

The

January 1964

Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



Dr. Walter S. Flory, Jr.

Edited Under The Direction Of
THE AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

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The Boxwood Bulletin

January 1964

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a most active quarter for our organization as plans for the coming year in connection with the Bulletin as well as the American Boxwood Society have been formulated and put into operation.

As a result of our double loss of Treasurer and Editor in Dr. Flory's move to Wake Forest it was necessary to regroup and so a combined meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society and the Editors of the Bulletin was held on December 5, 1963 at Blandy. Our first order of business was to unanimously elect Dr. Walter Flory, Jr. to Honorary Membership in the A. B. S. with the hope this would in part convey our deep gratitude for his continuous efforts in the Society's behalf from his first thoughts of its formation through its embryonic development to its present sound foundation of over 500 regular members. As President, it was my pleasure to convey to Dr. Flory news of his election and our Society's thanks.

At the request of the Editors a definite budget was set for the BULLETIN, the scope and intent of the editorial policy discussed and approved, and voluntary plans announced by Dr. Singleton to give more Library space and office equipment (that not being used by Blandy at present) to the Society.

It was the consensus of the Committee that a boxwood garden be designed and planted at Blandy utilizing the Box now owned by the Society (through gifts and propagation). Dr. Singleton showed the members a lovely square section near the entrance to Blandy proper that is being held for the A. B. S. use. Definite plans will be announced shortly.

Following the suggestion of the Committee your President has sought and gained a most gracious invitation for the members of the American Boxwood Society to visit the gardens of "The Tuleyries" owned by Mr. and Mrs. Orme Wilson in the afternoon on May 13th, 1964 following our annual meeting.

Other tentative plans are being considered for Society action and will be set before you as they develop.

Neill Phillips
President

In Memoriam

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

The President whose strong sense of beauty and historical tradition inspired the lovely box-filled garden at the White House.

CHATTER BUXUS

Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!

Hear our whipping boys? We have so many reasons for being late with this issue that we refuse to bore you with even one. Just accept our apologies, please.

Home, Sweet Home—

"There's no place like home" and indeed there is no place on the Eastern Seaboard like our Society's home base and Mother, Blandy Experimental Farm. It occurred to us that you might like to know about our home and the generosity of Mother Blandy and the University of Virginia to our Society. So we begin with the origin of Blandy Experimental Farm in this issue and will continue to bring her history and achievements to you in each issue thereafter for we have learned something you will be proud to know—OUR MOTHER IS FAMOUS!

Testing — Testing — Testing

Last issue our printers (we know they must have done it on purpose to test our alertness) sent some Bulletins out with no holes in them and some with two holes in them — and after we'd promised you three. Do save your Bulletins anyway, we'll get it right "next time".

European Buxus Bustus

Both your President and your Editor went to Europe last fall in search of beautiful box and gardens though in different locales and at different times. Neither came home with one usable picture or line of type.

Their stories are sad and we sympathize
but we'd be only too glad to realize
That since their trips were a great big bust
the very next time — they'd send us.

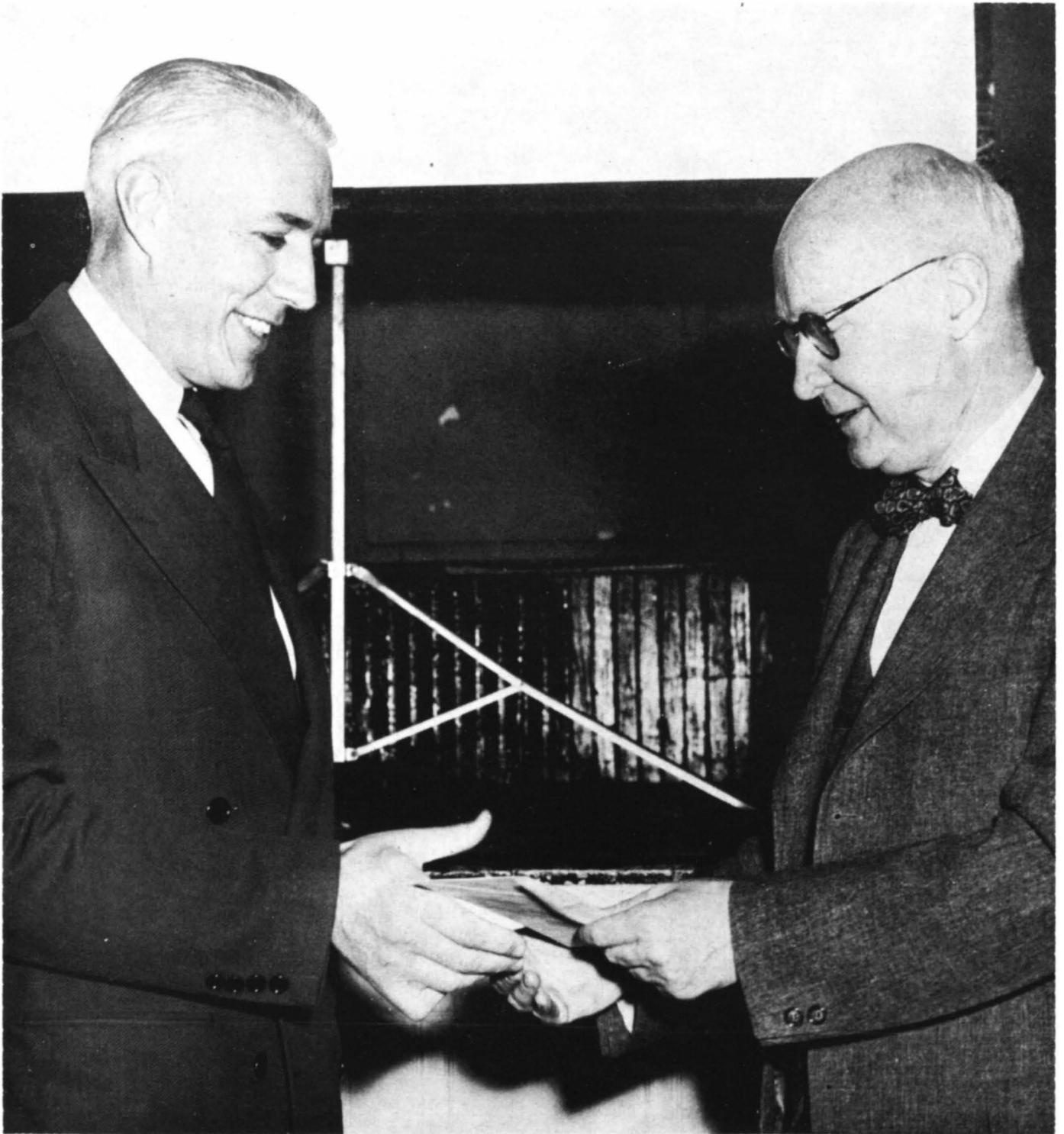
Be in the Right Place at the Right Time

As in the past those members attending the annual meeting on May 13th will be given rooted cuttings to add to their boxwood collections. This year's cuttings are of *Buxus sempervirens* var. *Handsworthii*, a truly handsome box with large, deep-bluish green leaves. Our thanks to Mr. Clark Crabill of Blandy Farm who propagated these cuttings for the Society's use.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We want to thank the many people who have been kind enough to send us articles and pictures for future use in the Bulletin. Particularly we want to thank Dr. Singleton who wrote a magnificent article on Dr. Flory and Blandy Farm and then gallantly without a word let us pull it all apart and make it into two articles. He gathered all the information, did all the hard work, and helped us with countless other things. Thank You, Doctor.

Dr. Baldwin, Mr. Eaton, and Dr. Flory were a tremendous help and we would not have been able to do without the help of Mr. McDonald at Carr Publishing. Thank You All.



