

*The*

OCTOBER 1968

# Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



## Winter is Coming!

*Old Westbury Gardens on Long Island cover up, every year, before the coming of snow and wind.*

*Above, the North front of the mansion photographed in winter.*

*The South front in the height of summer, to the right.*



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# The Boxwood Bulletin

OCTOBER 1968

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EDITOR — MRS. EDGAR M. WHITING

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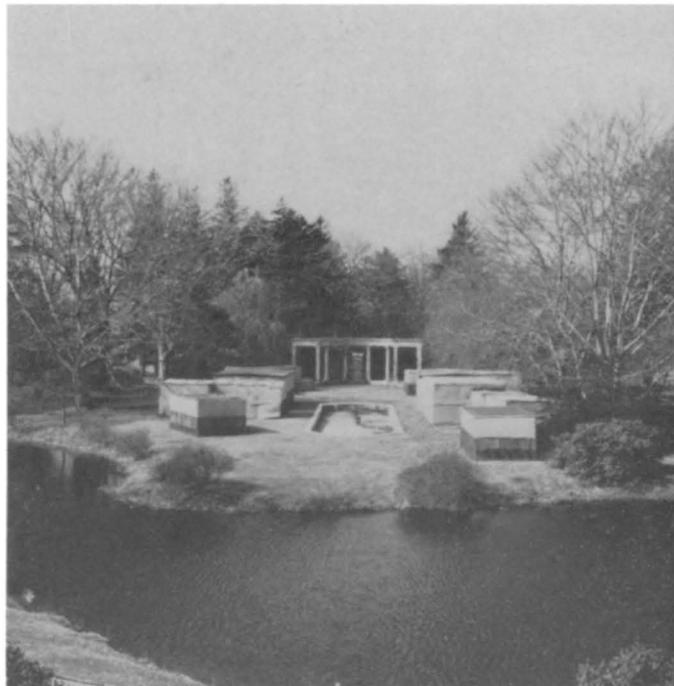
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# BOXWOOD GOES INTO WINTER QUARTERS AT OLD WESTBURY GARDENS

Peter Coats, in GREAT GARDENS OF THE WESTERN WORLD, describes Old Westbury as "these large and beautifully planned gardens on which the creators have lavished every blessing that taste, knowledge and a great fortune can bestow." This "flowering wonderland" was shown in all its spring and summer glory in the April 1968 issue of the Bulletin.

But, as Kipling wrote, ". . . such gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful' and sitting in the shade". Nor are they kept up by any such easy method, as all gardeners know; and even when the last chrysanthemum is gone, there are endless chores involved in putting the garden to bed for its long winter nap.

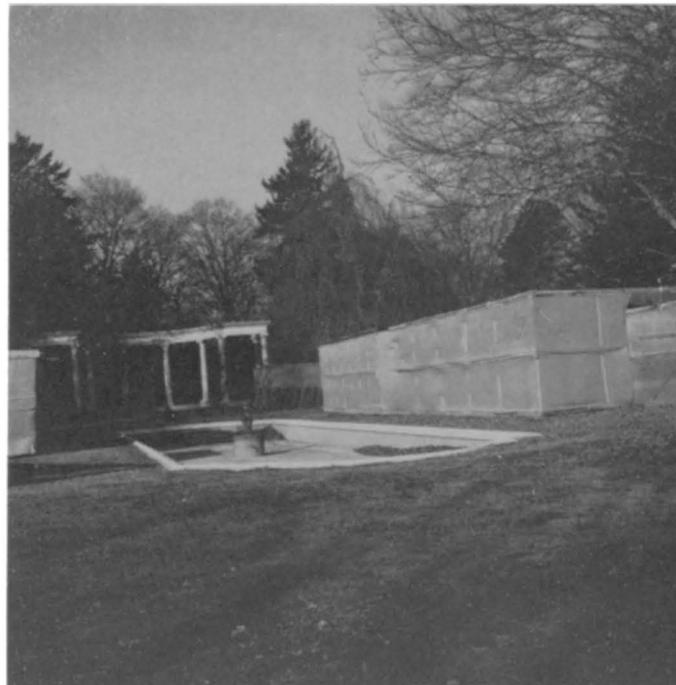
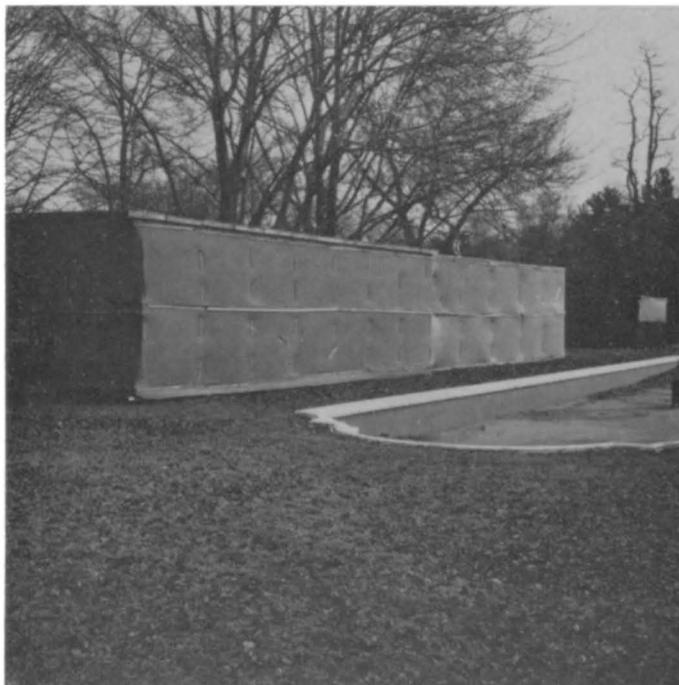
At Old Westbury, one of the most important preparations for winter is the protection of shrubs and hedges against the heavy snows, bitter winds and possible sun burns of Long Island winters. The gardens welcome visitors from early May to late October, and are closed to the public the rest of the year. Early in December protective structures are built over the giant boxwoods around the lily pool, the high hedge of clipped hemlock south of the mansion, and other tall plants that might be crushed and broken by heavy snows.



*Large boxwoods around the lily pool (drained for winter) are covered by a group of protective structures. (Above)*

---

*The spacing of the frames (4 feet in width) is plainly shown where the burlap is attached, in the pictures to right and left below.*



*All photographs, including those on the cover, from Old Westbury Gardens.*



*On the sheltered sides, snow fencing provides partial sun- and wind-break, while permitting air circulation. (Above and below)*

These protective structures at Old Westbury represent a maximum in winter care, probably more than is needed in many areas or zones of hardiness. Your knowledge of climatic conditions in past winters is the best guide to working out a protective system that will be adequate without being excessive. You may find suggestions for partial or modified shelter for your boxwood, if you study the details of design and construction in these structures at Old Westbury.

