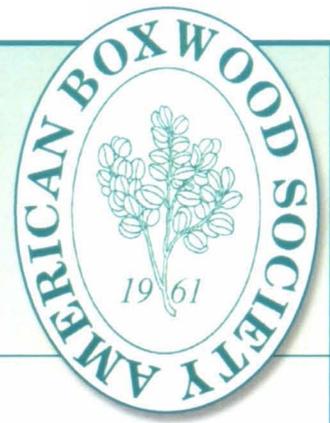


# THE BOXWOOD BULLETIN



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

Vol. 51 No. 4

Spring 2012

Change ↗



*Ted Mays*

*The ABS in Charleston*

# 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 *Buxus*. Visit our website at:

**www.boxwoodsociety.org**

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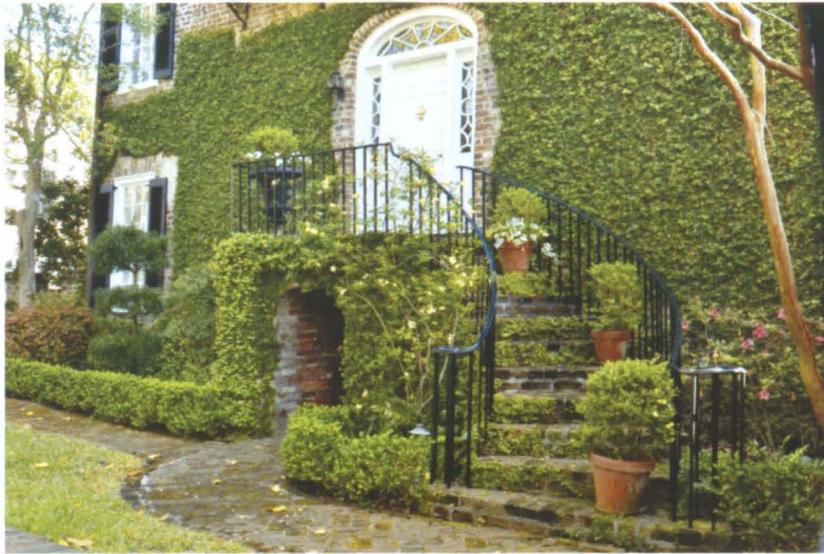
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Be part of The Boxwood Bulletin! Submit an article, photograph, question, idea or report of your own experience.

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# *Celebrate Spring – And Boxwood!*



## *Renew Your Membership! And Introduce a Friend!*

*TO: Members of the American Boxwood Society*

As all good ABS members know, the rites of Spring include prompt membership renewal at the sight of the first daffodil. (That would have been pretty early this year!) Actually, our year begins on May 1 and renewals are due on or before that date.

We have already enjoyed our very fine 2012 annual meeting and symposium (March 25-27) in Charleston. It was early this year, like Spring, and we received there a good taste of the fruits of hard work and commitment on the part of devoted Society members. Work has already started on the 2013 annual meeting to be held in Williamsburg. More benefits of membership await us as we come together again to enjoy the company of like-minded gardeners and growers.

The work of the American Boxwood Society has never been more important. That work, you know, is to make sure the ancient plant *Buxus*, in all its forms, is kept for future generations of gardeners, and to educate growers and gardeners concerning its culture and use in the landscape. As we face the mysteries and uncertainties of boxwood disease, now trying to gain a foothold in the United States, we need “every hand on deck”. This important mission can only be accomplished with your help and commitment.

Please renew today and pledge to bring a new member into the Society. Look for ways to become involved and do not hesitate to volunteer your talents. You are needed.

Sincerely,

Your ABS Membership Chairman and The Board of the American Boxwood Society

**PS–** We’re off to a great start with the new memberships and renewals received at the Charleston symposium and eagerly await all outstanding renewals. Don’t forget to bring a friend! An envelope is enclosed in this Bulletin for your convenience.

## *From the Editor...*

At the time of this writing, the Board of Directors of the ABS is in the process of weighing carefully the how, when and why of producing the Bulletin. We believe this reassessment is an absolutely vital process to engage in, and hope that changes made from conclusions reached will be stimulating to the Society.

The cost of producing a Bulletin issue is becoming inordinately expensive. Quarterly publication puts a strain on the budget that we believe needs to be, and can be, reduced. The information disseminated through the Bulletin can, with diligence, be done in fewer issues, saving lots of wear and tear on the budget, as well as the editor! And the availability of editors is, of course, a crucial element, too. It is important that the membership have a ready supply of volunteers coming forward to undertake the task of editing the Bulletin. This is, perhaps, the most difficult problem of all to solve. Fewer issues per year would seem to be a step in the right direction as we address these problems.

