

The

July 1965

Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina

Photograph, Frances Spalding

Boyce, Va.

Vol. 5 No. 1

Edited Under The Direction Of
THE AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

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The Boxwood Bulletin is published four times a year by the American Boxwood Society in the quarters beginning with October, January, April, and July.

A subscription to the Boxwood Bulletin is included as one of the benefits of membership in the American Boxwood Society, with \$2.00 of the dues of each member being allotted for the Bulletin subscription.

The Bulletin is \$5.00 per annum to non-members in the United States and Canada; single numbers are \$1.00 each.

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The Boxwood Bulletin

July 1965

Vol. 5, No. 1

Editors ----- Mrs. Edgar M. Whiting
 Mrs. Chester L. Riley

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 Boyce, Virginia
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 Carr Publishing Co., Inc., Boyce, Va.

DO YOU KNOW ALL THE BUXACEAE?

The October issue of The Boxwood Bulletin will be devoted largely to the relatives of *Buxus*. Dr. J. T. Baldwin, Jr., Special Editor for this special number, has assembled papers from leading authorities on the five accepted genera in the Buxaceae in addition to *Buxus*, as follows:

STYLOCERAS, by Dr. Gabriel Edwin, Chicago Natural History Museum.

SIMMONDSIA, by Dr. Howard Scott Gentry, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

SARCOCOCCA: SWEET BOX, by The Hon. Lewis Palmer, Winchester, England.

PACHYSANDRA, by Dr. H. C. Robbins, Kentucky Southern College.

AFRICAN BOXES, by Dr. B. Verdcourt, Verdcourt Luton, Beds., England.

This will be an issue on a high professional level, of which The American Boxwood Society may well be proud. You will want to preserve it as a reference work, and to recommend it to your friends.

BOXWOOD BRIEFS

GIFT FROM MRS. McCARTY

Mrs. J. B. McCarty, one of our Honorary Life Members, sent a gift of ten copies of her delightful little book, "The Story of Boxwood", to be sold at the Annual Meeting for the benefit of the Society. The books were quickly sold to the earliest arrivals at the meeting, and our treasury was enriched by twenty dollars. Mrs. McCarty's generosity and continuing interest are gratefully appreciated by the Boxwood Society.

SURVEY OF WINTER DAMAGE

Dr. J. H. Tinga, Associate Professor of Horticulture at V.P.I., Blacksburg, Va., is making a survey of winter injury to boxwood on the eastern seaboard in the past winter of 1964-65. He is circulating a brief questionnaire on the subject among owners and growers of box in the area. Fifty copies of this questionnaire were distributed at the Annual Meeting, and Dr. Tinga will be glad to send others to any member who will reply. He promises an article on the final summary and report for a future number of the Bulletin, and hopes that it will be based on a large number of replies.

An exhibit of specimen boxwood plants from the Society's collection excited much interest and favorable comment at a Flower Show held by the Council of Garden Clubs of Winchester, Va., on May 26th and 27th.

Mr. Clark Crabill, acting head of the Orland E. White Arboretum at Blandy Farm, arranged and installed the exhibit, which included many new varieties such as "Curly Locks" and "Belleville", hardy boxwoods such as "Wintergreen" and "Northern Find", and an unnamed specimen of an extremely miniature form. A feature was a group of fifteen two-year-old seedlings showing the wide variation in size, rate of growth, shape and color that may come from the same seed lot.

HARDY CANADIAN BOX

Buxus sempervirens "Northern Find"

"This plant originated at St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and was first propagated by the Woodland Nurseries of Cooksville, Ontario, in 1939. The originator is not known, but the plant was introduced commercially about 1955. In the words of Mr. Leslie Hancock, "It is a nicely rounded bush, capable of growing over many years to considerable height, with a semi-open branching habit. The leaves are oblong-oval, 1-1¼" long, convex, with glaucous bloom on young foliage with an occasional small branch of silver-variegated foliage. It will apparently be normal-appearing at -25 to -30°F." This has not been widely distributed as yet, but is becoming more and more popular in this section of Ontario, Canada."

ARNOLDIA, May 31, 1963

BOX REGISTRATION

The Arnold Arboretum has been appointed pro tem the National Registration Authority for some genera of woody plants, including Box, which have not been assigned to other organizations.

WAGENKNECHT LIST AVAILABLE

"A Registration List of Cultivar Names In *Buxus* L.", by Dr. B. L. Wagenknecht of Norwich University, is now available in booklet form from the American Boxwood Society, Boyce, Va.

The price is 25¢ a copy, plus 5¢ a copy postage on a single-copy order or a number up to nine. For an order of ten or more copies, the price is 25¢ a copy postpaid.



Box defines and dominates the Alsops' city garden. White wisteria overhangs the terrace next the house. Magnolias shade the lower terrace, in the foreground of the picture. Here, a former "moss" garden of ferns and wildflowers — not entirely successful — is now replaced by hostas. Unusual espaliered box grows against the house walls.

With all this luxuriant growth, skillful arrangement creates a feeling of space and seclusion that overcomes the limitation of size.

*Photograph, courtesy Georgetown Garden Tour.
Glogau, Washington, photographers.*

The Georgetown Garden

of

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Alsop

Early in April, every year, Mr. Joseph Alsop turns for a moment from politics and world affairs to share with the many readers of his column the events of Spring in his Georgetown garden — the setbacks and the successes which new growth has revealed once more.

A year ago, he wrote of the damage inflicted by “the cruel snow”, but went on to rejoice in the survival and strong growth of two plants of wall-growing box, espaliered against the walls. We printed pictures of these two, and quoted liberally from his column, in the July 1964 Bulletin.

This year, in his column “The Improver”, in the Washington Post of April 12th, Mr. Alsop decided that “the capricious Providence that presides over all gardens” had, on the whole, been kinder than usual. “The box,” he wrote, “has had a good year, too. No bush lacks the tiny bead-like buds that are the promises of new growth; and the strange, rare sport, the box plant that likes to be espaliered, has an inch of growth on it already. It seems to be ramping up its wall in the manner of an enthusiastic cat-burglar.”

In relation to the other houses on Dumbarton Street in Georgetown, the Alsops’ house and garden are on the second floor level, with a flight of steps leading up from the street level to the entrance door. The front and two wings of the house enclose the upper terrace of the garden on three sides, with large windows and French doors bringing outdoors and indoors together in undisturbed privacy.

A beautiful white wisteria vine grows over this terrace, and the garden also features two fine *Magnolia grandiflora* and a great variety of camellias.

