jean's garden notes are some of the most complete records of an early American garden. Her library was among the largest assembled by a woman in 18th-century America. Unique at Prestwould is the fact that many of the outbuildings have survived. This offers a better portrait of plantation life in the early republic.

Arrangements have been made to open Prestwould for the tour group on Sunday morning in order to view the house and gardens before lunch.

Luncheon will be provided, and that will complete the tour.

Tour members must make their own reservations for lodgings for Friday, May 7, and Saturday, May 8 (unless they can arrive in time to leave on the bus at 8:30 a.m.). A block of rooms is being reserved until March 29. Registration deadline is also March 29. Instruc-



Original octagonal summer house at Prestwould.

tions and costs are included in the insert. Space is limited and reservations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

See the enclosed registration form for further details. The form must be sent to Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton, 1714 Greenway Dr., Fredericksburg VA 22401.



At Prestwould a path bordered with aged boxwood leads to the Skipwith family cemetery. (Photo: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton)

ABS Annual Meeting Scheduled for May 21-22, 1993

At Historic Williamsburg, Virginia

Friday, May 21, 1993

EARLY REGISTRATION - Lord Paget Inn

Noon-1:00 p.m. Registrants must pre-register by mail. Name tags and meeting information can be picked up during registration periods on Friday and Saturday.

WORKSHOPS - Williamsburg Regional Library

2:00-3:00 p.m. Uses of boxwood in the landscape and companion plants

3:00-4:00 p.m. Propagation and care of boxwood

4:00-5:00 p.m. History and identification of boxwood species/cultivars

EVENING PROGRAM - Lord Paget Inn

8:00-9:00 p.m. "Flora In Glass" - World renowned glass paperweight artist Paul Joseph Stankard

9:00-10:00 p.m. Reception

Saturday, May 22, 1993

REGISTRATION - Lord Paget Inn

8:00-9:00 a.m. Danish, coffee and juice to be provided. (This is a good time to meet fellow ABS members)

MORNING PROGRAM - Historic Gardens Area of Colonial Williamsburg

9:30-11:30 a.m. A guided walking tour/lecture of selected gardens in the historic area, with an emphasis on Colonial-era plants

LUNCHEON (by pre-registration)

Noon-1:00 p.m. An outdoor picnic luncheon in the Colonial style, weather permitting. (This luncheon is optional)

ANNUAL MEETING - Williamsburg Regional Library

1:30-2:00 p.m. Business meeting

2:00-3:00 p.m. Educational program (subject and speaker to be announced)

3:00-4:00 p.m. Working with Boxwood - a hands-on lecture identifying boxwood cultivars, recognizing leaf shapes, colors, growth habits, and a discussion of boxwood care and cultivation

AUCTION - Lord Paget Inn

4:45-5:30 p.m. Annual ABS auction of named boxwood cultivars

Reservations

A limited number of modestly-priced rooms are being held at the Quality Inn Lord Paget on a *first-come* basis. To take advantage of these rooms, registrants must submit a deposit and complete Annual Meeting Registration so they are received by March 1. For those wishing to make their own accommodations in the Williamsburg area, registration deadline for the 1993 ABS Annual Meeting is May 10.

See the enclosed registration form for details. The form must be sent to Mr. Dale T. Taylor, Box 250, Wenonah, NJ. 08090.

Program Notes

To encourage participation, the 1993 ABS Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 22, 1993, in Williamsburg, Va. An optional Work Shop and our traditional Pre-Annual Meeting Reception will be held on Friday,

May 21. Headquarters for the meeting will be the Quality Inn Lord Paget, less than one mile from the historic area and three blocks from the Colonial Williamsburg Visitors Center. Dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings will be "at will."

The above program is tentative. The final schedule will be published in the April edition of *The Boxwood Bulletin*.

***Buxus sempervirens* at Cairngorm Farm**

Sigrid G. Harriman

A 206-acre tract of land in Fairfax County, Virginia, now known as Cairngorm Farm, was purchased by Richard Sanford in 1742.