The concept of the online journal is one of the possibilities being examined. Many find the transient

quality of electronic publications undesirable, along with its tendency toward sloppy editing. However, circumstances surrounding budget and editorship may dictate the choice of an 'e' edition, in which case, the Bulletin would truly assume more of a "bulletin" format, with brevity being the key. That doesn't always work, but alternating this approach with a paper edition might work just fine.

The Bulletin is for you, the ABS members, and your position on all these possibilities needs to be heard. It is important that you supply your part of the equation, that we hear from you about your preference, your reasons for it; and your willingness to be a part of the answer. We encourage you to write, email, or call the Society with your opinions. We look forward to hearing from you.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Bulletin on the Charleston meeting. It was a super event! And another one is on the way! Mark your calendars now for the 2013 Annual Meeting and Symposium in Williamsburg, tentatively set for May 19.



“The Charleston Experience” can hardly be exaggerated. It is a place of superlatives—great natural scenery, a beautiful harbor, charming historic homes, gorgeous gardens, a vibrant arts and crafts culture, and a unique cuisine born of its deep involvement with the land and water that surround it.

With a history to match, from pirates to plantations, to the Civil War, to modern engineering marvels, Charleston offers its visitors a really meaningful opportunity where it is impossible to be a merely casual observer. ABS members filled two days to the brim, combining all that Charleston offers with a well-planned symposium. An account follows.

# *The ABS in Action...*

## *And Other News of the Society*

The ABS is joining forces with others all over the US and the world to understand the blight that is ravaging boxwood in fields, forests, nurseries and gardens, and find preventive measures in the battle against boxwood disease. ABS board member Bennett Saunders will be in England in late April for a Summit Conference that will focus on boxwood blight. (The disease has been present in England and Europe since the mid-1990's.) Lynn Batdorf, International Registrar for Boxwood, will also be in attendance there. In addition, Lynn will be addressing the European Boxwood and Topiary Society at Touquet, France, in May, on this and other aspects of boxwood culture. Both ABS members will be reporting on their findings and we will hope to publish these reports in a future Bulletin.

### *In other news...*

- In January, ABS board members participated in the MidAtlantic Nursery Trade Show in Baltimore. Venues like MANTS present excellent opportunities for showcasing boxwood and the American Boxwood Society.
- In March, ABS members and other boxwood enthusiasts enjoyed an outstanding symposium, thanks to the leadership of board member Ted Mays and his committee. See the full report on this major event in this Bulletin.
- ABS member John Elkins was “our man in Charleston” during the symposium, taking lots of photographs of people and plants, as he documented the ABS visit to this delightful city. His photos decorate this issue of the Bulletin. His gift of time and talent are deeply appreciated. Contact the ABS office for information on obtaining a copy of his photographic essay.

The Bulletin would like to report your participation in similar events in future “ABS in Action” columns. Let us hear from you!

### **IN MEMORIAM**

**John W. Boyd, Jr. (October, 1922 - April 2012)**

As this edition of the Bulletin went to press, we received word of the death of Mr. John Boyd Jr, longtime member of the American Boxwood Society, and the father of John Boyd III, our current ABS president.

Many memories have been shared with the ABS office (Executive Secretary, Tootie Rinker) from ABS members and from community leaders who praised Mr. Boyd's involvement in his city and in his profession, remembering him as “a wonderful gentleman.” A boxwood wreath was sent for the funeral from the American Boxwood Society. The flower shop sending the wreath noted that Mr. Boyd had supplied the shop with boxwood for many years and the family continues to do so today.

# AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY IN HISTORIC CHARLESTON

The 52 annual meeting and symposium of the American Boxwood Society convened in Charleston, South Carolina, on March 25, 2012 and in the two days that followed an ambitious agenda was accomplished with stellar success. Records were set, weighty matters discussed and delightful gardens were visited—by all accounts it was a memorable and meaningful experience.



Attendees were greeted on Sunday night with a welcome reception with ABS board members serving as hosts, on the lookout for new members and first time symposium attendees, as well as returning old friends. Everyone received welcome bags holding vital information and a surprise gift from Charleston Gardens, a Charleston shop (now online and by catalog) and a longtime supporter of the Charleston Horticultural Society who partnered with the ABS in presenting this meeting.