Walter S. Flory receiving (March 6, 1961) the President and Visitor's Research Prize at the University of Virginia. The prize is awarded for the best published scientific study of the year by a University of Virginia faculty member. The prize is being presented by then Dean of the University Ivey F. Lewis (at right) for a monographic (47-page) paper by Flory dealing with phylogeny and pollen conditions in 95 species and 55 other taxa of Roses of the world. (Photo courtesy of THE DAILY PROGRESS, Charlottesville, Va.)

DR. WALTER S. FLORY, Jr.

On October 5, 1907 in Bridgewater, Virginia, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Flory gave to our country one of its outstanding botanists, Walter S. Flory, Jr.

Their son, through study and research, has been honored many times by his colleagues and his Alma Mater. He is listed in everything from "Who's Who" to the "International Blue Book." His varied interests have taken him from president of a local bowling league to Trustee of Bridgewater College. He has held positions in and been active with the P.T.A., the Boy Scouts, the theatre, library and fine arts groups, the American Red Cross and the Lions Club. In addition he has membership in 18 scientific societies and has served most of them in some official capacity.

Throughout his school years Dr. Flory was active as class president, editor of the various school papers, and belonging to the Varsity debating and tennis teams.

Dr. Flory graduated from Bridgewater College in 1928 as an honor student and received his Bachelor of Arts degree.

He came from Bridgewater to Blandy as a research fellow and from 1928 to 1931 worked and studied under Dr. Orland E. White, Blandy's first director. During these years he presented his work in a thesis in Zoology, for which he received his Master's degree in 1929, and a thesis in plant genetics, for which he earned his P.H.D. in 1931. His work was considered brilliant and, at 23, he was one of the youngest men ever to receive a P.H.D. in Biology at the University of Virginia.

In 1935-36 Dr. Flory did a post-doctoral year as a National Research Fellow in the Biological Sciences at the Arnold Arboretum and Harvard University. His major was in Botany—Plant Cytogenetics.

The positions he has held are several and varied. In 1931-32 he was in charge of the technical work of Shaver Brothers, Inc., in Florida; he was an instructor in Chemistry and Mathematics at Greenbrier Junior College, 1932-34; Professor of Biology at Bridgewater College, 1934-35; Horticulturist, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1936-44; Horticulturist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute Experiment Station, 1944-47. While located here he did some important work in developing new peach varieties.

In 1947 Dr. Flory returned to Blandy as Professor of Experimental Horticulture at the University of Virginia as well as Vice-Director and Manager of the Farm. Shortly thereafter he received two coveted awards for his research work. In 1949 he received the J Shelton Horsely Research Award presented annually by the Virginia Academy of Science, and in 1950 he received the President and Visitors Research Prize from the University of Virginia.

In 1955 he became Curator of the newly named Orland E. White Arboretum. This Arboretum was established by Dr. White and named for him upon his retirement. In 1956, Bridgewater College chose

their distinguished graduate, Alumnus of the Year, and conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate of Science.

Dr. Flory remained at Blandy for 16 years and it is obvious as one walks about and sees the beautiful plantings he added through his tenure that he loved the farm and did his utmost to enhance it in every way. In addition to planting new specimens and supervising the maintenance of the Arboretum, Dr. Flory, as Farm Manager, had also to plan for all the phases of the farm work. This included the Hereford cattle, the sheep, and any crops grown and harvested. His was also the chore of keeping all the financial records of the farm.

His research has been in the field of cytology and genetics of his horticultural plants; adaptability, phylogeny, breeding and cytology of woody ornamentals; cytotaxonomy of Amaryllidaceae. Recently he has used the radiation source at Blandy for the treating of woody plants. In these studies he produced a tall Forsythia from a dwarf variety; also a tall boxwood from the small Korean dwarf box. He also discovered that the gymnosperms are much more sensitive to irradiation than the angiosperms. In other words, the conifers, especially the pines, are extremely sensitive to irradiation. This finding was confirmed later at the Brookhaven National Laboratory where they made extensive tests of the phenomenon.

Dr. Flory has contributed many scientific articles (over 80) on genetics, cytology, and horticultural subjects in professional journals, and over 100 popular articles in sectional and national magazines.

It was largely through the efforts of Dr. Flory, and the late Churchill Newcomb, that the Boxwood Society came into being. From its founding in 1961 to the time of his resignation, Dr. Flory served as editor of the Boxwood Bulletin, a publication which has already become established among the botanical journals of this country.

Fortunately Dr. Flory is still a member of the Advisory Board of the Bulletin and continues to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Arboretum. This advisory committee was enthusiastic about the establishment of the Boxwood Society and is continuing to give active support and advice to the Boxwood Society.

Dr. Flory's personal life has been as full and as successful as his scientific life. Married to Maude Thomas in 1930, he is a devoted husband and father of 3 children. He recently became a grand-father when his oldest child gave birth to a boy.

The Florys are extremely well liked and always pointed out as "an ideal couple happily married." Both good looking, they are gracious and sincere people with a delightful sense of humor and a clean-cut quick wit. They travel a great deal and when at home entertain their countless friends who are always knocking on the door.

BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM

ORIGIN

Graham F. Blandy, New York stock broker and railroad magnate, came to Boyce, Virginia for a summer vacation in 1904 and by 1905 had purchased four adjacent tracts of land in Clarke County. The four tracts totaled 912 acres and included a lovely old mansion built by a Col. Tuley or Tully about 1830 . . . hence the name "The Tuleyries". Mr. Blandy made "The Tuleyries" his summer home until his death in 1926.

Early in the nineteen twenties Mr. Blandy visited President Alderman at the University of Virginia to talk with him about leaving his estate to the University as an experimental farm. Dr. Alderman's suggestion was that the Virginia Polytechnic Institute would be a more logical recipient since the University was not in the farming business.



Graham F. Blandy

Following the probation of Mr. Blandy's will after his death in 1926 it was learned that he had given to the University about 700 acres of land of the Tuleyries Farm plus the residual estate (at the death of his widow). The residual estate amounted to about \$670,000. All of this provided that the University accept the bequest under the terms of the will within two years or it would revert to the widow. The will called for the establishment of a training center to be named Blandy Experimental Farm by the University.

Over a year later the University sent a committee headed by Dr. Bruce D. Reynolds to investigate the advisability of the University accepting the Blandy bequest. The report and the plans for use of the farm were accepted and the property was transferred. The plans were to (1) have a farm manager operate the farming phase of the program; (2) have a director to supervise the educational program, spending winter months at Charlottesville teaching graduate courses and summer months at Blandy teaching and supervising actual research; and (3) founding five fellowships carrying stipends of from \$500. to \$1,000.

The capable guiding hand of Dr. Reynolds had much to do with the subsequent development of Blandy into one of the better known genetical and plant science institutions of this country and a research organization known the world over in plant circles. Dr. Reynolds always stayed very much in the background when the Farm was doing well, but stood ready to assist in every possible way when help was needed. He remained Chairman of The Blandy Farm Experimental Committee until his sudden death on April 26, 1957.

By this time, of course, Mr. Blandy's bequest to the University in spite of its' discouragement, was seen as a very wise one. Only a man with vision and determination would have proceeded in this manner and these very qualities undoubtedly had served Mr. Blandy well in his life.

