

The

April 1966

Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



Dwarf Box Defines A Small Decorative English Garden (article, p. 51)

Edited Under The Direction Of
THE AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

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The Boxwood Bulletin

April 1966

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EDITOR — MRS. EDGAR M. WHITING

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American Boxwood Society

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 11

Commencing at 10 A.M.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

At the Blandy Experimental Farm

Boyce, Va.

Luncheon Will Be Served

PLEASE PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Neill Phillips, President

CARTER HALL GARDENS OPEN TO ABS

MEMBERS AFTER ANNUAL MEETING

By the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Christopher, the beautiful box gardens of Carter Hall at Millwood, Virginia, will be opened for members of the American Boxwood Society on Wednesday, May 11th, after the Annual Meeting adjourns. The house will not be open.

Carter Hall, "one of the Valley's most imposing and lovely homes", was built of native limestone between 1792 and 1800 by Colonel Nathaniel Burwell, one of the wealthiest Virginians of his time. He had inherited over five thousand acres in Clarke County from his father, as well as large estates — Carter's Grove was among them — in Tidewater Virginia. The stately house stands in a grove of magnificent old oaks, and the terraced gardens slope downward from the north side.

Mr. Wade E. Muldoon, one of our speakers at last year's Annual Meeting, is in charge of the Carter Hall gardens, and his guidance will add to the value as well as the pleasure of the visit for box lovers.

EDITORIAL THANKS

— AND HOPES!

The three leading articles in this issue of the Bulletin all came in as the result of suggestions from ABS members, followed by generous help from everyone who was appealed to in our follow-up. Co-operation like this makes the Bulletin better and better, and arouses the liveliest sentiments of pleasure and gratitude in the editor.

Mrs. Moncure Lyon, of Purcellville, Virginia, suggested and sent the article, "Boxwood In Gardening History". Permission to reprint was asked of the English COUNTRY LIFE ANNUAL; they passed on the request to the author, Mr. Lanning Roper, who not only gave his consent, but took the trouble to re-assemble the photographs and send them by air mail.

Dr. Freeman Weiss, of Charleston, South Carolina, sent a clipping from the CHARLESTON EVENING POST, with an article by Mr. Basil W. Hall, describing the Adam mantelpieces now being made again in England. Although Mr. Hall kindly gave permission to reprint his column, it was felt that, for the Bulletin, there should be more about the boxwood moulds themselves. A letter to Lawson, Marsden & Co., named by Mr. Hall as the firm producing these mantelpieces, brought a handsome booklet, with permission to use its text and pictures as we desired. They also directed the editor to the firm of G. Jackson & Sons Ltd., as the originators, owners and users of the moulds. This latter firm most kindly had pictures made of the moulds and the relief ornaments cast from them, and sent these by air mail, together with further information. From all three sources we have put together an article on this little-known use of box wood.

Mr. Donald W. Martin, who is engaged in general farming in Kentucky, offered on his membership renewal blank to contribute informal notes on "How to plant thousands of slips and lose them". This intriguing title suggested that there might be some valuable tips to be gained from Mr. Martin's experiences in how-not-to-do-it; and he responded to our request with what we think is an instructive as well as an amusing article.

As our need dictates and our time permits, more requests have gone out and will still go out in the future; the editor is grateful for every offer of help to make the Bulletin what it can and ought to be. But don't wait to be asked — follow the practice Dr. Baldwin suggested last year. Clip and send articles, news notes and pictures from magazines and newspapers or copy pertinent passages from books. Send ideas of observations that occur to you, even in briefly jotted notes; we may ask you to expand them later. This is your Bulletin, and it will be what you make it.



GARDEN WITH STONE VASE, AT SISSINGHURST CASTLE. "Slow-growing box, ideal for low edgings." Photograph: J. E. Downing

On The Cover:

BOX EDGINGS IN A SMALL DECORATIVE GARDEN AT DONNINGTON GROVE, BERKSHIRE."
"The variety *suffruticosa*, which has defined paths, beds and borders for centuries, is slow-growing and therefore ideal for low edgings".
Photograph: Sydney W. Newbery

Boxwood in Gardening History

By LANNING ROPER

Boxwood has been important in the history of gardens for so long that it is hard to think of a time or a country in the western world, since the days of the Greeks and the Romans, where it has not played an important role in garden design. In the Far East box has also been important, as species indigenous to Japan, Korea and the Himalayas have been liberally used in gardens there. In fact, no evergreen has had a more far-reaching effect on garden design, and certain types of gardens rely almost exclusively on box in a setting of water, paving, gravel and sculpture for their effect.

There are a number of reasons for this popularity. Foremost is the fact that box, although it prefers an alkaline soil, is tolerant of most soils. Witness the great natural stands on the steep chalky slopes of Box Hill in Surrey, or in Southern France on the limestone formations where it is indigenous. Its ruggedness is undeniable, for it braves both the gales on exposed mountain slopes and the intense heat of the bright searing summer sun. On the other hand, we find box growing to perfection in areas of high rainfall and cool temperatures in Ireland and the West Country. It thrives in heavy shade and it is one of the very few evergreens that do not mind growing under yew trees, as long as there is enough moisture and a little light.

There are many varieties of the common English box (*Buxus sempervirens*), each useful for a different purpose, ranging from the dwarf box edging (*B. suffruticosa*, Fig. 4), without which old kitchen gardens and formal parterres alike would be very different in character, to the tall tree box (*B. s. arborescens*), which may grow to 30 or 40 ft.

There is a delightful weeping form (*pendula*) which forms a small graceful tree with pendulous branches, and still others with a neat moulded habit. A number of coloured forms with silver or golden margins or striations add interest as specimens or in shrubberies. The size of the leaves varies considerably from those of the very small, narrow-leaved *elegantissima* or the narrow-leaved *rosmarinifolia* to the broad-leaved *latifolia*. Another small-leaved species that forms a neat compact low bush is *Buxus microphylla*, which is of Oriental origin. The best-known variety of box is surely *suffruticosa* mentioned above, which has defined paths, beds and borders for centuries. Tudor and Elizabethan gardens would have been very different without it, as would the great 17th- and 18th-century parterre gardens of France, Portugal, Italy and Spain, as these depend largely on box edgings for their neat evergreen patterns, both winter and summer. It is slow-growing and therefore ideal for low edgings.

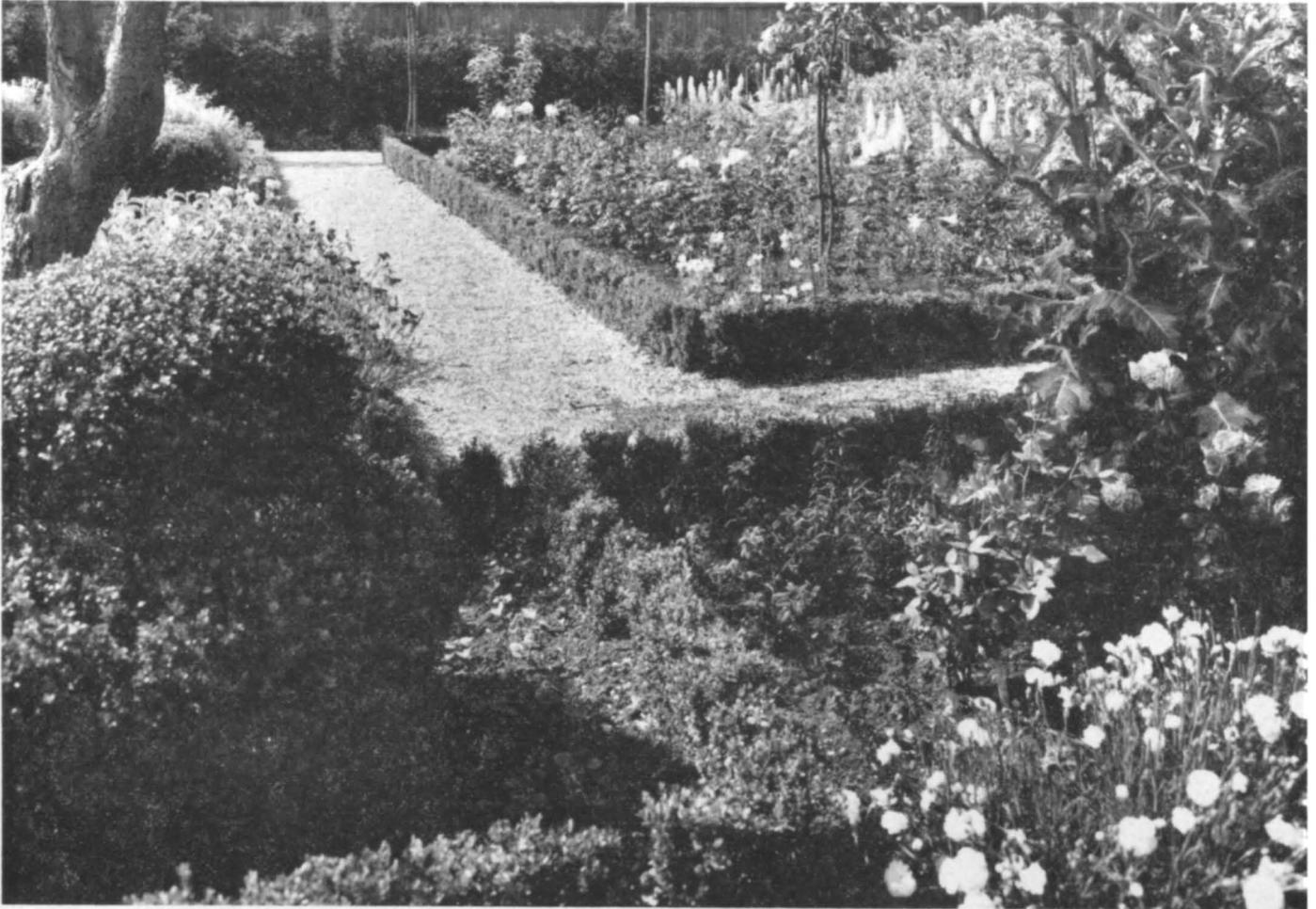
Old kitchen gardens, with their mellow pink brick walls, espaliered fruit trees and borders of box, had a charm all their own until the second World War. I say "had" as, alas, with the passage of time and altered conditions, the concept of gardening has changed. Brick walls are expensive, and very few walled gardens are being built in Britain today, while others have been destroyed. Second, box edgings have fallen into disrepute, as gardeners claim that they harbour slugs and snails. This may be true in a few localities, but certainly is not generally so. Far too much emphasis has been placed upon it. For centuries gardeners in Europe and America have coped very successfully with the problem, and in many areas it is non-existent, so why this sudden panic?