The Horticultural Society with their expert volunteer guides took attendees through six gardens on Monday—the unique small town gardens behind beautiful old walls and iron gates that are a big part of the heart and soul of Charleston. We toured on foot, in small groups, each with its own guide.



The gardens of Charleston were a refreshing change from the gardens most of us tend in other parts of the country. They are small, yet never crowded, though every inch of space is utilized in imaginative ways. Paths and parterres are important elements, as are the plants used in Zones 7-9. But ABS members were on familiar ground as they were greeted in each garden with lots of Buxus!

Our first garden, a breathtaking beauty, is carefully tended by the owners (the husband is the Chairman of the Garden Conservancy), garden enthusiasts who leave no stone unturned in their meticulous care of this garden. Here, as in the other gardens, extensive use is made of ‘Kingsville Dwarf’, whose petite form and slow growth are perfect for these small gardens. In this case, the charming small parterre used ‘Kingsville Dwarf’ as its border. The Japanese boxwood, ‘Winter Gem’ is also a reliable player in this garden and throughout Charleston gardens.



Our second garden was none other than the one tended by Mrs. Whaley, the famous Charleston hostess who gave us two books—one on her garden and one on her well-known hospitality. Now tended by Mrs. Whaley’s daughter, the garden was designed by Lutrell Briggs, a much sought-after Charleston designer, whose work we encountered often. In addition to the familiar boxwood, the garden contained other interesting plants, most notably the acanthus, which was spectacular.

Our third garden was the stunning result of combining architectural elements with wonderful plant selection. The garden was surrounded by a ruin—the walls of a very old brick warehouse whose window spaces were imaginatively used, and missing a roof! A small square pond was surrounded by ‘Kingsville Dwarf’, and there were pots of Harlandii ‘Richard’ strategically placed. Fantastic!

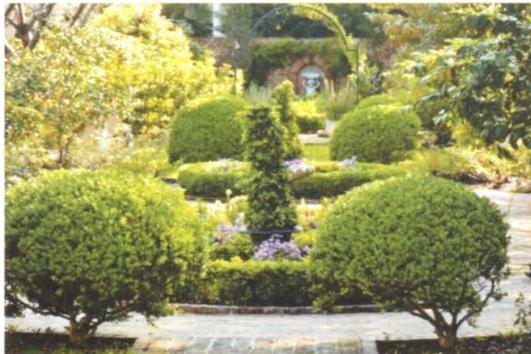
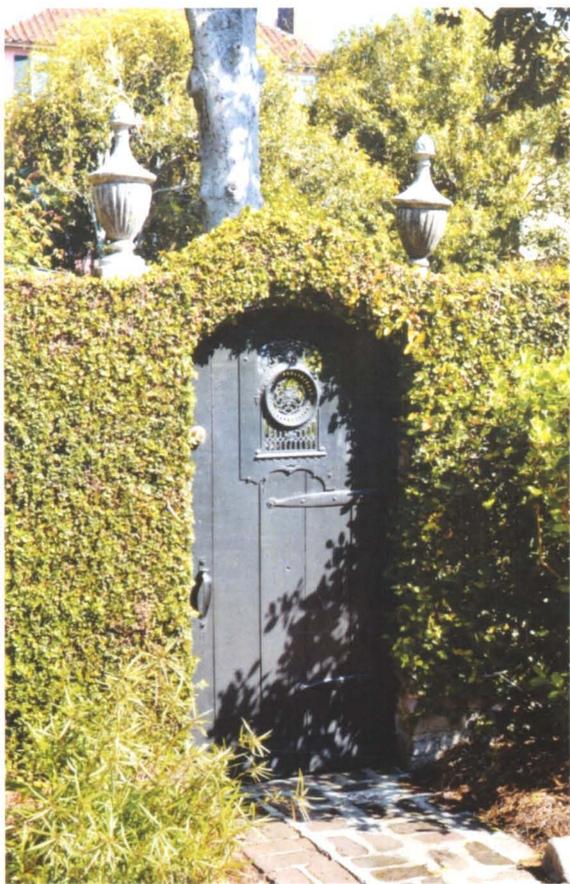