Ironic, isn't it, that a man never a student at the University should insist upon giving it an experimental farm it did not want and for that farm to become the center for the best plant scientists in this country? "Blandy graduates man research posts in Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the United States department of agriculture, the American Cancer Society. They hold faculty posts in 19 American colleges and universities, including Columbia, Yale, and the University of Michigan. Students from abroad are taking Blandy ideas back home to Turkey, India, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Chile, and Canada."¹

1. From an article on Blandy Farm by Helen C. Milius in the University of Va. Alumni News.

RUGGED BOXWOOD

Many Hardy Varieties Will Grow Up North

By KENNETH MEYER

(Reprinted from the New York Times for April 14, 1963)

Of all ornamental woody plants, there is none with a more ancient and honorable lineage than boxwood (*Buxus*) or box as it is sometimes called. Cultivated since the time of the Roman Empire and used in castle bowers and cloister garths of the Middle Ages, box has played an important part in the history of gardening. Native to Southern Europe, its introduction to the British Isles antedates recorded history. Early Colonists brought box to this country to establish gardens similar to those they had known and loved in England.

Until recently, the boxwood most generally grown was *Buxus sempervirens*, known as common box, and its botanical varieties *B. suffruticosa* and *B. arborescens*. *Suffruticosa* is the true dwarf box, often called Old English Dwarf, with deep glossy green leaves and very compact growth. Quite slow growing, it usually averages only one inch or less per year. In section where it is hardy (to Zone 6, as a rule), this form is unequalled for edging beds and for outlining formal gardens. *Suffruticosa* is the variety that is seen and admired in the gardens of Mt. Vernon and in other noted gardens of Virginia and Maryland.

Picturesque Outlines

Arborescens is the tree box, sometimes referred to as American boxwood, along with other faster growing forms. Its habit of growth is open and irregular and the plant is at its best when grown as a specimen to assume picturesque outlines. In favorable situations tree box may ultimately reach 30 feet in height. Sometimes pathways in old Southern gardens lead between tree box which has grown so large, it roofs the walks with its branches.

There are a great many other horticultural varieties of *B. sempervirens*, including a weeping form, which is magnificent and a vigorous grower. One nursery catalogue lists a dozen or more forms of *B. sempervirens*. Their distinguishing features are based mainly on habits of growth, shape, texture of leaves and varying degrees of hardness.

The species has become quite variable which is not so surprising for a plant under cultivation for centuries. Many forms have developed with marked distinctions in leaf and growth habit. *B. sempervirens* Vardar Valley, is so outstanding, it deserves special mention.

Withstands Cold

This variety, which has glossy green leaves, grows into a handsome mound. According to a description published by the Arnold Arboretum, Vardar Valley has withstood -23 degrees without injury. The Arboretum states further that the variety

is one of the hardiest boxwoods known. It retains fine dark green color throughout the winter and is perfect for foundation planting as well as specimen use.

During recent years more attention has been given to the development of boxwood which is hardy and less likely to turn red-brown in winter when unprotected from winds, sun and sudden freezing. Enormous numbers of *B. sempervirens* seedlings are being grown for this purpose. Experiments and observations, along with careful selection made by informed plantsmen, are furnishing useful data.

Greater attention is also being paid to the hardy oriental species *B. microphylla*, and its many varieties which are just as variable as those of *B. sempervirens*. One in particular, *Koreana*, thrives in Canada and similar locations where winters are too severe for other types. Korean boxwood has a much smaller, thinner leaf, less glossy than common box, and is lighter green in color. The plant is extremely hardy and useful; it grows slowly to about 20 to 24 inches in height.

Another variety of *B. microphylla* deserving special mention is *Compacta* which originated as a seedling. Slow growing, it too survives Canadian winters and does well in the South. Still another is *B. microphylla sinica* of Chinese origin. Unless the climate is too severe, this variety usually holds its green color all winter, and consequently it is widely used for low hedges. Not to be overlooked is the very dwarf and slow-growing *B. microphylla* Kingsville Dwarf which is said to have withstood -24 degrees in Ohio without damage.

Soil Preferences

While boxwood grows in a wide range of soil types, it thrives best in soil which is fertile and limy with a porous sub-soil. Experience has shown that a light feeding helps box retain a rich green color. Indications are that soil conditions in general have a bearing on foliage color, although some varieties appear more prone than others to turn red-brown when cold weather arrives. Soil should be well-drained; boxwood will not tolerate sogginess. A good supply of organic matter will keep the soil from baking, cracking or heaving.

Tests have shown box to be somewhat indifferent to soil reaction. It will grow in an acid, peaty soil or in a limy soil. Specialists recommend a soil pH reading of 5.5 to 7.4, quite a broad range. Plants growing in partial shade and those situated where stirring currents of air protect them from burning afternoon sun, hold their color best.

Transplanting may be done at any time, except when plants are in active growth or when the ground

is frozen. My experience has been that the best results are achieved when boxwood is moved in the spring so it has an early start at root developments. When fall planting is necessary, September is a good month, as the plants will have sufficient time to produce new roots before the soil freezes.

Planting Depth

It is important that boxwood be planted at the proper depth. Those which are set too deeply or have settled so the original soil line is lowered 6 inches or more are nearly always unthrifty. The original soil level should not be lowered more than a few inches after some allowance is made for settling of the root-ball. The plant should never be set so deeply that the lower crotches are below ground level.

Individuals who are particularly interested in boxwood can gain further information from the recently organized American Boxwood Society, Boyce, Va. The aim of the society is to acquire and share all possible information on the subject. It publishes a bulletin every quarter which contains useful and authoritative data.

Annual Meeting Wednesday May 13, 1964



Boxwood Garden at the Governor's Palace, Williamsburg, Virginia.

BOXWOOD GARDENS

OLD and NEW

(Excerpts from Mr. Lewis' book by the same title, published by the William Byrd Press, Inc. of Richmond, Virginia, in 1924. Excerpts from this book have appeared in previous issues of The Bulletin.)

THE SPICY BOX THAT MARKS THE GARDEN ROW

"If we ever lived on another ball of stone than this, it must be that there was Box growing on it."

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

HAPPY is the man who has growing beside his doorway or down beside his garden path an old hedge or an old knot of Box. Fortunate is he who dwells where Boxwood flourishes, for on summer days when the warm sun sifts through its shaggy foliage and steeps the air of the whole garden with that clean, spicy, bitter-sweet odor, and on zero days when the perennial green of the Box with its glistening leaves keeps the garden living while the world outside is dead, the ancient Box with all its memories and associations will lend an air of Home-ness and Peace as no other plant can ever do.

It is the fact that old clump of Boxwood has been a century or a century and a half in growing, and once stood in one of those prim, long-ago gardens in which frail ladies in silken gowns and tall gentlemen with high-heeled shoes strolled along the terrace walks? Or is it perhaps that strange unanalyzable perfume, that old-time-fragrant bitterness "which carries us out of time into the abysses of the unbeginning past," and makes our domicile, even reeking with the odor of new paint, to have a dignity and a grandeur and an antiquity which will mark it from other homes?

For certain it is that men have designed and planned and builded, and failed in the end, until there was added the final touch of the Boxwood. As one architect has said, "A planting of Box establishes immediately a colonial atmosphere — an atmosphere of home." Its shaggy green beauty knots up the landscape with the garden, and the garden with the home, and the home with all that is restful and harmonious and enduring.

To live beside a hedge of old-time Boxwood is to be breathing continually the fragrance of eternity, and to become endowed with almost a hypnotic seventh-sense of memory. Ah, and what memories!

Gabriel d'Annunzio in his *Virgin of the Rocks* describes an old garden in which wanderers breathe the "Bitter-sweet odor" of Box which reconstructs "some memory of their far-off childhood." Fortunate are those of us who can remember our grandmothers "culling simples" in amidst the sun-warm clumps of

Box. Fortunate are those of us whose grand-children will in years to come remember us associated with the Box which has that "clean feeling of a vigorous old age," and bless us for planting it for them

But farther back than childhood the memories reach — back to the days of the pagan Greeks who consecrated the Box of Plato that there might be beauty living evergreen in the Hereafter throughout the year.