The extensive use of box in this small city garden is of especial interest to members of the Boxwood Society. A request to Mr. Alsop for more specific information brought this answer:

“The present garden was made four years ago, when the addition of a wing to my house forced me to tear up an earlier garden. The earlier garden’s magnolias and the large English box were conserved and reused, however.

The dimensions of the garden are roughly 90 feet deep by 60 feet in width at the widest point, but the upper terrace is not more than 30 feet wide. The garden is in fact shaped like a T, with a piece taken out of one cross bar by the end of the longer wing of the house. The varieties of box planted in the garden are as follows:

1. English box forming the main planting.
2. *Buxus rotundifolia* espaliered on the walls of the upper terrace.
3. Vardar Valley box from the Balkans, experimentally planted in the lower garden.
4. Kingsville box used as an edging plant.
5. The Hohman hybrid with leaf form resembling English box, with a close to procumbent habit of growth, used for espaliering on the wall of the lower terrace.
6. A variant of Kingsville box, with especially small leaves, which grows naturally in Bonsai-like forms, used to make an ornamental bed.
7. Another Hohman hybrid “curly locks” planted as an accent.
8. Still another Hohman hybrid called “green mound” or “green cushion”, with a habit of growth indicated by its name, used for corner accents on the upper terrace.
9. Still another Hohman hybrid used as an edging plant on the lower terrace.”

"ESCAPED FROM OLD GARDENS"

Chapter VIII of THE JONATHAN PAPERS

By ELISABETH WOODBRIDGE

In the days when I deemed it necessary to hunt down in my well-thumbed Gray every flower of wood and field, and fit it to its Latin name, I used often to meet this phrase. At first, being young, I resented it. I scorned gardens: their carefully planned and duly tended splendors were not for me. The orchid in the deep woods or by the edge of the lonely swamp, the rare and long-sought heather in the open moorland, these it was that roused my ardor. And to find some newly discovered flower was not a wild flower after all, but merely a garden flower "escaped"! The very word carried a hint of reprobation.

But as the years went on, the phrase gathered itself meanings vague and subtle. I found myself welcoming it and regarding with a warmer interest the flower so described. From what old garden had it come? What associations and memories did it bring out of the past? Had the paths where it grew been obliterated by the encroachments of a ruthless civilization, or had the tide of human life drawn away from it and left it to be engulfed by the forest from which it had once been wrested, with nothing left to mark it but a gnarled old lilac tree? I have chanced upon such spots in the heart of the wood, where the lilac and the apple tree and the old stoned cellar wall are all that are left to testify to the human life that once centred there. Or had the garden from which its seed was blown only fallen into a quiet decay, deserted but not destroyed, left to bloom unchecked and untended, and fling its seeds to the summer winds that its flowers might "escape" whither they would?

Lately, I chanced upon such a garden. I was walking along a quiet roadside, almost dusky beneath the shade of close-set giant maples, when an unexpected fragrance breathed upon me. I lingered, wondering. It came again, in a warm wave of the August breeze. I looked up at the tangled bank beside me — surely, there was a tall spray of box peeping out through the tall weeds! There was a bush of it — another! Ah! it was a hedge, a box

hedge! Here were the great stone steps leading up to the gate, and here the old, square capped fence-posts, once trim and white, now sunken and silver-gray. The rest of the fence was lying among the grasses and goldenrod, but the box still lived, dead at the top, its leafless branches matted into a hoary gray tangle, but springing up from below in crisp green sprays, lustrous and fragrant as ever, and richly suggestive of the past that produced it. For the box implies not merely human life, but human life on a certain scale: leisurely, decorous, well-considered. It implies faith in an established order and an assured future. A beautiful box hedge is not planned for immediate enjoyment; it is built up inch by inch through the years, a legacy to one's heirs.

Beside the gate-posts stood what must once have been two pillars of box. As I passed between them my feet felt beneath the matted weeds of many seasons the broad stones of the old flagged walk that led up through the garden to the house. Following it, I found, not the house, but the wide stone blocks of the old doorsteps, and beyond these, a ruin — gray ashes and blackened brick, two great heaps of stone where the chimneys had been, with the stone slabs that lined the fireplaces fallen together. At one end was the deep stone cellar filled now with young beeches as tall as the house once was. Just outside stood two cherry trees close to the old house wall — so close that they had burned with it and now stood, black and bare and gaunt, in silent comradeship. At the other end I almost stumbled into the old well, dark and still, with a glimmer of sky at the bottom.

But I did not like the ruin, nor the black well lurking in the weeds and ashes. The garden was better, and I went back to it and followed the stone path as it turned past the end of the house and led, under another broad hedge of box now choked by lusty young maples, to the old rose-garden. Beyond were giant lilacs, and groups of waxberry bushes covered with the pretty white balls that children

love to string; there was the old-fashioned "burning-bush," already preparing its queer, angled berries for autumn splendors. And among these, still holding their own in the tangle, clumps of the tall, rose-lilac phloxes that the old people seem specially to have loved, swayed in the light breeze and filled the place with their heavy, languorous fragrance.

Truly, it is a lovely spot, my old garden, lovelier, perhaps, than when it was in its garden prime, when its hedges were faultlessly trimmed and its walks were edged with neat flower borders, when their smooth flagging-stones showed never a weed, and even the little heaps of earth piled, up, grain by grain, by the industrious ants, were swept away each morning by the industrious broom. Then human life centred here; now it is very far away. All the sounds of the outside world come faintly to this place and take on its quality of quiet, — the lowing of cows in the pastures, the shouts of men in the fields, the deep, vibrant note of the railroad train which goes singing across distances where its rattle and roar fail to penetrate. It is very still here. Even the birds are quieter, and the crickets and katydids less boisterous. The red squirrels move warily through the tree-tops with almost a chastened air, the black-and-gold butterflies flutter indolently about the heads of the phlox; a hummingbird, flashing green, hovers about some belated blossom-heads of the scarlet bee-balm, and then, as if to point the stillness, alights on an apple twig, looking, when at rest, so very small! Only the cicada, as he rustles clumsily about with his paper wings against the flaking bark and yellowing leaves of an old apple tree, seems unmindful of the spell of silence that holds the place.

And the garden is mine now — mine because I have found it, and everyone else, as I like to believe, has forgotten it. Next it is a grove of big old trees. Would they not have been cut down years ago if any one had remembered them? And on the other side is a meadow whose thick grass, waist-high, ought to have been mowed last June and gathered into some dusky, fragrant barn. But it is forgotten, like the garden, and will go leisurely to seed out there in the sun: the autumn winds will sweep it and the winter snow will mat down its dried tangle.