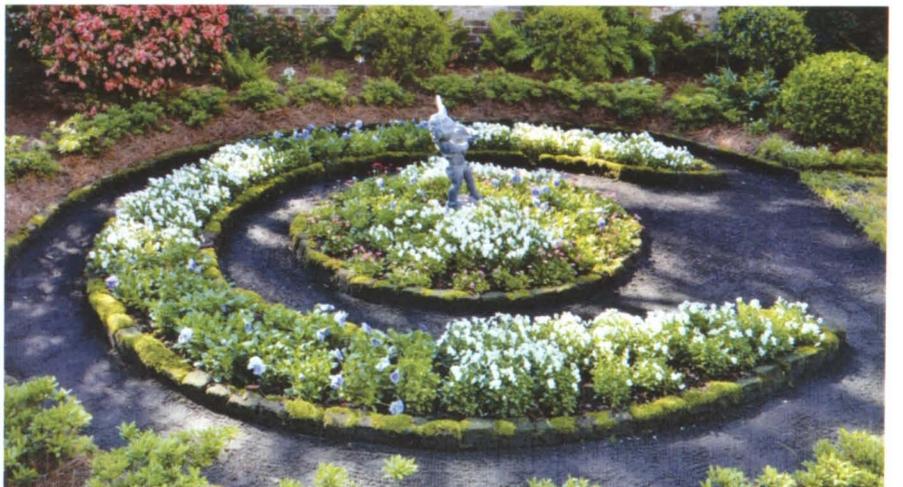
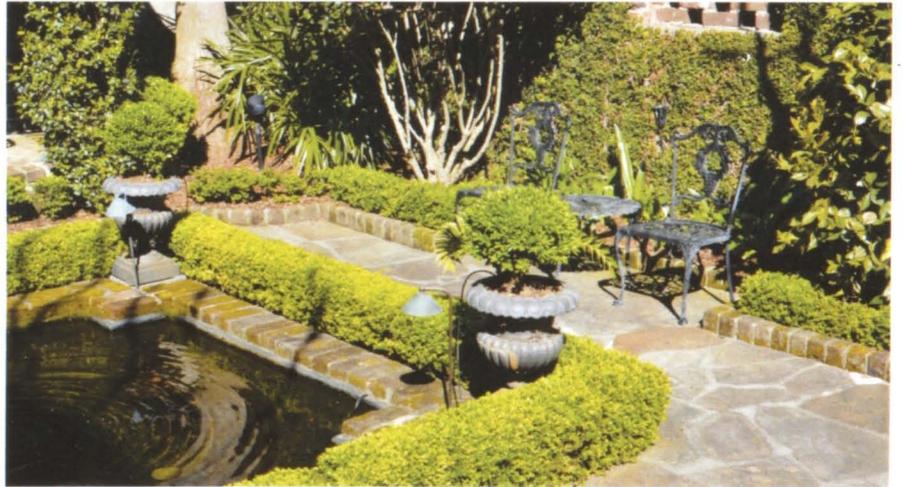
The fourth garden held special surprises for us. In this beautiful garden full of healthy, happy boxwood, we had the pleasure of meeting the young woman who so carefully tends the garden and she treated us to a lesson in properly pruning boxwood, with emphasis on thinning, showing us how to cut out the bushy whorls that are the result of frequent, shallow shearing, thus opening up the plant to light and air. Kelly Megeath is a graduate of Virginia Tech and through her business, Garden Elegance, takes care of many Charleston gardens. The owner of this garden graciously introduced Kelly and expressed appreciation for her expertise and devoted work. It was a truly outstanding garden. (Kelly was on hand for the day of lectures on Tuesday, and became a Contributing member of the ABS!)

It was an exciting morning of looking and learning, and the group eagerly accepted the chance to pause for lunch and iced tea at High Cotton, a historic restaurant on our historic path.

Following lunch, we finished our memorable tour with two more gardens, each as special as the individuals who owned and tended them. The fifth garden belonged to Patti McGee, chairman of the Charleston Horticul-

# THE ABS IN CHARLESTON





tural Society, who freely confessed that friends call her “Plantaholic Patti”—and the evidence supporting the name was all about with an exciting array of beautiful and unusual plants. A delightful garden with an equally delightful owner whose hospitality was much appreciated.

We wrapped up our tour in great style as we looked at the work of a former radiologist-turned-garden-designer! This beautiful garden of the Hieronymous-Roper House made good use of the ‘Kingsville Dwarf’ box, as well as ‘sinica var. insularis’. Evidence that gardening is lots more fun than radiology was all about us!

