

The *Boxwood* Bulletin

A Quarterly Devoted to Man's Oldest Garden Ornamental



This 550-year-old mansion in the town of Dorney Court, west of London, was the site for the first meeting of the newly formed European Boxwood and Topiary Society. See page 43. (Photo: Lynn Batdorf)

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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.

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Contributing	\$50		

Non-member subscriptions for groups and institutions, such as botanic gardens and libraries, are \$25 by the calendar year as established or current year for new subscriptions.

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Back issues of *The Boxwood Bulletin* (thru Vol. 34)

	(each) \$ 4
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<i>Boxwood Buyer's Guide (4th Edition)</i>	\$ 6
<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
<i>Index to The Boxwood Bulletin 1991-1996</i>	\$ 3

Publications may be ordered from Mrs. K. D. Ward, ABS Treasurer, 134 Methodist Church Lane, Augusta, VA 24485-2053. Prices quoted are postpaid.

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

Boxwood Memorial Garden Fund
Boxwood Manual 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. 22620-0085

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:

Dr. Stephen D. Southall
3912 Faculty Drive
Lynchburg, Va. 24501-3110

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*. Material should be submitted to:

Chairman, Bulletin Committee
1714 Greenway Drive
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401-5209

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European Boxwood and Topiary Society

Lynn R. Batdorf

The first annual meeting of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society (EBTS) was held on Saturday, September 28, 1996. The site for the meeting was well chosen, on the estate of Mr. Palmer, in the town of Dorney Court, west of London.

Representing a diverse membership, there were more than 110 charter members in attendance. Some were nursery owners or managers, horticultural consultants, garden writers and professional gardeners. Others were from various institutions such as botanic gardens, the Royal Horticultural Society and the American Embassy in London.

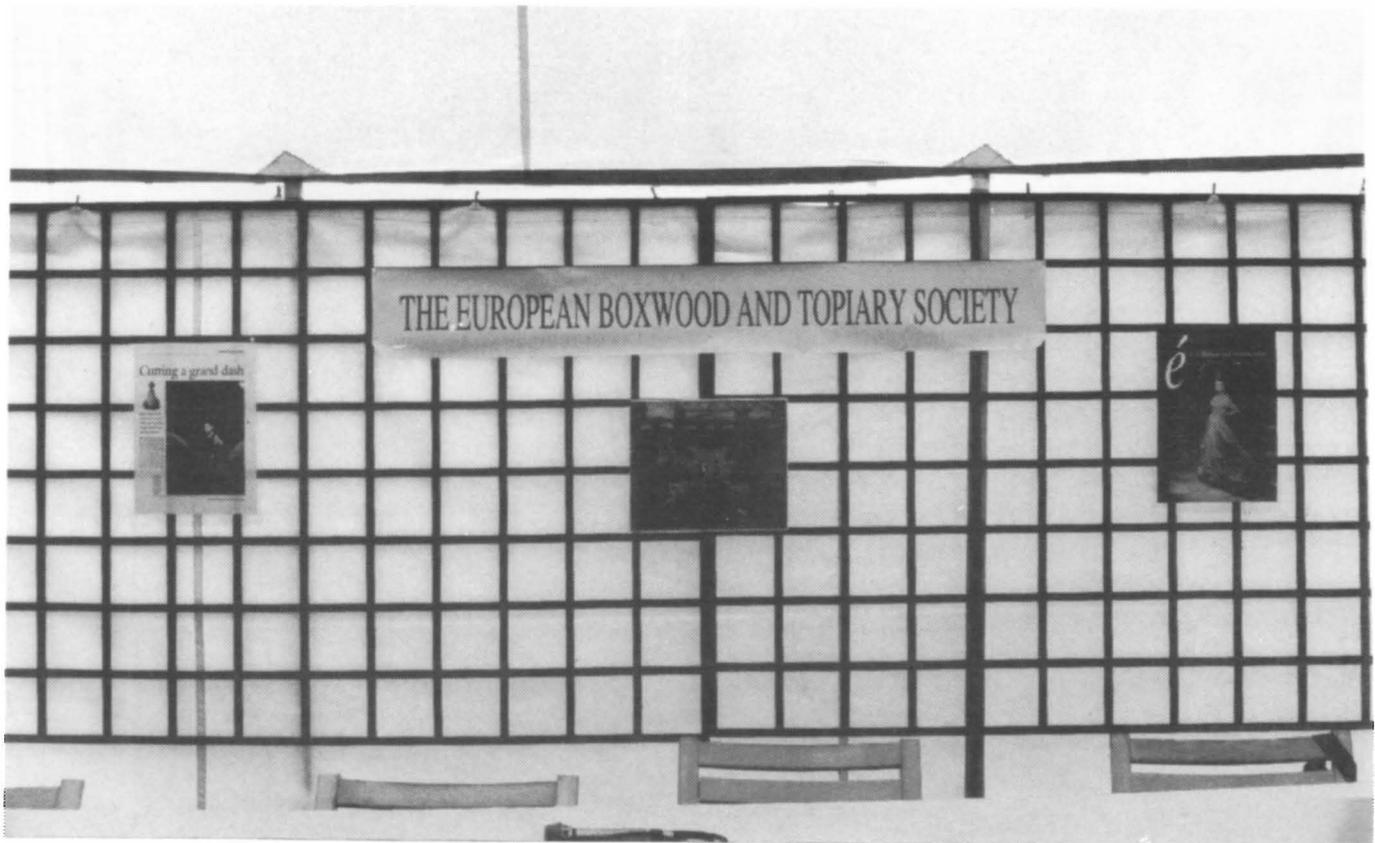
The program began with a reception in the Great Hall of the Palmer