And back six thousand years ago when the prophet Isaiah told the children of the Lord of the glorious promise that God "will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the Box-tree together." Certainly such planting would make the bleakest desert become a place of rejoicing forever.

In the seventeenth century an old Jesuit poet, Rapin, wove a fanciful tale around the origin of Box edgings. He said that

"Gardens of old, nor Art nor Rules obey'd,
But unadorned, or wild Neglect betray'd;"

that "Flora's hair hung undressed, neglected, 'in artless tresses,' until in pity another nymph 'around her head wreath'd a Boxen Bough' from the fields; which so improved her beauty that trim edgings were placed ever after 'where flowers disordered once at random grew.'"

There is no knot of Box, no low-running border of it, no great shaggy hedge which does not go back in memory to Pliny's villa at Laurentium, to an Old Abbey Garden in early Britain, to gorgeous Versailles and the colorful days before the Marseillaise, to Merrie England when the Good Queen Bess reigned well, and down to Colonial America with its sturdy courage and greatheartedness.

Nathaniel Hawthorne says in the "American Note-Book" of the Colonists: "There is not a softer trait to be found in the character of those stern men than that they should have been sensible of these flower-roots clinging among the fibres of their rugged hearts, and felt the necessity of bringing them over sea, and making them hereditary in the new land."

To dream of Box was ever a good omen of happy marriage, long life, and prosperity according to the astrologers of Shakespeare's time; and dreams of it must have been frequent for there was scarce a garden in all England without its cherished Box; and that clean pungency must have wafted in the mul-

lioned windows of their casements and made sleep a sweet and fragrant thing.

Box was held dear by the maidens of Shakespeare's day for another reason — the leaves and dust of Boxwood "boyld in lye" would make the hair to be "of an Aboure or Abraham color" (in other words, auburn), according to Parkinson, the early English garden commentary. Who knows — perhaps Titan's women with their glorious hair, knew of this same secret. Sure it is that Boxwood grew in all their gardens, too.

The wood of Box is firm and beautiful and Renaissance artisans used it in fine inlay work and in musical instruments. Tablets for inscriptions to be long preserved were made of Boxwood, and the root was used for dagger hilts.

As someone says: "We can thank Heaven that there remains to us of the earlier gardencraft as beautiful a memorial as the Boxwood."

It is the most precious heritage we could receive from the longago days, for it is a green heritage of beauty and the spirit of home. The old hedges and knots of Colonial days are still alive. Some are cared for and loved. But let us rescue from the oblivion of tangled gardens, and ancient, forgotten, cemeteries, and meadows that have spread over old-time terraces, those clumps which remain uncherished. They can transform any house by the strange and uncanny witchery of their presence into an American home. Fortunate, I say, is the man who has growing beside his doorway, or down beside his garden path an old Boxwood knot, for the charm that is there will be as hard a thing to dislodge from his garden "as a ghost story from a house."

"The legions of grass in vain would blot
The spicy Box that marks the garden row."

Box Hedges of Old Monks

THERE were two very different kinds of Old Roman gardens in England long ago. The earliest was the type which belonged to the legionaries who conducted the Roman roads and walls in Britain before the birth of Christ. They were rich men, with plenty of slaves, with a love of luxury, and homesick for sunny Italy they tried to reproduce its gorgeous villas and gardens in the North Country. One of these is described in "A Book of Old World Gardens":

"Houses, parks, and fields now cover the gardens that were attached to Roman villas. Many a man lives over the spot where the hedges and alleys, the flower-beds and walks, once delighted those gentlemen who sat drinking Falerian wine poured from old amphorae dated by the year of the consul. Where sheep now browse, gentlemen have sat after a feast of delicacies—Syrian plums stewed with pomegranate seeds; roasted field-fares, fresh asparagus; dates sent from Thebes—and having eaten, have enjoyed the work of their topiarius, whose skill cut hedges of Laurel, Box and Yew into the form of ships, bears, beasts, and birds."

But the kind which has survived to this day is the old monastery garden, whose ancient Box hedges and strange herbs still live in abbeys and cloisters throughout the island.

St. Augustine was sent to Canterbury in 579 A.D. to "convert the blue-eyed Angles into Angels." His hardy little band of monks brought the plow with the cross, for meat of four-footed beasts was prohibited at that time, and the holy men lived principally on vegetables and fish.

They had to clear a plot from the forest and wall it about for protection and for privacy, and within the shelter of the walls for hundreds of years they raised their vegetables and flowers and herbs oblivious of the tumult waging without.

Inside of the stone barricade there was a hedge of evergreen, usually of Tree Box or Yew.

"The hegge as thick as a castle wall,
That who that list without to stand or go
Though he would all day prien to and fro
He shoulde not see if there were any wighte
within or no!"

This hedge also served the purpose of keeping the monks from having their attention wander from their duties to the outside world. They could not even peep at it if they wished, through this double enclosure.

However, some monastery gardens had a mound in the center, and very devout monks were allowed to climb to its height and thence gaze out over the hedge and the wall at the country-side. Such mounds have appeared in later enclosed gardens, and there is one at Hampton Court called the Mount of Venus.

Within the hedge the garden was divided into four sections. There were flower beds, Box-bordered, for although the very early Christians disdained flowers as symbols of paganism, they were considered by this time suitable decorations for the altars, and even used to point simple morals, especially the rose, whose thorn was supposed to suggest mortification of the flesh.

The second section was devoted to beds of "simples" and "physics," herbs with which the good men bound up the wounded and sick who were brought to them from the constant warfare going on between feudal lords and barons. The monastery constituted a sanctuary which war could not violate, and so it turned out that often enemies from opposing sides would be brought to the same monks for treatment, and would convalesce amicably together behind the green headges of the peaceful garden.

The vegetable garden was far the largest section, and every variety of vegetable was cultivated there, all in prim oblong beds exactly identical, with neat dwarf Box clipped borders to emphasize their precision.

The fourth section of the monastery garden was a combination orchard and burial ground, and it is not surprising that these resolute Christians did not dread death when they could rest so quietly in the sun-flecked shade of the blossoming fruit trees of those tranquil walled gardens.

There is an old record in an illuminated manuscript which recounts that Augustine had a gardener who attended "hourely in the garden for setting of herbis, and clipping of knottis, and sweping the said garden clene." But the usual practice was for the monks to work in changing squads, some in the kitchen, some at church rites, some in the garden.

When convents and nunneries appeared in England the women were supposed to take the spade with the veil, and to tend their cloistered gardens just as the monks did. They wove beautiful garlands for the sacred statues, for the altars and refectory, but were usually too delicate for the rough manual labor necessary to bring blossoms and food from that untilled, virgin soil. Heloise, the abess of Paraclet, in one of her letters to her beloved Abelard, complained that it was unreasonable to expect the nuns to do the heavy agricultural work performed by the monks.

There are some of these gardens still growing about England, where one can see the gnarled and antique Boxwood set out by holy men centuries ago. One is at Battle Abbey, the first great monastery founded in England after the Norman Conquest.

William the Conqueror ordered it built on the site of the decisive conflict between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman armies, for he had made a vow as the battle raged, that he would erect a splendid chantry for the souls of the slain, if God would make him victor. "The high altar is said to mark the spot where Harold the King was killed and his body found by his betrothed after nightfall."

The monastery gardens here are laid out with a formal terrace bedded with geraniums and edged with Box, and there are embrasures in the thick wall where one may sit and look over the parterre to the woodlands and downs across which William and his army advanced.