By 1808, James Hewett Hooe named the property Burgundy Farm, and had fruit trees planted and chestnut rails and posts installed to encircle much of the property.

During most of the Civil War Burgundy Farm, owned by George Dashiell Fowle, served as a Union encampment. In 1916, the original mansion burned down and subsequently, George Zeiler, the owner, restored and enlarged the former servants quarters for the use of his family. In 1951, the sixteenth and present owners, Dr. Thistle McKee Bennett and her late husband, Martin Toscan Bennett, renamed the remaining thirty acres of the original estate Cairngorm Farm.

One reaches this oasis via a slowly ascending, privately-owned and narrow driveway that passes between some of the tallest trees in Northern Virginia, each about 100 to 150 years old. The drive leads to an open space between those trees, much like the summit of a mountain. Thus, honoring a mountain in Scotland and a family bracelet made of Cairngorm smoke-brown crystalline quartz, the Bennetts gave the property the new name. They farmed part of the estate for a number of years, but lately Cairngorm Farm has been used only as private residence.

It was assumed that after the restoration of the new living quarters in 1916, the boxwoods were planted. Two sweeping circles of the straight species *Buxus sempervirens* define a terrace and a meadow. The terrace, (about 15 by 60 feet) extends along the east side of the building and is enclosed by *Buxus sempervirens* that grew undisturbed for many years. They reach to the second story windows of the building and when first seen, appear



The southeast sector of the "Great Meadow" at Cairngorm Farm. (Photos: Sigrid G. Harriman)



The northwest portion of the "Great Meadow."



The northeast entrance before pruning.



The northeast entrance after pruning.



Southeast entrance to the patio in original condition.



Southeast entrance to the patio today.



The south patio entrance before pruning.



The south entrance after pruning.

impenetrable. The great meadow, fanning out some fifty yards to the north, east, and south of the terrace, is surrounded by beautifully mature trees (*Acer* spp., *Fagus sylvatica*, *Ilex opaca*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Picea* spp., *Quercus* spp., and others). The trees emerge from a spectacular sweep of hundreds of *Buxus sempervirens*, each 10-15 feet tall.

Because of the property's pristine quality of unspoiled, old-growth forest, Dr. Bennett applied for the establishment of an historic preservation easement for Cairngorm Farm, which would prevent future owners or Fairfax County from further dividing and developing the tract. The easement would protect a unique cultural resource, both the historic building and the unspoiled forest with its magnifi-

cent plantings, for future generations.

When I met Dr. Bennett, her boxwoods surrounded the great terrace by spreading in all directions, barely showing the three openings that once led to the great meadow. (See photos.) While realizing that some renovation was needed, she expressed great concern about having the boxwoods trimmed. The rejuvenation of the *Buxus sempervirens* around the terrace was done in three stages. First, selective removal of branches restored the original openings on either side of stairs leading to the meadow; second, weak and dead branches were cut from within; and finally, branches trailing along the slate terrace were clipped. Hour after hour the boxwoods seemed to take deeper and deeper breaths until their fragrance surrounded us grate-

fully. (Subsequently, Dr. Bennett had strong arbors built and placed into the openings. See photos.)

Stepping back, we could see through newly revealed openings into the next garden room, the great meadow surrounded by *Buxus sempervirens*. They form a natural link between the trees and became living walls for an outstanding garden room. These *Buxus sempervirens*, allowed to develop unrestricted for many years, returned to their original function as an understory shrub and now form an extraordinary free-flowing border. Their understated simplicity enhances the trees and makes the meadow a truly great open space.

Mrs. Harriman, a new member of The American Boxwood Society, is a landscape designer.