Forgotten — and as I lie in the long grass, drowsy with the scent of the hedge and the phlox, I seem only a memory myself. If I stay too long I shall forget to go away, and no one will remember to find me. In truth, I feel not unwilling that it should be so. Could there be a better place? "Escaped from old gardens!" Ah, foolish, foolish flowers! If I had the happiness to be born in an old garden, I would not escape. I would stay there, and dream there, forever!

Elisabeth Woodbridge (Mrs. Charles G. Morris) died in the spring of 1964, just two months short of her ninety-fourth birthday. Moderns who contend that a woman can successfully combine home and career should hold her up as an example. She wrote at least ten books besides magazine articles and poems, taught at Vassar (her own college), was active in politics, and all the time was making a happy home for her husband and six children.

The Jonathan Papers, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1912, recall the pleasures of country living half a century ago, told with humor and gentle philosophy.

Chapter VIII awakens nostalgic memories of days when one could safely walk down still-quiet country roads, and sometimes find old gardens not yet bulldozed out for housing developments.

Dr. Woodbridge E. Morris, oldest son of Elisabeth Woodbridge, writes:

"It was she who introduced me to the smell of box. I was already married, and raising my own family at Dover, Delaware — one of the old East Coast towns, where box had indeed been planted 'as a legacy to one's heirs'. We were visiting the beautiful old Christ Church and churchyard, a block or so from the Green.

'Oh, smell the box,' she exclaimed, and when I replied that I didn't know it was box I was smelling, she led me to stand down-wind of it.

She had none in her own garden at Newtown, Connecticut, perhaps because it was truly a farm garden, to which she was steward, as she wrote, rather than master 'leisurely' to be sure, as she thought a boxwood garden should be, but neither 'decorous' nor 'well-mannered'.

Incidentally, if you happen to have a copy of The Jonathan Papers, More Jonathan Papers, Days Out and Other Papers, or any other of her writings, I would be glad to buy them from you for whatever we might agree would be a reasonable price. There don't seem to be quite enough copies extant for her grandchildren."

If any of our readers have any of these books and would be willing to part with them, Dr. Woodbridge's address is 5324 West Markham, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72205.



Butterworth boxwood growing in the yard of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Smith, Jr., Blacksburg, Virginia.

(Picture courtesy Virginia Agricultural Extension Service)

History of The Butterworth Boxwood

By A. G. SMITH, JR.

The January, 1965 number of the Boxwood Bulletin (Vol. 4, No. 3) contained a registration list of cultivar names in *Buxus* L., which was prepared by Dr. Burdette L. Wagenknecht. Since *B. sempervirens*, Butterworth was included in this listing, the following facts are submitted for the record.

The parent stock of this variety grew at the home of John Butterworth (1785-1840), my great grandfather, at Butterworth's Bridge, Petersburg, Virginia.

During the later years of my father's life he began, as a hobby and for sentimental reasons, to take cuttings from boxwood plants at the homes of relatives and old friends. These were rooted and lined out in a field on Osage Farm, in Dinwiddie County, where I was reared.

This planting, containing more than 1500 boxwood, is still at the home place, minus some plants which were given to relatives and friends. All identifying labels have disappeared from the different lots.

My father's diary contains the following entry under date of October 11, 1932: "Got a good bunch of boxwood from the old Butterworth home at the Bridge and should have a nice lot of cuttings to put in sand".

In early 1936 my father gave Mrs. Smith and me some of his hobby plants; and among them was one labeled Butterworth. It was planted at the southwest corner of our residence in Blacksburg, where it is still growing. (See picture).

About 1952 I rooted a number of cuttings from this plant and sent them to Mr. Samuel H. Thrasher, Greenbrier Farms, Norfolk, Virginia, with a note saying that since this variety had done well in eastern Virginia, it might be worth propagating for sale.

A few years ago, the Tingle Nursery Company, Pittsville, Maryland, began the listing of Butterworth boxwood with the statement that the variety had proved to be quite hardy at V.P.I. Actually, this plant has never been out of our yard. Because of my long connection with the Department of Horticulture at V.P.I., it was assumed that the plants came from that institution.

The Butterworth boxwood plant, with numerous others on our lot, has been thinned from time to time to keep it within its allotted space.

The plant is growing in full sun, except for a short time in early morning. It is in good soil; and as far as I can recall, it has never been mulched or fed.

It has developed strong branches with a compact form. The ten or more dry summers, with several severe winters, at Blacksburg have not caused the foliage to turn brown. However, the leaves are never as glossy as those of some other varieties in our yard.

This cultivar has no special merit, in my opinion, except that it is a rugged sort.

Quoted by permission from

GARDENERS FORUM:

Kingsville Dwarf Boxwood

The very dwarf and ultra-slow-growing form of box, Kingsville Dwarf Boxwood (*Buxus Microphylla* Kingsville Dwarf) has been one of the hardiest in Columbus (Ohio). Now over 30 years old, it has withstood 20° below zero without damage. Unfortunately, it is not one of the easiest to root even under mist.

GARDENERS FORUM of the American Horticultural Society, December 1962.

Propagating

The "Kingsville Dwarf"

Henry J. Hohman, the originator of the very hardy dwarf boxwood, "The Kingsville Dwarf Boxwood", noted the comments in the December issue of the Forum "that it was not easy to propagate," and sends these suggestions.

"Cuttings are taken in January and February and inserted in trays of 50-50 sand and peatmoss, and the trays are placed on greenhouse benches so that they receive bottom heat, and the area where trays are placed is shaded to shield the cuttings until rooted.

Cuttings are cut with a small heel left at base, and then we make two upright cuts, opposite each other, on the part of the stem to be inserted, just one-quarter inch above the base of the cutting. This cut is made identical as a cut is made when layering a stem for rooting, or air-layering. The base of the cutting will callus quickly, and the roots start readily where the two upright side cuts were made. The results are 100% rooting."

GARDENERS FORUM, American Horticultural Society, Vol. 6, No. 2, March 1963.



Gleaming white marble sculpture and gray trails of Spanish moss contrast with the deep green of box at Brookgreen Gardens.

Photographer, Frances Spalding

Box Brings A Touch Of The Past To A Noted Collection Of Sculpture At Brookgreen Gardens, South Carolina

By GURDON L. TARBOX, Jr.