One of the most interesting abbeys built by the Dominicans or Black Friars is the beautiful one still standing at Newstead, once the estate of Lord Bryon. There is a large pond or "stew" where the monks raised fish. There is the cloister garth, or square plot of grass before the entrance. There are two parterres enclosed with Box and marked out with Boxedged beds of flowers and herbs. The garden, like many ancient ones, was originally divided into what might be considered separate rooms by hedges of tree Box, to symbolize that "in my Father's house are many mansions."

Unfortunately Henry VIII, enraged at the church, ordered the dissolution of the monasteries, and their perfect old gardens, and from the many scattered remains one knows what places of refuge and shelter they were, and one loves old Boxwood better because it once beautified these places of sanctuary.

Rules Old and New For The Care Of Boxwood

In the oldest gardener's calendar known there are some rules for the care of Boxwood, which still apply to our hedges and borders and knots of Box. We find these items in the

"KALENDARIUM HORTENSE OR THE GARD'NER'S ALMANAC

Directing What He Is to Do Monthly Throughout the Year.

MARCH: To be done In the Parterre
Plant Box in Parterres

APRIL: To be done
Toward the end (if the cold winds are past) and especially after showers, clip Alaternus, Cypress, Box, Myrtils, and other tonsile shrubs.

JULY: To be done
Clip Box in Parterres, Knots, and Compartiments if need be, and that it grows out of order; do it after Rain."

This advice, centuries old, still holds good; and to it might be added a word from two modern authorities.

"The growth (in formal Box edgings) must be regularly clipped each year. Stretch a line the whole length of the edging, so as to show the correct height; then cut evenly on neatly both top and sides. Box is easily grown and stands pruning without impunity."

Another gardener says: "Most amateurs clip Box edgings early in the spring. This causes an early growth which is just in condition to be nipped by a sharp, late frost. The safeguard is to delay clipping until the end of August. Then comes free, healthy growth which renders Box-lined garden paths cheerfully and pleasant to the eye through time of heat and drought."

"Box can be grown in almost any soil, but prefers light soil with gravelly subsoil."

Its roots grow compactly and solidly and so the transplanting of enormous century-old bushes is practical by an experienced landscapist with the proper machinery and equipment. This makes it possible for historic plants, grown in gardens associated with tradition and legend, and now forlornly deserted, to be removed to happier, friendly gardens where they will be cherished like old masterpieces or like period furniture enriched with historical background.

Flowers and Fruits of Boxwood

J. T. Baldwin, Jr.

College of William and Mary

"Ye shall know them by their fruits", St. Matthew said. And indeed one readily tells an oak by its acorns, a rose by its hips, a pea by its pods. So, too, one can recognize a boxwood by its fruits—except for those varieties which, for some strange reason, do not flower and hence produce no fruits. But many people knowledgeable of plants never notice the fruit of boxwood. And many individuals give no heed to boxwood flowers, though some of the flowers—especially those of *Buxus microphylla*—have a pervasive fragrance.

Let us paraphrase from Alfred Rehder's *Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs* (Macmillan, 1940) the descriptions of flowers and fruits of boxwood.

The flowers are without petals and occur in axillary or terminal clusters which usually consist of a central pistillate flower and several staminate flowers (Fig. 1 a & b). The staminate flower has four sepals and four stamens much longer than the sepals (Fig. 1 f). The pistillate flower has six sepals and a 3-celled ovary with three short styles (Fig. 1 c, d, & e).

The pistillate flowers, of course, develop into fruits (Fig. 2). The fruit is a subglobose or obovoid, 3-horned capsule which at maturity opens into three 2-horned valves; in each valve are two lustrous black seeds (Fig. 3. Philip Miller in his *Gardeners Dictionary* (1733) wrote more picturesquely about the Box-Tree: "The fruit is shap'd like a Porridge-pot inverted, and is divided into three cells, containing two Seeds in each; which, when ripe, are cast forth by the Elasticity of the Vessel."

The seeds may be thrown several feet. If duff or leaf mold are present, the seeds will germinate and establish seedlings by the hundreds. Those in the dense shade of the mother plant will die soon after germination unless some boxwood enthusiast rescues them. In Virginia seeds are discharged from the exploding fruits in June and July.

For reasons not yet known certain clones (vegetative lines) of boxwood set fruits in which some or all of the seeds abort.

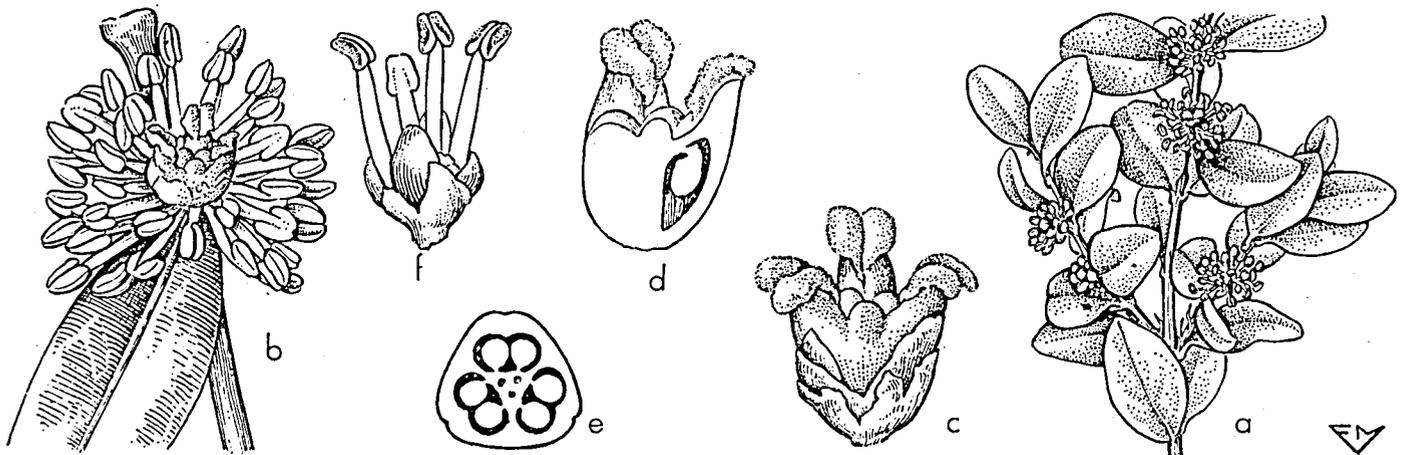


Fig. 1. *Buxus sempervirens*: a, flowering branch, X 0.85; b, inflorescence and flowers, X 3.5; c, pistillate flower, X 4.5; d, same, vertical section, X 4.5; e, ovary, cross-section, X 8.5; f, staminate flower, X 4.5. (From L. H. Bailey, *Manual of Cultivated Plants*, The Macmillan Company, 1949. Copyright 1924, 1949 by Liberty H. Bailey.)

Boxwood Is Poisonous

J. T. Baldwin, Jr.

College of William and Mary

Livestock—cattle, horses, sheep, pigs—will on occasion browse upon boxwood with fatal results. The plant “is emetic and purgative in its action and may cause nervous symptoms and convulsions” (Walter Conrad Muenscher, **Poisonous Plants of the United States**. The Macmillan Company, 1939). Rarely a human being is sensitive to boxwood and develops dermatitis upon contact with the plant. All reports at my disposal concerning poisoning in animals and man refer only to **Buxus sempervirens**.

The peculiar odor and bitter taste of boxwood cause most animals to avoid the plant. This disdain is sometimes used to advantage. Thousands of boxwoods are propagated each year at Berkeley Plantation, Charles City, Virginia, to be sold to tourists and others. A fast-growing type of European box is used. Once the plants are established in the field, sheep are pastured there: these animals control the weeds and grasses, fertilize the boxwood, produce a crop of lambs, and eventually supply mutton. A most efficient operation! The boxwoods are not cultivated at all.