Far more serious, during the war years weeds such as the invasive ground elder and convolvulus became firmly established and marched through shrubs, bushes, perennials and box edgings. For this there is no cure, as these weeds are very difficult to eradicate, especially the former. As a result, many hedges were scrapped of necessity. In large gardens a further misfortune eliminated a great deal more.

In view of the shortage of labour and rising costs, efficiency experts did irreparable harm by removing large quantities of box edging and fine old fruit trees to make mechanisation possible.

I know more than one friend who has regretted at leisure his hasty action, when brief attempts at commercialisation failed. They have replanted fruit trees and box, realising that the charm of the old walled garden was more important than over-hasty efforts at commercialisation, and that labour could be saved elsewhere. In fact there has been a dawning realisation that the large walled garden could be simplified in other ways, such as by grassing certain areas and concentrating flowers, vegetables and fruit — possibly in the outer borders or in blocks. Areas could be utilised for a tennis court, swimming-pool, a paddock for geese, a small shrub- or tree-nursery, and even for a small house within its sheltered seclusion.

Lastly, there is the realisation that gardens in the style of the French *potager* (Fig. 1) with flowers, vegetables and fruits in rows or blocks, with box edgings and perhaps a few specimen box as well, reminiscent of the gardens of Virginia or parts of France, are as decorative and interesting as complicated old schemes that called for herbaceous borders, a rose garden, a vegetable plot, fruit and so on. In the former scheme we find the decorative and the



Photograph: Sydney W. Newbery

1. THE *POTAGER* AT HILL BARN HOUSE, GREAT BEDWYN, WILTSHIRE. "Gardens in the style of the French *potager*, with box edgings, are as decorative and interesting as complicated old schemes".

utilitarian happily merged in a single area that has charm the year around.

In the United States the tradition of box is very strong indeed, as the old plantations of the south in general, and of Virginia in particular, rely on box for their particular character and charm. Historic gardens, such as those in the restoration at Williamsburg (laid out so accurately in accordance with old plans, descriptions and archaeological remains, that the 18th-century counterparts are exactly reproduced down to the smallest detail) are predominantly green gardens with box the salient feature (Fig. 4). The gardens of Thomas Jefferson's old home, Monticello, lovingly restored; the old home of Robert E. Lee; and the James River plantations show this same reverence for box.

The recently laid out George Washington garden at Claverton Manor (at American Museum at Bath) is an exact replica of part of the gardens at Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. The interior paths and beds are outlined with low box hedges, while the major paths along the boundary

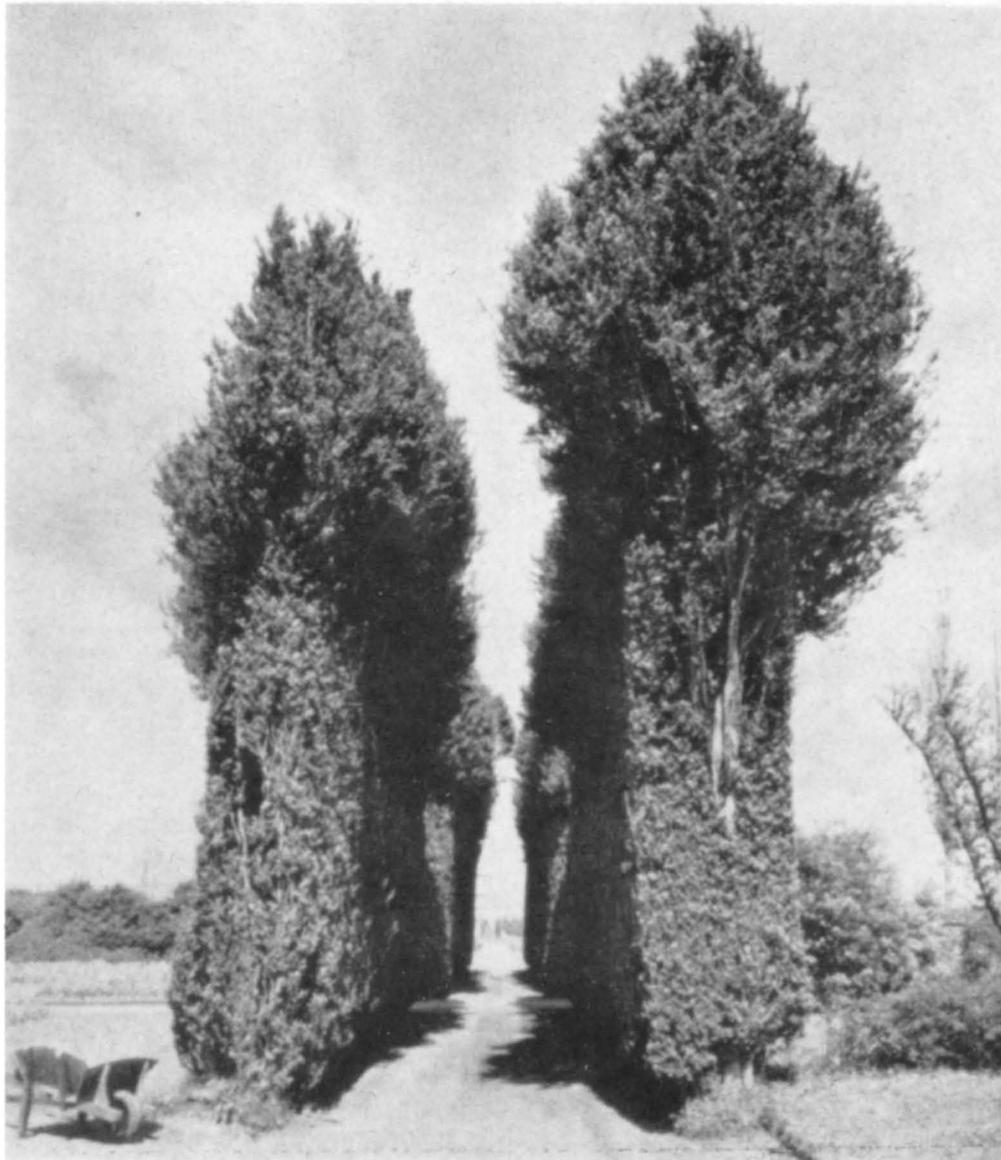
walls have loose irregular masses of taller box. This garden, completed in the spring of 1963, thanks to the generosity of the Garden Club of America, needs time to settle down, but already it begins to have some of the charm and character of its 18th-century American counterpart.