A New Look at a Once-Fashionable Boxwood

Buxus sempervirens 'Myrtifolia'

Mary A. Gamble

'Myrtifolia' is a relatively old boxwood, first listed in *English Catalog of Trees and Shrubs*, published by Dermen and Edmonds in 1782. We have found no record of when it reached this country. We believe it may have been in the vanguard of the choice shrubs which the colonists brought with them or had shipped from Europe to grace their New World gardens. Discriminating St. Louis gardeners were planting 'Myrtifolia' in the first half of this century. I recall seeing a group of plants labeled "Myrtifolia-Suffruticosa" at a local nursery. This

suggests that the two plants were looked upon as interchangeable in the landscape.

Local gardeners must have turned to 'Myrtifolia' when they found that 'Suffruticosa', usually from Virginia, was insufficiently hardy to withstand the changeable local climate. This is not to suggest that 'Myrtifolia' is tough. It is not. But it can be grown in the Midwest if it is carefully sited and given some winter protection. In a climate less temperamental than that of the Midwest, 'Myrtifolia' should present no serious problems.

The Boxwood Society of the Midwest has grown 'Myrtifolia' from the time we had our first nursery in the early 1970s. We took cuttings from plants in the gardens of two members, Mrs. John S. Lehmann and Mrs. Eli M. Strassner. The cuttings were successfully rooted in the Missouri Botanical Garden greenhouses. In 1974 we were sent 14 rooted cuttings from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England. These plants had a rough Atlantic crossing. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, the cuttings had desiccated during the trip and did not survive to be set into the



A row of 'Myrtifolia' boxwoods in the St. Louis County garden of Mrs. John S. Lehmann. They border the apple trees which were John Lehmann's favorite. (Photo: Mary A. Gamble)

nursery. However, we did check them against the local cutting and found them to be identical. Today we have 30 nice plants in the Society's present nursery. Claude Badeusz, our horticulture chairman, rates them as follows: Good, Fair, and Poor. The fair and poor plants are concentrated in a nursery row which is adjacent to the neighboring street. In summer months they get the heat reflected from the paving.

'Myrtifolia' is a refined boxwood. Its leaves range in shape from lanceolate to elliptic with acute tip. They look much like, but are roughly one-third smaller than, those of the ground cover *Vinca minor*, commonly called "Myrtle." Leaf color is a uniform rich, medium green. Opposite leaves are about three-quarters of an inch apart on the stems. This gives the plant a slightly open look. Allowed to grow naturally, 'Myrtifolia' matures at a moderate rate of growth into a rather full mound



A sprig of *B. sempervirens* 'Myrtifolia' shows the plant's essential refinement.

which tops off at three to four feet. It is, however, easily clipped in a controlled manner either as a small specimen plant or group of plants, or as a medium-height hedge.

The innate elegance and refinement of 'Myrtifolia' made it an ideal boxwood for formal treatment and for smaller space. Its greatest handicap for Midwestern gardeners is its relative tenderness. But if gardeners have the right spot, and the time and will to give that added care, they can, with a little bit of luck, enjoy the presence of classic, historic and stylish *Buxus sempervirens* 'Myrtifolia' in the garden.

Mary Gamble, a long-time boxwood enthusiast, is a frequent contributor to The Boxwood Bulletin.

***Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill'**

P. D. Larson

Name: *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill'

Size (25 yrs.): Small - 2 1/2 to 3 feet high and 4 to 4 1/2 feet wide

Natural Form: Mounded and somewhat vase-shaped.

Annual Growth: Medium - 1 to 1 1/2 inches in height and 2 to 2 1/2 inches in width

Leaf Color: Medium yellow-green.

Leaf Shape: Elliptic; acute tip; cuneate base.

Leaf Size: Medium - 1/2 to 11/16 inches long and 3/16 to 5/16 inches wide

Leaf Surface: Glabrous and smooth

Internodal Length: Long - 3/8 to 1/2 inches

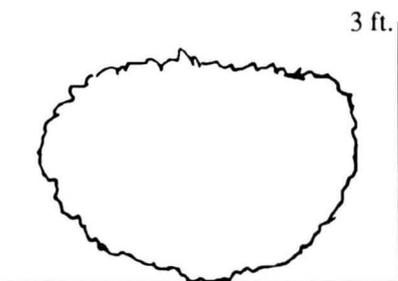
Flowering Habit: Not observed.