house. Tea, coffee, and Danish pastries were served. Jenny Hendy, a freelance horticultural journalist and garden designer was present to autograph copies of her new book, *Quick and Easy Topiary and Green Sculpture*. Lynn Batdorf, Horticulturist and Boxwood Registrar, attended to autograph copies of his book, *Boxwood Handbook: A Practical Guide to Knowing and Growing Boxwood*. This time also allowed the participants an opportunity to meet casually and talk with each other.

The group then moved to the lawn under a large marquee, set up for the business meeting in case of bad weather. It was a mild fall day. The weather was wonderful, with a light

overcast of high clouds. Dr. Mark Braimbridge, of the Langley Boxwood Nursery, began the program by explaining the day's events. He then introduced the proposed Board of the EBTS and other prominent guests in the audience.

Dr. Braimbridge explained how the idea of forming a European Boxwood and Topiary Society began and the goals of the society. The participants then approved the slate of Board members. The secretaries, one each for England, Belgium and Germany, were selected. The next agenda item involved selecting a leader of the organization, but first a decision on terminology was needed. Since the Europeans prefer the word Chairman



The business meeting of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society was held in a large marquee on the lawn of the estate of Mr. Palmer. (Photos: Lynn Batdorf)

rather than Chairperson, it was quickly agreed that the leader of the EBTS was to be called a Chairman. Nominations from the membership were solicited, and Dr. Mark Braimbridge was unanimously elected to serve as the first Chairman for the European Boxwood and Topiary Society.

After discussion on various options, it was decided that the EBTS would have two meetings each year. One meeting would be held in England, while the other would be in continental Europe. Each meeting would last for two days. The first day would consist of meetings and lectures, while the second day would have a tour of gardens with boxwood.

There was discussion on the exact name of the organization. Some

preferred European Boxwood and Topiary Society while others liked European Topiary and Boxwood Society. In the end it was agreed to keep the name European Boxwood and Topiary Society. The question arose as to what topiary was to be included. Some believed that the name of the society implied that only boxwood topiary was of interest. It was agreed by all that topiary in all its forms was to be included. Plants of Hornbeam, Holly, Arborvitae, Yew, Boxwood and any other genus that can be used for topiary are of interest to the EBTS.