Brookgreen Gardens was founded in 1931 by Archer Milton and Anna Hyatt Huntington as an eleemosynary corporation to display works of art, and to preserve the Southeastern flora and fauna. The Gardens themselves were established on the site of an old plantation which had a magnificent avenue of live oak trees, boxwood and other species traditionally found in plantings of that period. We estimate that the live oaks and other early plantings, including the boxwood, are about 200 years old, and were planted by the Alstons or the Wards, the early owners of the plantation.

At the time the Huntingtons acquired the property, the former gardens were in very bad condition. Weed trees and vines were growing in the old plantings, and trash had been deposited in borrow pits made there by removing clay for road building.

The weeds were removed, the trash was cleaned up, the holes were either filled, or deepened to form ponds, and the new Brookgreen Gardens was laid out. The old boxwood, needless to say, had suffered greatly, and the original shape of the plantings could not be determined. The remaining plants were nursed along, and responded. However, probably about twenty years ago, nematodes became a very serious problem and caused considerable mortality. This decline was in a large measure checked several years ago, when we started a program of applying nemagon. The color of the old plants improved, and new growth is encouraging. Even with nemagon, nematodes are still a serious threat to the remaining plants, which I believe are about 250 individuals. The climate is probably too hot here for optimum boxwood conditions.

We have two varieties, the Dwarf Box and the Tree Box. The largest dwarf box is about six feet tall, and the largest tree box is about ten feet tall.

The box here continues to give Brookgreen Gardens a touch of the past for the 350,000 persons who visit here each year. Its odor is noticed by many and gives the Gardens a distinctive scent on warm, moist mornings.

The sculpture exhibited on the grounds here has grown into a collection of 340 pieces. The work is all of a classical nature, and is done by American artists. I believe it is the largest collection of American sculpture shown out-of-doors.

Mr. Tarbox is the Director of Brookgreen Gardens, which is located at Murrells Inlet, South Carolina; about halfway between Georgetown and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Our cover picture, and another view of Brookgreen Gardens, South Carolina, illustrating the article by Mr. Gurdon Tarbox, were sent by Mrs. Beatrice Gilman Proske, who wrote:

“The boxwood garden at Brookgreen is near the site of the old house. It was probably planted by the family of Joshua John Ward, who acquired the land shortly before 1800, and developed it as a rice plantation. So much of the boxwood is missing, some of it destroyed when the house burned in 1901, that the original design cannot be reconstructed, but with care the plants are flourishing again.”

The photographer was Frances Spalding.

Fifth Annual Meeting

Of The American Boxwood Society

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Boxwood Society was held at Blandy Experimental Farm (University of Virginia), on May 12, 1965, with about ninety members present. After morning tours of the boxwood and other plantings at the Orland E. White Arboretum and the experimental greenhouses, the business meeting was called to order at 11 o'clock by Admiral Neill Phillips, president of the Society.

Mr. Alan Caspar, acting director of Blandy Farm, welcomed the gathering. The minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting were approved as printed in the July, 1964 Bulletin. The Treasurer's Report was presented by Mrs. Clay B. Carr, Secretary-Treasurer, and approved as read. Mrs. Edgar M. Whiting, an editor of the Bulletin, urged all members to increase their participation in their magazine, which is the Society's meeting place for the majority of members.

Mr. John Mitchell took the chair for the election of officers for the coming year. The following were unanimously elected:

President — Admiral Neill Phillips
 Vice President — Mrs. William Seipp
 2nd Vice President — Dr. J. T. Baldwin, Jr.
 Secretary-Treasurer — Mrs. Clay B. Carr

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee were continued without change for another year, as listed on the inside front cover page of the Bulletin.

The Society then recessed for lunch.

At 1 P.M., the meeting reconvened in the Library (because of rain), where Mr. Clark Crabill, acting head of the Orland E. White Arboretum, had arranged a display of the Society's collection of varietal specimens of boxwood, numbering about forty different kinds. Mr. Crabill spoke briefly, explaining the exhibit and suggesting the great potential value of a nursery garden of such specimens.

DR. J. T. BALDWIN, JR., of the College of William and Mary, spoke on "Boxwood Desiderata", As Dr. Baldwin expressed so well the desires of Admiral Phillips and of the Editors for the further development of the Society's work, his talk is given at some length, as follows:

"That you members more actively participate in the affairs of the Boxwood Society is the first desideratum.

TREASURER'S REPORT

to Annual meeting held May 12, 1965

The American Boxwood Society, Boyce, Virginia

In Bank of Clarke County as of May 1, 1965 \$1,642.36

Receipts for past year:

Regular Memberships	\$1,491.25	
Contributing — 23	230.00	
Sustaining — 3	75.00	
Life — 2	200.00	
Additional Bulletins	77.15	
Lunch Receipts - Annual Meet.	140.25	2,215.90

Disbursements

The Boxwood Bulletin			
Printing, photos,			
etc.	1,580.89		
Mailing-Envelopes,			
Postage, etc.	86.66		
Copyrights	20.00	\$1,687.55	
Reprints	5.50		
Office Supplies, Postage			
address plate			
changes	132.91		
Lunches-Annual			
Meeting	149.38		
Refunds-			
overpayments	98.00	385.79	2,073.34
			\$1,784.92

Regular members	452
Contributing	36
Sustaining	4
Life - Paid	6
	498

Some five years ago, here in the Blandy Farm Library, Mr. Churchill Newcomb proposed the publication of a quarterly bulletin devoted to boxwood. I immediately questioned the advisability of starting such a publication, for I thought there would not be sufficient material to fill its pages. I am pleased that I have now been proved to have been wrong. Indeed, I am enthusiastic about how the Bulletin has developed and about the influence that it has. Several of my nurserymen friends have told me that they have noted an increased interest in boxwood since the inception of the Bulletin and, of

course, since the organization of The American Boxwood Society. There is adequate material to keep the Bulletin going. Photographs of boxwood — old plantings, specimen plants, different kinds, news-stories about boxwoods, advertisements about boxwoods — these are of frequent occurrence and are of interest to our membership. When I come across such things, I clip them and send them to the editors for their files and sometimes with the suggestion that a request to a given individual might elicit a manuscript. I would urge each of you to do the same, and, more than that, I would ask that you actively recruit new members so that the Society might support a Bulletin of even higher quality. Finally, I would ask that you submit your own articles to the Bulletin. They can be delightful, charming, informative, and of historical importance.

Let me read you an article ("The John B. Roberts Box Garden", April 1965 Bulletin) written by invitation, that has already appeared in the Bulletin, and a second one that the editors may or may not wish to publish ("Boxwood of Sweet Briar", manuscript).