Hardiness: Zones 6-8.

Plant Use: Specimen, grouping for background and area separations, edgings, hedgings



In April 1991, Gloucester County, Va., a specimen identified as *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill', estimated age 45-50 years, measured 6 1/2 feet across and 26 inches high. (Photo: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton)



Registration: D. Wyman in *Arnoldia* 17(11):64, 1957

History: Originated as an open-pollinated seedling on Samuel Everitt's Tide Hill estate, Huntington Bay, Long Island, New York prior to 1936. It was selected and named by Dr. B. Blackburn in 1954.

Bibliography:

Blackburn, B., *Popular Gardening*, 1964

Bush-Brown, J. and L., *America's Garden Book*, Rev., New Bot. Gdn., 1980

Dirr, M. A., *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, 4th Ed., 1990

Wyman, D., *Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia*, New Expanded 2nd Ed., 1986

The Boxwood Bulletin, Vol. 25(3):68.1986 and 27(3):65.1988

Known Locations: Arnold Arboretum, U.S. National Arboretum, State Arboretum of Virginia, Willow-wood Arboretum

Culture and Care: Transplants readily. This plant is one of the few quite fussy about its cultural care. Prefers dappled shade for the best performance. Since it is a compact plant, keep it opened up, particularly in the top section, to provide ventilation and sunlight to penetrate and increase stem leaves to help support the feeder roots. The addition of organic compost as a soil amendment and 1 to 1 1/2 inches of mulch adds to the health of the plant. Water seldom and thoroughly; one inch of water every two weeks is sufficient in well-drained soil. Tolerates a pH range of slightly acidic to slightly alkaline with a



Buxus sinica var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill' growing at the U.S. National Arboretum in 1988. (Photo: Lynn R. Batdorf).

preference for the sweet side (alkaline). Demonstrates some fussy cultural requirements as the plant matures, but otherwise is an excellent cultivar.

Pests and Disease: Indicates a resistance to leaf miner, psyllid, and mites in the more humid climates. Serious diseases can occur when the special cultural requirements are not observed.

Propagation: Cuttings root reasonably well when using the poly-tent procedure, but cutting close to a node, bruising the stem tissue, and using IBA powder dip, all enhance rooting, and usually roots develop in 8 to 10 weeks.

Available in the commercial nursery trade (from *Boxwood Buyers Guide*, May 1990):

Axson Landscape, 19 E. Central Ave., Paoli, PA 19301

Daystar, Litchfield-Halloweel Rd., RFD#2, Litchfield ME 04350

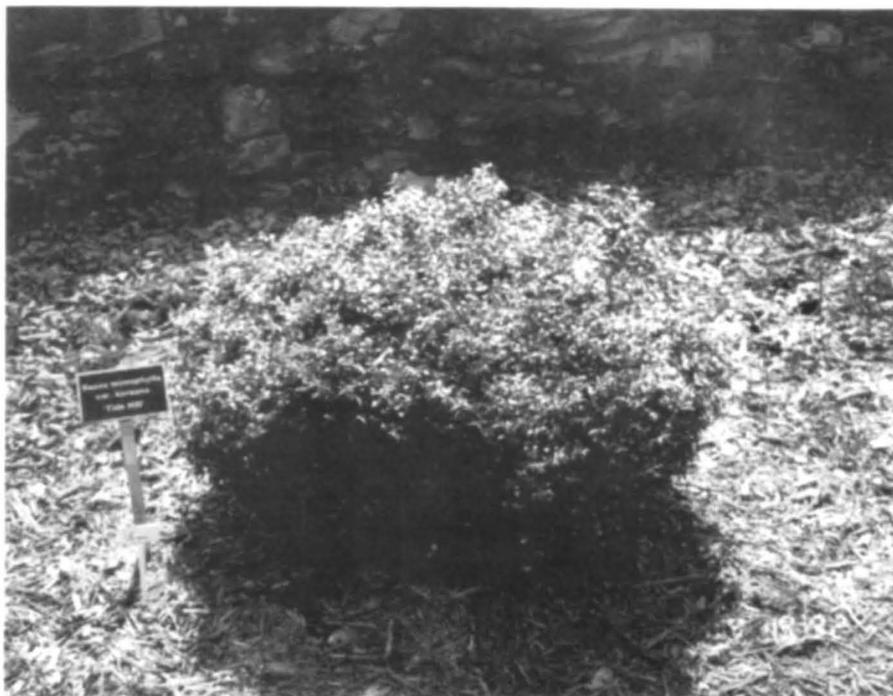
Environmentals, Box 730, Cutchogue, NY 11935

