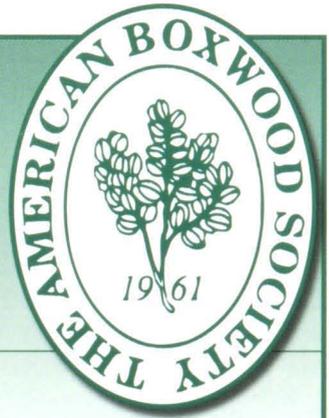


THE BOXWOOD BULLETIN



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

Vol. 47 No. 4

April 2008



During 2005, Dr. Tomasz Anisko, Charles Fooks, and Dr. Henry Frierson made a Buxus collecting expedition to northern Greece. Shown above is Buxus sempervirens growing as understory plants in the Pinus nigra forest.

(Photo courtesy of Dr. Radoglou)

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Collecting *BUXUS* in Macedonia

by Henry F. Frierson, Jr., MD

In a recent article “‘Vardar Valley’ Boxwood and its Balkan Brothers” (*Arnoldia* 65 (2):2-13, 2007), Peter Del Tredici reviewed the history of the Balkan collecting expedition by Edgar Anderson, who in 1934 traveled to Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia under the joint auspices of Harvard University and the United States Department of Agriculture. Anderson’s purpose was to explore for seeds and cuttings of four hardy broadleaved evergreens: holly, ivy, yew, and boxwood. By far today, his selection ‘Vardar Valley’, named as such by Donald Wyman in 1957, is one of the most important cultivars of *Buxus sempervirens*, due to its immensely attractive characteristics, relative pest resistance, and cold hardiness. As noted by Del Tredici, the original plant at the Arnold Arboretum measures 23.3 feet wide and 8.3 feet tall (December 2006).

With the knowledge of Anderson’s success at finding boxwood near Skopje, Macedonia and our highly productive expedition to Greece in 2005, Charles Fooks (Woodland Nursery, Salisbury, Md.), Andrea Filippone (Tendenze Design, Pottersville, N.J.), Dr. Tomasz Anisko (Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pa.), and I traveled to Macedonia from September 10 to 29, 2007, to examine and collect *B. sempervirens* in native populations. The expedition had been organized by Dr. Anisko in collaboration with Dr. Goran Zlateski, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Forestry, St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. During our trip to the Balkans, we also drove to Thessaloniki, Greece to inspect the collection that we had made in 2005, and to Pogradeci, Albania to meet with Dr. Hajri Haska, Director of Forest Directory, Environment, Forest, and Water Administration Ministry in Albania, to arrange an expedition for 2008 in that country.

After arriving in Skopje, we explored on September 12

Treska Gorge through which flowed the Treska River, a tributary of the Vardar River, the main artery in Macedonia, which ultimately drains into the Aegean Sea near Thessaloniki. We took cuttings from five interesting boxwood plants along the rocky mountainous slopes (80% of Macedonia is considered to be mountainous) not far from the ancient Church of Sveti Nikola (500m altitude), overlooking Lake Matka, a popular retreat only a thirty minute drive from Skopje. Perhaps the most interesting of the five plant collections was a 12” tall, 36” wide prostrate form. The following day we ventured just south of Skopje to Mount Vodno, whose 1,066m summit is topped by a large 75m steel cross; its construction commenced in 2002 and it serves as a constant source of irritation to the 25% ethnic Albanians who live in Macedonia. In the landscape of hellebores, chestnut, ligustrum, and juniper, we made only two collections of boxwood (known by the Macedonians as *simsir* or *zelenika*), one of which, however, was a



A beautifully shaped, dense Buxus (MK-17) grew just along the bank of the Mala River.

handsome, blue small-leaved sport from an otherwise undistinguished more than six foot tall plant. Most of the boxwood on Mount Vodno, and indeed on many dry and exposed sites in Macedonia, suffered severely from psyllid infestation. In general, mite damage was often also observed, while leafminer was virtually completely absent (the near absence of leafminer in native populations of *B. sempervirens* in Europe is incredibly curious, and invites the investigation of why so many *Buxus* in cultivation in the United States are so susceptible). On September 14, we collected cuttings from two plants near the village of Smesnica, south of Skopje (in fact, all native populations of *Buxus* were south of the capital). One of the plants here was a tree form, but most had undesirable characteristics, as they were growing as understory plants in rather dark shade in the forest.



Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest lakes in the world and is surrounded by a few villages and the scenic and historic city of Ohrid.



This fastigate form (MK-31) was growing as an isolated specimen in the Galicica Park above Lake Ohrid.



Buxus (MK-33) growing as an understory plant in the shade typically had a loose habit.



This boxwood growing in an open degraded hillside had upright branches (MK-29).