The second thing to be desired is that a concerted effort be made to set the record straight for scientific and horticultural names and that many of the best of the thousands of unnamed clones in cultivation be given names. This will not be easy and will require the attention of trained botanists and the cooperation of nurserymen and others.

Each of you knows that the scientific name of a species or variety is identified with a type specimen on deposit in an herbarium, that the description validating the name is based on the type, that the species or variety varies in its characteristics if it be propagated by seed, and that the judgment of the taxonomist determines the limits of variation allowable for the category in question. No critical study of the taxonomy of *Buxus* has been made in recent years: one is desperately needed. Take *Buxus microphylla*, for example. The species has been in cultivation in the United States for only a hundred years, and already the names of its varieties are hopelessly confused in the trade. When one orders var. *japonica* or *sinica* or *koreana* from the usual nursery, there is no telling what representative of the species will be delivered. In fact, reliable identification of many specimens in this complex of the genus can not be made with confidence because much of the literature is not reliable. A competent taxonomist must study the type specimens of these varieties and exercise his judgment about the limits of variability before systematic order can be brought about.

Let us take another example. Surely, one would think, there could be no mistaking *Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*, the so-called English box. But I believe that it is done fairly commonly. In Cedar Grove Cemetery at Williamsburg, Virginia, is a handsome, billowy specimen that some outstanding plantmen have referred to this clonal variety *suffruticosa*. I think those individuals are wrong. Indeed, until I get evidence to the contrary, I shall claim that the specimen in the cemetery is representative of an unnamed clone that forms the

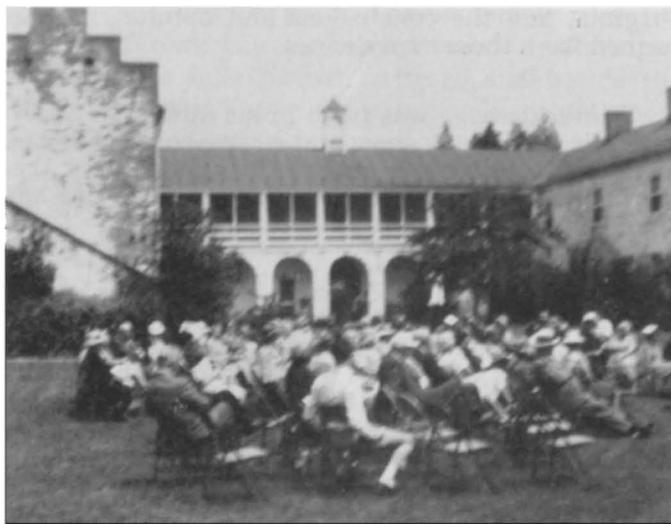
impressive plantings at Carter's Grove. I shall report further on this situation in an early number of the Bulletin. At the moment it seems to me that this plant is even better — if that is possible — than *suffruticosa*.

It is perhaps even more difficult to keep track of horticultural varieties based on clones than it is to designate correctly specific and varietal populations based on seedlings.

It is to be desired further that a clonal collection be built up at one place and that massive seedling populations be grown in order that selections be made from them. I have had considerable success in selecting from limited populations of seedlings and in selecting sports from the ever-sporting var. *compacta* of *Buxus microphylla*. A number of these plants will in due time be named.

My opinion is that The American Boxwood Society should establish and maintain for scientific and commercial purposes a nursery of authenticated clones — this to be quite different from the much-discussed boxwood garden. If this proposal runs counter to the consensus of the members (as I suspect it will), then a corporation could be formed to accomplish the same ends. Such a nursery would contribute to the knowledge and use of box, would be a financially profitable venture, and would be in accord with the Johnsonian program for the beautification of America. Can you not envision thousands of miles of boxwoods along our highways?

Tests need to be run on the viability and germination of boxwood seeds. Several members of the Society might well do this. Fruits should be harvested just before they are ripe enough to explode. A number of seed — say, fifty — should be planted at regular intervals throughout the coming year, and the percentages of germination recorded by dates. The results would be a contribution to knowledge.



Assembling for business meeting outside "the quarters" at Blandly.

Photograph, Mrs. H. R. Totten

The comparative results from the experiments of several individuals would be of significance, especially if serious efforts are made to identify the plants from which the seeds were collected. The warning should be added that over-watered seeds usually rot.

We need to know more about the fertilization of boxwood. Nothing much is in the literature. I have known individuals who have used chicken manure with great success. Another individual who applied hardwood ashes from the fireplace and grew fine plants. And an old gentleman in Richmond who got ground-up leaves from the city, mulched his ground inches deep with this material, and grew many kinds of excellent boxwoods. Years ago, I applied bone meal at too frequent intervals to the Korean box that lined the front walk to this building (at Blandy Farm) and killed many of the plants.

Roy Kersey, the outstanding horticulturist at Devon, Pennsylvania, has told me that he plans to run fertilization experiments on several box clones this summer. We shall look forward to his results. As is to be expected, different clones react differently to fertilization. Both Kersey and I have noted that 'Vardar Valley' under greenhouse conditions is stubbornly resistant to fertilization.

If any of you have had experiences good or bad, comparable to those I have mentioned, I would appreciate your sending me a note about those experiences in order that I might make a compilation of them.

Finally, I would say that we need observation on the degeneration of box under urban conditions. Causes are doubtless many and varied."

MR. WADE E. MULDOON, of Millwood, Virginia, spoke on his experiences with box in Northern Virginia, and the conclusions and opinions he has formed from these experiences.

Winter damage was fresh in his mind. His observation is that heavy snow and severe cold affect box in both protected and exposed situations, and that the length of a freeze matters less than the size and degree of hardening-off in the plant itself.

Mr. Muldoon has protected large hedges of *suffruticosa* at Carter Hall, near Millwood — hedges 7 to 8 feet high and 8 to 10 feet across at the top — with a support of stakes (which need not be as high as the plants) and baler twine. The iron stakes used for electric fences are easier to drive, and baler twine is a better weight than binder twine. The stakes are driven 10 feet apart, and tops of opposite stakes are tied together through the hedge. Three strands of twine are then tied from stake to stake around the hedge, not pulling the branches in at all. This supports the hedge well through wet, heavy snows. The few branches that did break were in the middle, and probably should have been pruned out previously.

Examining 30-year-old dwarf boxwood (*B. microphylla koreana nana*) at Blandy Farm.