In French and Italian gardens we again see the liberal use of this dark gleaming green shrub, for the elaborate formal parterres make full use of it. Likewise in Spanish gardens, box, along with myrtles and citrus fruits, is all-important, whether in the great terraced palace gardens or in a little interior court or patio. Even in cloister gardens in old monasteries boxwood more often than not surrounds the splashing fountain or carved well-head, and contains the beds of fragrant violets, lemons, roses, pomegranates and rosemary. The tiny leaves glisten in the sun like silver flowers and exude the curious fragrance that for me is always nostalgic of childhood.

In contrast to the low box edgings, there are gnarled old specimen trees as much as 20 or 30 ft. tall, with branching silvery trunks. These can be pruned to advantage and are picturesque features in woodland walks and old shrubberies. Recently a number of fine box trees were removed from an old garden to make room for rhododendrons and azaleas. Such ruthless and indiscriminate clearing is to be deplored, particularly as the fine-textured foliage of box would have been the perfect foil for the large bold leaves of rhododendrons or the diversity of bush roses and flowering shrubs.

Box makes superb topiary: in fact, to my mind it is the finest of all, as it is so compact and solid (Fig. 3). Birds, animals, chessmen, spirals, pyramids and other more elaborate geometric shapes are to be found in old gardens. Most of these are now difficult to obtain in Britain, the main source being Holland.

In America huge box specimens are prepared and moved with as much as half a ton or more of soil around the root ball. These settle down happily in their new homes. In areas subject to heavy snow



Photograph courtesy of Lord Rosse

2. BOX TREES OVER 40 ft. HIGH AT BIRR CASTLE, CO. OFFALY, IRELAND. They are believed to be at least 150 years old.



3. CHARACTERISTIC FORMS IN A BERKSHIRE GARDEN. "Box makes superb topiary".

such as in Washington, Philadelphia and further north, box specimens must be protected from snow and ice storms, as the wood is brittle, and hence wooden frames covered with burlap or even with wooden roofs are erected each autumn to protect the precious specimens. In the winter of 1962-63, in a Gloucestershire garden a large specimen box 20 ft. tall was broken in half during a blizzard. This is an irreparable tragedy, as such a specimen took years to develop.

The largest box trees I have seen are in the gardens of Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, in Southern Ireland (Fig. 2). Here there is an avenue of trees, each well over 40 ft. in height, with silvery gray boles several feet in diameter. The branches have been clipped to make a green aerial hedge, but at the top they feather out to form a lofty Gothic arch. Their exact age is not known, but they are believed to be at least 150 years old, and there are other bushy specimens along the river walk and in the arboretum.

Today, with interest in gardening concentrated on small areas (often in conjunction with architecture) boxwood is popular. It combines well with

brick, York paving, cobbles, gravel and other surfaces. It is effective in winter and summer alike, and is as useful in the all-green garden as it is as a foil for brilliant colour or silvery-grey foliage. In America there has for a long time been an interest in the foundation planting of architecture. This so-called base planting, which is effective throughout the year, is generally adopted, as it is permanent and labour-saving. It consists largely of boxwood and other evergreens, particularly yew, junipers, pieris, dwarf evergreen ilex and kalmias, with evergreen ground covers including periwinkles, pachysandras and ivies. Gardens as a result have a well-furnished appearance. In this country there is inevitably a trend towards this same type of planting, as new houses and public buildings must be landscaped with the minimum of labour for upkeep, although in England flowers will always play a major role.

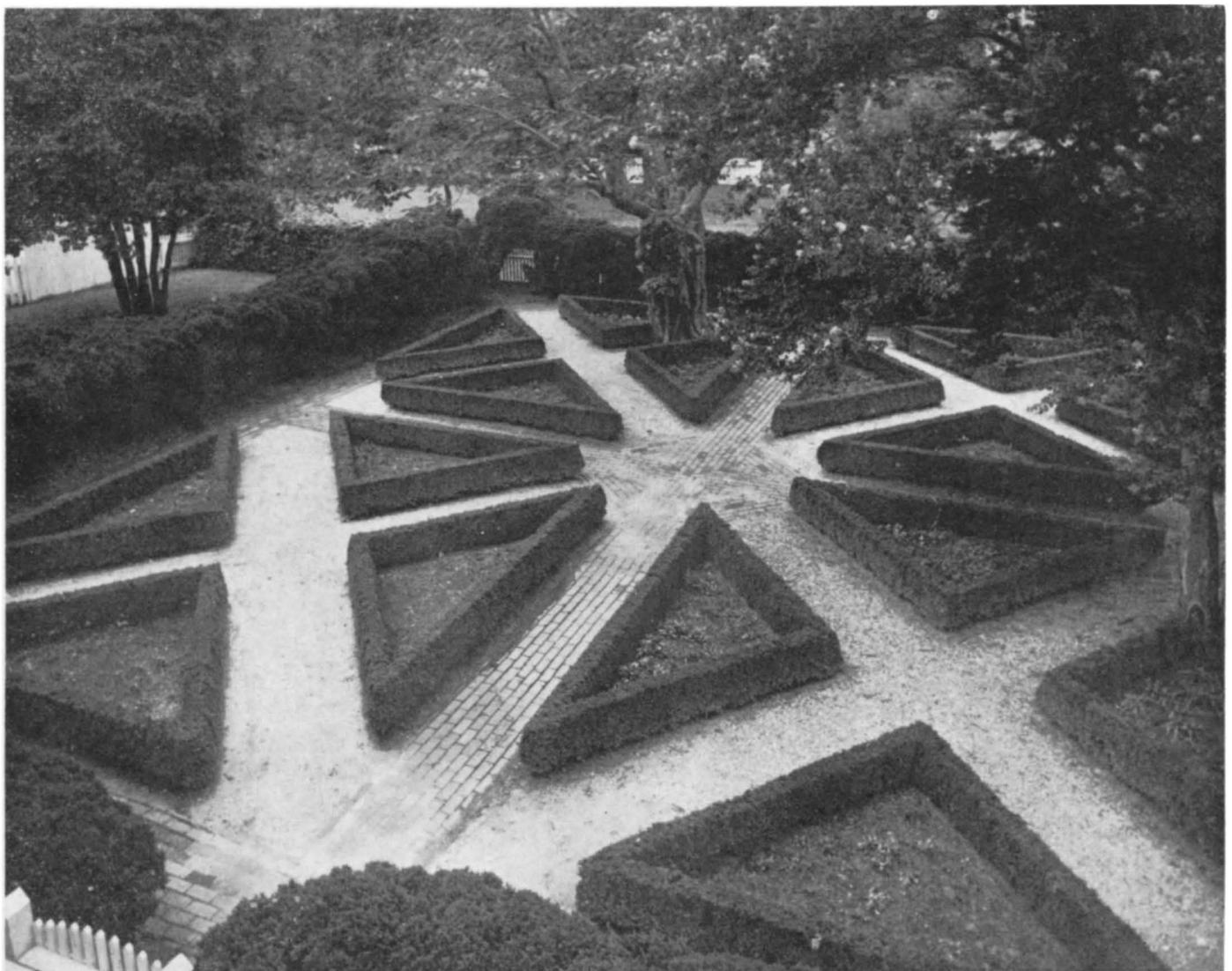
Box trees are ideal for tubs and pots, as long as they are properly watered and fed. They even stand up to the rigours of city conditions. To combat the prevalent theory that specimens in tubs are short-lived, I cite the tall pyramids that have been grown in large lead tubs in a Cambridgeshire garden for

over 15 years. These are now well over seven feet tall and are well furnished with leaves to the base. In New York I recently saw a number of large specimens growing happily in containers with curtains of silver- and gold-leaved ivies spilling over the sides. Few plants have such style and solidity of form as clipped box.

Be sure to plant box trees in tubs with sufficient soil for root development as well as shards for drainage. Both are essential for good cultivation. Careful watering is also essential, and occasional feeding with dried blood and bone meal every spring proves beneficial. One other word of caution: male dogs and boxwood hedges or specimens are incompatible.

I am convinced that box will continue to gain favour in this country, and I shall be happy when it gains the popularity that it has long enjoyed in America and on the Continent. Certainly it is deserved.