In the afternoon, however, we explored a site along the Mala River, where, overall, we found the most spectacular boxwood of any location in Macedonia. Among the five plants whose cuttings we collected here included a 15" tall, 30" wide dense, pillow-shaped form, and a 12' tall, 10' wide extremely dense plant with a beautiful habit.

On September 15, we returned to the

Treska Gorge area, determined to find the original 'Vardar Valley' plant that Anderson had collected, or a least some plants that resembled it. Armed with two photographs taken by Anderson that Del Tredici had included in his recent article, we began by talking with nuns at the Monastery of Sveta Bororodica, a monastery that we thought might be the one that was depicted in one of the Anderson photographs. Unfortunately, after nearly a full day of traveling, discussion with young and old Macedonian citizens, and exploring a location thought to be the site of a demolished monastery, we were unable to locate with certainty the monastery, near which Anderson had collected the original 'Vardar Valley' (although Del Tredici surmised that it was the Church of Sveta Andreja, we were not convinced that the current structure resembled that seen in the 1934 photograph). Furthermore, we never observed any boxwood (even at other locations within Macedonia) whose characteristics were similar to those of 'Vardar Valley.' We did manage to collect cuttings from two plants that day around a makeshift dump near the village of Sisevo. One of the *Buxus* was a striking weeping form.

On September 16, we explored a site along the Vardar River itself, but made no collections. We then returned to the Mala River, and took cuttings from four additional plants, including a spectacular dense 12' tall, 5' wide missile-shaped plant, that some of us likened to a Christmas tree. The day ended in celebration at the home of our guide, a local forester, who treated us to homemade rakia, wine, and appetizers. The following day we traveled to locations near Demir Kapija, known as the "wine country" within Macedonia. We learned from local foresters that some woodworkers carved *Buxus* occasionally to make small cups for rakia, while previously we had been informed that some boxwood timber was used for fenceposts. In discussing other uses for *Buxus*, we learned that the twigs were sometimes thrown over coffins housing the deceased, and, also, were formed into wreaths, draped over the door of a bride's home at the time of her wedding. In horticulture, boxwood was used sparsely in Macedonia (similar to that in Greece, Russia, and other countries that have native populations). On the day, cuttings from only one plant were taken. The next day we explored areas near Gevgelija, a town near the Greek border, but found no plants with special features. On September 19, we explored another site just

30 km from Skopje that contained old juniper and was high above the Vardar River. Cuttings from two boxwood plants as well as a seedling were obtained; these were found on an exposed rocky slope and had quite small leaves. We also took cuttings from a plant in the yard of one of our Macedonian hosts, who stated that he had collected the plant near the Treska River, but which to us looked suspiciously like *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa.'

We drove on September 21 to the tourist city of Ohrid on Lake Ohrid, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) site because of its cultural, environmental, and scientific significance. This area is the jewel of Macedonia, and Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest lakes in the world. Boxwood exploration here was fruitful, as we made seven collections, including a 12' tall, 5' wide pyramidal form in the mountainous forest, and, lower down on an exposed rocky slope, a much shorter plant whose numerous branches were vertical, imparting an appearance of multiple candles. On September 22, we drove from Ohrid to Lake Prespa hoping to find native boxwood in that area, as we had observed significant populations just south of the lake in Greece in 2005. We confirmed what our hosts had told us in that no native *Buxus* grew there. We did, however, talk with two homeowners, who had collected boxwood in nearby Albania for use in their landscapes. One of them had nicely clipped small *Buxus* globes, while the other used boxwood as a screen along a fence of barbed wire. This homeowner informed us that in Albania boxwood was used to make pipe stems, knife handles, and beads.

During the final days in Skopje, we happened upon a botanical garden that was under construction, and were astounded to discover a large collection of *B. sempervirens* bonsai, that had been developed over a 35-year period by the founder of the garden, Blagoja "Jack" Sotirovski (A detailed story about this extraordinary boxwood bonsai collection will appear in another article in *The Boxwood Bulletin*.)

After preparing the 33 collections of Macedonian *Buxus* and obtaining the required phytosanitary certificates, the plants were shipped to the United States, passed customs and inspection, and reside as three separate collections at Longwood Gardens, Woodland Nursery, and Tendenze Design.



Buxus (in foreground) was found on a degraded hillside near the village of Sisevo.



Charles Fooks inspects boxwood growing along the Mala River.



A small compact boxwood (MK-12) was collected from a pasture adjacent to the Mala River.



The front of this house which faced Lake Prespa had boxwood growing along a barbed wire fence. The boxwood cuttings had been taken from native plants growing in nearby Albania.