Photograph, Mrs. H. R. Totten



Individual trees of *sempervirens* up to 15 feet tall have been wound with baler twine from top to bottom at 2-foot intervals, interlaced with vertical twine to hold it in place. The long twine may be fastened to the tree itself, if the top stem is strong; or a stake may be introduced. The plant should not be very tightly bound, and the twine should be removed as early in the spring as possible, to allow circulation of air and sunshine.

Pruning if necessary, should be done gradually to avoid shock. Although it is said that pruning of box can be done at any time, Mr. Muldoon's opinion is that if 12 to 18 inches is taken off a plant in the fall, it leaves a bad look for about a year. Shearing box in late summer and early fall results in brown color all winter, and winter shearing causes a grayish look. March shearing is soon covered up by new growth.

Box moved from along a brick wall proved to have three-fourths of the root growth under the bricks, and because of this spreading root system, did not move well. However, if box is to stay in position, it grows excellently next to brick.

MR. RICHARD D. MAHONE, Assistant Director of landscape construction at Colonial Williamsburg, discussed "Boxwood in Tidewater Virginia", Propagation of box in that favorable climate is an old and widespread habit. Seeds may be had at little or no expense, seedlings can be collected from under *sempervirens*; and more than either of these, cuttings may be rooted at any time (old people say) except

April and May. In hurricane season the broken branches are a good source, and the time — September and October — favors rooting.

A good deal of Williamsburg box, some of it over fifty years old, came from the charming and romantic thoughtfulness of two gardening ladies. They would ask for sprigs of box from the bridal bouquets and floral arrangements used for weddings of their friends and friends' children; these would be rooted and grown for five years and then presented to the young couples for their home gardens.

Mr. Mahone recommends a well-drained sandy soil for rooting, with ample organic material to hold moisture. Cuttings of dwarf box are taken about 3 to 5 inches long, those of *sempervirens* 6 to 10 inches. About a third of the cutting is in the soil. He does not use hormones. About 90% root and survive. Rain water — if you can get it — is preferred for watering; and iron barrels will add a valuable element through rust. In early spring rooted cuttings should be lined out, or put into pots; 4 to 5-inch pots are best to allow strong root growth.

Anti-desiccants such as Wilt-Pruf, Weather Shield and Plant Guard, give excellent protection against winter drying. These are applied, at Williamsburg, about a week after the first heavy frost when the weather has warmed enough to allow spraying; and again about the end of January up to February 15th as the temperature permits.

Young box may be mulched, but on older box it can be overdone. Water is most important of all; box should go into winter well wet down. Snow fence, pine boughs and so on give winter protection, but are unsightly where the garden should appear well the year round. Instead, Williamsburg gardeners sometimes stay up all night shaking and brushing snow from the bushes.

At Williamsburg, severe pruning is done in the spring and light prunings twice during the summer, but not after the end of July or the beginning of August. A ratio of roots to top should be observed; where you see dying at the top it probably means root damage. Poor color may mean anything. A light brown usually suggests sun scald, a dark brown may be dog damage.

Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., recently took over the maintenance of Carters Grove on the James River. The garden there included some *sempervirens* 12 to 15 feet high, as well as a new garden planted in the 1950s. About 150 of the boxwood had the worst infestation of leaf miner that Mr. Mahone has ever seen. Five truckloads of infested material was pruned out, often back to the principal stems, to open up the plants. Two sprays of lime sulphur were applied, with malathion in May, and a liquid feeding the last of May. No mulch was used. 99% control of leaf miner was achieved.

Mr. Mahone closed by summarizing the elements of good box care — PROTECTION from desiccating winds, ice and snow; FEEDING — the box may be being robbed by another plant; PRUNING, to let in light and air; MULCHING — if and as you find best in your situation; SHADING, in hot summers by USE OF LEGUMES, black locust and mimosa; and above all WATER — flush the plant against red spider, have good drainage and water well, best in late afternoon.

MRS. JAMES E. BIRCHFIELD, of Ashburn, Virginia, began her talk with some additional suggestions for box culture. She stressed the importance of potash for boxwood. The whole mid-Atlantic region is deficient in potash, and so-called winter damage may be due to a potash deficiency. Wood ash leaches too quickly. Kelp, green sand and granite dust are all good, will supply potash for three years. They should be put into holes around the perimeter of the plant, rather than on the surface.

A good rooting medium developed by the University of Nebraska is:

- 1 part milled sphagnum moss
- 2 parts perlite (plaster aggregate size)
- 2 parts vermiculite (concrete aggregate size)

The two last-mentioned may be found at building supply stores. There is no plant food in this mixture. When the plant begins to show growth, give a liquid feeding weekly.