Gary's Nursery Co., RDI Box 78, County Rd. 532, Bridgeville DE 19933

Hildebrandt Nurseries, Inc., Box 52 Main St., Oldwick NJ 08858

Northeast Nursery, Inc., 234 Newbury St., Rt. 1, Peabody MA 01960

Plantbrokers, 534 Halliwell Rd., Orange CT 06477



Buxus sinica var. insularis 'Tide Hill' (under old label) taken in 1992 at the ABS Memorial Garden in Orland E. White Arboretum before area was vacated for construction of amphitheater. Plant was then 16 years old. (Photo: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton)

T. S. Hildebrandt Nursery, RR2, Box 312, Stewartsville NJ 08880

Woodland Nurseries, Rt 4 Johnson Rd., Salisbury MD 21801

was his latest piece for The Boxwood Bulletin. He was among the most ardent of boxwood enthusiasts. For his work with the garden, his extensive research, his lectures and his sharing of knowledge, he will be greatly missed by all who were privileged to be among his acquaintances (see also inside back cover).

Word has been received of the death of Cdr. Larson, who was Chairman of the ABS Memorial Garden Committee. This

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Richard C. Plater, Jr., a Charter Member of The American Boxwood Society, shared with ABS President Dale T. Taylor an undated article believed from a *Garden Club of America Bulletin*, circa 1930, entitled "A Prelude to the Study of Box" by Mrs. Lewis W. Francis, Member-at-Large, of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mrs. Lewis begins, "A prelude might express a present mood or a vision of what might be...accents of

glossy green wherein we might find a revelation of the contributions which the plant family *Buxaceae* may yield."

ORIGINS: The author says that boxwood has filled a place of honor from ancient times where it is a native or has been introduced, both as an ornamental and as a commodity of commercial value. The ancient Greeks shaped it into household utensils. They gave it the name *puxos*, similar to their word for tablet. Homer said that

Priam's horsecollars were made of boxwood. Other uses were for writing tablets and for tools.

The author believes that the earliest recorded botanical notes on boxwood were from Theophrastus (circa 372-287 B.C.) in his "Enquiry Into Plants." Using Sir Arthur Hort's 1916 translation, she continues that he (Theophrastus) writes that box [*sic*], like ebony, is heavy because the grain is close, and owing to the closer growth

there are no knots, and the core is not conspicuous. He rates it as wild and an evergreen along with other shrubs - tamarisk, holly and contoneaster, "all of which grow about Olympus." He declares the habitat to be "peculiar to mountain country, and [they] do not grow in the plains." Theophrastus writes, "Babylon grudgingly admits the box and lime for even these give much trouble to those engaged in the gardens."

DURABILITY: Used for "the carving of images" by the Greeks as well as for making tools because it's "naturally proof against decay...it (the skolex) avoids wood which has a strong smell or is bitter and hard, such as boxwood, since it is unable to bore through it."

CHARACTERISTICS: "Lime and box are very late in fruiting, lime has a fruit which no animal can eat, and so have cornel and box...the box is not a large tree, and it has a leaf like that of myrtle. It grows in cold, rough places."

FROM THE ROMANS: The name puxos becomes *buxus*. Pliny describes his Tuscon villa as ornamented with topiary box, "Tonsile buxetum." Ovid mentions its usefulness in furnishing combs for the knotted tresses of the ladies and Virgil tells of its use for pipes and flutes.