After the formal business meeting was concluded, Mr. Palmer addressed the group. He gave a brief and most interesting introduction to the very long and rich history of his family



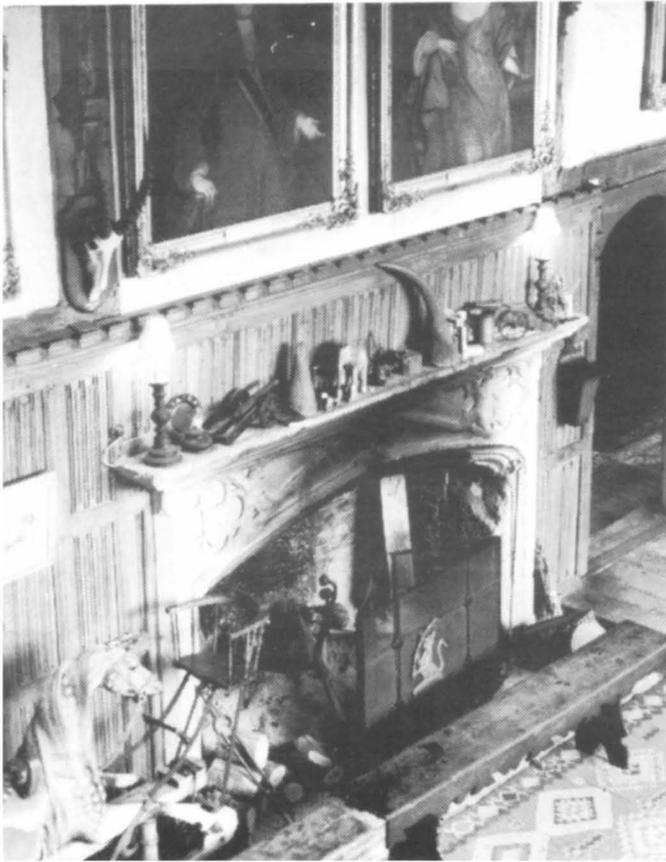
Tools of the trade used to create boxwood topiary.

estate. Built in 1440, the house has been in the Palmer family since 1520. It is quite unique for such a large, historic estate to be kept in one family for so many generations.

Lunch was served in the Great Hall of the Palmer house. Served



Several functions of the meeting were held in the Great Hall of the Palmer house. Dr. Mark Braimbridge, Chairman of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society, is seen talking to several members of the society.



In the tour of the Palmer house, family portraits can be seen over the mantelpiece.



Mrs. Elizabeth Braimbridge gives two volunteers expert advice on creating the perfect boxwood topiary.



The participants were especially interested in the "hands-on" topiary demonstration.



After the topiary demonstration, afternoon tea and snacks were served, followed by the boxwood plant auction. The participants were able to bid on a rich assortment of rare and unique boxwoods.



Left to right: Dr. Mark Braimbridge, Chairman of the EBTS; Comtesse Véronique Goblet d'Alviella, General Secretary; Baron Jack de Rosée, Auctioneer; and Mrs. Elizabeth Braimbridge work together during the boxwood auction.

buffet style, a rich variety of entrees, vegetables, breads, cheeses and wines were available. This time again gave the participants an opportunity to exchange many good ideas. After lunch, the participants of the EBTS were divided into three groups and given a guided tour of the remarkable Palmer family home.

After the tour the group strolled to Bressingham Plant Centre. With the expert guidance of Mrs. Elizabeth Braimbridge, a boxwood topiary demonstration was conducted. Volunteers were selected from the audience to participate in the hands-on demonstration. Two conical *Buxus sempervirens* were quickly transformed into perfect spirals.

The demonstration was followed by an enthusiastic boxwood auction. The many rare and unique boxwoods available resulted in all of the plants being sold. The income from the auction will go towards promoting this new society.