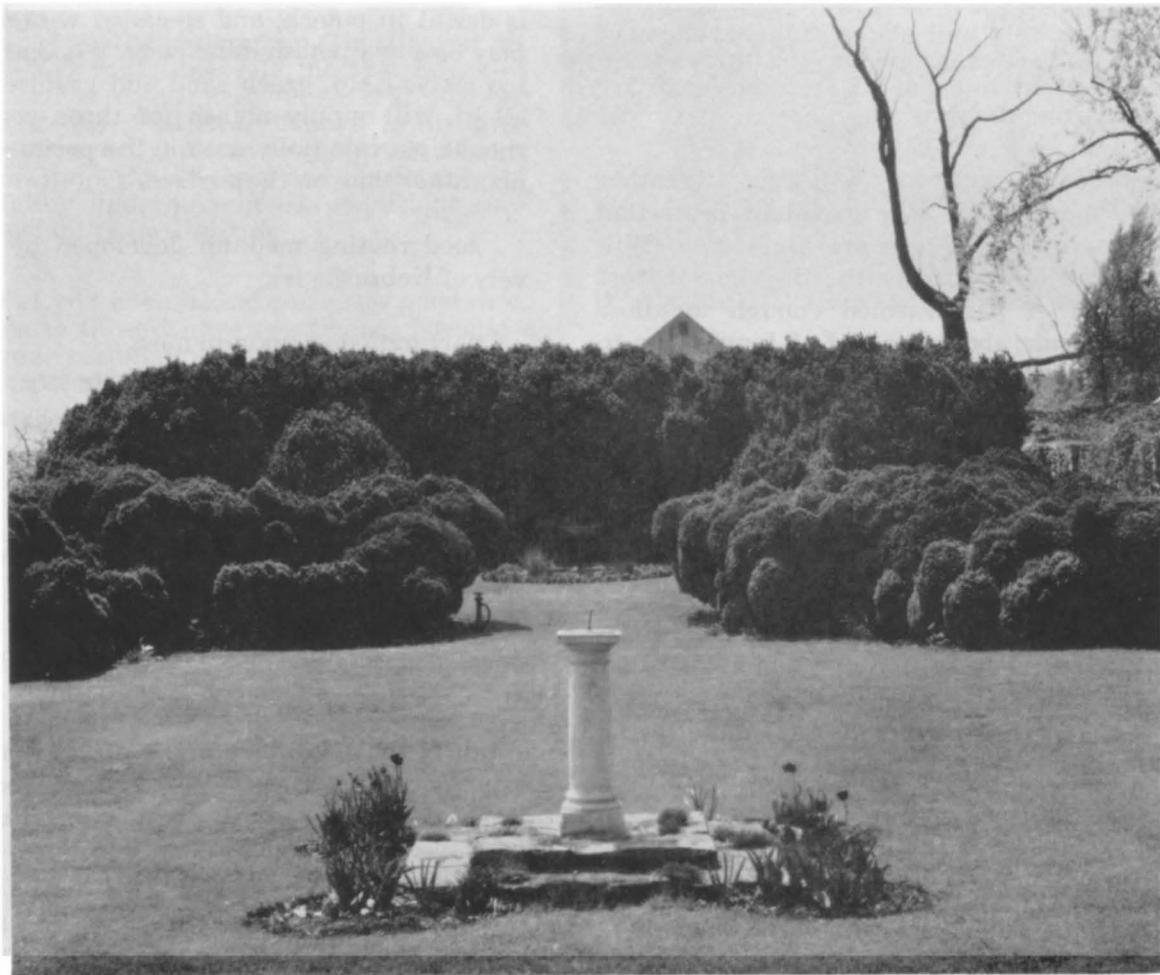
On her scheduled subject, "The Usefulness of Box — Outside and In", Mrs. Birchfield said that box belongs in every garden, and is widely useful in many different ways and situations. It looks happy and in place in a formal parterre and beside the tiniest mountain cabin. All plants go well with box; large-leaved plants, evergreens, deciduous shrubs.

Mrs. Birchfield dislikes shearing; but light pruning, down inside the plant to give light and air, affords a lot of cutting material through the year. Besides rooting, these box trimmings may be used for Della Robbia and Advent wreaths at Christmas, "kissing balls" which are solid spheres of box clip-pings stuck into potatoes and hung from ribbons. Much more box might well be used in flower arrangements and decorations.

Mrs. Birchfield closed with mention of the symbolism and tradition of box and of its long history, quoting from the letters of John Custis in the 18th century, which describe his struggles (even as today) with winter cold, summer drought, and dogs.

After the meeting adjourned, the members visited Fairfield, a few miles away in Clarke County. This handsome limestone house was built by Warner Washington in the mid-eighteenth century, and the terraced box gardens were planted about the same time. The Richardson family has owned Fairfield since 1830. The present owners, who entertained the Society at tea, are Mrs. Walter W. Crawford, her sister Mrs. Edward J. Winters, and their brother Mr. John Richardson.

Their father, the late Mr. Ralph Richardson, was a valued charter member of the American Boxwood Society, and a skilled experienced grower of box. He planted young box by the acre, and made Fairfield an outstanding registered nursery. Visitors are always welcomed, but a telephone call in advance is advisable, and appreciated.



Box plantings begun by Warner Washington about the time of the building of the house, 1765-69.

The oldest boxwood at Fairfield. This unfamiliar view looks across the upper terrace, at a right angle to the walk which descends the terraces from the house. Behind the masses of old dwarf box, the opening into the circle of old tree box known as the "Green Room" is darkly seen. The house is to the right, on an upper level.

Virginia Chamber of Commerce Photograph, by Flournoy

Courtesy of The Garden Club of Virginia

Why Is Just Some Box Called "Sempervirens"

By DR. WALTER S. FLORY, JR.

It has been pointed out that all Box is evergreen, and moreover that *sempervirens* means ever green. The question then followed "Why is just some Box called *sempervirens*?" This is a reasonable question which can be rather readily answered.

In 1753, Carolus Linnaeus published "Species Plantarum", now considered by modern botanists as the starting point of present day botanical nomenclature. In this work Linnaeus assigned two names (a "binomial") to every species of plant treated, and in some cases additional names were applied to variants, or varieties, of a given species. In his 1753 work Linnaeus mentions only one species of *Buxus*, *B. sempervirens*. Under that species name he listed two varieties: *B. sempervirens arborescens*, the so-called Tree Box; and *B. sempervirens suffruticosa*, the dwarf Edging Box that usually is less than one meter in height.

It was quite logical for Linnaeus to apply the name "*sempervirens*" to an evergreen taxon. But once that name had been used for one species of Box, other names — under his widely accepted system of nomenclature — had to be used for additional species of *Buxus* as they were discovered and described — even though they too were evergreen. Thus some additional species were named after places, as *B. balearica* (from the Balearic Islands), or *B. benguelensis* (from tropical Africa); or morphological characters, as *B. microphylla* (with its comparatively small leaves); or persons, as *B. Conzattii* (a Mexican species named by Standley, apparently for the Mexican botanist C. Conzatti); or on some other basis. But every additional species named and described, even though evergreen, had to have some distinctive name — a name other than *sempervirens*.

Otherwise, because of lack of distinctive names, for distinctive taxa, chaos — rather than order — would predominate. As it is, each separate species has its own separate and distinctive name. Thus just as each of the boys of the Smith family look different, and each have their own names, as John Smith, Paul Smith, Tom Smith, etc. — just so each of the species of the *Buxus* genus which look different, and are different, have their own names, as *Buxus sempervirens*, *Buxus microphylla*, *Buxus balearica*, and so on.

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Question Box

In the necessarily brief question period following the talks at the Annual Meeting, the question was asked, "Is it advisable to plant box near or under walnut trees?"

The panel of speakers disclaimed any specific opinion on this matter, and the audience, when asked to give their experiences, was evenly divided between yes and no.

Mr. Mahone's positive recommendation of the two leguminous trees — black locust and mimosa — was repeated, and reasons given:

1. These two trees give light shade, favorable to the growth of box.

2. Their root-growth is light and fibrous, not overpowering to the similarly delicate roots of box.

3. Being legumes, they have the power of fixing free nitrogen from the air, and nitrogen in the soil feeds the box.



Specimens of *Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa* ready to be put into place around the statue of Stonewall Jackson. Mike Westman (left), Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Capitol Square, and George Gillen, Landscape Supervisor. State Library in background. Photo by Joseph Colognori.