Mr. Jerome A. Eaton, Director of Old Westbury Gardens, describes the procedures of construction and assembly as follows:

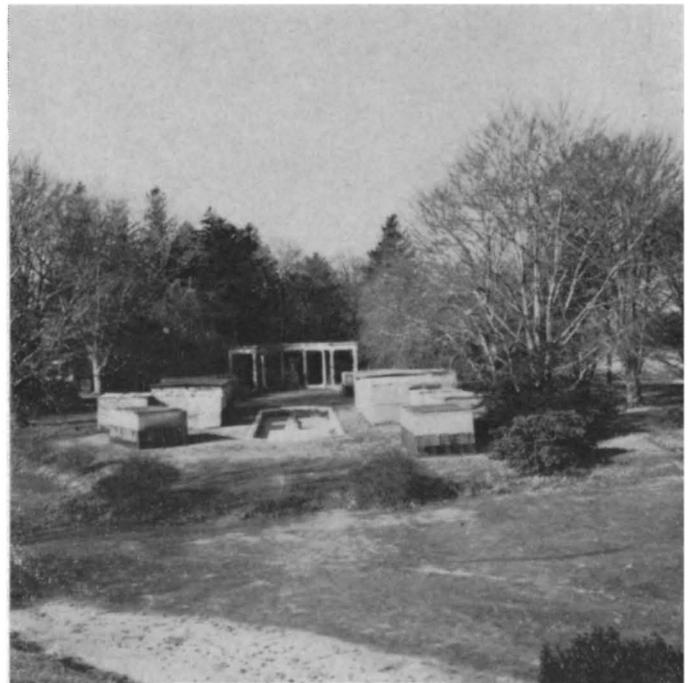
“The protective structures at Old Westbury are prefabricated in sections no greater than four feet in width, so that one man can lift each section and place it against the next support member. Each section is attached by means of a bolt and wing-nut. The roof attaches to the vertical sections by means of simple hooks and eyes.

We put burlap on the sides where the wind is strongest and closely slatted snow fencing in the more protected areas. The burlap is attached with flat head nails which are hammered through the center hole of a 1½-inch round tin ring.

These structures are assembled about the 10th of December and are removed on April 1st.”

In the April Bulletin, Mr. Eaton wrote: “The solid roofs keep the weight of the snow from breaking any branches, and the continuous snow fences and burlap walls prevent burning by the sun or desiccation by the wind.”

*In this view over the lily pool (Below, right), the lae shown on the preceding page has been drained, as well as the pool.*



# Is It Too Cold Here For Boxwood?

By E. BRADFORD CLEMENTS  
Ontario, Canada

Photographs by Mr. Clements.



If you ask most nurserymen in Ontario if they sell English Boxwood, they will reply that they sell Korean Boxwood, but that it is too cold here for the other kinds. I have received the same answer from nurserymen in New York State and Pennsylvania. Yet just west of Toronto, Ontario, we have in our garden, a thriving forty-year-old *Buxus sempervirens* V. *arborescens*, (sometimes called "American" box. We also have several thousand plants propagated from the original one, about twenty varieties which we bought five years ago from Mr. Hohman at Kingsville, Maryland, and a few others.

How cold is *too cold*? Certainly many times during the last forty years the temperature here has fallen below  $-20^{\circ}\text{f}$ . Every winter we have temperatures as low as  $-15^{\circ}\text{f}$ . (The summer high is around  $90^{\circ}\text{f}$ .) We have proof that at least twenty-five varieties of boxwood will withstand temperatures as low as  $20^{\circ}\text{f}$ . If we succeed here with boxwood, or if we fail, I submit that the reasons for our success or failure are the same reasons as apply in Maryland and Virginia, and do not include low temperatures.

Having had lots of replacements, we have planted boxwoods in what we thought were the worst possible locations, testing them for survival. The one cardinal rule for winter survival of *Sempervirens* is that *it must have good drainage*. If you will look over the illustrations in the Bulletin you will observe that many of the best gardens are near other trees and shrubs. The root systems of these plant neighbors create channels in the soil and thus promote good drainage. Frequently the pictures show good specimens growing on high ground. Very old and large boxwoods are often found growing untended in old cemeteries. These plants have survived without fancy fertilizers, or insecticide sprays, or

watering in dry seasons, or regular pruning. *This is an incredibly robust plant*. It is worth noting that cemeteries are usually established on hills where the drainage is good.

Various bits of advice to Northern gardeners have been appearing regularly in the Bulletin, written by well-qualified amateurs and professionals. If this article has a contribution to make it is one of emphasis, and we repeat that *Buxus sempervirens will not flourish in poorly drained soil*.

It is probably safer to locate plants where they will not be buffeted by strong winds. However, if the plants go into the winter season in good condition they will survive. We do not encourage growth except in the Spring months. This allows the plant to harden, whereas late season growth is immature when autumn comes and invariably suffers winter damage. To the same purpose we avoid heavy pruning and fertilization. We have never noticed any disease.

The original plant was allowed to grow without pruning for twenty-five years. Then it became our only source of cuttings. About seven years ago some hungry deer ate a considerable amount of it. Five years ago a large section of it died, cause unknown, but most likely resulting from construction of a terrace about two feet high over part of its root system. It is now well-rounded and healthy about two and a half feet in height and diameter, not large by southern standards, but we have not aimed at bigness.

In October, 1966, after searching local libraries for material on boxwood and finding very little information except that it was "not reliably hardy north of Philadelphia", I discovered that there was

an American Boxwood Society which published The Boxwood Bulletin. I now have a complete set of the Bulletin, all issues from October, 1961. It has added

tremendously to my interest in boxwood and my knowledge of the plant.

E. Bradford Clements

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# The Story of Clembrook Boxwood

By E. BRADFORD CLEMENTS

About forty years ago my father bought a boxwood, *Buxus sempervirens*, and planted it in his garden which is on the South-Eastern slope of the Niagara Escarpment, west of Milton, Ontario. It was an exposed location; the soil was heavy clay; the plant was not provided with any shelter from the wind or sun, nor was it mulched in the winter. During the first winter it suffered fairly severe damage. (As time went on, spruce and cedar trees were planted on the West side of the plant and leaf-mould having a high lime content was spread around it, so that it now has good winter protection and good soil conditions.) After the first year there was no winter damage whatever for thirty years. Then half of the plant was killed, cause unknown. Since then it has grown-in well and now has a rounded, thrifty appearance, about two feet high and two feet wide.