A busy day...so far...but there was more to come. After a return to the hotel for a quick change of shoes, we made a trip back into Charleston to visit the charming art gallery of Gaye Sanders Fisher where we enjoyed wine and cheese as we viewed her work. (Gaye was a contributor to the annual ABS auction—a beautiful watercolor of boxwood in a Charleston garden.) From the gallery attendees went their separate ways to various restaurants nearby for a taste of famous Low Country cuisine. What a day!

## **A Day with Outstanding Speakers**

Tuesday was our day to get down to the business of updating and learning from the experts. The annual meeting of the ABS was followed by illustrated talks from guest lecturers who addressed subjects as diverse as parterres and boxwood blight. Kari Whitley, an active board member for the Charleston Horticultural Society, was the perfect lead speaker, opening with a story of an injured baby blue jay which she rescued. She revealed her love of nature in all its various parts as she discussed “Selecting, planting and designing with the right boxwood for your landscape.” She emphasized the importance of properly caring for what we have to work with, whether it be an injured bluejay or a boxwood plant and proceeded to give us an overall plan to follow in maintaining our boxwood gardens with details on pruning, planting depth, mulch pros and cons, and guidelines on drainage and irrigation. A graduate of the University of Georgia with a B.S. in Horticulture and M.S. in Plant Pathology, Kari founded Scout Horticultural Consulting after seeing that horticultural professionals, landscape architects and homeowners needed someone to advise them on matters of plant health. Her talk on proper care of the garden around us was an inspiring lead-in to the lectures that followed.

Dr. Kelby Fite, holds a PhD in Plant and Environmental Science from Clemson University with a research focus on urban soil renovation and root biology, and has been a member of the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories team for ten years. He spoke on “Cultural Practices for Gardening Success”, emphasizing spotting the problems early and dealing with them immediately. Key to his lecture was his opening statement: “Before you ask ‘what should I do about my problem plant’, ask, ‘WHY am I having to this?’” He spoke in depth about roots, rootballs, root collars and soils. Even for the most experienced gardener and grower, there was much to be gleaned from Dr Fite’s talk.

Dean Norton, an ABS Board member, is responsible for applying the latest plant science and management techniques to the gardens of Mount Vernon, where he began his full time career in 1977. He discussed his love of history and boxwood, taking a light approach, giving his audience important information with an enjoyable touch of humor.

Andrew Kohr, a landscape architect with offices in Atlanta, works on a variety of urban design and historic preservation related projects. His illustrated address gave us a look at the history of the parterre, that landscape design element that makes such extensive use of boxwood. Although it has a long history that goes back to the Roman garden and was used often in medieval gardens, it has proved its enduring qualities and is frequently seen in the modern garden. Exciting information for the designer in all of us.

Dr. Kelly Ivors, Associate Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at North Carolina State Uni-

versity, with degrees from Texas A&M and a PhD from Penn State, focused her comments on phytophthora and cylindrocladium diseases in boxwood. As the boxwood “blight” continues to become evident in garden centers and gardens east of the Mississippi, her timely message, completely illustrated, kept the audience fully engaged.

This very full day was gratefully received; we were so fortunate to have had these experts who were also engaging speakers.

Still to be enjoyed was a sumptuous banquet, followed by a fascinating presentation by an exceptional artist—topiarist Pearl Fryar. His talk was accompanied by slides of his extraordinary work. His success in the field of topiary has permitted him to form a foundation through which he shares his life and work with young people who need encouragement . It was a thrilling finale and much appreciated by an enthusiastic audience.



Not to be forgotten is the annual auction which followed the banquet. There were plants and artifacts of all sorts auctioned, including two magnificent topiary standards which had decorated the hotel lobby throughout the symposium, brought by Hugh Crump, board member from Charlotte. (These were the perfect complement to the specially painted banners depicting boxwood gardens which were given to the Society by Walter Carell.)

The ABS is deeply indebted to Karen McIsaac and Ted Mays for planning and carrying out to perfection the entire meeting. And they would be quick to say that the help and organizational skills of ABS Executive Secretary Tootie Rinker were absolutely vital to their success. The assistance our planners received from the Charleston Horticultural Society was crucial to the success of this meeting. We were fortunate indeed to have received the total support of this great organization.

For three wonderful days we were indeed “in high cotton”!

**THANKS, EVERYBODY, FROM A GRATEFUL BOXWOOD SOCIETY!**



# Boxwood Bookshelf

With Charleston-style gardens very much on the minds of ABS members returning home from the March symposium, it seems a good time to review *Knot Gardens and Parterres*, by Robin Whalley and Anne Jennings, a book recommended by Hugh Crump (ABS board member), a year ago in his Bulletin article on design (see April 2011 issue, “*Knot for You*”).