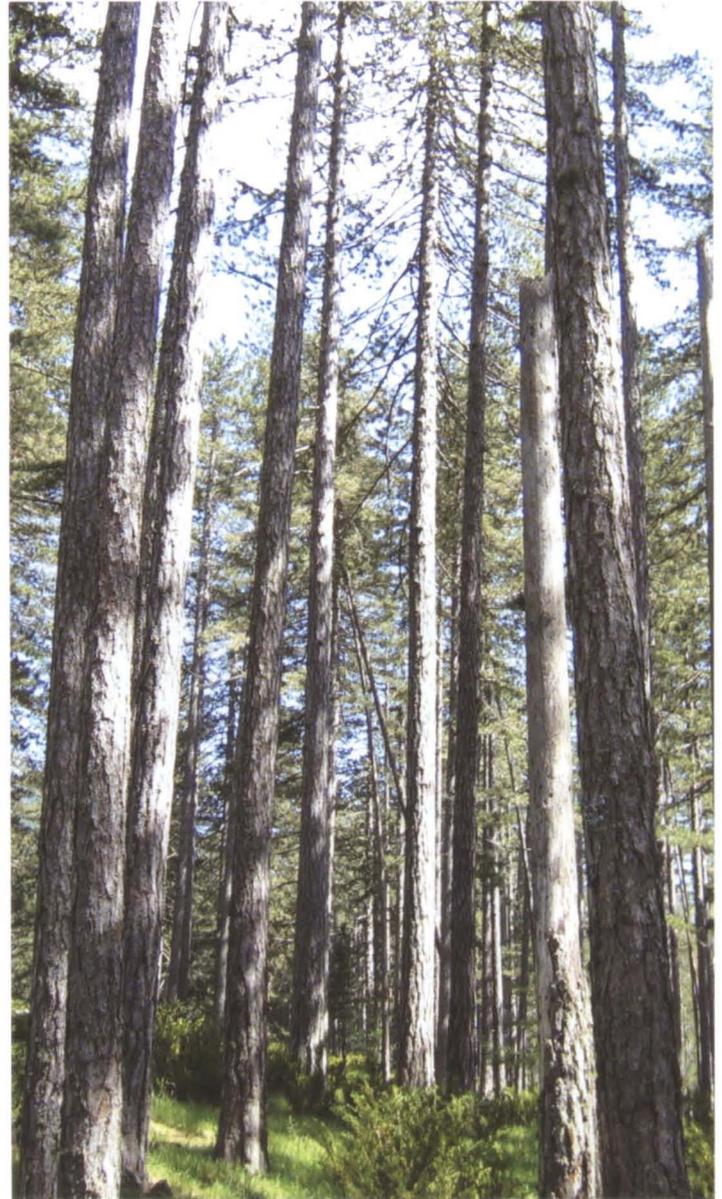


The Vardar River flows from north to south in Macedonia before it drains into the Aegean Sea.

2005 *Buxus* Expedition to Greece

by Henry F. Frierson, Jr., MD

During July and August, 2005, Dr. Tomasz Anisko, Charles Fooks, and Dr. Henry Frierson made a *Buxus* collecting expedition to northern Greece (*The Boxwood Bulletin* Vol. 45 No. 4 pp. 178-191, April 2006). The expedition was organized by Dr. Kalliopi Radoglou, Deputy Director of the Forest Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Foundation in Thessaloniki. During this highly successful expedition, cuttings from over 90 *Buxus* plants were collected. Dr. Radoglou has estimated that we explored approximately 40% of the sites in Greece that contained populations of *Buxus*. One site that was not explored was the Pindos National Park, one of two national parks in the Pindos mountains, which form a 160 km-long range, known as the spine of Greece. The Pindos mountains begin in the northwest corner of Greece near the Albanian border, and contain some of Greece's highest peaks, including Mount Smolikas at 2,637m, and deepest gorges, including one of the world's deepest, Vikos gorge. The mountains consist of limestone and serpentine rock, and contain extensive natural beech and pine forests. Shown here is *Buxus sempervirens* growing as understory plants in the *Pinus nigra* forest. (photos courtesy of Dr. Radoglou)



EBTS Europe

The formal beginning of the EBTS (European Boxwood and Topiary Society) Europe AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif, an international society without a lucrative objective) is progressing well and a draft constitution has been prepared and is being reviewed. This follows a meeting held in Brussels on March 13, 2007 when the proposal for a new European structure was discussed and agreed between the various countries. This was ratified at the Annual General Meeting of the EBTS UK held in Kent on June 9, 2007. Each individual country is setting up its own organization to reflect

how they wish to operate and individuals are coming forward to fill the various positions. This is an exciting time for EBTS and it is hoped, and expected, that the new EBTS Europe AISBL, under the leadership of Bill Seddon-Brown, will be set up as a legal organization and begin operation in early 2008. Already efforts are being made to extend their Pan-European membership to include Italy, Spain and Portugal using contacts they've established in those regions. This is a great opportunity for the future of EBTS Europe which will strengthen and enlarge organized boxwood activities throughout Europe.