This variety of boxwood has lustrous, dark-green foliage, maintaining this color throughout the year with the exception of the new growth in the spring, which is light green. (There is sometimes new growth in late summer, particularly on young boxwoods. This will always be killed in the Winter and will have to be trimmed off.)

I have been propagating plants by cuttings from the original for the past fifteen years and now have several thousand in various stages of growth. During this time the plants have been thoroughly tested for hardiness. The most meaningful conclusions obtained from this testing is that, *provided that cultural requirements of this plant are carefully adhered to, no damage will result from exposure to temperatures at least as low as -20° f.*

High and low temperatures in this part of Ontario commonly range from 90° f to -15° f in most years. The mean average daily temperature for the winter months is 24° f, and, for the summer months 68° f. Annual precipitation is 30 inches, well-distributed throughout the year. Snowfall is 7 inches for December, 11 inches for January, 9½ inches for February and 5 inches for March. It is apparent then, that we are not in a snow-belt; also that snow is not retained for long periods. During most winters our plants do not receive the protection of snow-cover.

We have not experienced damage to our plants, in any important degree, due to ice and snow bending branches out of shape or breaking them off. We have found Boxwood very satisfactory to grow in

all other respects, as we have not had to spray (yet) for red spider or leaf-miner, or for any disease.

As a result of this long period of testing we are now able to make several "educated guesses" concerning the cultural needs of *Buxus sempervirens* in our area. These cultural needs must always come first. The really important thing to consider is not whether a boxwood would *look well* in a certain location, but whether it would *do well*. Even though we have broken all the following rules, sometimes intentionally for test purposes, and had success, not withstanding, and you may be able to do so also with success, you will stand a far better chance if you *observe these rules carefully*.

## Cultural Rules

1. *There must be good drainage.* This is accomplished by the use of tile drains, by ditching, by elevating the bed, by providing good, loamy, friable soil, by planting near the foundation of the house or where tree roots are not far below the surface, etc. The roots of nearby trees and shrubs will create channels in the soil favorable to good drainage. They will not adversely affect the health of the boxwood by "taking all the moisture out of the soil".





Boxwoods should put on their annual growth only in the spring and at this season there is usually enough moisture for all plant-life. (If you have a dry spring you should water well during this growing season.) It is safe to plant boxwoods in quite dry locations, and they will stand a good deal of shade. The roots will not ordinarily clog foundation drains.

If the drainage is poor the tissue of the feeding roots of plants such as these, becomes injured and eventually killed. The plant, then, cannot take moisture up into the leaves, the leaves become dehydrated and the plant dies. During the summer the plant may have an opportunity to repair partial root-damage as the water table in the soil lowers. During the winter it does not have this opportunity. Hence "winter-kill" results.

2. *Locate where there is protection from the Winter sun and wind.* Plant on the north or east side of a building or of other evergreen trees or shrubs. Boxwood leaves keep giving off moisture all winter and the loss of this moisture is increased by the action of strong winds and bright sun. As the ground is frozen the roots are not capable of replenishing the moisture as generously as required by the leaves. This also causes dehydration of the leaves and "winter-kill".

Nature has provided "Deciduous" trees and shrubs with a method of reducing loss of moisture during winter. By dropping their leaves in the autumn these plants limit loss of moisture (transpiration) to that lost by the trunk, branches and twigs. The narrow-leaved evergreen plants, pines, spruce, cedlars, yews and junipers are all specially adapted to cope with cold winter conditions. *Buxus sempervirens*, however, is native to the Mediterranean re-

gion and has not the built-in devices which would protect it during our long, cold winters. It needs help to limit evaporation from the leaves in winter.

3. *Give extra protection during the first winter.* In the late fall mulch the plant with peatmoss, leaves, straw, strawy manure, shavings, sawdust, etc. Then evergreen boughs should be placed around it and over it. This is an excellent use for an old Christmas tree. Another method is by driving three or four stakes around the plant and attaching a burlap bag to them; or the boxwood may be covered with an old hamper, or cardboard box. (Do not wrap the plant with plastic or other material.) If you had to do this each winter you might well lose interest in growing boxwood. You would also be denied the pleasure of seeing this lovely green shrub bravely standing out in the snow at a time when most other shrubs are apparently lifeless; however, this extra protection is only required during the first winter. (It is well to give the same kind of protection for two weeks at the time of planting, especially if the weather is hot and windy.)

4. *Avoid heavy feeding.* Any reasonably good soil, neutral, acid or alkaline, will allow the plant to produce all the growth which it should produce. It should add new growth only in the Spring. Late season growth will be soft and immature when winter arrives and will invariably suffer winter damage. Late season growth results from unnecessary fertilization, cultivation and watering. If you want maximum growth per year you may obtain this *during the spring growing period* by using liquid fertilizer and adequate watering. However, cultural practices which promote maximum growth also lead to seed-production, and seed disfigures the plant. (It is interesting to note that we observed seed for the first time, on *one* of our plants, in 1966.)



5. *Prune with health and survival of the plant as your principal objectives.* Keep in mind that if you keep clipping off the new outside growth you are removing the healthiest part of the plant. The leaves will become progressively smaller and the interior of the plant will consist of crowded, weak, bare stems. To compensate for this you must regularly reach in and remove a few small branches. The small holes which this makes in the exterior will be inconspicuous and will soon fill in. On the other hand, when the plant is relatively compact it has the best chance of winter survival: each leaf provides protection for its neighbors by giving shade; also humidity is maintained better around the leaves. An open, branchy plant is not a good winter risk. Adverse exposure is increased with height.

Pruning should never be severe. April is the best time. In the case of mature plants light pruning may be done at any time. Young plants should not be pruned except in April, or very lightly, in late autumn, Mid-season pruning encourages undesirable late growth.

#### NOTES

Boxwoods may be transplanted at any time except when the new, spring growth is well advanced. The best time is as early as possible in the Spring. The second best time is when the new growth has hardened — late June and July in this area. If the weather is hot and windy give protection.

Yellowish foliage denotes poor drainage. The presence of lime in the soil seems to improve the green coloring, though we find well-colored plants in quite acid soil, too.

If you plant a hedge in full sun, fill in the gaps between plants each winter with pine or cedar branches until the hedge becomes compact. (Then each plant will protect its neighbors.) To achieve a permanent height of 1 ft. - 2 ft. the plants should be placed 12" - 18" apart.