With over 100 members in attendance at this first ever boxwood meeting in Europe, it quickly became apparent that this young, yet large and enthusiastic organization has a bright future. The Board members have worked very long and hard both to start this society and to produce such an excellent premier meeting. Interest in boxwood throughout Europe has never been higher. With this interest, the European Boxwood and Topiary Society will be able to accomplish many exciting projects in the years ahead.

Lynn R. Batdorf, International Registration Authority for Cultivated Boxwood attended this meeting. The American Boxwood Society is interested in encouraging the new European Boxwood and Topiary Society. As a result, Mr. Batdorf's attendance and participation in this meeting were partially funded by the ABS.



Numerous examples of completed boxwood topiary were brought to illustrate various styles.

Members and Guests at the Inaugural Meeting

Auctioneer: Baron Jack de Rosée

Mrs. Jenny Alban-Davies, Mr. Alban-Davies

Mr. Ross Allan

Mrs D. Anderson, Mrs. V. Hudson

Mrs. S. Archard

Lynn R. Batdorf

Joanna Crane

Mrs. Debra Barnes

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Blakey

Miss Clare Berry

Mrs. J. Booth

Mrs. Liz Boyle, June Ansley

Kathlin Bradley-Hole

Mark and Elizabeth Braimbridge

Mr. and Mrs. David Brent

Mr. and Mrs. Keith Broley

Mr. Jeremy Brudenell

Mr. Trevor Cains

Joan Clifton, John Raffin
 Mr. Nigel Cowderoy
 Mr. S. P. Crisp
 Anne Dinsdale
 Mrs. J. Dyer
 Mrs. M. Dyer
 Mrs. Jennifer Ensell and David Ensell
 Mr. Mark Farley
 Mr. R. Funnell
 Mr. Chris Gates and Mr. P. A. Bowskill
 Mr. Bruce Ginsberg
 Mary Anderson
 Mr. John Glenn
 Mr. Rupert Golby
 Dr. Daniela and Dr. Michael Grosse-Buning
 Mrs. Rodell Hall and Gloria Slatter
 Countess Véronique Goblet d'Alviella
 Julia and Georgina Harvey
 Helga Hislop and Peter Morrell
 Jenny Hendy

Mr. and Mrs. David Landaw
 Fiona Lawrenson
 Dorothy Love
 Mr. P. Lynch
 Mr. and Mrs. M. P. deLisle
 Mrs. Victoria Machin
 Mr. Charles McKinnon
 Mrs. Jan Mash
 Mr. Christopher Miller
 Donald and Charlotte Molesworth
 Laurent Michel
 Bobby Meyer
 Brenda Meade
 Diane East
 David Hicks
 Mr. Trevor Nicholson
 Mr. Anthony Noel and Paul Hollis
 Mrs. Christine North
 Mr. D. Nutley and Mr. M. Ranks
 Lady Palmer
 Clare Pearson
 Mrs. P. Perks and Mrs. K. Watson
 Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Rebdy

Mr. Paul Rich and Mark Lamey
 Baronne de Rosée
 Mr. Simon Rose
 Mr. Henry Safran
 Jill Scott
 Carole Smart and Mrs. Sue Mesher
 Mrs. Lou Soden
 Barbara Stockitt
 Mr. and Mrs. V. Stokes
 Mrs. Taylor and Fiona Walmsley
 Mr. Don Tozer
 Anne-Marie Tremlett
 Mr. James Troup
 Mrs. Veronica Veenbaas
 Mrs. Maitanne Vernes
 Mrs. S. A. Wade
 Mr. Richard Webb
 A. M. Weldon Hollingworth and Mr. S. Cramer
 W. G. Wood
 A. J. Young

A New Hardy Boxwood

Decca Frackelton

Buxus 'Glencoe', described as a dependably hardy, broadleaf evergreen shrub is an introduction of Chicagoland Grows, Inc. A selection from the collections of Chicago Botanic Garden, it is hardy to Zone 4 (possibly better).

Twelve-year-old plants at Chicago Botanic Garden are 3' high with a spread of 5'.