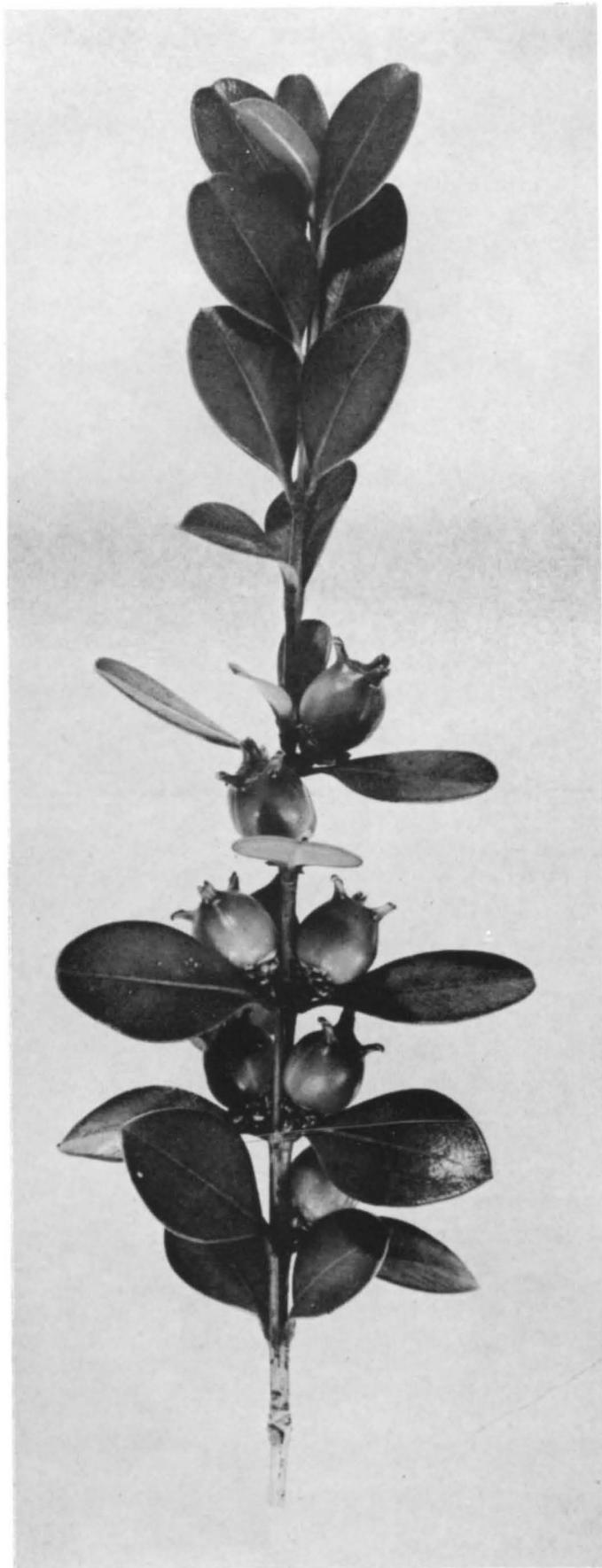


Fig. 2. Fructing branch of *Buxus microphylla* var. *sinica*, X 1 1/4. Specimen taken in Williamsburg, July 10, 1963. Photo., courtesy Colonial Williamsburg.

Following the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 13th, 1964 visit the beautiful gardens of “The Tuleyries” by gracious invitation of the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Orme Wilson.

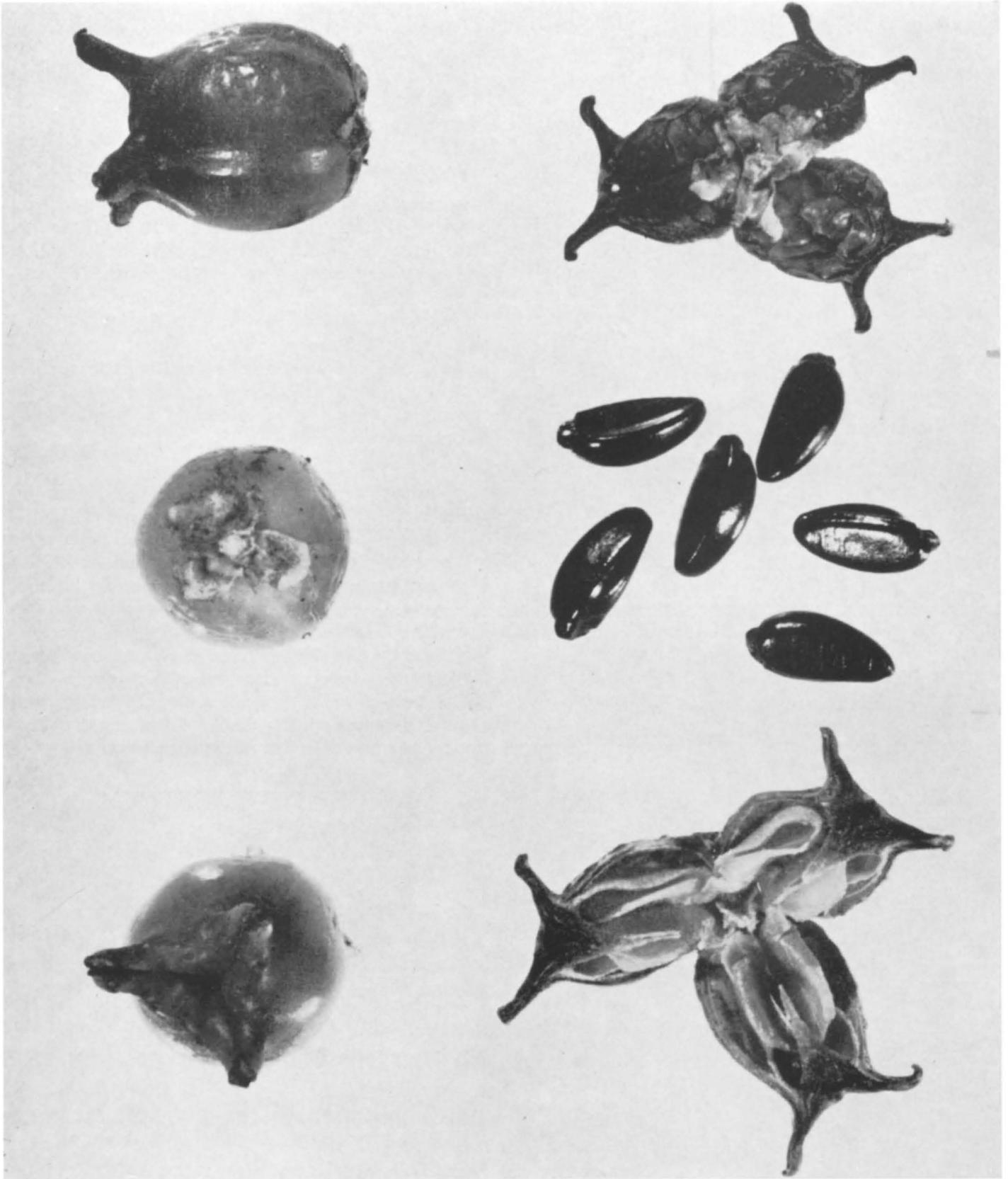


Fig. 3 Fruits and seeds of specimen shown in Fig. 2. About four times natural size. Photo., courtesy Colonial Williamsburg.