Boxwoods On Capitol Square Grounds In Richmond

J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

The News Leader, Richmond, Virginia, for March 31, 1965, carried the accompanying photograph taken that day and showing specimen plants of *suffruticosa* box to be placed around the statue of Stonewall Jackson in Capitol Square. This is the first step in the renovation of the Capitol Square grounds in accordance with plans made by Meade Palmer, landscape architect of Warrenton, Virginia, and subject to approval by the Fine Arts Commission.

I was in town and went down to see the planting. Luckily, Mr. L. M. Kuhn, Director of the Budget, and Mr. George Gillen, Landscape Supervisor, were there. Mr. Kuhn explained that the care and maintenance of the buildings and grounds were under his office and that over the years there had been a great deal of trouble with the various kinds of *Buxus sempervirens* in Capitol Square. He mentioned, if I recall correctly, that the *suffruticosa* box at the Governor's Mansion was replaced rather often. He showed me one of the fast-growing box that was in bad condition and said that five experts from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, who had been invited to advise him on the boxwood problem, were of the opinion that the abundance of soot in the area was the cause of the difficulties. The theory being that the soot would clog the stomata and impede the exchange of gases.

Mr. Gillen told me that the handsome specimens of *suffruticosa* being planted had been purchased from a private source at Varina, which is near Richmond. The owner had fertilized them with chicken manure.

Afterward, I wondered why a sprinkling system might not be put among the branches of these fine specimens whereby the stomata could be kept washed clean. Years ago, in the country just outside Williamsburg, when I would visit Mr. J. B. Brouwers at his home, I would often find him playing water on his boxwoods from a hose. He reported that the plants liked to be so washed. And, indeed, he did grow splendid box of many kinds. He, a former landscape superintendent for Colonial Williamsburg and a Dutchman, is an outstanding plantsman. The late Donald W. Davis, Professor of Biology at William and Mary, used to grow excellent box; I have heard him say on a number of occasions that boxwoods liked water as long as they did not "keep their feet wet". At Mount Vernon water pipes have been run through the *suffruticosa* plantings but are not visible unless one spreads the plants to look within. It would seem only logical to water by vigorous sprinkling and keep the stomata clean.

The Boxwood Society Meets Once A Year At Blandy Farm — Four Times More Each Year In The Boxwood Bulletin

In the course of his talk at the Annual Meeting, Dr. Baldwin read an amusing passage from Sir Ernest Gowers' delightful book, *Plain Words*. In answer to several requests, we are giving the passage in full:

“Here is the response of a child of ten to an invitation to write an essay on a bird and a beast:

‘The bird that I am going to write about is the owl. The owl cannot see at all by day and at night it is as blind as a bat.

I do not know much about the owl, so I will go on to the beast which I am going to choose. It is the cow. The cow is a mammal. It has six sides — right, left, an upper and below. At the back it has a tail on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away so that they do not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with, and the mouth is to moo with. Under the cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, the milk comes and there is never an end to the supply. How the cow does it I have not yet realized, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell; one can smell it far away. This is the reason for the fresh air in the country.

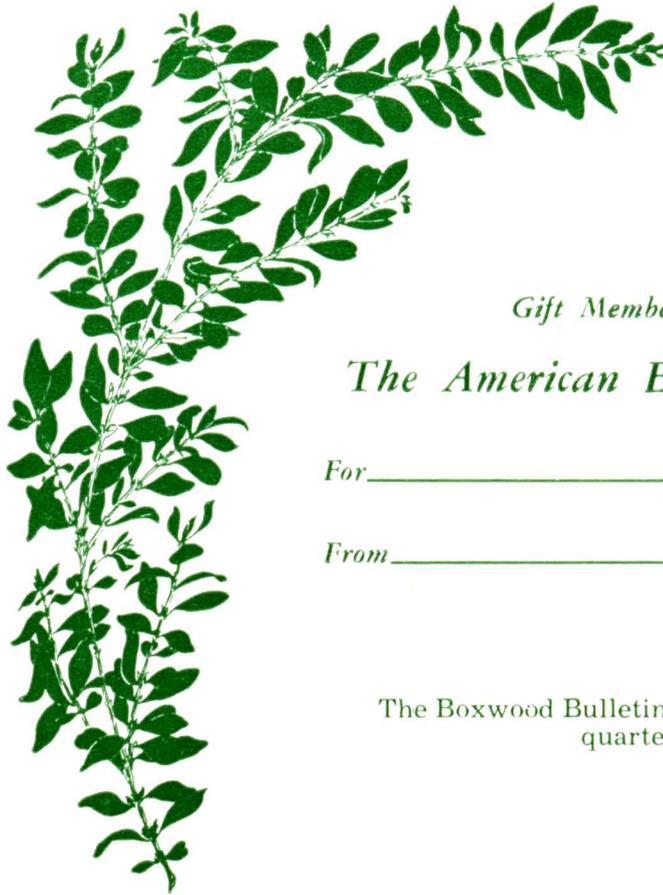
The man cow is called an ox. It is not a mammal. The cow does not eat much, but what it eats it eats twice, so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it moos, and when it says nothing it is because its inside is all full up with grass.’

*From The Complete PLAIN WORDS,
by Sir Ernest Gowers; published by Her
Majesty's Stationery Office, London,
1954*

“The writer” (says Sir Ernest) “had something to say and said it as clearly as he could, and so has unconsciously achieved style.”

The point that Dr. Baldwin made was that you need not be a professional writer, to tell us what you know about box. Other box growers and lox lovers want to know what you have done with box in your garden or seen in an old garden or that of a friend; how you have grown box successfully or encountered difficulties about which you have questions. A picture often tells as much as many words, and only a few are needed to explain it.

Won't you help make the Bulletin what it ought to be, the real meeting-place of the Boxwood Society and all who are interested in box?



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Above you see a reproduction of our gift card just as it would go to one of your friends announcing your gift membership to them for one year. The Society year runs from May 1 to April 30, or from one annual meeting date to the time of the next annual meeting.

Regular membership dues at \$3.00 per year, of which \$2.00 are for a subscription to The Boxwood Bulletin. Other classes of membership available are: Contributing, \$10; Sustaining, \$25; Life, \$100; and Patron, \$500. The higher classes of membership provide income which permits the publication of more plates or of additional pages in the Boxwood Bulletin, as well as the expansion of other society activities. Names of those holding Contributing, Sustaining, Life, and Patron memberships will be published each year in the January issue of The Bulletin.