We have had "confirmation from the grave" for some of our theories about boxwood. Some wonderful specimens are found in old churchyards. They are very old and big in the southern United States, but we have them in Ontario, too — not so old or big, but very thrifty, and more significant to this study. The key points are that churchyards are well-drained and that plants in old churchyards are not handicapped by receiving excessive tender, loving care.

You should take warning that it is easy to become infected with *Boxwood Fever*. If you plant *one* you will soon just have to plant more and you will soon just have to try other varieties. Also you will look right past the most glorious displays of other flora in any public or private garden and see only the boxwood.

— E. Bradford Clements

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*The two preceding articles on winter care of boxwood may suggest further study of the subject. Those possessing a complete file of The Boxwood Bulletin will find in it many reports on winter damage and suggestions for its prevention and cure.*

Vol. 1 No. 1, October 1961, "Delayed Damage From Last Winter"; as well as several letters from all over the country.

Vol. 1 No. 2, January 1962, "Value of Winter Protection in Maryland", by Dr. J. B. Wilson, University of Maryland.

Vol. 2 No. 1, July 1962, "Winter Injury To Boxwood", by Dr. J. T. Tinga, then of Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Vol. 2 No. 2, October 1962, "The Culture of Boxwood In An Old Virginia Garden", by Capt. Reginald J. Vickers.

Vol. 4 No. 2, October 1964, "Winter Care Of Box", by Mr. William A. P. Pullman, Rear Adm. Neill Phillips, Dr. J. B. Wilson, and Mrs. Helen R. Allen.

Vol. 6 No. 2, October 1966, "Winter Protection For Boxwood", by Arthur Dugdale.

Vol. 6 No. 3, January 1967, "The Winter Color of Boxwood", by Dr. J. H. Tinga.

Vol. 8 No. 1, July 1968, Mr. Alden Eaton's valuable checklist for the factors that may reduce winter damage to boxwood.

# BOX GLEANINGS FROM MORGUE

J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

I chose this title and like it and keep it, though it does demand a bit of explanation.

Today — September 17, 1968 — I visited the office of the Richmond newspapers, by which I mean the *Times-Dispatch* and the *News Leader*, and inquired therein for the *morgue* where I hoped to find stories on boxwood. I was directed to the *library*. Fashions in words like fashions in clothes change. It was not necessary to *glean* — “to pick with patient and minute labor”: within minutes after my request for information on boxwood an efficient individual — and I am grateful to her — handed me an envelope filled with clippings from the two papers. Among them were several about The American Boxwood Society, including one story in the *Times-Dispatch* for May 7, 1961, from Boyce, wherein was reported the organization of the Society “last week” at The Blandy Experimental Farm and with a membership of 250 from the District of Columbia and sixteen states. Rather good, I thought, for a new society dedicated to one genus — and a small one at that — and a credit to Churchill Newcomb who got the whole thing started. Next, I learned that xerox copies of news-stories could be had for modest charges; and likewise prints from negatives of photographs that had been used in recent years. Such are the labors of research nowadays! Readers might easily contribute significantly to the *Bulletin* if they would send to the Editor facsimiles of items in the files of their local newspapers. I urge them to do so.

I place on exhibit nuggets taken at random from this buxaceous mine. All of them just happen to be from the *Times-Dispatch*. Later, perhaps, I shall complete my account of gleanings from both papers.

May 13, 1956, after an interview with Fred L. Williams, Sr., nurseryman, Pat Perkinson writes, quoting: “We have found some of the best old specimens of English box [*Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*] in the yards of the poorest and we’ve sold it to some of the richest in the land. . . . Strangely enough, boxwood seems to like clay soil. We’ve noticed that the plants we bring in from the red clay sections of the State have a sheen and a stand-up quality that are not found in those grown in sandy soils”. But he has observed that box does have a tolerance for a wide range of soils. [E. H. Wilson — about whom I shall publish soon in the *Bulletin* — knew *Buxus* well in the wild in Europe and Asia and in gardens and has stated that box “favors chalk and this fact may have something to do with the difficulty people have in causing it to flourish in the acid soil of New England”. This statement is of especial interest because it is contrary to some of the observations presented in the paragraphs hereafter.] Mr. Williams favors mulching: there are those who question its efficacy with box. He has found chicken manure to be a good food and, because

of the litter present, a good mulch; also, leafmold together with cotton seed meal, which has a high nitrogen content.

Mildred Williams reports on August 13, 1957 (?) most entertainingly and with a fertility of information about Mr. A. J. Moore, who used to have a place in Richmond on Hermitage Road, where he grew box as a hobby. I visited him there once and immediately sensed that he loved boxwood: he became enamored of it when still a boy and played among the big plants at “Prestwold” in Mecklenburg County; the odor of box charmed him before he appreciated the plant for its other attributes. When failing eyes curtailed his reading, he devoted much time to the propagation of box. Soon he had so many plants that to alleviate the crowding he began to sell them, priced according to their heights against a yardstick and, of course, with regard to the varieties — of which he had a number, certain of them brought by him from England. The City gave him ground-up leaves from the streets of Richmond, and with them he mulched his box to a depth of several inches; no cultivation was needed. He grew fine specimens. To assist him there was a negro gardener of long-time loyalty. Together they operated a motorized cart to haul leaves and to move plants. Meeting with him and sharing his enthusiasms are prized memories, and I am indebted to Miss Williams for making the opportunity for me to talk here about this gracious man. He enriched his own life and that of others with his beloved box plants. Miss Williams reports how he rooted cuttings (if, for example, he wished to have a big plant fairly soon of a slow-growing variety, he used big cuttings); how he inserted his cuttings in the rooting medium; how he controlled leaf-miner with DDT; how he considered August to be “the season when boxwood cuttings should be made.” I just talked to Mr. Moore: he now lives at 6209 Tapoan Road in Richmond; he still grows box, at prices reduced 60% — which signifies the best bargain in fine plants in my experience. He will be eighty-eight on September 30th.

A story for May 31, 1959, from Volens in Halifax County, is excellent. It was, in fact, for this story remembered for almost a decade, that I went searching in the *morgue*. I reproduce the article in its entirety.

*Volens, May 30* — F. M. Hickson sold his first boxwood sprays about 50 years ago. Today on his farm near here in Halifax County he has 15,000 to 18,000 boxwood from which he shipped some 15,000 pounds of sprays last fall.

The story of how this business began and grew was unfolded while Hickson pointed out the acres planted with tree and English dwarf boxwood.