Boxwood In Williamsburg

By ALDEN EATON

(Editor's note: The following article is based on a lecture given by Mr. Eaton, Director of Landscape Construction and Maintenance for Colonial Williamsburg, at the May 1963 meeting of the American Boxwood Society.)

Boxwood plants — over three miles of hedges and hundreds of informal plantings, accents and topiary pieces — are greatly admired today by the thousands who visit restored 18th-century Williamsburg just as they were by the colonists some 200 years ago.

Before the capital of Virginia was moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg in 1699, it is probable that box was planted at Jamestown and on the surrounding plantations as soon as any effort was made at decorative gardening. The *Oxford-English Dictionary* contains reference to a tree box (“the small evergreen trees or shrubs . . . native of Europe and Asia”), and to dwarf box (“much used in ornamental gardening” for the edging of flower-beds), as being familiar to England in the 14th and 15th centuries.

By 1620, the colonists sent back glowing accounts of the soil and climate in Virginia. Most plants and shrubs, native to England, France and Italy, were experimented with in Virginia. As plantings that produced commodities were of chief interest, these were the ones most mentioned in records. All sorts of plants, “seedes and fruit trees” were shipped over by the Virginia Company of London in 1621, according to *Records of the Virginia Company of London* edited by Kingsbury in 1933.

Though there is no specific reference to boxwood in these early records, it is reasonable to assume that it found its way to Virginia by the middle of the 17th century if not sooner. There are specific references to boxwood in Williamsburg, however, by the early 1700's in the correspondence of John Custis.

In 1717, Custis was living in Williamsburg where his chief interest was his garden. In 1725, he wrote Robert Cary, a London merchant, that he had “a pretty little garden” in which he took “more interest than in anything in the world and have a collection of tolerable good flowers and greens from England; but have had great losses by their coming . . .” In 1734 he wrote a friend that his garden was “inferior to few if any in Virga.”

Custis corresponded at length with Peter Collinson, a London botanist of note, and exchanged plants and bulbs with him. He mentioned boxwood specifically in some of his letters to the merchant Cary and to Collinson as follows:

[April 1726. To Mr. Robert Cary] “. . . The garden truck were carelessly put in the steerage; where as I am informed a dog tore all to bits; the cornations and auriculas; so that they all perished; the

box and goosberry trees; some of them lived, but the gardener you mentioned, under whose care you put them I believe to be an ignorant knavish fellow; for he has carried those few things which escaped with life to Secretary Carter's which is a long way from me and should have them as soon from Jamaica; . . .” [E. G. Swem, *Brothers of the Spade* (Worcester, Mass.: 1949) page 38]

[To Peter Collinson, ca. July, 1736] “. . . it would be difficult if not impossible to say how much I think myself indebted to you for your pretty presents; and cannot express the grief I labored under when I found our kind and most obliged endeavours fruitless and destroyed . . . altho the strawberrys were rotten; they were like whole and visible. One striped box had some life in it; I should have bin glad of it; being a great admirer of all the tribe striped gilded and variegated plants; and especially trees; I am told those things are out of fashion; but I do not mind that I allways make my fancy my fashion. . .” [Swem, *Brothers* . . . p. 49]

[To Peter Collinson, 1737] “. . . wee had the severest winter that ever was known in the memory of man, 16 weeks constand hard frosts; the last winter was severe but this far exceeded it; then the spring continuall heavy rain which has killed abundance of cattle and killd abundance of things notwithstanding I took all the care immaginable to preserve them. Amongst the rest it killd a great deal of my dutch box edgings which is as hardy a thing as any; this was the ruin of my poor tulips you sent . . .” [Swem, *Brothers* . . . p. 60]

[To Peter Collinson, ca. August, 1737] “. . . we have had the greatest dry season that was ever known in the memory of man; I was obliged for severall weeks to keep 2 lusty men all day long to draw water and put in tubs in the sun to water my garden and notwithstanding a great many things perished. The dutch box edgeings that survived the sever[e] winter; perished in spots in the borders which had been established many years . . .” [Swem, *Bothers* . . . p. 62]

[To Peter Collinson, 1738, regarding things which he had sent: “. . . the strawberry tree was the freshest and the silver holly; the gold holly dead to the graft; the double blossom peach cluster cherry were also but very sickly; the striped box alive and persian lilack; I put them all in the ground . . . and made a shade over them; but cannot tell whet[he]r I shall save them or not; . . .” [Swem, *Brothers* . . . p. 69]

From the above quotes it is clear that not only

was boxwood greatly admired in the 18th century but that the colonists had their problems in acquiring and growing it.

Since its early introduction, box has spread throughout the southeastern states and has become so well established over the years that many people refer to common boxwood as American boxwood. However, only a few of the original plantings of 18th-century Williamsburg remained when the restoration was started in 1928. In the early days it was necessary to send agents out in search of boxwood plants. Boxwood for the restored gardens came from nurseries, old plantations and private lands in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. We make it a policy not to remove boxwood plants from cemeteries or to take those that form an important part of the landscape. Various means of transportation brought the plants to Williamsburg: train, box and flat cars, river barges and trucks.

Today we have a large file of letters offering to sell or give us boxwood plants, covering the entire eastern seaboard from Massachusetts to Georgia. However, our needs are quite limited now and we

can usually meet all planting requirements close by Williamsburg.

We always try to be fair in setting the price we pay and only make one offer after carefully studying the plants to be purchased. If our price is not acceptable, we search elsewhere.

The late John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the benefactor of Colonial Williamsburg's 130-acre historic area, greatly admired boxwood. He took a personal interest in our larger plantings in the restored gardens and at his own home in Williamsburg. He enjoyed visiting many of the old houses and plantations nearby where great quantities of good boxwood thrive. He especially liked the billowing natural growth of box but did not care for the larger plants growing out into walks and passage ways. On his recommendation we made extensive experiments with the severe cutting back of those that encroached over walks. Some excellent results of these undertakings may be seen in the Coke-Garrett and Archibald Blair gardens. I think he was almost as pleased with the restored gardens of Williamsburg as he was with the restored historic buildings.



Beautiful boxwood at the St. George Tucker House at Williamsburg, Virginia. Photo by John Crane.

Visitors to Williamsburg spend a great deal of time wandering through the many gardens open to the public. Most of these feature boxwood. Sight-seers are constantly admiring and taking photographs of our thousands of plants. The foliage has a distinct year-round aroma which varies in degree with the season, temperature and humidity. Often boxwood's fragrance is diffused with other seasonal garden scents: newly-worked soil after a rain, freshly-cut grass, jonquills and hyacinths in early spring; calycanthus and mock orange.

Our boxwood gardens also serve other uses. Children living in the historic area play games using plantings as hiding places and hurdles. Residents themselves entertain friends in outdoor living areas enclosed by boxwood. Queen Elizabeth II of England and Prince Philip were given a large reception in 1957 on the Bowling Green of the Governor's Palace which is completely surrounded by these tremendous plants. We, however, derive the most satisfaction from seeing our many visitors enjoy these gardens as they tour Restored Williamsburg.