Historic Garden Week in Virginia Garden Club of Virginia

Glorious Gardens and Fabulous Houses:

Historic Garden Week in Virginia Celebrates 75th Anniversary

Suzanne Munson, Garden Week Executive Director

Heralded as Virginia's premier springtime tourism event, Historic Garden Week in Virginia celebrates its 75th anniversary April 19-27, 2008. Four centuries of Virginia's rich heritage will be highlighted on more than 30 tours across the Commonwealth.

Events are sponsored by member clubs of The Garden Club of Virginia, with proceeds benefiting the restoration of historic landscapes throughout the state. Many of the lovely private houses and gardens are open to the public for the first time. Houses on tour date to the Colonial era, American Revolution, Civil War, and the Victorian period, as well as those recently completed in this century. Featured gardens also span the centuries in history and design.

Event locales range from the Chesapeake Bay to the Blue Ridge Mountains and include rural, urban and suburban settings at the peak of Virginia's springtime color. Homes open represent every major architectural style found in Virginia, including Colonial plantations, Victorian farmhouses, elegantly restored city townhouses, suburban estates, and glass-walled waterfront properties. Beautiful gardens range from formal 18th century terraces to backyard habitats, boxwood mazes, walled city spaces, and cutting, water, herb and "secret" gardens.

Boxwood Gardens

As always, many of the older gardens open for Historic Garden Week contain large and ancient boxwood plantings. On the grounds of "Piedmont," one of the estates featured on the Albemarle County tour (April 20-21), the boxwood bushes are said to be descended from a trade with Thomas Jefferson for a wagonload of red clover seed and corn. "Piedmont" has been owned by the same family for nearly 275 years. Another estate on this Albemarle tour in the scenic Greenwood area contains expansive landscapes originally designed by Charles Gillette. Like all properties open for this outstanding event, visitors here will enjoy gardens with spectacular views of meadowlands and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The tour in Caroline County near Bowling Green (April



22) takes Garden Week guests to venerable properties dating to the 18th century and to Virginia's early horseracing history. "Bowling Green Farm," where the famed English stallion "Diomed" was stabled, was visited regularly by President George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette. Remnants of the Colonial-era gardens still exist, including massive English boxwood on either side of the house, estimated to be more than 265 years old, and two levels of old terraces. The Garden Club of Virginia commissioned a 2002 study of the gardens with funding from Historic Garden Week proceeds. At "Mulberry Place," a handsome Federal home also on this tour, the owners' daughter once counted 465 boxwood on the property. Many are in a series of boxwood parterres behind the house and will be next on the owners' renovation list.



Boxwood-lined gardens designed by Charles Gillette will be showcased on Richmond's exceptional tour in the Windsor Farms area (April 24). Featured houses date to the early development of this upscale neighborhood, patterned after an English

Windsor Farm



Bowling Green Farm



village in the first part of the 20th century. Gillette's designs have been preserved and enhanced through succeeding decades.

At "Leafwood," an 18th century manor near Saluda open for the Middle Peninsula tour (April 25), impressive features of the gardens are the two concentric circles of old boxwood bushes between the front entrance and the street. The plantings were grown from

cuttings from Boxwood Alley at Gunston Hall, home of George Mason near Alexandria. More boxwood cuttings were taken from Berkeley Plantation on the James River as part of the current garden restoration.

These are just a few examples of interesting boxwood plantings featured on tours throughout Virginia this year. For details, please access the event name on the Schedule page of www.VAGardenweek.org, where all guidebook copy has been posted. Be sure to check the Tour Highlights section of the site, or the guidebook, for additional information and for special activities such as flower arranging demonstrations. Guidebooks are available by mailing a \$6 donation to Historic Garden Week, 12 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219. The Garden Week telephone number is (804) 644-7776 and e-mail is gdnweek@verizon.net.

Prices for tour tickets range from \$10 to \$40 per event. Tickets may be purchased on the day of the



Hampton Manor



tour at any of the properties open, at designated information centers, and in advance from local tour chairmen or via the website. It is not necessary to buy tickets in advance, although bus groups may wish to make earlier plans. Tours will be held on their scheduled days, rain or shine. Visitors typically drive to tour areas and then are greeted by hostess guides at properties open. Each event offers an engaging variety of five to six local houses and gardens. All houses will feature superb flower arrangements created by members of The Garden Club of Virginia, with emphasis on colorful seasonal flowers and plants native to the state.