"Back 50 years ago Miss Maggie Loving of Amherst traveled around this country buying boxwood," Hickson recalled. "We had quite a bit of boxwood on the old home place, but my grandmother wouldn't sell them to Miss Loving. After failing to buy the boxwood, Miss Loving told my brother and me how we could make some money cutting sprays, and she gave us the address of a place in Pittsburgh that bought them."

The Hickson brothers cut sprays and shipped them. Back from Pittsburgh came a check that surprised and delighted them. "We got \$40 or \$50," Hickson recalls, "and that was a lot of money for a couple of boys in those days."

After cutting the boxwood at home, the two brothers started traveling around the county in a wagon, buying boxwood and reselling them. Then came an automobile.

As the business grew, Hickson traveled throughout the state buying boxwood sprays. Even with this expanded source, he found that sometimes rush orders came in that he couldn't fill, and he set to thinking that he should have boxwood of his own.

The result of that thinking — tree boxwoods now coming into full production — were planted in 1936. These large boxwood are planted between tall black or post oak trees.

"Boxwood needs a certain amount of shade," Hickson pointed out. "In addition, locust trees put nitrogen in the soil just like legumes and the fine leaves from the trees make a perfect mulch for the boxwood."

In addition to the sprays, which now are sold mostly in New York for Christmas decorations, Hickson has sold cuttings for propagation.

#### *"Never Save Seedlings"*

"Most people don't know it, but boxwood will also come up from seed," Hickson observed, "however, we never save seedlings. They don't run true to their parent stock."

Hickson now has been joined by his son, F. M. Hickson, Jr., and boxwood is a full-time business for the father-son partnership. In addition to the spray business, they have dwarf English plants of varying sizes, and are just beginning a nursery stock business.

The cutting and shipping season begins about October 15 and continues until about December 15, with occasional orders being received throughout the winter.

Cuttings for planting purposes start in August and continue until spring, just before the new growth starts. Then there are the jobs of dusting against red spiders, fertilizing the plants, and cutting grass. Very small plants are also cultivated.

While most of the sprays that are shipped to New York are sold in the New England states, Hickson said he wouldn't be surprised if some of them found their way back into this area.

"I stopped at a florist's in South Boston (Virginia) the other day and saw they were using boxwood sprays," he laughed, "I asked them where they got them, and they said from New York. The sprays could have very well come from right here."

I recall that in the 'twenties buyers canvassed the old places in Charlotte County for boxwood clippings to be used for decorative purposes.

September 23, 1953, Thomasia Spencer reported from Charlottesville the experiences of the Warren Clouds on their half-acre lot in Meadowbrook Heights with boxwood. They were fortunate that their half-acreage had been part of a dairy farm. "Doing all the gardening themselves in the evenings and on week ends, the Clouds not only have made their grounds enchanting, but they have achieved such variety and productivity that it has been necessary for them to obtain a grower's license so that they could sell their excess. Now they garden for both pleasure and profit! . . . . Most gardeners don't make enough use of their compost heap . . . . We put everything we can into our compost pile, even coffee grounds, tea leaves, egg shells, corn stalks, vegetable trimmings, as well as the usual things like grass cuttings, leaves and pine needles. We put it around everything, particularly our boxwood, just as soon as it is well rotted. We also use partially rotted sawdust . . . . Our other garden secret is the habit of working a little almost every day of the year. There always comes the perfect time and perfect weather to do a certain job." These industrious individuals have nurserymen prune the box and sell them the clippings to be used for Christmas decorations.

Betty Parker Ashton writes on December 7, 1958, from Gordonsville, that seven years ago Orange County Agent E. V. Breeden was sold a hundred box plants by a County resident. Now retired, he is growing box as a business. At the time of writing, he had 6,000 plants and was planning to have a boxwood auction at "Auburn", his box-studded farm north of Gordonsville. I do not know how his venture has prospered, but I would add a note of caution: I have come across a number of individuals who became so enthusiastic about propagating box that soon they had quantities of plants which in a relatively few years attained a size that made moving them uneconomical.

I will end this miscellany with a report by Pat Perkinson, just as I began with one of her stories; this last one, under date of April 17, 1960, is headlined "Gardens, Boxwood Are Synonymous In Virginia History". "Whereas the adaptable evergreen formed the framework for nearly every other well-known garden in the State, Jefferson got along very well without it at Monticello". Surprising that I had

never thought of this, and Jefferson is my favorite American. I was amused at the wry comment quoted by Miss Perkinson from the former Alden Hopkins, who as resident landscape architect for Colonial Williamsburg was my good friend: Alden said that

Jefferson "probably saw too much of it [box] when he was in Williamsburg". And Hopkins used very little box in rebuilding the gardens of Mr. Jefferson at the University of Virginia.



*Three very different leaf types of Box; Buxus balearica Lam. in the center. Natural size. Photograph by Dr. R. O. Flagg, then of the Blandy Experimental Farm. Article, next page.*

# Concerning *Buxus balearica* Lam.

J. T. BALDWIN, JR.

These notes are based in large measure upon *Dr. John Fothergill And His Friends* by R. Hingston Fox, M.D., Macmillan, London, 1919.

Doctor Fothergill (1712-1780), "London physician, a man of science, a Quaker and a philanthropist", bought an estate in Essex in 1762 and developed a flower garden "surrounded by shrubberies and a wilderness of trees". There, outdoors and under glass, he grew many rare and valuable plants and, constantly, by correspondence and via collectors in his employ added plants. An estimate is that he had 3400 species in his greenhouses alone. Many of his introductions were new to Britain, mostly herbaceous things but woody plants as well. Of the new introductions, the names of about one hundred are on record.

Of interest to us is the fact that Fothergill brought in "the handsome Balearic Box; one of the finest specimens in the country is a tree near the temple of the sun at Kew, which was 13 feet in height, as recorded by Loudon, in 1835: it may perhaps have been sent to the royal garden by Fothergill himself." Introduced before 1780, the species is still in cultivation in the British Isles. The specific name signifies nativity in the Balearic Islands of the Mediterranean; the common name "Minorca Box" recognizes one of those islands just as does the name of one of our domestic fowls. Alfred Rehder in his *Manual* states that the plant also occurs in Spain and Sardinia.

Some years ago Henry Hohman made me a gift of five of this box, with the comment that they were probably the biggest specimens of the species in the United States. At Kingsville, Maryland, Hohman has to protect this box in the winter; here in Williamsburg, Virginia, it has so far been completely hardy. One of our plants fell victim to a mower; the

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## *Buxus balearica*, the Box with the largest leaf.