HEBREW: The author was disappointed that the Biblical allusion to "the fir tree, the pine tree and box together" has been refuted by a reference book on Biblical terms declaring that the Hebrew Teasshur, translated in the authorized version, as box tree and in the Vulgate as *buxus*, is properly a species of cedar called Scherbin.

ENGLAND: Continuing to England, the author notes disagreement by authorities as to whether the boxwood was indigenous to Great Britain or naturalized. In any case it was rated of economic value by the Anglo-Saxons and cultivated by the Romans. The earliest mention among the flora of England seems to date from 750 A.D. in the Corpus Glossary of Latin and Anglo-Saxon words.

LITERATURE CITINGS: Following the use of box as a place name, the earliest Dr. Skeat, an authority, believes is Box-ora (box-bank), which is the mediaeval name for Boxford in Berkshire. Thirteenth century place names were more common: La Boxe, Boxen, Hundred de Boxe, Boxford, Boxted, and others. In Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, though in mediaeval Latin, the author detects that *buxus* was growing abundantly in Berroc Wood, which in 1738 was identified with Boxgrove. She read that "in 1789 the last remains of Boxgrove in Sulham parish was grubbed about 40 years ago." From Gerard in 1597, "the box tree groweth upon sundry waste and barren hills in England." John Ray in 1696 mentions its growing at Boxhill in Surrey, at Boxley in Kent and at Boxwell in the Cotswolds. At Boxwell Court in Gloucestershire, wood of aged boxtrees was found and a 1556 will reads: "I will that it shall be lawful for the said Anne, my wife, to cut and fell all my boxe, reserving the young store at any time or times at her pleasure within the space of the said five years." (This wood was located as "upon a steep southern slope of the Cotswolds at an elevation of from five hundred to six hundred feet and extends a distance of a little less than half a mile.")

The author says, "The most famous colony of this so-called indigenous box still extant is at Box Hill, Surrey, where with yews and other shrubs it covers many acres and must present a unique display."

DISTRIBUTION: In Norway it is cultivated as far north as Lat. 67°50' on the coast and in Sweden up to Lat. 50° 07'. The author notes that the western costal climate of Scandinavia is milder because of the gulf stream.

Buxus sempervirens, common box, is a native of Western Europe, the Mediterranean territory, the Caucasus, where it has been known to attain a height of 50' with a trunk diameter of two feet, and northern Persia. In France it ranges from Dauphine, Languedoc, Provence and the Pyrenees north to

Meuse and Meurthe-et-Moselle into Belgium. Also spotted in Germany, the Balkans, southern Tyrol, Italy, Spain and Portugal, and occasionally in Algeria. Marco Polo mentioned the box trees in Georgia.

Species other than *Buxus sempervirens* are found throughout the continent of Asia, in Japan, the Philippines and parts of Africa. In the Western Hemisphere they are native to the Bahamas, West Indies and Mexico. She goes on to say that although no natives have been found in the United States, it has naturalized in Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas and other eastern states and that "its attainment in Virginia rivals its most luxurious growth in the Caucasus."

CLASSIFICATION: From the author: "Box belongs to the order of *Sapindales*, and the most recent botanists assign it to the family *Buxaceae*, though excellent authorities place the genus *Buxus* in the family of *Euphorbiaceae*." (Today, *Buxaceae* is the accepted family.) She says that botanists sometimes use the term *Eu-Buxus* to distinguish it from *Buxella*, which includes four species found in Madagascar and tropical South Africa and Tricera, which comprises about a dozen species native to the West Indies. Also, the 1895 *Index Kewensis* lists 22 species. Later editions (c. 1930) list about 30 species.

She lists six species in the realm of possibilities for American gardens, but acknowledges few are obtainable in our nurseries: *Buxus japonica* Muell., *B. microphylla* Sieb. & Zucc., *B. harlandii* Hance, *B. balearica*, Lam., *B. wallichiana* Baill. and *B. sempervirens* L.