75th Season Celebrated

Historic Garden Week in Virginia, celebrating its 75th season, is the oldest and largest statewide house and garden tour event in the nation and is known as "America's Largest Open House." Garden Week tours have been held annually since 1929, except for a period during World War II when members of The Garden Club of Virginia took time off to tend their Victory Gardens. More than 3,400 members of The Garden Club of Virginia, along with other friends and supporters, work to produce the tours during the last full week of April each year. Over the past seven decades, Historic Garden Week ticket sales have reached approximately \$13 million.



New Market Plantation

Historic Garden Week tour proceeds have restored the gardens and grounds of Virginia's most prominent historic figures, including those of George Washington and his mother, Mary Ball Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James and Dolley Madison, Patrick Henry, George Mason, Robert E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson. All of these fine historic properties are open to the public, along with dozens of other lovely Garden Club of Virginia restoration projects. A description of The Club's restored gardens is available on the Club's website: www.GCVirginia.org.

Future Annual ABS Meetings

- ❖ April 23-26, 2008 - Charlotte, NC
- ❖ Spring 2009 - Atlanta, GA
- ❖ Fall 2010 - Newark, OH
- ❖ Spring 2011 - Boyce, VA
ABS 50th Anniversary

Boxwood Citole at the British Museum

by Mark Braimbridge

This boxwood citole in the British Museum, London, is the only English musical instrument surviving from the Middle Ages. The citole is the ancestor of the modern guitar. It was popular from 1200-1400CE, and was usually plucked with a plectrum. Very little is known of the type of music played on the citole but it will have been used, like the lute, by the troubadour serenading his noble and married mistress, singing the poetry of courtly love in the castles of, initially, southern France.

Exactly what a citole was is not straightforward - the name is probably a French diminutive form of cythara - and this particular instrument was itself labelled a gittern for many years in the British Museum itself and only recently has been re-titled a citole there¹. A gittern is best distinguished from a citole by its rounded back and body, like a small lute, and unlike the citole with its flat back.

By 1578 this citole was in the possession of either Queen Elizabeth I or her favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, with the royal arms and Leicester's badge engraved on the silver gilt cover of the contemporary peg box. It was later owned by the Earls of Warwick. At that time the citole was going out of fashion and this one was remodelled as a violin by the addition of new finger frets and sounding board. The decorated body is, though, original.

The body of this citole is made from a giant piece of box-



wood that would be unobtainable in the modern era and has a large thumb hole. It is decorated with intricate carving of woodland scenes with real and imaginary animals. Hawthorn, vine and mulberry leaves mix with hybrid monsters, such as an archer with the head and trunk of a youth and the hindquarters of an animal, and huntsmen, animals of the chase and swineherds beating acorns for their swine. The style of decoration is closely paralleled in English manuscript illumination and sculpture of the period 1280-1330.

The citole is in Room 42 of the British Museum.

Reference

1. Buehler, Kathryn (2002) *Retelling the story of the English Gittern in the British Museum. An Organological Study ca.1300-Present* Univ.of Minnesota
2. Galpin, Canon Francis (1965) *Old English Instruments of Music, their History and Character; 4th ed* Methuen: London