This photograph by Dr. R. O. Flagg, then of the Blandy Experimental Farm, first appeared as the cover picture of the January 1962 issue of *The Boxwood Bulletin*. The picture, as Dr. Flory wrote at the time, "illustrates the leaf types of three very different kinds of Box. Left: *Buxus sempervirens rosmarinifolia* (Madiot) Baill.; a very narrow-leaved form of the species widely scattered through southern Europe, north Africa and Western Asia. Center: *Buxus balearica* Lam., from the Balearic Islands, Spain and Sardinia; a tree box growing to 60 feet in height, in the warm climates to which it is adapted its leaves become almost two inches in length. Right: *Buxus microphylla koreana* Nakai; a hardy low-growing, spreading box seldom attaining two feet in height. As its name suggests, it has small leaves and comes from Korea. All are here reproduced at natural size."

other four are doing well and are four feet tall. If memory serves aright, Mr. Hohman got his cuttings from Kew, and I like to think that this clone had its provenance in a plant introduced by Doctor Fothergill into his Essex garden.



*Buxus balearica* in the Royal Gardens, Kew  
From *Holly, Yew and Box*, by W. Dallimore, 1908

Dallimore says of this particular boxtree: "An illustration is given of a specimen of this species growing at Kew. Over sixty years ago (1835) Loudon mentions this specimen as being 13 feet high and the largest within ten miles of London; it is now (1908) 22½ feet in height, with a girth near the ground of 3 feet 3 inches, and at 3 feet above the ground 2 feet 5½ inches. A fine example, 12 feet high and as far through, may be seen in the ground at Ashton Court, Bristol.

# BOXWOOD WEBWORM

By DR. JOHN A. WEIDHAAS, JR.  
*Extension Specialist, Entomology,*  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Everything is relative! Compared to most of our common pests, the boxwood webworm (*Galasa nigrinodis*) is brand new. Mr. Freund of the Virginia Division of Regulatory Services, Nursery Inspection, reports it first was observed in Virginia in Mathews County in 1959. It has been reported also from other states including New York and Pennsylvania. During the past year, it has been found commonly in widely scattered parts of Virginia. We have collection records from Carroll, Henry, Montgomery, Botetourt, Augusta, Pittsylvania, Halifax, Fluvanna, Stafford, Hanover, Henrico, Mathews, and Essex Counties.

## HOSTS

Most of the reports are from English boxwood. The webworm has been relatively easy to find in most English boxwood plantings examined, both in nurseries and in established plantings. At present, we have one report of occurrence on American boxwood and two from Stokes holly (*Ilex crenata stokes*).

## RECOGNITION AND DESCRIPTION

Signs of damage are very inconspicuous and are easily overlooked. To determine if the insect is present the plant must be pulled open to examine the inner branches. Considerable webbing (easily confused with spider webs) can be found where numerous caterpillars are present. The webbing contains an accumulation of excrement droppings, and brown chewed-off leaves.

The caterpillars are very small in late summer (about 1/8" - 3/16" long) growing to about 1/4" - 3/8" by fall and up to 1/2" or more by late May and June when full grown. They are dark grey, almost appearing black when mature. On a few occasions chewing of the bark of twigs down inside the plant has been observed. This may account for an occasional dying branch.

## SEASONAL DEVELOPMENT

Studies are in progress to learn the life history in more precise detail. It appears that one generation

per year occurs in Virginia although there may be more than none. All of the larvae are not the same size at a given time indicating that emergence of adults may occur over a relatively long period. The majority of adult emergence occurs in June and perhaps some in July. Larvae have been found from July to the following June in gradually increasing sizes. The winter is spent as a caterpillar in the webs within the plant.

## CONTROL

There have been no control tests reported to date. It is expected that either diazinon, malathion, carbaryl, or DDT would control the larvae, and may be used on a trial basis. Thorough coverage inside the plant crown is essential, requiring spreading of the branches to expose the inner foliage. Care should be taken not to spray the hands and arms. Since the larvae are larger and more mature in the spring, applications in the latter part of July and again in early September are suggested. Spring treatment should be attempted when new infestations are discovered at that time of year.

Reports of boxwood webworm occurrence, especially in counties not mentioned above, would be appreciated.

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**USE PESTICIDES WITH CARE. READ THE LABELS, FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER, HEED ALL WARNINGS.**

# Boxwood Pests and Their Control

By JOHN C. SCHREAD

Entomologist, The Connecticut Agricultural  
Experiment Station

The evergreen shrubs called boxwoods may be included with other plant materials in landscaping homes, gardens, cemeteries and public buildings. Many of the boxwoods growing in Connecticut belong to the species *Buxus sempervirens* and its 18 or more varieties. Some of these are slow growing and dwarfed. They are often referred to as English box (*B. sempervirens suffruticosa*). Others are relatively rapid growers and tree-like in general appearance. These are called the American box, (*B. sempervirens arborescens*).

Boxwoods do well over most of Connecticut, especially so in climate zones 6 and 7 — the shore towns from New York to Rhode Island and inland to the central part of the state. Unless protected at higher elevations in the northwestern area, winter scorching and dieback of tender branches may occur. Boxwoods are subject to several types of insect damage which we have investigated for several years.

## Boxwood Troubles

In addition to problems in the culture of boxwoods, insects and diseases frequently cause disfiguration of the foliage from dieback of branches or the loss of an entire plant.

The following discussion will be limited to the life history, habits, and control of boxwood leaf miner, psyllid, and mites. Although mealybugs and scale insects occur on box in other areas of its established growth range, these pests have not been troublesome in Connecticut.

Experiments in the control of insects and mites with pesticides developed between 1945 and 1955 have been described in earlier publications of this Station (1953 & 1956). DDT, lindane, chlordane, malathion and Ovotran® were among the materials used in the tests.

## BOXWOOD PSYLLID

The boxwood psyllid (*psylla buxi* L.) hibernates in the egg stage and as a first instar nymph under scales at the base of the boxwood buds. Terminal buds may be more heavily infested than lateral ones. The extent to which the eggs hatch in late summer varies from year to year. An examination of 70 buds collected at random on March 14, 1966, showed 6, or 8.57 per cent, were infested. A total of 17 psyllids in a range of 1 to 8 were found under the bud scales. Of this number only 7, or 41.17 per cent, had hatched. A second examination of 35 buds collected 8 days later (March 22) indicated 100 percent hatch.