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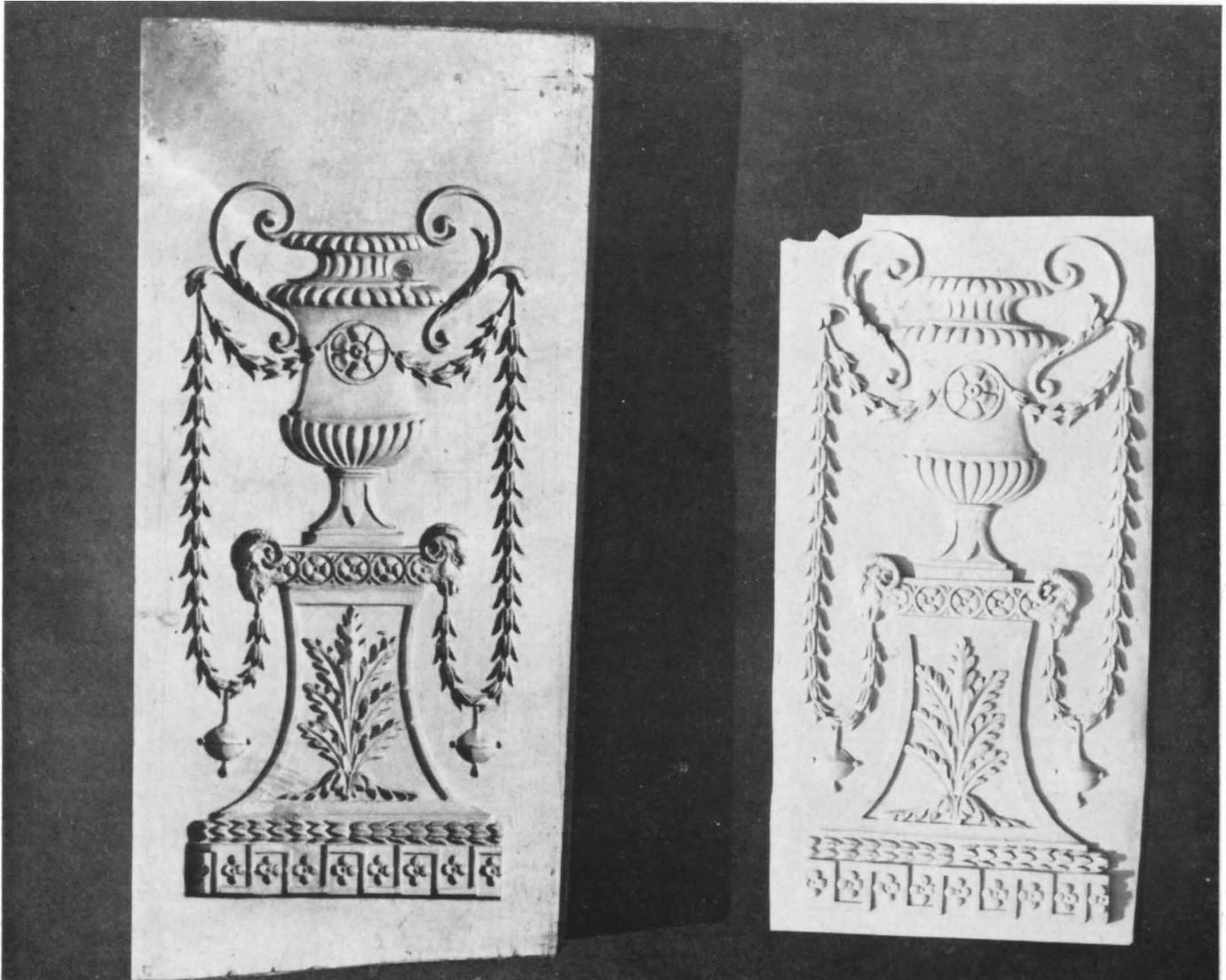


Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.

Photograph: John Crane

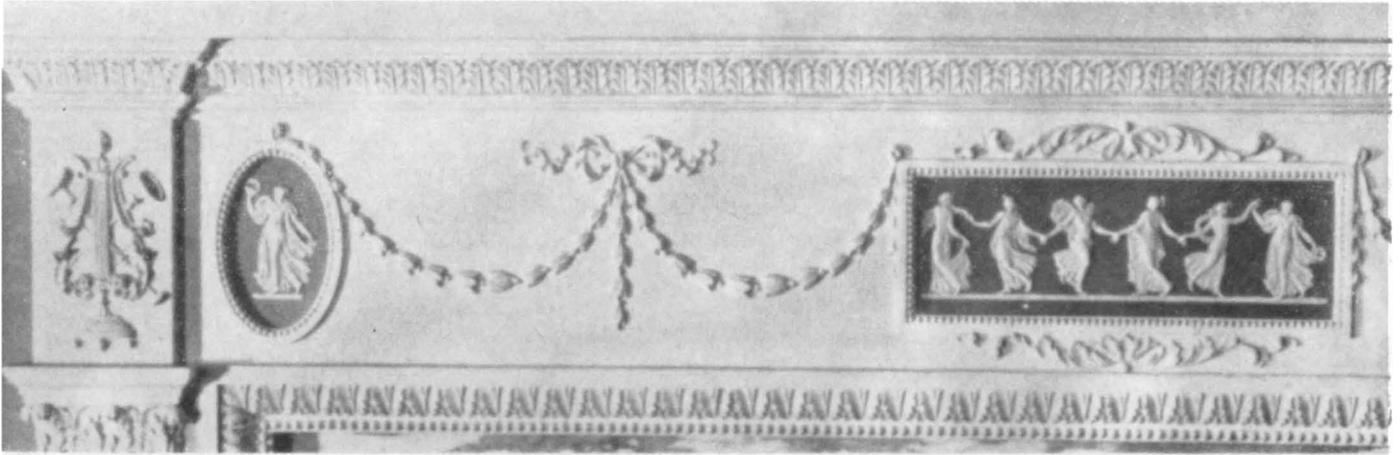
4. THE CUSTIS-MAUPIN GARDEN IN WIL-
LIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA, USA. Dwarf boxwood
edgings are planted in a design adapted from the
British flag.

CENTURIES-OLD BOXWOOD MOULDS AGAIN IN USE TODAY



A Reverse Mould Carved From A Design of Robert Adam, During His Lifetime; and The Relief Ornament Produced In Composition By The Mould. The dense, hard wood of box has preserved for 186 years the sharp detail of the exquisite husk garlands, and the lovely curves of urn and pedestal.

This photograph, and that on p. 58, by courtesy of G. Jackson & Sons, Ltd.



18th Century Masterpieces Re-Created

Robert Adam (1728-1792), most famous architect of his period, introduced a restrained, elegant classical tradition of simplicity and good proportion which left an enduring mark on English furniture as well as architecture. He liked to do it all — as at Osterley Park, which he designed for the Earls of Jersey; exterior and interior designs, down to the last detail of furniture, are all his own. An Adam house is a unique product of English art.

His mantelpieces are marked by fine proportions and the reticent, delicate decorations of graceful garlands with urns, vases or medallions. The great Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) made Jasper plaques and medallions to fit into some of the designs of these superb mantelpieces and chimney surrounds.

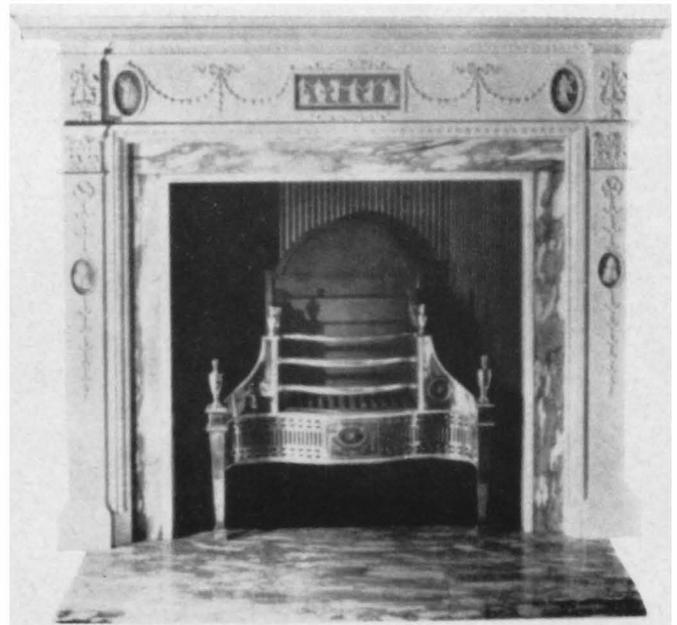
The Adam style came to America soon after the end of the Revolutionary War, when trade and communications with England recommenced. Many of the most beautiful houses in Charleston, South Carolina, show the influence of Adam; and this is especially evident in their mantelpieces, ornamented with lovely raised garlands and medallions.

What has all this to do with boxwood?

The hard, smooth wood of box had a modest, behind-the-scenes, and yet important part in the production of these masterpieces of 18th-century design — and it still does.

Robert Adam needed a means to get the wealth of delicate ornament in his classic design more quickly than by carving. He bought the famous (and secret) recipe for composition from Liardet, the Swiss Pastor, and entrusted it to George Jackson, who carved reverse moulds in boxwood and pressed out the ornaments in the composition.