ABS Director Sigrid Harriman obtained plants from Scarff's Nursery of New Carlisle, Ohio. They will be presented to the ABS Memorial Garden and to the U.S. National Arboretum.



Plants of the hardy Buxus 'Glencoe' in three-gallon pots. (Photo: Decca Frackelton)

BOOK REVIEWS

Boxwood: Its History, Cultivation, Propagation and Descriptions.

By P. D. (Swede) Larson. 1996.
Foliar Press, Route 2, Box 210,
Boyce, VA 22620.

Boxwood is a book that fills an important void in the world of boxwood. At 228 pages it is, to date, the largest and most complete single work that describes and illustrates the cultivars of boxwood. It discusses in detail more than 110 species and cultivars. It is a well-printed, 6" by 9" soft-cover publication, with four pages showing 12 boxwoods in full color.

The introductory sections of the book briefly discuss the history of boxwood, commercial usage, general plant characteristics, propagation, as well as pests and diseases of boxwood. Attention is also given to cultural considerations, but too briefly.

The majority of the book discusses individual taxon, species and cultivars of boxwood. This is where the real strength of Larson's work shines. Each entry typically has a line drawing that shows foliage characteristics and another that shows the habit of the overall plant. In a concise outline form, information is given on the size of the plant at 25 years of age, form, growth rate, leaf color and shape, leaf size and surface characteristics, internodal length, flowering habit, hardiness and use. This is followed by important information giving the registration, history, bibliography, known locations, and additional information on culture/care, pests/diseases, and whether the cultivar is available in the commercial nursery trade. The placement of the bibliography with each taxon serves the reader well.

The next section of the book has an excellent plant description sum-

mary. Presented in a matrix, this effective format gives a concise overview of the boxwoods and is even better at allowing quick and accurate comparisons of boxwoods. The coding for the various plant characteristics seems awkward, but these terms are defined and presented at the bottom of each page. There is a glossary which defines botanical terms with which the reader may be unfamiliar. Selected references, an amended registration list and a brief list of public gardens follow.

It is probably because Larson was not able to complete the book himself that several shortcomings present themselves. The most noticeable are important technical errors, too numerous to list here, that appear throughout the book. Typographical errors, usually misspellings, are numerous; examples include names in author citations, and even *Buxaceae*. It is unfortunate that major species and significant cultivars were given only a very brief account. In an effort to present one taxon per page, significant information was often omitted. Curiously, many tropical species are presented. The author's knowledge in this area is wanting, but he does admit that he had not observed most of these plants. The book would have been better served if this section had been omitted. The book lists an additional 133 taxon by name, in the back of the book, but these are given only brief consideration. Several illustrations showing the foliage are botanically incorrect. No attempt was made to show them at actual size or to depict correctly the leaf venation, both features which would greatly increase the value of the numerous illustrations. This is not a book to place on a shelf, as this would highlight the spine, which has inverted printing.

ABS Annual Meeting May 15-17, 1997

This year the annual meeting will be held at Blandy Farm of the University of Virginia in Clarke County, Virginia, on Route 50, ABS headquarters and the site of our Memorial Garden. This is a return to Blandy after several years due to construction and the relocation of the Memorial Garden.

As is the custom, attendees will be responsible for making their own reservations. Details and registration forms will be provided in the April issue of *The Boxwood Bulletin*.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 15, 1997

Arrival and reception

Friday, May 16, 1997

Registration, tour of the Garden, business meeting, lunch, program, auction, dinner and speaker

Saturday, May 17, 1997

Tours: "Glen Burnie" and other, lunch

Notice

ABS Auction - May 16

Anyone with named cultivars to offer for the boxwood auction at the annual meeting, please contact Mrs. Scot Butler, 107 Cottage Drive, Winchester, VA 22603, (540) 665-5879.