When I pulled the book from my library shelf I was surprised to see its published date—1998! It is the sort of book that is absolutely timeless in its appeal—a great history book and a great “how to” book. The gardener who enjoys a bit of formality in his garden, and who yearns to tackle a garden project that will test his mettle—not easy, but so enjoyable—will love this book.

With a foreword by the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury whose gardens, including knot gardens, enjoy world renown, the book launches into a world class history lesson from the first syllable. Robin Whalley continues the history lesson, from the knot’s origin in Tudor England to its staying power, in various forms, through the following centuries.



In the second half of the book, Anne Jennings, whose gardening skills are well known, (she tended the garden at the Museum of Garden History in London, among others) takes us from history to hands-on execution. The challenge of the knot is greatly tempered by her clear explanations and drawings, and obvious enthusiasm for this garden art form. The choices and opportunities are fully explained, as she takes the gardener from initial planning, design and plant choice to the basics of maintenance. Here you will find all the practical advice and creative stimulus you need to design your own knot; and for the boxwood lover, lots of opportunity to use your favorite plant.

The less intricate parterre, often a simple rectangle or square formed by hedging, usually of boxwood, and often with interior divisions of more hedging, is a Charleston garden favorite, a feature we saw often on our garden tour. Using dwarf forms of box, the diminutive parterres were perfect for these small enclosed gardens. Captivating and inspiring!

Thanks to Hugh for reminding us of this excellent book with its practical gardening information on this historic garden design.

## AND FINALLY...

The American Boxwood Society wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to the SPONSORS whose generous support insured the outstanding success of the 2012 Annual Meeting and Symposium in Charleston, South Carolina.

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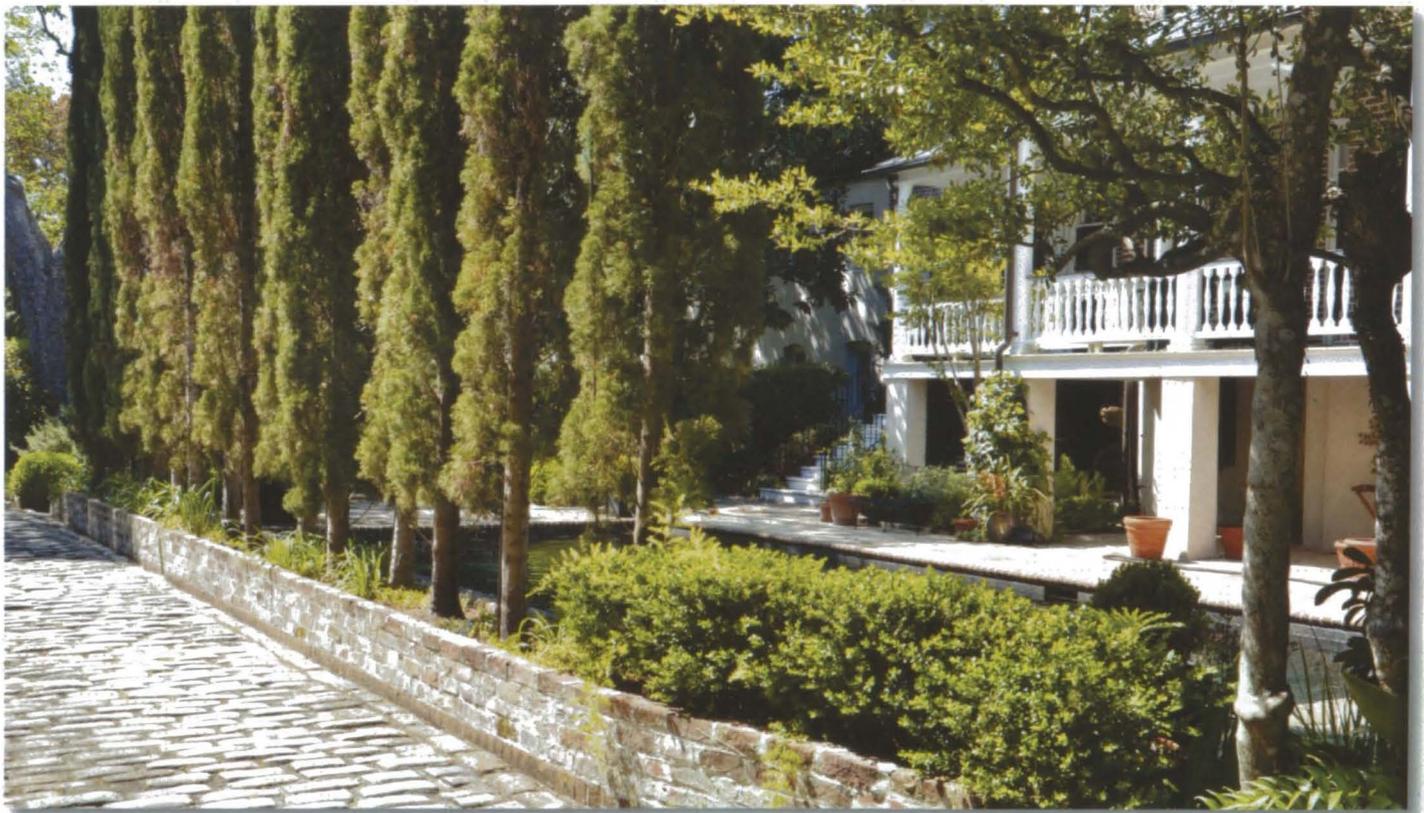
Paul Saunders - Piney River, Virginia