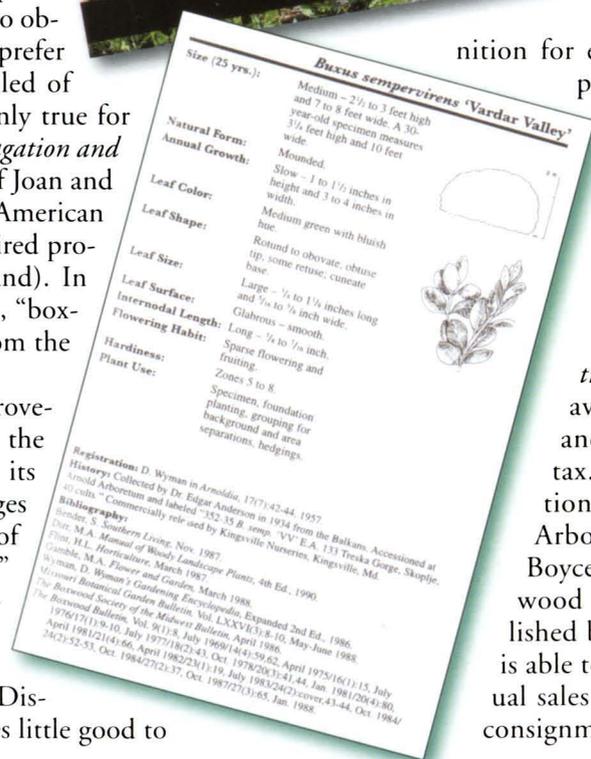
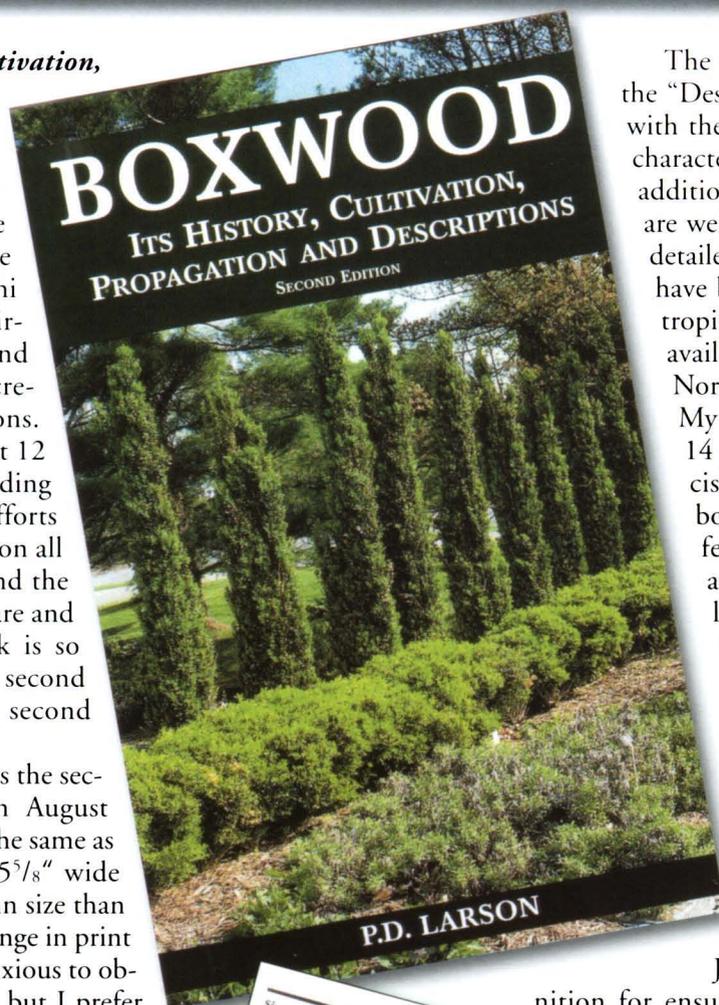


THE BOXWOOD BOOKSHELF

Boxwood: Its History, Cultivation, Propagation and Descriptions was written by P.D. "Swede" Larson, prior to his passing in 1993. Published posthumously in 1996 with the able assistance of both Christine Flanagan and Christopher Sacchi while they were both at the Virginia State Arboretum, and Jeneau Thompson who had created the numerous illustrations. Swede, largely self-taught, spent 12 years gleaning all he could regarding boxwood and the result of his efforts appeared in his first edition. Soon all 5,000 copies were exhausted and the book went out of print. It is a rare and wonderful thing when a book is so well received that it requires a second printing, or in this case, a second edition.

Out of print for several years the second edition was published in August 2007. It has 228 pages, exactly the same as the first edition. The book at 5⁵/₈" wide and 8⁵/₈" tall is slightly smaller in size than the first edition, but with no change in print size or font. Many readers are anxious to obtain the first edition of a book, but I prefer later editions which are generally culled of various technical errors. This is certainly true for *Boxwood: Its History, Cultivation, Propagation and Descriptions* largely due to the efforts of Joan and Scot Butler (life-long members of the American Boxwood Society) and Joe Metz (a retired professor from the University of Maryland). In only one small but important example, "boxwoods" has properly been banished from the second edition.

Unfortunately, a few critical improvements didn't make the second edition, the most important of which begins with its title. "Propagation" with only three pages of general information is not worthy of inclusion in the title. Even "Cultivation" in the title is questionable as this section is unnecessarily brief, omitting essential information. In one dramatic example, the section on "Boxwood Diseases" opens with the sentence, "It does little good to worry about diseases of boxwood."

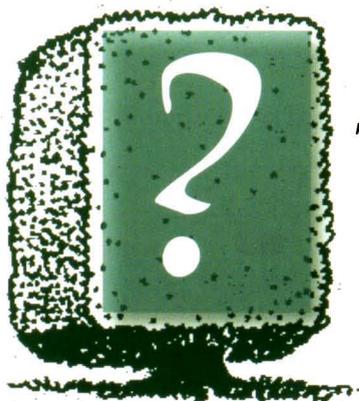


The real strength of the book lies in the "Descriptions." The 131 *Buxus* taxa with their line drawings, leaf and plant characteristics, origin, bibliography and additional information for each entry, are well presented with organized and detailed information. The book would have been improved if the numerous tropical species, which are both unavailable and cannot grow in most of North America, had been omitted. My favorite part of the book is the 14 page summary which offers concise and reliable comparisons of boxwood plants based on 13 different traits. With these useful and informative features it would lead some to ask, "Why pay \$110 for Batdorf's *Boxwood Encyclopedia*, if Larson's *Boxwood: Its History, Cultivation, Propagation and Descriptions* is only \$30?" Both books focus on the detailed descriptions, and illustrations, of boxwood cultivars. For many, Swede's book is the obvious, and correct, choice.