Overall, these weaknesses should not detract from the good contribution that *Boxwood* has made to the literature. The author's interest and enthusiasm in the subject resonate through the entire book, which clearly shows that Larson was a tireless master at

collecting information from various sources and presenting it in a logical and understandable fashion. As a result, the wealth of facts presented in this book is easily accessible. Written by a self-taught enthusiast, the

information in the book has a strong popular appeal. It is a valuable resource for those with a desire to learn about the many wonderful cultivars of boxwood. The commercial nursery trade and professional

gardeners will benefit most from this work. Available from the publisher at \$24.95, plus \$4 postage, *Boxwood* is a real value and well worth the price.

-Lynn R. Batdorf

Buxus

By Ireen Schmid. 1996.

Groen BoekerU, Kosmos-Z & K Uitgevers, Utrecht/Antwerpen

Buxus is a Dutch book which focuses on the landscape design and topiary considerations of boxwood. It is a practical guide that easily leads the reader through its 112 pages. It is a well-printed, 6" by 9" soft-cover publication. It has 35 full-color photographs which show numerous magnificent European gardens, their use of boxwood and unique topiary specimens.

There are 53 line drawings; most illustrate the many techniques used in creating and maintaining boxwood topiary.

There are seven chapters. The first briefly discusses the garden history of boxwood which focuses on the Middle Ages, Renaissance and

Baroque periods. The second chapter gives a short treatment of boxwood names and folklore.

The next chapter focuses on an interesting aspect of propagation by layering. The body of the book and the most significant chapter is a large discussion on boxwood topiary. Well illustrated with color photographs and line drawings, it shows how to shear balls, squares, cones, spirals, and a broad assortment of animals and figures.

The fifth chapter gives the cultural considerations necessary to grow boxwoods in containers. The next chapter describes the design and landscape aspects in which Europeans excel. It serves to make this American

wish for a similar European climate so we could grow boxwood the same way in the U.S. Finally, a chapter lists a few species and many cultivars. It usually has a sentence or two which describes the major plant characteristics.

Ireen Schmid is a professional garden writer with many books to her credit. This is her first and excellent attempt on boxwood. It is priced a bit high at 32.90 Dutch guilders, or about US \$25, but hopefully this will not stop people from buying it. My greatest regret is the book is written in Dutch, which requires most Americans to read between the lines.

-Lynn R. Batdorf

CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Walter S. Flory, one of the founders of The American Boxwood Society, Honorary Life Member and a former Director, called to give his change of address. At 89 years, he's still very much interested in boxwood. He noted that he'd found *B. sempervirens* 'Northern Find' easy to propagate and that it performed well in his area (Winston-Salem, N.C.).

Dr. Corey Reese, of Chestertown, Maryland, sent his photo (right) dated May 29, 1996, showing damage to a *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' caused by a male deer cleaning the velvet from his antlers.



Old Scientific Instruments Using Boxwood

At the 1996 Annual Meeting, I was handed a couple of Xeroxed sheets illustrating some instruments made of boxwood. Illustrated were:

1. "Nocturnal, boxwood, London, England, c. 1740." The nocturnal was developed in the 16th century to determine the time at night. 16th- and 17th-century examples were made of brass and they survive in greater numbers than the later boxwood ones.
2. "Back-staff, by B. King, Salem, Massachusetts, U.S.A., c.1775." This, for measurement of the sun's mid-day altitude, was invented by John Davis in 1594. Rosewood, mahogany or ebony frames with boxwood arcs are found on English and American instruments.
3. "Octant, wood and brass,

engraved flower and scroll design, by J.C.V. Vuer; Holland, c. 1775." John Hadley's quadrant was invented in 1731 to measure solar altitude by reflection. Because of double reflection, the frame subtends an eighth of a circle, hence "octant." They were made of mahogany or ebony frames, rarely of brass, with boxwood arcs.

4. "Napier's Rods, ivory in boxwood case; London, c.1680." These rods, also called Napier's "Bones" because early examples, made of ivory, were in sets of four-sided rods made of ivory, boxwood or softwood covered with paper scales. They were used as aids to multiplication.