Of *B. sempervirens* she continues, "This species is one that endears itself to us, for it belongs to the familiar varieties of the variegated and pendulant forms, and the beloved var. *suffruticosa* (now listed as *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa', a cultivar rather than a variety) known often, though without authority, as old English box, and which enshrines so many memories of "my grandmother's garden."

She notes, "three species indigenous to Mexico: *Buxus pubescens*, determined 1898, found in Maria Madre Island, Teppic.; *B. lancifolia*, in San Luis Potosi; and *B. mexicana* in Puebla, a small shrub growing on the mountains two thousand one hundred to two thousand four hundred meters altitude."

MODERN USE: This densest of European woods, according to the author, weighs 81 pounds 7 ounces per cubic foot newly cut and 68 pounds 13 ounces dry, whereas seasoned white oak weighs 50 pounds per cubic foot. She says that boxwood is the only European wood that sinks in water.

She finds that this beautiful pale wood which takes a fine polish is preferred for the manufacture of wind instruments, for textile spindles and for intricate mathematical instruments. Also, from Albrecht Durer to modern times wood engravers use it as it will finish as sharp as metal and is "superior in taking the ink."

She cites that until 1890 the export of boxwood from the Caucasus via the Black Sea was an important industry

averaging 2340 tons annually from 1883-87 with danger of exhausting the supply.

She continues that boxwood from the West Indies largely supplanted the trade from Russia and that wood from the Caribbean goes by the trade name of boxwood, but is made up of different hardwoods, most of which do not belong to *Buxaceae* or *Euphorbiaceae*. Venezuela and Colombia are sources for this trade "boxwood."

HARDINESS: The author warns that the greatest danger to our boxwood is sudden extremes of alternating heat and cold. A northern exposure seems to cause less disturbance due to extremes in temperature and winter protection should not be such as to cause overheating.

She cites one plant that has survived, though not increased much in size, many years at Lake George (upper New York state), protected only by a heavy snow covering.

PROBLEMS: The most serious problem among her plants is box-leaf miner. The treatment was molasses and

Black Leaf 40, but she finds that on a warm, damp day, "the odors wafting from the garden were faintly reminiscent of a Cuban sugar mill."

In order to study boxwood, and with great difficulty, she collected fourteen kinds and hopes they'll winter through in a sheltered position with pine bough protection. Uncertain of correct naming, she did not label the plants, but each is distinct.

She concludes, "I am well aware that there is none of the poetry of box, of its romance, and its tradition in this paper. That has been reluctantly set aside in the practical aim to make it a prelude to a fuller appreciation of the historical dignity of one of the choicest of our broad-leaved evergreens, and towards stimulating the experiment of utilizing some of the less known varieties as welcome evergreen material for our gardens."

Editor's Note: Mrs. Plater found this article when she was going through some scrapbooks and papers Mr. Plater had inherited from an aunt and uncle.

NOTICES

Symposium

The Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club announces a Garden Symposium for Thursday, March 4, 1993.

J. C. Raulston, PhD, Director of the North Carolina State University Arboretum in Raleigh, specializes in woody ornamentals. He conceived and developed the NCSU Arboretum collecting 5,000 different species and cultivars for evaluation. His current research concerns adaption, propagation and utilization of woody plants.

Alastair Martin is an English garden designer who communicates a philosophy of garden design rather than just displaying a style. According to Commissioning Editor Celia Van Ess of London, "Mr. Martin creates gardens with timeless elegance that show a sensitive, educated response to site and

PROGRAM

- 10:00 a.m. Registration
- 10:35 a.m. Welcome from the President of Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club, Mrs. William Wilbur
- 10:45 a.m. Dr. J. C. Raulston: Woody Ornamentals
- 11:45 a.m. Box Lunch served
- 1:00 p.m. Alastair Martin: Garden Design
- 2:00 p.m. Door prizes awarded
- 2:15 p.m. Elsa Bakatar: Perennials

(Space is limited)

architecture." His creative process adapts well to historic houses and ordinary ones alike.