Above: Detail of “Dancing Hours” medallions and composition ornaments in relief, made with moulds of box wood.



An Adam Fireplace Re-created. Plaque and Medallions are “Dancing Hours” Modelled in 1775 by John Flaxman, R. A. This is perhaps the most delicate and graceful, as well as the most famous of the Wedgwood relief ornaments.

Photographs on this page, courtesy of Lawson, Marsden & Co.

The firm of G. Jackson & Sons, Ltd., thus begun in 1780, has over the following period of years cut more moulds in all the English and French styles of the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, until their collection runs into many thousands. These moulds and the composition are still in use today.

G. Jackson & Sons Ltd. are proud of their team of craftsmen, ranging from keen apprentices of 16 to men of over 70, who are equal in skill and experience to their forebears. A large amount of restoration work made necessary by the War has been successfully carried out by the firm.

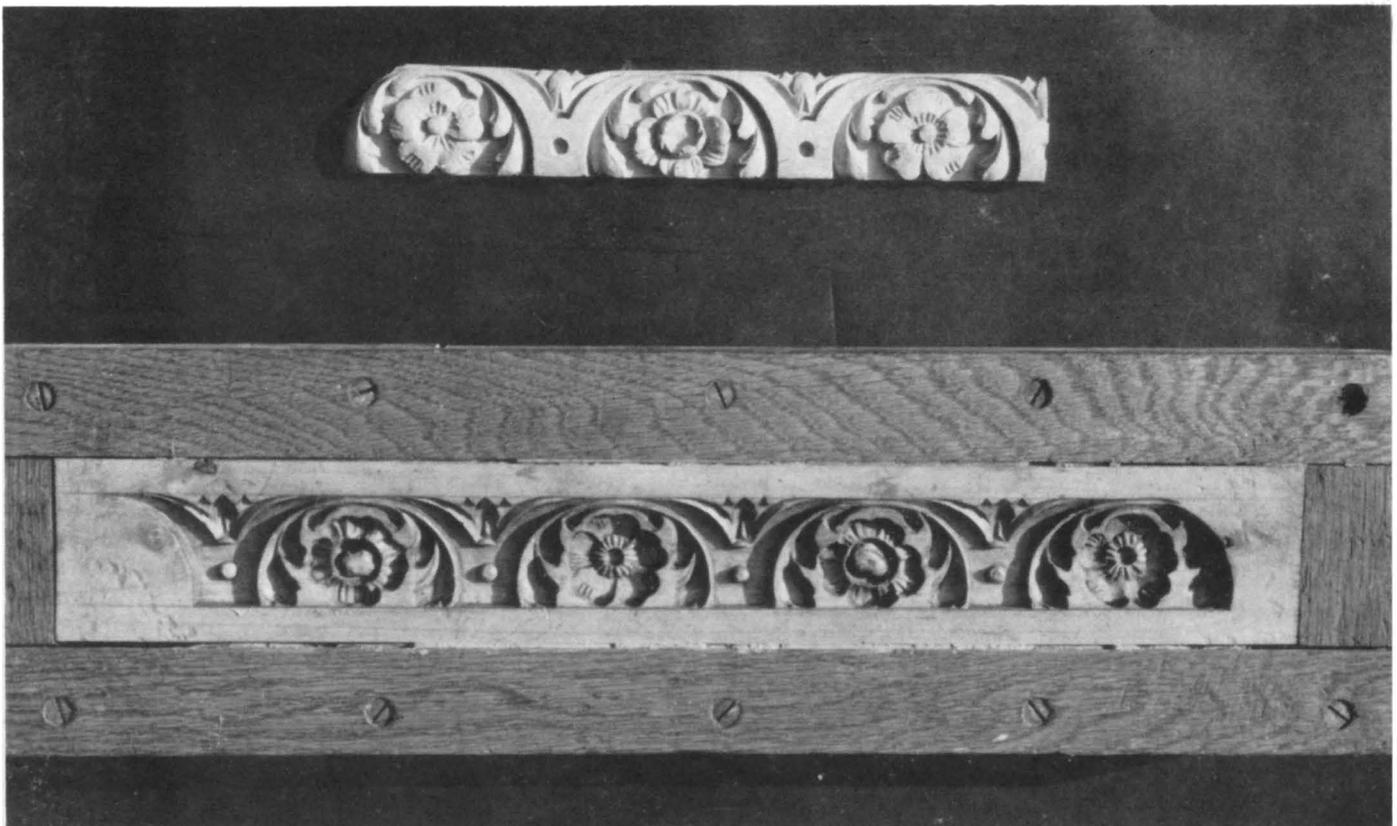
The continuity of the Wedgwood family business since 1759 is too well known to need eladotation. Six generations since Josiah Wedgwood, and he himself was in the fifth generation of a family of potters!

The original Adam moulds were stowed away when the style temporarily lost its popularity, and lay unused and forgotten for nearly two centuries. Now, resurrected and apparently undamaged by long disuse, they are again being put to the purpose for which they were intended, by the same firm that first carved them for Robert Adam. The Wedgwood medallions, too, are made from the original moulds designed by the celebrated John Flaxman, R. A. All the plaques, medallions and mouldings are produced in limited numbers.

This means that after 200 years, incomparable mantelpieces of great beauty and unsurpassed workmanship are available, hand made by skilled craftsmen exactly as in the lifetime of Robert Adam.

Sole distributor of these mantelpieces:
Lawson Marsden & Company,
Oakley Hall, Market Drayton,
Shropshire, England

G. Jackson & Sons Ltd.,
Rathbone Works, Rainville Road,
Hammersmith, London, W. 6



Old Box Wood Mould Carved In Reverse, and Section Of Ornamental Border In Relief, Pressed From This Mould.

The Horrible Example

By DONALD W. MARTIN

Thirty five years ago I moved to a large colonnaded house near Henderson, Kentucky as the farm manager. The farm had been owned by the Adams family, of early U. S. Presidential history, and the house had been built in 1833-34. The present owner had title via a very interesting love affair back in the nineties. She had propagated a few box from cuttings, at her home in town, and gave me some to transplant around the old farm home. I was very proud of them. Five years later I had moved back to Henderson and then the old farm house was destroyed by fire and the box were also burned.

About three years later I had an interest in a small subsistence farm and decided to propagate some box of my own. I wrote to an acquaintance, who was with the Horticultural Department of Virginia Experiment Station and asked him where I could obtain some box cuttings. He put me in touch with Mr. H. D. Gibson of Barboursville, Virginia. Mr. Gibson shipped me 20 pounds of box cuttings at 20¢ per pound. He sent them in either late March or early April advising that this was the best time to set them. The cuttings were around 12 inches in length. I stripped off the lower half of the leaves and twigs and set them in rich valley soil on the shady edge of the woods. They did fine with at least 85% making healthy growth. The following spring I transplanted them about 3 feet apart and ordered 40 more pounds of cuttings. These were known as *Sempervirens* of the English type. Again I had very good results with the cuttings.

My efficient colored hired hand did an excellent job of taking care of the young plants but about a year later he had a violent death. With a bottle of gin he went horseback riding to call on a friend one Saturday night and he and the horse were both killed on the highway by a truck. His replacement was a sly, lazy, rustling good-for-nothing. When I asked him what he had toiled with during the week he would generally reply, "I been workin in them 'scrubs' ". I finally got so sick of hearing this, that I sold the land with the privilege of removing the box later on.

For the next few years the box grew untended and disappeared under the tall weeds. I gave many of these plants away to friends and planted some around my home in town. Then the new owners began giving plants away and then began selling them until I bought a farm and salvaged what was left.

The 100 or so plants that I had left appeared like culls for the most part, but my farm tenant put a little barnyard manure about them and a year later they had a dark vigorous appearance.