Jim Wyatt deserves special recognition for ensuring that this book is back in print. He also effectively works to promoting Swede's book. In one small example, in the copy I received, he included a postcard of "Down Tuleyries Lane" with a hand written note on the back. I'm very fond of that postcard, which also serves as a bookmark.

Boxwood: Its History, Cultivation, Propagation and Descriptions is available for \$30, plus \$5 shipping and Virginia residents must add 5% tax. Send check and mailing information to: Foundation of the State Arboretum, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce, VA 22620, Attn: Our Shop - Boxwood Book. The second edition is published by a print-on-demand contract and is able to satisfy the demands from individual sales and even wholesale purchases and consignments.

Lynn R. Batdorf



The Question Box

Q: I have a home on the East End of Long Island and have designed a boxwood parterre, which requires approximately 150 boxwood of 3 gallon size (or 15-18" diameter.) Your fabulous book, *Boxwood: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* is so helpful, but I am having difficulty identifying the cultivar that is best for my conditions-sunny, southern exposure, 18" high at full height-in the quantity I need. A local nursery had a large quantity of 'Green Mountain' (Sheridan series), but they had evidence of leafminer. (Thanks to your book, I could identify this!) I have irrigation and resources for maintenance, but I am finding little help from local landscapers in advising which species would be best for my garden. I have found a nursery in New Hampshire that has 'Winter Gem', but I do not want to take this further until I consult with you or another boxwood expert. Can you help me with the name of a plant that you would recommend or the name of a professional boxwood locator that I might employ to assist me? I apologize in advance if this request is inappropriate. I just don't know where to turn.

A: Certainly there's an appropriate box for you. To properly select the best boxwood, please answer the following questions:

- Will the box be sheared or allowed to grow "natural"?
- Are you using the box as specimens, or in a mass planting, or in a hedge row, or other?
- Do you have a sandy loam soil?
- What is your soil pH?

Follow-up Q: Thank you for responding so quickly to my questions. I am so honored that you are willing to advise me.

The parterre garden will comprise approximately 150 boxwood, planted as a low hedge, and sheared in with crisp lines. Within the boxwood "compartments" I will plant annuals. The final height and width of the hedge will be approximately 20". In a separate E-Mail, I will send you the drawing of the boxwood parterre, which will be planted in full sun. It will be viewed from above, as well as from eye level.

I am currently having the pH tested in the area where the garden will be planted. The results should be available by the end of the month. In general, our soil tends to be slightly acidic and sandy with decent topsoil. We have good drainage in that

area. We are at the very north eastern tip of Long Island, between Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay.

Over the weekend, I was able to identify a local supplier who offers a number of potentials: *Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Green Beauty'; *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen'; *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley'; and *Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Winter Green' and others. You can see the nursery's full Buxus offering at:

www.bissettnursery.com/Nursery/nurs_Buxus.htm.

Please note, however, that I am happy to consider other sources.

I would prefer a cultivar that exhibits minimum winter bronzing, and one that is resistant to the most common pests.

I am a new, but passionate, gardener, and boxwood has become my "favorite" plant. I already have two beautiful 'Graham Blandy' plants growing on my deck. For Christmas, I asked my husband for your book, *Boxwood: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. To my delight, the book was under the tree on Christmas morning.

I am interested in supporting the efforts of the American Boxwood Society and will be sending a check to the organization this week. Again, thank you so much for your help.

Follow-up answer:

While common in the great European gardens of centuries ago, here in the U.S. the long term impact of maintaining boxwood by shearing "with crisp lines" creates a high degree of cultural stress. Additionally, keeping them at a maximum height of 20 inches creates a pseudo-bonsai effect (not allowing them to grow to their full size), which is another heavy stress inducing factor.