In heavy infestations all of the scales at the base of a bud may be infested, with two or more individuals per scale. Heavily infested buds are often smaller than uninfested ones, and may be killed by the nymphs. As many as 60 nymphs have been counted at the base of clustered flower buds, causing a slowdown in bud development. Data taken in 1964 showed that twig growth from uninfested buds averaged 2.65 times that from infested ones.

## Seasonal Development

As the buds develop in the spring the nymphs crawl from under the bud scales and infest the leaves. The feeding punctures cause the leaves to curl and form a cup in which the greenish-colored nymphs are concealed. They produce a waxy excretion which may cover part of the body or occur in small waxy pellets side by side with the nymphs. When only a few nymphs emerge from the base of a boxwood bud, later cupping of the leaves may be at a minimum. Conversely, when a number of nymphs are present, all or most of the leaves may be partially or completely cupped.

## Development in 1966

Buds examined in a fast-growing American boxwood on April 4 showed signs of expansion. Buds that were infested with psyllids were growing slowly, averaging only 1½mm in length, whereas the uninfested buds indicated faster growth averaging 5½mm in length. On April 4, 26 per cent of the first instar nymphs were increasing in size and beginning to work their way out (to the extent of one-half their length) from under the bud scales. This, however, was not the case in the slower growing English boxwoods, which still appeared to be dormant.

By April 15, psyllids in the American boxwood had increased in size but none had emerged. Buds were now 5 to 10mm long. A week later bud length had increased to a maximum of 13mm. Nymphs now measured ½ to ¾mm in length. By April 25, 2.5 per cent of the terminal bud leaves were beginning to cup. One nymph was found concealed within each group of cupped leaves. This first emergence of nymphs probably occurred between April 22 and 25. By May 2, 40 per cent of the expanding buds (17 to 27mm long) were infested with 2 to 12 nymphs, an average of 2.66 per growing bud. At this time (May 2) buds in English boxwood measured 3 to 5mm in length and nymphs had not emerged.

## Psyllid Control

Fig. 1. Nymphs of the boxwood psyllid caused the cupping of leaves in the clusters at left and right.



Because of the boxwood psyllid's overwintering and early spring habits and the injury which it causes, experiments intended to control the insect were planned to include three series of tests. The first one was meant to determine if the nymphs, protected by the bud scales, could be killed before significant plant growth started in the spring and migration of the insects commenced. A second series of treatments was applied after the nymphs had entered the expanding leaves and caused cupping. The final tests were meant to kill the adults which appear at the end of May and during early June. (Out of 3024 psyllids counted on June 3, only 21 were adults. From that time on transformation to the adult stage was rapid).

#### Early April Tests

Five- to six-foot English boxwoods 18 ft. in circumference were divided into quarters and sprayed on April 5 with Cygon® and Chlorpropylate® 24% emulsions at the rate of 1 and 2 pints respectively in 100 gallons of water. Diazinon® 48% emulsion was included at ½ and 1 pint rates. Triton® B1956 was used as a wetting agent. A 30-gallon hydraulic sprayer delivering 200 lbs. pressure and a single-nozzle spray gun were used to apply the treatments.

Control data taken on April 26 were obtained by removing the bud scales and counting the number of dead and live psyllids in 10 buds per rate of treatment and checks (Table 1).

TABLE 1.

Psyllid control, boxwoods sprayed on April 5, 1966		Insecticide & Psyllids		Per cent
rate of treatment	Dead	Alive	kill	
	<i>Pints</i>			
Cygon	1	23	0	100
	2	27	3	90
Chlorpropylate	1	10	53	15.8
	2	4	80	4.7
Diazinon	½	63	15	80.7
	1	54	0	100
Untreated	--	4	87	--

Table 1 shows that, with the exception of Chlorpropylate®, the insecticides used in the tests were effective in killing overwintered psyllids before emergence started.

Fig. 2. The stunted bud on the right shows injury from the boxwood psyllid, in contrast to the uninjured bud on the left.



Nymphs that escaped the April 5 treatments (Table 1) caused some cupping of the 1966 foliage. To determine the extent to which this occurred, five average 6-inch twig clusters were examined per rate of treatment. The data, summarized in Table 2, were taken on August 1. Chlorpropylate® was not included.

TABLE 2.

Effect of insecticides in preventing cupping of leaves by boxwood psyllids on plants sprayed April 5, 1966

Insecticide & rate of treatment	Pints	Leaf Clusters		Per cent cupped
		Not Cupped	Cupped	
Diazinon	½	56	2	3.4
	1	68	1	1.4
Cygon	1	75	5	6.2
	2	70	0	0
Untreated	--	61	37	37.7

## Late May Tests

By late May all overwintered psyllids had emerged from under boxwood bud scales and were feeding in the cupped leaves. On May 26 Diazinon® and Cygon® were sprayed on additional English boxwood plants at the same dilutions and in the same manner as that used in the April 5 treatments.

It was necessary to take the control data within 24 hours after treatment, since many of the dead nymphs fell to the ground and therefore were unaccounted for. Complete control of psyllids was obtained with the insecticides used in the tests.

## BOXWOOD LEAF MINER

Because the boxwood leaf miner sometimes defoliates and kills part or all of badly infested plants, it is considered a more important pest of boxwood than the psyllid.

The slower growing English varieties of box appear to be less susceptible to attack by the leaf miner than the faster-growing American ones.

There is only one generation of leaf miners a year. The adult is a small midge-like insect, orange or orange-yellow. Injury to box is first recognized in late spring and early summer when small pin-point blotchy areas, light gray in color, appear on the new leaves. (Oviposition does not occur in the previous year's foliage). The blotch-like areas indicate the presence of eggs which have been deposited through the upper surface of the leaves. They hatch in a few days.

Later, as the miners grow, the infested areas appear to be blister-like. They are most noticeable on the underside of the leaves.

The small yellowish-green maggots overwinter in the leaves and resume feeding in the spring. Enlargement of the feeding areas, especially in badly infested leaves, may cause an intermingling of the miners, and some cannibalism. As many as 17 live miners have been found in a single leaf. Seriously infested foliage becomes yellowish and small, and the plants show an obvious loss of thriftiness.

Transformation to orange-colored pupae occurs in late April and May. An examination of many leaves taken from an American boxwood on May 12, 1966 indicated 61.7 per cent of the miners were in the pupal stage and 38.3 per cent in the prepupa stage. None was in the larval stage.

Before pupation the miners form small, paper-thin, light gray or whitish caps in the underside of the leaves. Adults emerge through them, leaving conspicuous white pupae cases protruding through the exit holes.