5. "Two-foot Gunter's rule, boxwood, by Beicher Bros.; New York, U.S.A., c. 1830." John Napier's 1614 publication of his invention of logarithms provided a means of computing. Edward Gunter in 1623 set this out on a scale or rule for use in navi-

gational calculations. They were usually two feet long and made of boxwood.

6. "Sectors, in brass, by Gilbert; London, England, and Clarget; Paris, France, c. 1730." In 1598 Galileo and Hood were each given credit for the invention of the sector which, rather than the slide-rule, was the instrument of calculation until the late 19th century. Boxwood, brass, silver and ivory were all used for the limbs which were usually six inches long.

7. "Gauger's slide-rule, boxwood, by E. Roberts; London, England, c. 1790." Sliding rulers were invented by William Oughtred before 1630 whereas the true slide-rule, with fixed stock and moving slide, was published by Partridge in 1661. Before the mid-19th century the slide-rule was rare outside of Britain.

-Decca Frackelton

NOTICES

Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage

Dates for 1997 are:

- Sat. April 26 - Queen Anne's County
- Sunday, April 27 - Somerset County
- Saturday, May 3 - Baltimore County, Lutherville
- Sunday, May 4 - Baltimore City, Fells Point/Federal Hill
- Saturday May 10 - Prince George's County
- Saturday May 17 - Frederick County
- Sunday May 18 - St. Mary's County.

Tickets (\$20.00 each day) may be purchased from the Pilgrimage Headquarters or at the first house visited.

For further information contact: Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage, 1105A Providence Road, Towson, Maryland 21286. Call 410-821-6933 or FAX 410-821-7620.

Historic Garden Week in Virginia

Dates for 1997 are April 19-26.

Maymont Flower & Garden Show

Maymont's Flower and Garden Show will be held Feb. 20-23, 1997, at the Richmond (Va.) Centre. Lectures are free with admission to the show.

Among the nearly 20 speakers are Mike McGrath, Editor-in-Chief of *Organic Gardening* magazine and Erica Glasener, host of "A Gardener's Diary" on the Home and Garden Television Network.

Gillette Forum

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden announces plans for the sixth annual

Gillette Forum entitled "Rejuvenation of the Garden" to be held May 7-8, 1997.

There will be a visit to a notable out-of-town garden TBA, including an interpretation, Wednesday, May 7, and morning lectures Thursday, May 8, at The Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. Bus tours will depart from The Jefferson Hotel the afternoon of May 8 to visit private Richmond area gardens.

Karen Kettlety, ASLA, will be the keynote speaker for the Forum. Kettlety, a landscape architect who practices on Mt. Desert Island, Maine, will discuss philosophies of landscape rejuvenation and a current Gillette garden rejuvenation in North Carolina.

For more information on the Gillette Forum call Jennifer M. Suther at (804)262-9887, ext. 3016.

ABS Memorial Garden Progress

Word from Mrs. Scot Butler, Chairman of the ABS Memorial Garden is that the metal strips edging the beds in the "new" garden are in place and look great. She deserves much credit for the work she does on this committee and for the enthusiasm with which she approaches the challenges.

Grading was done along the northeast end of the North Bed and a Juniper which was encroaching the main path has been removed. A good bit of transplanting has been done, but wet weather delayed this work considerably.



Bob Arnold of the Blandy Farm staff setting Buxus sempervirens 'Joy' on a cold November day. (Photos: Decca Frackelton)



Buxus sempervirens 'Joy' in the middle of the Center Bed.



From the parking area looking toward the west. Stakes with blue tags in the lawn mark the northern edge of the small East Bed. Behind the "Evergreen Trail" sign, the Juniper and the Arborvitae have been removed.



The cultivar 'Hermann von Schrenk', recently transplanted to the Center Bed.



Stakes in the foreground indicate boundaries for the edging of the South and Center Beds.