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Danny Jones - Lawrenceville, Georgia

Kevin Wasilewski - Lakeland, Florida

## THANK YOU!!



# *The American Boxwood Society*

## *Annual Meeting*

*Tuesday, March 27, 2012; Charleston, South Carolina*

### **Call to Order**

- President Boyd called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. The gathered members totaled 59. The presence of a quorum was confirmed.
- President Boyd expressed the gratitude of all members present, and the Society as a whole, to this year's Symposium Co-Chairs Ted Mays and Karen McIsaac, for providing the leadership to create the event and for all their direct efforts in carrying it to a successful fruition.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting on May 14, 2011 were distributed and approved. (George Schumacher / Dean Norton / unanimous by voice)

### **Financial**

- Treasurer Bennett Saunders filed the financial report and reviewed the highlights. He stated that the financial condition of the Society is in "good shape" with some positive trends reestablished. The financial reports were accepted. (unanimous by voice)

### **Committee Reports**

- **Membership:** Chair Louise Smith reports 320 regular memberships from all classes (including 19 new for this Symposium) and 51 Life memberships. A membership renewal notice and letter will be sent to all at the end of April 2012, to coincide with the start of the new fiscal year on May 1, 2012.
- **Bulletin:** Vol. 51 #2 is being printed. Volume 51 #3 is being gathered.
- President Boyd announced the appointment of Louise Smith as the new Editor of the Boxwood Bulletin.
- **Symposium 2013:** Symposium Chair Katherine Ward reported suggested dates of Sunday, May 19 through Tuesday, May 21, with a format similar to 2012. She invited other members who may be interested in participating on the 2013 committee to speak with her.
- **Symposium 2014:** Washington, DC is the site, with a probable May date.

### **Research**

- President Boyd announced the appointment of Dr. Tomasz Anisko as Chair. Bennett Saunders will serve on the Committee and President Boyd will work on adding some additional individuals to the Committee.

### **New Business**

- President Boyd turned over the chairing of the meeting to Nominating Committee Chair Katherine Ward. She presented the slate of nominees as follows:

**President** – John Boyd III

**First Vice President** – Lee Hahn

**Second Vice President** – Charles Fooks

**Secretary** – Jan S. Carter

**Treasurer** – Bennett Saunders

**Director 2013** – Laurie McMinn

**Directors 2015** – Bernard Cross, M.D.,  
Hugh Crump, Helen R. Hecht.

- The floor was opened for further nominations; after seeing none, a motion was made, seconded and passed to adopt the proposed slate of nominees by acclamation. (Lee Hahn / Walter Carell / unanimous by voice)