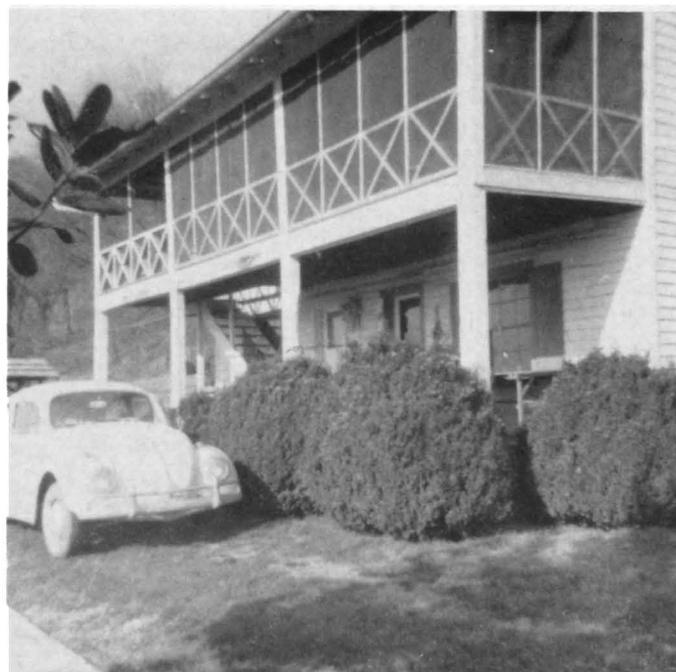
With this encouragement and a strong desire for lots of box, I set out 1000 or so cuttings in rich soil back of the "Doghouse" which is my domicile when I stay on the farm. The farm is primarily Ohio river-bottom land but has some wooded hills overlooking the bottoms and is located 40 miles from my home. I did not provide enough shade for the cuttings and at least 90% of them perished. I abandoned them to the weeds for a year and lost some more.

Next I planted about 2,000 cuttings in a little clearing that I made in moist rich woodland. The plants did fine and the following year I set out about 4,000 cuttings in another clearing and transplanted the yearling plants to nursery rows. Thinking that a little stimulant might be good for the transplants I told the hired hand to put about a tablespoon of high grade fertilizer around each plant. Later many of the plants turned brown and perished. It developed that the "hand" had let his six year grandson help with the fertilization. They boy had thrown handfuls of the hot fertilizer on top of the plants and destroyed more than half of them.

About this time it was discovered that the chemical "2-4-D" was a wonderful weed eradicator in corn production, I stored a barrel of "2-4-D" in the "Doghouse" for the tenant's use. It later proved to be

The "Doghouse", February 1964.

Photograph, Donald W. Martin



highly volatile when the tenant poured the liquid from the barrel into cans which he took to the field. Fumes from the "2-4-D" flowed around the vicinity and killed at least 20 beautiful three-foot box and a large black walnut tree.

Later I asked a hired hand to remove the fume-killed box and replace them with undamaged plants. Wanting to boost the growth of the smaller plants, he filled the holes full of rotted manure from a cattle barn and then transplanted. The plants really did respond and have been doing so these six or eight years since with at least twice normal growth both spring and fall. The growth is coarse and unattractive and the fall growth usually freezes and turns pale.

About this time I had a vision and a strong desire to have 100,000 box and began increasing the planting of cutting up to 10,000 a year. I would "tailor" many of the cuttings myself and tie them in bunches of about 50 to hold for suitable planting weather. One year the cuttings began getting dry because I had held them so long and I decided to rejuvenate them by soaking the stems in water overnight. That year more than 90% failed to take root.

Then I built a shelter house plant-bed with two layers of snow fencing over the top and sides for shade. The cuttings grew very successfully in it.

The following year I figured that a half inch of rotted manure application might be a good idea in the shelter house. Also, that black plastic between the rows would be fine for holding down weed growth. The hired hand decided that two and a half inches of manure would be five times as good as a half-inch. I lost every cutting set that year, and I divided the blame between the use of plastic and the excess of manure.

After a year's rest the next crop of cuttings for the shelter house were without plastic strips for the weeds. The result was about 20% of a stand of weak-looking plants and I believe that the heavy application of manure was to blame for the weakness in the plants.

When the severe cold weather came in early 1964 I was sunning in Mexico and my box were freezing in Kentucky. I lost about 4,000 three to seven year olds in the nursery rows and 100 or so of mostly eight year olds, as well as a few of my originals. Loss of the older plants was primarily due to my casual carelessness and stupidity. I had moved several four-foot plants because they were crowding. When we move these large box plants we dig a good sized ball for the roots, tie a log chain around the limbs next to the earth, lift the plant with a tractor lift and swing it along to the new location. This is a pretty rough operation and I generally disappear to avoid seeing the cruelty of it. The "hands" prepare holes, always too large and generally too deep, and the plants have a pretty slow recovery at best. Some of these were lost to the freeze. No large plants were lost where they were not moved.

While on a summer vacation a couple of years ago the "hand" who was to keep the nursery cultivated failed to do so. That fall the Jimson weeds, horse weeds, hog weeds, butterprint, etc. had closed in over the plants with a six foot canopy. When we



The "Hand's" House, February 1964.

Photograph, Donald W. Martin

finished cutting, hoeing, and pulling out those weeds we had a third less live box in the nursery.

Goats do not eat box and so I turned some into a weed infested lot where I had some large box. The animals enjoyed polishing their horns on the larger box limbs while they thereby removed the smaller branches and much of the bark. The box recovered and grew out of the damage.

Two small boys once decided to beat one of my box to death. Their clubs knocked off nearly all of the branches but the plant grew back again.

The ability of box to withstand abuse and adversity amazes me, but chemicals are lethal to them, beginning with the elementary "K-9-P" and the modern "2-4-D" which is so very important to field crop production.

I am now satisfied that 10,000 box will be as many as I can possibly say grace over, if I ever succeed in producing that many. They are primarily a hobby or avocation for me, but I also consider them as a practical tax free savings account which can be drawn upon if I need the money. As savings accumulate interest, the box accumulate valuable growth.

Well, it's that time again and my new "hand" is now stripping out cuttings downstairs while I sit here in the "Doghouse" reminiscing about the pleasures and anxieties of growing boxwood.

Last year a neighbor stopped by to call on the hired hand and saw the large box about the premises. She admired them and asked if she could be given some. The "hand" replied with emphasis, "Good God, No! you don't know how much trouble it is to raise these plants."

Boxwood Gardens Old and New

(continued)

By Albert Addison Lewis

Excerpts from Mr. Lewis' book by the same title, published by The William Byrd Press, Inc., of Richmond, Virginia, in 1924.

THE BONAPARTE BOXWOOD HEDGE

How often we find that the prosaic days of the present time are linked up with the romantic days of the long-ago by the spicy witchery and shaggy greenery of an old Boxwood.

The removal of such a hedge, a remarkable wall fully seven hundred feet in length, of genuine Boxwood from the ancient garden which was once a part of the famous old country residence called "The Homestead," caused many interested folk to turn back to a fascinating page in American history. For it was this very hedge that Jerome Bonaparte, later to become a king, planted during his honeymoon.

It is a romantic story, rather an exotic one in these practical democratic days of ours. But, it is an interesting one, though students of the fateful life of Napoleon may already be familiar with its details. It takes us back to the time of the fall races in the year 1803 in the prosperous town of Baltimore. A distinguished guest was to honor the occasion that year, none other than young Jerome, brother of the Corsican First Consul of France. Ordered home by Napoleon, he had stopped at Baltimore where he was immediately lionized by the local society. And during his entertainment he was invited to dinner at the home of the principal French resident of the city, to which all of the gay people of Baltimore were to assemble. Among the guests was Elizabeth Patterson, daughter of a wealthy merchant, and the most beautiful and haughty debutante of the season. The first meeting of this young couple, so soon to take a tragic part in the history of those ambitious days, was romantic to the extreme.

It was while the guests were waiting the approach of the dinner hour that Betsy Patterson and her friend Henrietta Pascault stood at the window watching the arrival of two young men. One was M. Reubell, son of Reubell the Director. The other was a small, graceful, spare, dark-eyed man with hands as delicate as a woman's, and clothed in the rich uniform of a French naval lieutenant. This was Jerome Bonaparte, youngest brother of the man who later sought to become Emperor of the world. Miss Pascault, perhaps in jest, pointing to the approaching figure of M. Reubell, exclaimed, "That man, whoever he is, will be my husband!" "Very well," rejoined Miss Patterson calmly, "I will have the other." Within three months both of these marriages took place.

Jerome and the haughty, charming, clever American girl had fallen desperately in love. Forgetting the wrath of Napoleon, and all of the riches and regal splendor which awaited him in France, Jerome thought only of becoming this dazzling creature's husband. Betsy, on her part, saw a glittering future in which there was every promise of a court and a crown. Only her father, foreseeing the probable intervention on the part of Napoleon, sought to break off the match.

And so on Christmas Eve, 1803, Betsy Patterson was married to Jerome Bonaparte. The ceremony was performed by the Catholic Bishop of Baltimore and every civil precaution was taken in the marriage contract against its future rejection. It is said that as she stood beside her husband that evening she seemed like a fairy bride, though beneath her fairy-like self was concealed an iron will and dauntless ambition which later stood in marked contrast to the weak nature of young Bonaparte.