Patriarch of Shandy Hall

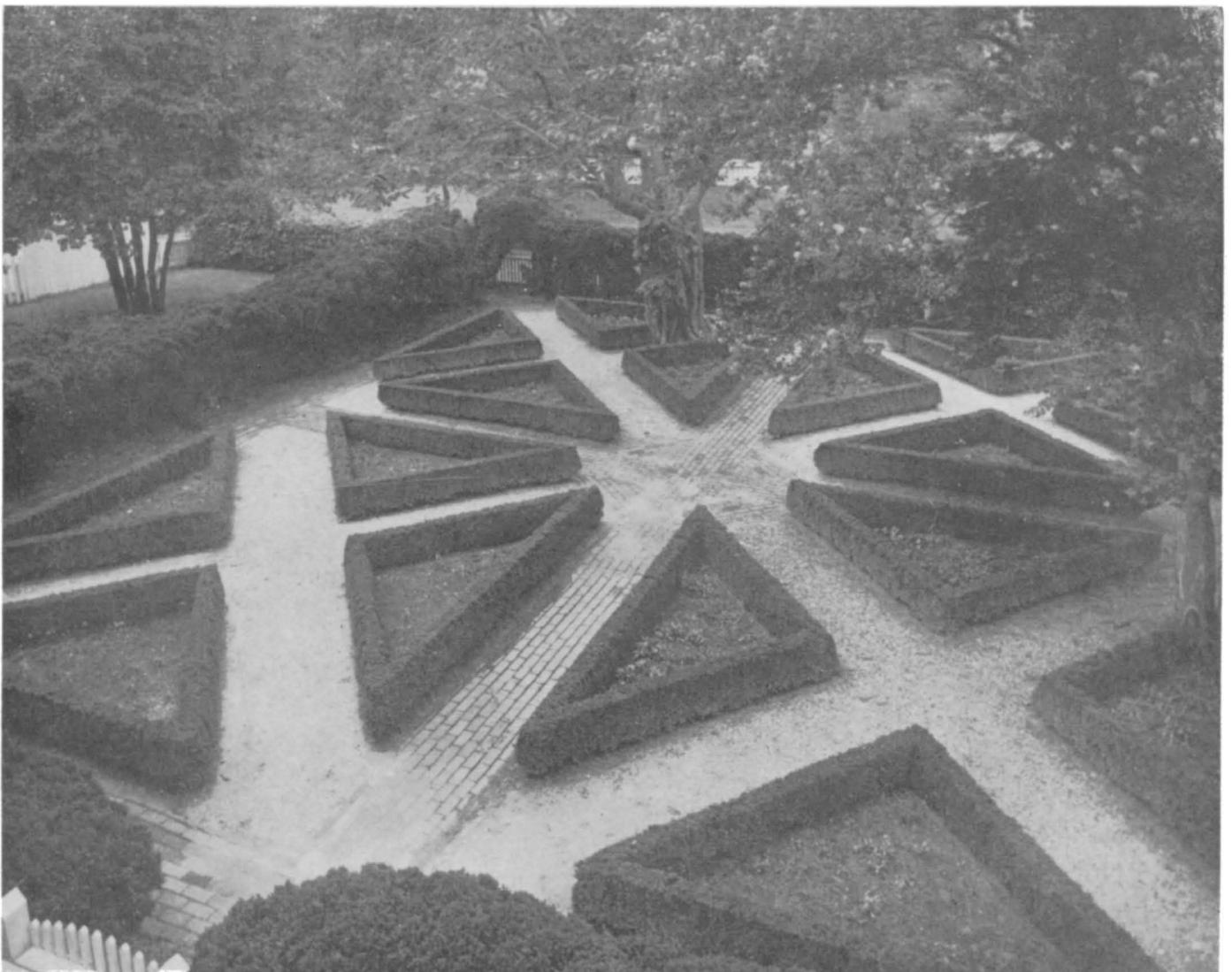
(Continued from Page 44)

plug from the ancient plant indicating it to be approximately 120 years of age. The plant has been propagated by the Holden Arboretum, and small rooted cuttings are offered for sale by the Historical Society.

Shape and size of leaves, along with size and habit of plant, indicate this to be a specimen of **Buxus sempervivens arborescens**, often called Tree Box. At Shandy Hall it grows in Rehder's Climatic Zone V, where not many large Tree Box are found.

The flourishing survival of the Shandy Hall Patriarch over many decades indicates its hardiness for the area, and suggests the desirability of its trial and use through Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island — states also found entirely, or chiefly, within Zone V.

It is hoped that some member of the American Boxwood Society living near the Shandy Hall area will make a more detailed study of this magnificent old Box, and will present the results of their findings in some future issue of The Bulletin.



Dwarf box is used in the Custis-Maupin parterre garden at Williamsburg, Virginia. Photo by John Crane.

Patriarch of Shandy Hall

by

Walter S. Flory
Wake Forest College

This is a brief description of a very large and old Boxwood plant which grows at Shandy Hall, an outpost Museum of The Western Reserve Historical Society. Shandy Hall is a mile east of Unionville in Ashtabula County, Ohio.

The information in this article derives from a description under the same title by Marie Kirkwood, which appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer of September 29, 1963, or from further facts furnished by Meredith B. Colket, Jr., Director of The Western Reserve Historical Society of Cleveland, or by Lewis F. Lipp, Horticulturist of The Holden Arboretum at Mentor, Ohio. The plant was first brought to the writer's attention by Mr. Colket, who also supplied the accompanying photograph. Mr. Lipp sent additional information, along with a two foot branch from the plant.

Shandy Hall was a gift to the Historical Society from the late Lawrence Norton, his sister — Mrs. Fred White, and her son — Fred White, Jr. Their ancestor, Captain Alexander Harper, founded Harpersfield Township (where Shandy Hall is located) in 1798, and is said to have planted a box cutting he had brought to Ohio with him. That original box was the ancestor of the present one.

The Shandy Hall "patriarch" is 15 feet in height, has a spread of almost 25 feet, and a circumference of 103 feet. There are 32 "Multiple trunks" with a possibility of more than one original plant being involved, although it is now considered as a single plant. Using a Swedish "increment borer," Mr. Henry Norweb, Jr., Director of the Holden Arboretum, has extracted a

(Continued on Page 43)



The Box at Shandy Hall forms a jungle 103 feet in circumference.

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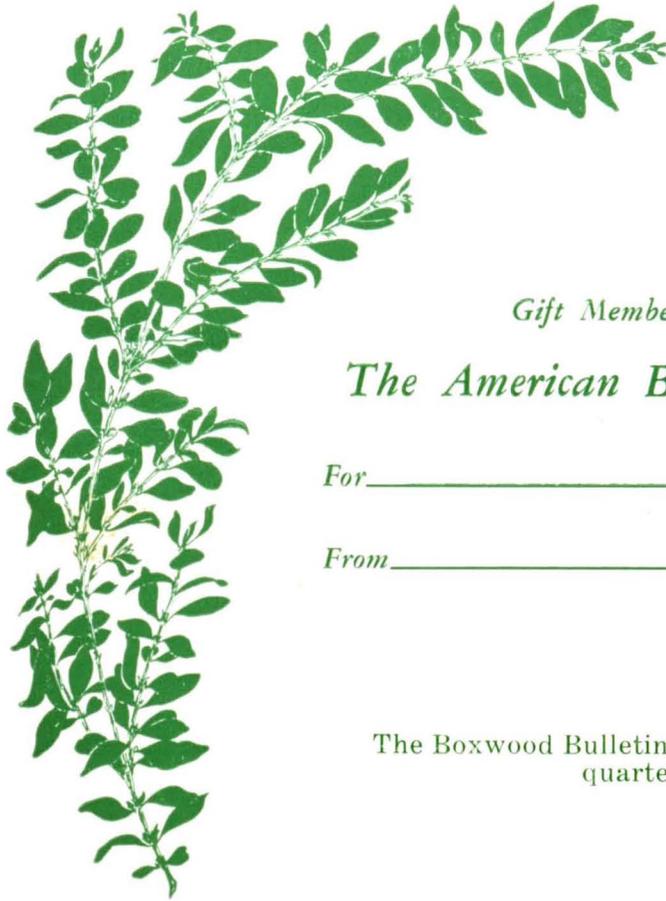
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