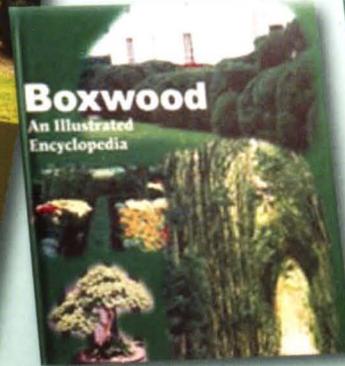
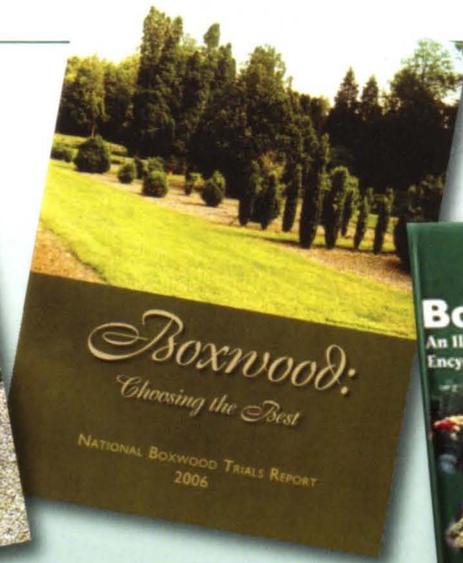
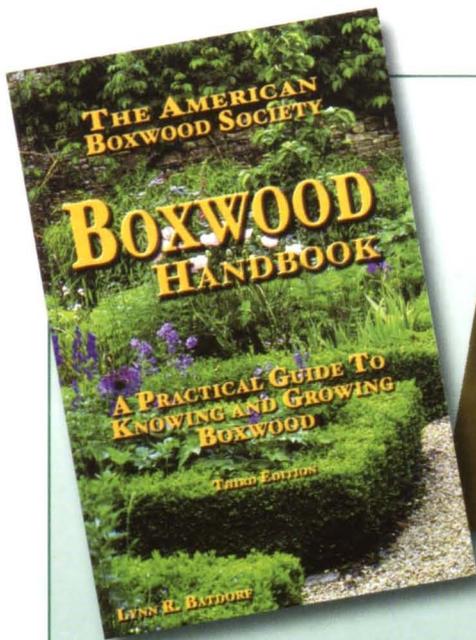
As long as you are sensitive to these challenges, and take every possible action to reduce, or eliminate, all the various cultural, site, pest stresses, your boxwood should be very happy indeed.

In no particular order, here are some culturally important considerations:

- Your sandy topsoil soil is excellent for box. Please ensure the soil pH is between 6.7 and 7.5.
- Maintain one inch (not 2 or 3) of mulch. If you need to water, then do so infrequently but heavily.
- If your soil needs fertilizer (indicated by a soil test) do so only in the fall, never spring or summer.
- Keep sharp shears. Shearing will result in abnormally dense foliage at the extreme terminal end of the branches with little or no interior foliage — a condition that greatly weakens the plant and encourages disease. To counter this, the terminal foliage must be thinned to allow air and light to circulate through the interior portions of the plant.

Finally, in addition to the above considerations, winter bronzing can be further minimized or eliminated by providing

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THE QUESTION BOX... *Continued from Page 47*

protection from both the winter sun and wind.

Having said that, regarding the four cultivars you're considering:

- 1) *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Green Beauty' wants to grow too tall for your requirements
- 2) *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen' does extremely well as a hedge, and does not have the "thick foliage" issue mentioned earlier.
- 3) *B. sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley' is a superior box, but will ultimately fail under chronic shearing at 20 inches.
- 4) *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Winter Green' there is no box with this name; perhaps you're confusing it with *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen'?

Therefore, *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen' would be a superior choice given your site conditions and landscape requirements.

Q: We can't figure out what is causing the foliage of our boxwood to turn white, starting at the margins. This is followed by leaf drop and subsequent regrowth. It occurs in blotches on the side of the hedge, interestingly at approximately the same height (20 inches). The hedge is watered by a lawn irrigation system. Any ideas?

A: Your irrigation system is constantly wetting the foliage of your boxwood. The water on the leaf acts like a magnifying glass, burning the foliage from the sunlight. This creates a dysfunctional leaf which is aborted by the plant. This absence causes foliage regrowth.

The pop-up spray head irrigation systems are designed for turfgrass, not ornamental plants. Adjust the distribution of the spray heads so that they do not wet the boxwood leaves.

One aside: boxwood that is constantly sheared in order to create a hedge creates a wide variety of stress-inducing factors. Ensure the basic cultural needs of your boxwood are satisfied in order to reduce this stress. That includes: proper mulching, monitoring soil fertility and soil pH, and regular inspection for pest or disease, and yearly thinning.

Q: I'm planning to start a boxwood nursery, several acres in size, in northeast Florida. I'm interested in improving the selection of boxwood available by growing various cultivars. Could you please tell me what I need to know to successfully grow boxwood. Do you have a Florida list of boxwood that are currently being grown?

A: There are many important considerations to successfully enter the nursery production industry. The best place to start is at: www.amerinursery.com

You want to obtain three books from them:

- 1) *Boxwood Handbook* by Batdorf
- 2) *Nursery Management* by Davidson et al.
- 3) *So You Want to Start a Nursery* by Avent

To talk to a successful box grower along the east coast, contact Saunders Brothers Nursery in Piney River, Virginia; they can tell you which box are best to grow. Once you've reviewed all this, we'd be happy to answer specific questions. Good luck!