Soon after the wedding the young couple moved to "The Homestead," a country seat just outside the city of Baltimore, surrounded by the estates of many of Baltimore's leading citizens. The weeks which followed were the happiest of Elizabeth's life. During lulls in the gay social season of their little colony, the young Bonapartes spent much time in their new garden. That spring they supervised the planting of a Boxwood hedge, which was to surround the entire garden.

It is pleasant when one does not remember all the turbulence and unhappiness and change which were to come in after years to think of those sweet garden days when together they planted that Boxwood hedge. And yet they realized that they would not remain to see it grow up, for already they were yearning for the wider fields beyond their boxwood garden. In May, 1804, Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor. The gratification of this long-nurtured ambition incensed him all the more against the marriage of his younger brother to an American nobody. Denying the legality of the marriage he held Jerome guilty of a heinous offense against him and against France. In the face of these rumors of opposition and implacability, Jerome and Elizabeth finally sailed for France in the early spring of 1805. They reached Lisbon on the 2nd of April, where they were met by Napoleon's ambassadors who refused to allow Miss Patterson to land. Jerome had to face his brother alone, and the result was inevitable

when his weak nature was pitted against his brother's indomitable one. After a tearful farewell, in which Jerome swore to remain faithful, come what might, the couple separated, little dreaming that they were to see each other but once more in all the years to follow. Finding the ports of continental Europe closed against her by her enemy, she sailed for England where she was given a warm and curious welcome. Here on the 7th of June, her son, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, was born.

In the meantime, the Emperor had broken down Jerome's feeble resistance and ordered him to secure a divorce. Pope Pius the Seventh was likewise summarily ordered to grant the divorce, but to the surprise and wrath of the Emperor, he refused, and was forthwith imprisoned in the Chateau of Fontainebleau.

As a reward to Jerome's submission to his brother's will, he was made King of Westphalia and married to the Princess Frederica Catherine, daughter of the King of Wurttemberg. In a few years by his magnificent and foolish extravagance he had bankrupted his Kingdom, and after the Battle of Leipsig he was compelled to flee to Switzerland. In after years he returned to France, becoming governor of the Invalides in 1848 and in 1850 a French Marshall. He died in 1860. Only once in all of these years did he ever see Elizabeth Bonaparte again. It was in the year 1822 in the gallery of the Pitti Palace in Florence where one day she came suddenly face to face with Jerome and his second wife. She passed them by without a word.

But if the faithless Jerome's fortunes waned in Europe, Betsy Bonaparte legally Betsy Patterson, once more, went from social success to social success in all of the courts of Europe. And yet, despite her splendid reception wherever she appeared, due to her wonderful beauty and her sharp cleverness, a deep bitterness gnawed ever at her soul, a cankering grievance against the destiny which had held out a queen's crown to her and then had hastily whisked it away again. All the rest of her life she felt the bitterest contempt for the husband who had abandoned her. And yet, in after years, when she walked slowly and wearily up and down the garden paths of "The Homestead," where she sometimes went between her visits abroad, and felt the fragrance of the sun-drenched Boxwood rise to her, she would say to herself, remembering the Jerome of those far away days who had planted that shaggy hedge with her by his side: "Jerome loved me to the last. He thought me the handsomest woman in the world and the most charming. After his marriage with the Princess he gave the court painters several miniatures of me, from which to make a portrait, which he kept hidden from the good Catherine."

Small comfort you will say, but she has been dead long since. She lived to be ninety-four years old. As it says upon her tomb, "After life's fitful fever she sleeps well." And now the ancient Boxwood hedge which played its part in her romantic, yearning life, is being brought away. Surely it has beheld its share of the pomp and sorrows of this life since those days when it heard the swish of silks

and satins as Jerome Bonaparte and his beautiful wife walked slowly along the garden walks at "The Homestead."

BARBARA FRIETCHIE'S BOXWOOD

WHERE "the clustered spires of Frederick stand green-wall'd by the hills of Maryland" there is a substantial old brick house in a fine garden, square set to the roadway, with dormer windows and white shutters open against the warm red of the walls. It was from these very dormers that a brave, strong-hearted old lady, Barbara Frietchie, once defied a whole regiment of the Confederate Army.

"Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;
Bravest of all in Frederick town
She took up the flag the men hauled down.
"She leaned far out on the window sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.
'Shoot, if you must, this old grey head,
But spare your Country's flag,' she said."

That cry of staunch, unfaltering loyalty has come thrilling down the years to stir the hearts of all who love courage.

Barbara Frietchie was a fine old lady who believed in "plain living and high thinking." On weekdays she wore a calico dress of Quaker grey; on Sundays a black cashmere or alpaca for church. There are still a few in Frederick Town who can recall her in her garden, weeding, gathering herbs, clipping her loved Box bushes, or knitting under an apple tree. She was never idle. "Her language was always chaste, and entirely pure." She often sat there, too, with her Bible, a great ponderous volume bound in calf with two oak boards for sides. Legend says she kept her famous Union flag in this book on rainy days. Her life was simple, but what she had was of the best. She it was who owned the beautiful set of china, which had been borrowed by the ladies of the town when Washington was entertained there. And her garden, where from earliest spring to late autumn she lived her sweet and upright life, was of the best type, beautiful with perfect Box bushes, great sturdy clumps, green and pungent, and with beds of chrysanthemums, roses and dahlias.

Now that true-hearted old lady is gone from the garden and rests in a grave marked simply with B. F. and a flag, but her staunch spirit is immortal in Whittier's ballad, and in what remains of her garden — the beautiful Box bushes she planted and cared for.

Other passages from BOXWOOD GARDENS OLD AND NEW have been reprinted in The Boxwood Bulletin in January 1963, April 1963, July 1963, October 1963, January 1964 and January 1965. A few more portions of the book remain, which we plan to include in the future issues.

A Slime Mold on Boxwood

By J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

The scrofulous-appearing growth on the seedling of *Buxus sempervirens* shown in Figure 1 is the fruiting body of *Fuligo septica*, which is a slime mold. This and other common representatives of the Myxomycetes are among the most cosmopolitan of organisms. The slime molds are remarkably homogeneous and seem to constitute a class of organisms coordinate with other groups of plants generally recognized as fungi. There are some 400-odd known species of slime molds.

Many references are in the scientific literature to *Fuligo septica*, for it has been used for many special studies.

Slime molds have an ameboid stage of naked protoplasm that moves through and over a moist substratum of organic matter. This plasmodium subsists largely on dead matter. Under the influence of appropriate stimuli, this ameboid mass moves to a dryer substratum, becomes aggregated, and develops into one or more fruiting bodies (sporangia) which are characteristic in size and shape for the species involved.

In the case illustrated here *Fuligo* has used boxwood as a dry substrate to support its fruiting body. The slime mold does no harm to the boxwood. The seedling had been potted in forest soil in June of 1964, kept indoors under light, and was photographed on August 2, 1965, in the studios of Colonial Williamsburg. A specimen of the boxwood and fungus has been deposited in the National Fungus Collections at Beltsville, Maryland (*Baldwin* 16074).

I am indebted to Dr. John A. Stevenson, U. S. Department of Agriculture, for having the slime mold identified for me by Doctor Farr.