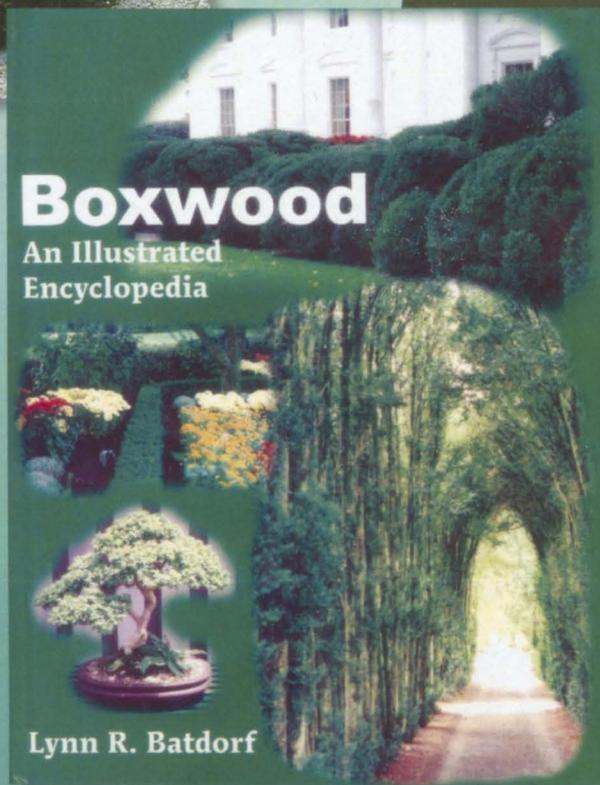
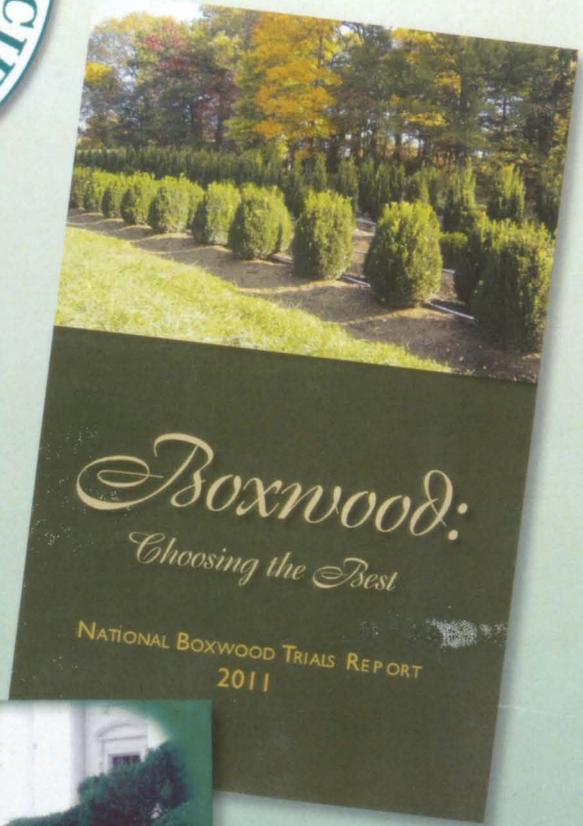
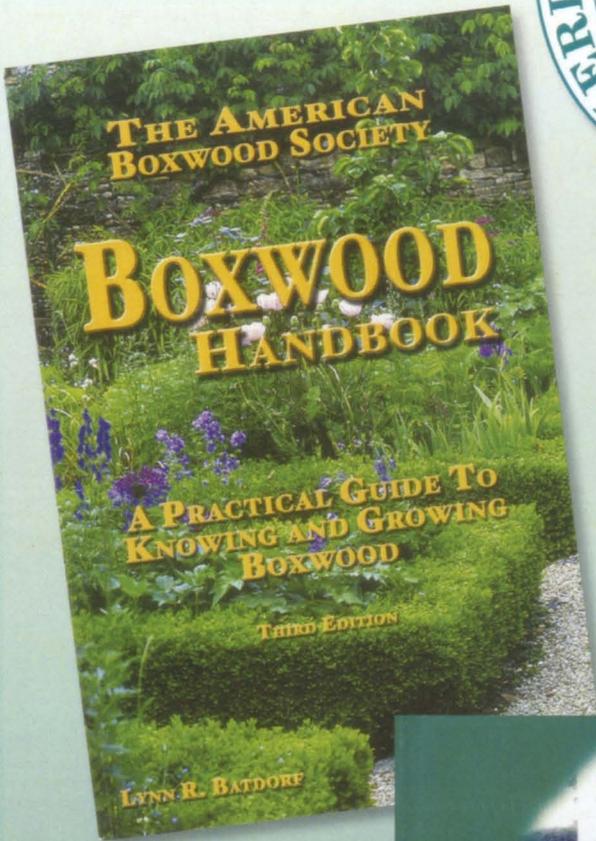
### **Adjournment**

Seeing no further business, President Boyd declared the meeting adjourned, without objection.



**The American Boxwood Society**  
**52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Symposium**  
**March 25-27, 2012**  
**Charleston, S.C.**





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