Elsa Bakatar, originally from England, has lived in the United States since 1947. She has been designing gardens since 1977. Her garden will be featured in her *One Woman's Garden*, to be released in 1994.

To register, send name, address, and a check for \$40 (includes lunch) to Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club Symposium, P.O. Box 87, Middleburg, VA 22117.

New Address

Joan C. Butler (Mrs. Scot), ABS Secretary, has a new address: 107 Cottage Drive, Winchester, VA 22603; (703) 665-5879.

NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

ABS Mourns the Passing of P. D. Larson, Director of the Society Since 1985

Cdr. Phillip D. ("Swede") Larson died on December 22, 1992.

From his biographical statement in *The Boxwood Bulletin*, July 1985, Vol. 25, No. 1, he was born in Oregon, attended Oregon State University and Idaho State University, married his hometown sweetheart, served in the U.S. Naval Supply Corps (1942-1963), entered the business world until retiring in 1975. He then went "full force" into woodworking and horticulture, the latter taking the majority of his time until his death.

His longtime friend, Captain William Sheehan, U. S. Navy, Retired, noted that he excelled at whatever he attempted. In his youth he was a baseball player and did quite well in one of the minor leagues. He had a golf handicap of 6 or 7. His interest in boxwood began after he met Tom Ewert, then Director of Blandy Experimental Station, and reported to Tom to do volunteer work there.

A memorial service was held for Swede on January 2, 1993. Most fittingly, it took place at Blandy Experimental Farm. The staff

assembled an assortment of boxwood and boxwood memorabilia; speakers represented various phases of his life and work.

A Tribute

A most dedicated and active Director of The American Boxwood Society since May 1985, "Swede" Larson has been overseer, curator and active "coolie laborer" of the ABS Memorial Garden at the State Arboretum of Virginia.

In pursuing his consuming interest, he produced new knowledge about boxwood cultivars and added many new specimens to the boxwood collection. His tours of the garden and his presentations at workshops have fascinated his listeners with his vigorous and expressive explanations and

descriptions.

The recent expansion of the boxwood collection is due entirely to his determination to ferret out an actual plant to exemplify every strange cultivar name which he encountered in his voluminous correspondence. He never failed to track down a boxwood clue, no matter how elusive.

Our Society and the garden will miss him terribly. His accomplishments and contributions will never be forgotten.

Joan C. Butler, Secretary, ABS

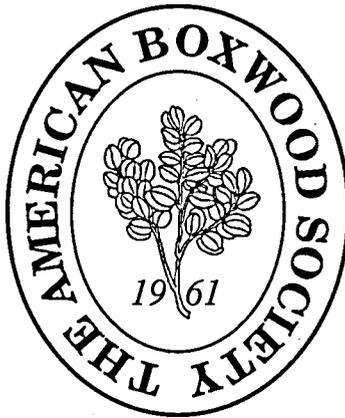
***Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* (Korean Boxwood) Used to Border Walkways**



At Sweet Briar College, Amherst County, Virginia, Korean boxwood edges this walk to one of the academic buildings. (Photos: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton)



Korean boxwood edges a walkway to the Quarters Building at Blandy Experimental Farm in Clark County, Virginia. Some shade is preferable, but these "green up" each spring.



Annual Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. *Filing Date:* October 27, 1992
2. *Title of publication:* *The Boxwood Bulletin*
3. *Frequency of issue:* Quarterly
4. *Complete mailing address of office of publication:*
P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620
5. *Complete mailing address of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers:*
The American Boxwood Society
P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620
6. *Names and addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor:*
Publisher: The American Boxwood Society
P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620
Editor: John S. McCarthy
345 Gray Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63119
Managing Editor: Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton
1714 Greenway Drive
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401
7. *Owner:* The American Boxwood Society
P.O. Box 85, Boyce, Va. 22620
(Incorporated, non-stock,
non-profit corporation)
8. *Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities:* None