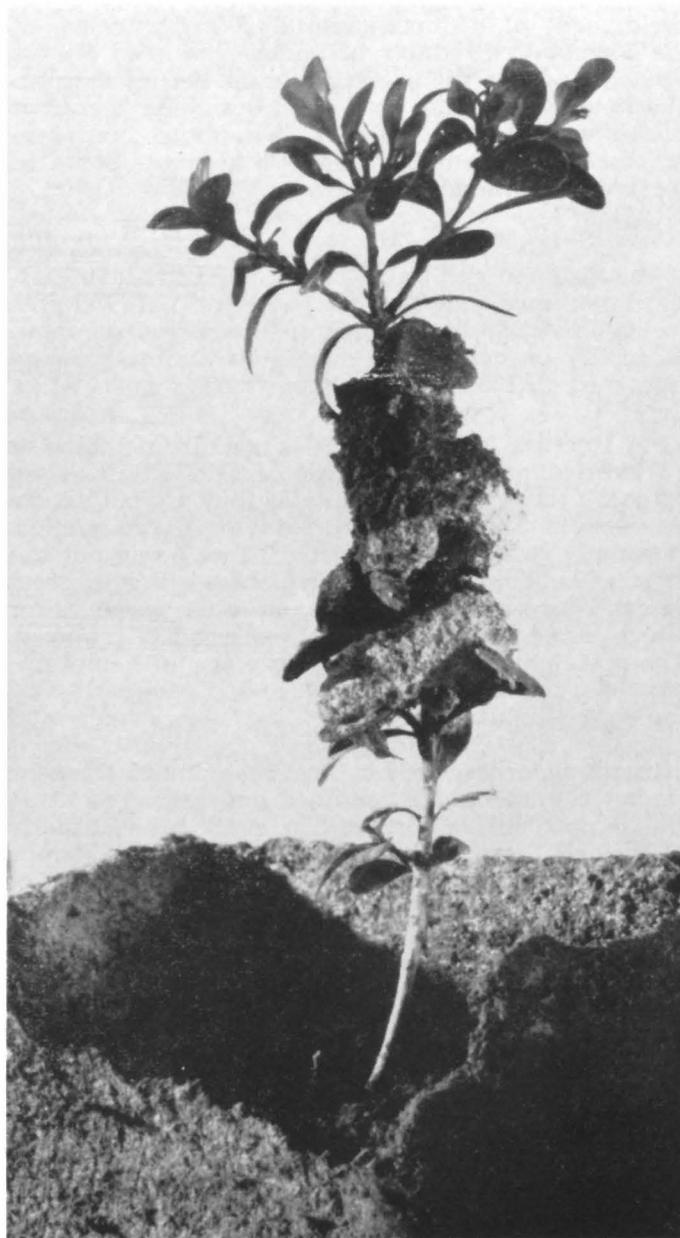


Fig. 1 Slime mold growing on boxwood seedling in 3-inch container. Photo: *Delmore Wenzel*.

WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE LIKE BOXWOOD ?

To introduce his talk on "Boxwood" before The Garden Club of America in New York City on February 9th, J. T. Baldwin, Jr. asked a question and answered it:

"Why do so many people like boxwood? Because it make billowy, stately, dignified, aristocratic masses of green or blue-green in so many pleasing conformations. Because it lends itself to formal and informal plantings alike. Because it carries connota-

tions of immortality. Because it creates an atmosphere of romance. Because it reminds one of youthful memories and promises pleasant contemplation for old age. Because of the fragrance of the flowers in early spring. And, above all, because of the smell of the foliage which is both sensuous and pervasive and always welcomed by those educated to it — a scent, depending on environmental conditions, that ranges from extremely delicate to foxy."

Indian Boxwood

By J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

Sir George Watt in *The Commercial Products of India* (John Murray, London, 1908), which is an abridgment of his monumental *The Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, discussed Indian Boxwood under the scientific name *Buxus sempervirens* whereas today we would designate the plant *Buxus microphylla sinensis*. We quote the paragraphs below from Sir George's account. Some of the areas mentioned are now in Pakistan.

Page 190: c. An evergreen shrub or small tree of the Suliman and Salt Ranges, the Himalaya eastward to Nepal and Bhutan (absent from Sikkim), at 4,000 to 8,000 feet, chiefly in shady ravines, more especially on calcareous soils. It is a slow-growing tree, very difficult to raise from seed.

A tincture from the bark is used in Medicine as a febrifuge, and the leaves are occasionally browsed by goats, though to most animals they are poisonous. Boxwood is found on the Himalaya of large size, occasionally over 5 feet in girth, 3 feet being not unusual. The Timber is very valuable, being in great demand for turnery, carving and other purposes for which a very hard, close-grained wood is required. The principal European use, since the 15th century, has been for wood-engraving, and it is regarded as the best substitute for ivory in many ornamental purposes. But the Indian areas are almost always difficult of access, and it has been found that the timber cannot be cut, seasoned and delivered at an Indian port, still less in London, at the prices usually offered. Hitherto the principal supplies for Europe have come from the Caucasus, but this is spoken of as being rapidly exhausted. The trade has accordingly asked for suitable substitutes that may at least meet certain of the purposes of boxwood.

NEW MEMBERS:

Calloway, Robert A., Counselor Horticultural Center of Jackson, 422 North Mart Place, Jackson, Miss. 39206

Carrington, Mrs. Stanley A., Maple Street, Box 71, Islip, N. Y. 11751

Carter, Mrs. Allen F., 619 Ballantine Rd., Bloomington, Ill. 47401

Hilton, Mrs. M. Robinson, "Hillside", Waterford, Va. 22190

Jones, Wyford D., Lucust Curve Farm, 1600 Radnor Rd., Delaware, O. 43015

*Morton, Mrs. David C., Agecroft Hall, 4305 Sulgrave Rd., Richmond, Va.

Richardson, John D., Box 407, Berryville, Virginia

* Contributing Member.

MORE RARE PLANTS GIVEN SOCIETY'S COLLECTION

BY HENRY HOHMAN

Mr. Henry Hohman of the Kingsville Nurseries in Maryland, who has been a most generous contributor to the Society's collection of specimen box plants, recently added the following varieties:

A plant of *Buxus semp. latifolia aurea maculata Hillier*.

Two plants each of

Buxus semp. Hardwickienseis-fastigiata

Buxus semp. 'Joe Gable'

Buxus semp. Krossi-Livonia

Buxus semp. latifolia aurea maculata

Buxus semp. 'Northland'

Buxus semp. rotundifolia.

A fine plant of *Azalea Schlippenbachii-Alba* was sent with these, for the Orland E. White Research Arboretum.

Mr. Clark Crabill, acting head of the Arboretum, whose expert care preserves and nourishes the boxwood collection, has thanked Mr. Hohman in behalf of the American Boxwood Society and the Arboretum; and has expressed our grateful appreciation of his continued interest in the work of both organizations.

The new plants, as well as the rest of the Society's collection, will be shown in the greenhouse during the Annual Meeting on May 11th.

ROOTED CUTTINGS OF ANGUSTIFOLIA TO BE GIVEN AT MEETING

This year, Mr. Crabill is continuing the pleasant custom of giving a rooted cutting of boxwood to members in attendance at the Annual Meeting. He has prepared for the 1966 meeting cuttings of *Buxus sempervirens angustifolia*, an unusual and desirable addition to the interesting collections of boxwood varieties which we hope are being built up from these living souvenirs of our meetings.

The American Boxwood Society

Annual Meeting May 11, 1966

At Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, Va.

Program

All times DAYLIGHT SAVING

10:00 A.M. Registration begins.

Informal tours of Arboretum, Greenhouses and Radiation Facility conducted by Mr. Clark Crabill.

Observation of Boxwood: the Society's collection and other specimen plants.

Renew friendships and exchange boxwood experiences.

11:00 A.M. Business Meeting.

12:00 Noon Lunch.

Boxwood Society members receive notices of the meeting, with a return postcard for reserving the box lunch. These should be returned as soon as possible, and not later than Monday, May 9. All interested non-members are welcome, and if they wish lunch should write to Box 85, Boyce, Va., to reserve box lunches at \$1.50 each; send your request not later than May 9, please.

1:00 P.M. The Formal Program.

In the Library: Rear Admiral Neill Phillips, U.S.N., Ret. presiding.

Speakers:

(The speakers will not be limited to the subjects listed, and are requested to touch on any items they think of interest to the Society.)

Dr. W. R. Singleton, Director National Colonial Farms, "Suggested Plans For Future ABS Activities".

Dr. J. T. Baldwin, Jr., College of William and Mary, "Boxwood Rarities", with slides of "Tedington".

Mr. Alden Eaton, Director of Landscape Construction and Maintenance at Colonial Williamsburg, "Boxwood at Historic Williamsburg and at Carter's Grove: Propagation and Culture".

Mr. Gordon Scott, Director Tennessee Botanical Gardens, Nashville, Tenn., "Boxwood Collections and Cheekwood, and Boxwood Developments In the South." Slides.

Mr. Clark Crabill, Acting Head of the Orland E. White Arboretum, "Boxwood Donations to ABS, and Distribution of Box Plants.

Adjournment about 3 P.M. DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

TO REACH BLANDY FARM:

For those who have not visited Blandy Farm before now, it is on Route 50. If you are driving west, it is about 2½ miles beyond the Shenandoah River bridge, with the entrance to your left. From Winchester going east, drive 8 miles on Rt. 50 to the Waterloo traffic light, then 1 3/10 miles more to the Blandy entrance, on your right. Entrance will be marked.

Followed by

VISIT TO CARTER HALL GARDENS

The distance is only 2 3/10 miles altogether, and the route is not as complicated as the following detailed instructions may sound.

On leaving Blandy Farm, turn right onto Rt. 50, continue for 1 3/10 miles, turn left onto Rt. 255 and continue for 6/10 of a mile into Millwood. Turn left again onto Rt. 723, and go 2/10 of a mile past the Old Mill (on your left); turn right onto Rt. 255 again, and go up the hill for 2/10 of a mile to the gate of Carter Hall, which is on your right.



Gift Membership in

The American Boxwood Society

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The Boxwood Bulletin will be sent to you
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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.