Information obtained during two seasons, 1958 and 1966, showed that emergence of adults in both years commenced on May 21. Perhaps if records had

been available for the intervening years some variation from May 21 may have been expected. Females live for several days, laying eggs during this time.

#### Leaf Miner Control With Sprays

During the past 8 years a number of insecticides have been tested for their efficiency in controlling boxwood leaf miner. Most of the treatments were applied as foliar sprays but soil treatments were also tried. Many of the soil treatments provided satisfactory control. Only a few, however, are registered for general use.

To simplify matters concerning the insecticides used as foliar sprays during the last 8 years, data concerning their use and results obtained are summarized in Table 3. A 3-gallon hand-pressure sprayer was used to apply the treatments. Triton® B1956 was added to the treatments to facilitate wetting the foliage. The treated plants varied in height from about 18 inches to 3 feet. Control data were obtained from an average of 20 leaves taken from 10 4-inch twigs per rate of treatment and untreated checks.

Table 3 indicates effective control of boxwood leaf miner with Diazinon®, but only fair to poor control with Cygon® and Sevin®. None of the materials caused any noticeable plant injury.

#### Leaf Miner Control — Soil Treatments

On July 15, 1966, 5% Cygon® and on August 3, 1960, 5% Di-Syston® granules were used at the rate of ¼, ½, 1 and 2 lbs. of Cygon® and ¼ lb. of Di-Syston® formulations on the soil under 2 to 3 ft. American boxwoods. The granules were applied evenly by hand (gloved) from the base to the periphery of a plant. No raking or watering was done.

Control data were obtained for the Cygon® treatments on August 24 and on September 28 for the Di-Syston® treatment. An average of 15 leaves taken from 10 5-inch twigs per rate of treatment and untreated checks were dissected for the purpose. All miners were killed by the 1 and 2-lb. treatments of Cygon® but only 3.8 and 43 per cent respectively for the ¼ and ½ lb. rates. The ¼ lb. rate of Di-Syston® accounted for 65 per cent control of the miners.

TABLE 3.

Spray treatments for control of boxwood leaf miner

Date of treat.	Insecticides (emul.)	Rate of dil. in 100 gal.	Miners		Per cent kill & date
			Dead	Alive	
July 22,	25E Diazinon	1	68	0	100 9-24
		2	44	0	100 9-24
	Sevin Flowable	1	32	53	37.6 9-24
		2	45	70	39 9-24
Aug. 4,	25E Cygon	½	31	23	57.4 10-24
		1	37	13	70.4 10-24

Fig. 3. Pupal cases protrude from boxwood leaves showing injury from leaf miner infestation.



#### MITES

Several mite species attack boxwood, most commonly *Tetranychus bimaculatus* Harvey and *Simplinychus (Neotetranychus) buxi* Garman. They are very small and difficult to see with the naked eye. The adult red spider mites vary in color from pale yellow with conspicuous darker spots to purplish red. The eggs are white or translucent. Boxwood mites vary from green to yellowish brown, and the eggs are lemon yellow.

Mites feed by sucking the sap from the leaves. They may inject a toxic substance in the course of feeding. When mites are abundant their feeding causes a stippling and blanching, or silver-like appearance to the foliage. Webbing may also be noticeable. Serious infestation causes yellowing of the foliage which may drop from an infested plant prematurely.

To determine the presence of mites, shake a small branch over a piece of white cloth. When present the mites will fall onto the cloth and be readily

seen as they move. One may also rub the underside of the leaves onto the cloth. Streaks of reddish-brown "blood" will be seen when the mites are present.

### Control

A number of materials have been used to control mites on boxwood. Sulphur dusts or sprays, nicotine, rotenone, and pyrethrum are a few of the miticides in common use some years ago. Recently newer compounds have been tested. They are 15E Mitox®, 12E Tedion®, 2E Cygon®, 48 E Diazinon® and 18E Kelthane®. All were used in tests as liquid concentrates at the rate of ½ and 1 pint in 100 gallons of water. Triton® B1956 was added to each dilution. Plants averaged about 24 inches in height. Treatments were applied with a 3-gallon hand-pressure sprayer.

Control of mites was complete with the five miticides at two dilutions each. No plant injury resulted from the use of the materials.

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# The American Boxwood Society

OCTOBER 1968

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The American Boxwood Society regrets to report the loss by death of the following long-time members of the Society:

- Mrs. Ruth Greene (Charter Member)  
133 N. West Street, Tipton, Indiana 46072
- Col. Clark J. Lawrence (Charter Member)  
"Castle Hill", Cobham, Virginia 22929
- Mr. Hart M. Dymond, Sr. (Member since July 1963)  
129 S. Main St., Chambersburg, Pa. 17201

(Mr. Dymond was the author of the series of articles on "Some Large Buxus in the Middle Atlantic States", which appeared in The Boxwood Bulletin in April 1965, January 1966 and October 1967.)

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Mrs. Edgar M. Whiting, Editor,  
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This applies to criticisms and corrections, too — "We regret errors; we welcome corrections."

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Regular membership dues of The American Boxwood Society are \$3.00 a year. There has been some misunderstanding of the statement that \$2.00 of this are for a subscription to the Boxwood Bulletin. It should instead be understood that the Society allots 2/3 of the money received from dues to the publication expenses of the Boxwood Bulletin.

Non-member subscriptions are for groups and institutions such as botanic gardens, libraries, etc. These are \$5.00 a year, and run by the calendar year.

The Boxwood Society year runs from one Annual Meeting to the next; from May of one year to May of the next year. Those joining the Society at other times are sent all the Boxwood Bulletin issues for the current Society year, beginning with the July number. Their dues are then again due and payable in the following May. This was voted by the Society to lighten as far as possible the heavy work load of our busy Secretary-Treasurer, who, like all other officers of the Society, is an unpaid volunteer.

Single numbers of the Bulletin are \$1.00, plus 6¢ postage, each. Orders of five or more copies are sent postpaid. At the present time any or all Bulletins are available, back to Vol. 1, No. 1. (Vol. 1 consists of three issues only, there was no Vol. 1, No. 4.)

Besides regular membership dues at \$3.00 per year, there are other classes of membership available: Contributing, \$10.00; Sustaining, \$25.00; Life, \$100.00; and Patron, \$500.00.

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### DR. WAGENKNECHT'S LIST OF REGISTERED BOX CULTIVARS AVAILABLE IN BOOKLET FORM

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*The price of the booklet is 25¢ a copy, plus 6¢ a copy postage on a single-copy order or any number through nine. For an order of ten or more copies, the price is 25¢ a copy postpaid.*



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