*The middle part of the South Bed. In foreground: three plants each of *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Morris Midget' and 'Morris Dwarf', with four companion plants of *Amelanchier* (*deciduous*). Near and behind are *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Green Beauty' and *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'National'.*

In Memoriam

William A. Gray

Mr. William A. Gray joined The American Boxwood Society in 1970. He was appointed to the Committee to plan and establish the Memorial Garden in 1975. He served as ABS Director (1981-1991) and as Chairman of the Research Committee for almost ten years. When he moved to the Charlottesville, Va., area in 1974, he established the Brecknock Nursery which he operated until about 1994.



J. C. Raulston

Dr. Jame Chester (J. C.) Raulston, though not a member of the ABS, will be remembered from the ABS Tour in the Raleigh area in 1984. Dr. Raulston was guest speaker following the Saturday evening dinner and our tour guide for and Director of the North Carolina State University Arboretum which he developed. This Arboretum and Dr. Raulston became "household" names through the years. He devoted his life to growing and distributing new plants. Three years ago he received the Thomas Roland Medal, given by the Massachusetts Horticulture Society.



Charles K. Woltz

Mr. Charles K. Woltz, Emeritus Professor of Law at the University of Virginia, was a recipient of the Alumni Association Distinguished Professor Award and of the University's highest honor, The Thomas Jefferson Award.

Mr. Woltz was a charter member of the ABS. Among the many types of boxwood he and his wife propagated were two from the Orland E. White Arboretum (Blandly Farm). One was the *Buxus sempervirens* 'Graham Blandly' of which they have many fine specimens. The other was *B. sempervirens* 'Dee Runk', which they had registered. This cultivar they saved from extinction as the original from which they were given cuttings by Dr. Runk has been lost. Attendees of the ABS Annual Meeting in May 1996 will remember with pleasure visiting the Woltz garden.



Reminder:

New Address

Mrs. Katherine D. Ward,
ABS Treasurer

134 Methodist Church Lane
West Augusta, VA
24485-2053

(Please advise the ABS of any change of address, whether from renaming of streets or moving, to prevent loss of contact when forwarding notices expire.)

Request:

Topiary

Anyone who knows of a commercial source for boxwood topiary is requested to contact:

Mrs. Decca Frackelton
1714 Greenway Dr.
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401
(540) 373-7975

The Seasonal Gardener

Practical tips for boxwood enthusiasts from Society members



Topiary

Topiary is a formally-pruned plant in a particular shape such as an animal, ball, or a glass-top-smooth hedge. Topiaries have been described as "...characterized by the clipping or trimming of live shrubs or trees into decorative shapes, as those of animals or birds," "A distortion of Nature," "The absurd fashion of cutting and torturing trees into all sorts of fantastic shapes."

Romans began the art of topiary. They were fond of topiaries and had gardeners whose sole task was to create and maintain topiaries in the gardens. In the United States the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s saw an interest in topiary. One of the best examples is the Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, Maryland.

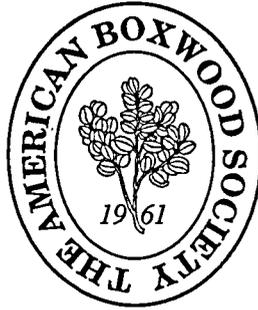
A few of the plants used to create topiary include: Yew, *Taxus*; Hemlock, *Tsuga*; Creeping Euonymus, *Euonymus radicans minimus*; Privet, *Ligustrum*; and Boxwood, *B. sempervirens*. The order given also corresponds to the adaptive nature of the plant to topiary. Yew is the best plant while boxwood is among the least successful plants for topiary, due to the constant shearing that slowly weakens boxwood.

In managing topiary boxwood, the plants should be sheared in early June. To produce a boxwood hedge, the base should be slightly wider than the top.



1993 photo of a boxwood topiary in the holding area for the ABS Memorial Garden. (Photo: Decca Frackelton)

From the Boxwood Handbook: A Practical Guide, available for \$15 from the ABS. See ordering information inside front cover.



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