

The

JANUARY 1976

Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



Magnificent old boxwood, growing naturally for more than 100 years, surrounds "Springfield" in Hanover County, Virginia. Owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Smith. Open for Historic Garden Week, 1976.

Edited Under The Direction Of
THE AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

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Incorporated under the laws of the State of Virginia, December 14, 1967. Exempt for Federal Income Tax. Contributions deductible by donors. Ref. IRS District Director, Richmond, Va.; Letter 430/GBS dated Dec. 4, 1968.

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

A subscription to the Boxwood Bulletin is included as one of the benefits of membership in the American Boxwood Society.

The Bulletin is \$5.00 per annum to non-members in the United States and Canada; single numbers are \$1.50 each.

Please address all communications, including manuscripts and change of address to the Boxwood Bulletin, Boyce, Va.

Reprints will be supplied to members and authors at cost but should be ordered at the time of an article's acceptance for publication.

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Entered as second-class mail matter at Post Office

Boyce, Virginia

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Printed in U. S. A. by

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

The Boxwood Bulletin

January 1976

Vol. 15 No. 3

EDITOR — MRS. EDGAR M. WHITING

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Charlotte Taylor Massie

Used by the Romans for hedges and topiary work, the valuable boxwood lends grace and charm to a garden. From its early morning dewy fragrance to its evening sun-kissed aroma, no other garden ornament can replace the boxwood in any of its numerous varieties. It would be hard to picture an historic garden, especially in Virginia, that did not have as its background for the other plantings the "Queen" of the evergreens.

Beyond its beauty and dignity, this hard uniform wood furnished Albrecht Durer with material for his wood blocks and is still used today by many of our artists.

Happily the time to clip is in the fall when it is transferred from the garden to the door in the form of wreaths tied with handsome ribbons; kissing balls hanging from chandeliers; topiary trees that decorate entrances for the holidays. Florists from New England contract with Virginians to clip the smooth broad leaf shrub for decorations for the holiday season in Northern cities where it does not grow as lush and green as it does in the Old Dominion.

The houses and gardens to be presented in 1976 by The Garden Club of Virginia during its Historic Garden Week, April 24 through May 2, were selected to include examples of Virginia's great heritage from its beginning to the present day.

Matching the pre-Revolutionary houses built by prominent men in colonial history are the glorious gardens in a fascinating variety of designs. In all of these layouts, regardless of scale, effective plantings of boxwood blend perfectly with other shrubs and seasonal flowers.

Rose Hill in Hanover County was listed in the government study of old Hanover homes as having been built about 1750. Lovely boxwoods surround this charming house and the old kitchen which is now a delightful guest house. Many of the old boxwood, which formed a walk and large circle in the front yard, were sold by a previous owner to assist with the restoration at Colonial Williamsburg.

Springfield, located in Hanover County, was built by General Thomas Nelson's sons for their mother, Lucy Grymes Nelson. Mrs. Nelson planted the boxwood circle in front of the house which consisted of 100 year old English boxwood with a tree boxwood in the center.

(See picture on front cover)

Lisburne is a stately house in Gloucester County which has been handsomely restored and added to in 1964. The original gardens are being restored, and a new formal boxwood garden has been added at the front of the house.

Visitors to Historic Garden Week in Virginia may obtain, free of charge, the 140 page guidebook giving details descriptions of the houses and gardens to be open for this April event, from the Historic Garden Week Headquarters, 12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, 23219.

Every year your Society receives inquiries from members and non-members who want advice about selling or donating pieces of boxwood that they no longer have a place for in their gardens or grounds. These inquiries usually concern large handsome specimen pieces that must be removed and that the owners naturally do not wish to throw away.

The Boxwood Society has followed a policy of not giving specific sales advice or making appraisals. To give such service to our members and friends would require our sending a qualified appraiser to examine the specimens. We don't have such personnel available.

As to general rules for valuation, bear in mind that a prospective purchaser is faced not only with the sales charge but also with the cost of transporting and replanting. Such costs can become enormous. Also they naturally are present for the older big handsome specimens so to make a sale at the theoretical fair market price for a fine piece, one has to find the right buyer. The right buyer usually means a person who selects your particular specimen in order to carry out a certain landscape design and who can afford to pay the costs rather than planting a smaller specimen and waiting for it to grow up.

Donations of specimens to parks, churches, schools, and other non-profit activities, is greatly recommended. The donor serves a good cause and usually can qualify for a tax benefit. The donor of course must find a donee who will pay the transplanting costs; or pay these costs himself.

A general piece of advice is to avoid giving a replacement guarantee to the buyer. The future welfare of the specimen one sells is bound up with circumstances over which one has no control and there really is no replacement for a fine unique piece. This matter of guarantee and replacement should be understood by both parties and put in writing.

As to keeping up with commercial market values there is perhaps no better practice than that of visiting commercial nurseries and noting their prices.

Phytophthora

American Boxwood Society

Neill Phillips, President

A Purpose Fulfilled

Mary A. Gamble



Members of the Boxwood Study Group are replacing temporary wooden labels with permanent metal tags in the New Nursery which is just a few yards west of the old one.

blind to the exceptions. They have looked, without seeing, at the multitude of boxwood plants growing next door, or on the next street or in the next town.

Once we eavesdropped on a visitor to the Missouri Botanical Garden. She stood and gazed admiringly at a 10-foot specimen boxwood. She looked long, shook her head slowly, then said, "Boxwood is beautiful; but you can't grow it here." To convince these doubting gardeners became the study group's first objective. To do this we knew we must pinpoint the hardy boxwood cultivars or strains and learn how to propagate and to care for the plants in the Midwest. Only if we knew, could we persuade. And so we began our program of collecting, propagating and learning about Midwest-hardy boxwoods.

We approached collecting on three fronts: local, regional and national. Locally and regionally, whenever we saw or heard of an outstanding and mature boxwood planting we asked for cuttings, explaining our purpose. Nationally, we wrote to a number of the late Dr. Edgar Anderson's fellow botanists and boxwood enthusiasts, contacting those he had suggested shortly before his death which occurred when our study group was still embryonic. Again, we explained our purpose and stated that our laboratory

The work of the Boxwood Study Group of the St. Louis Herb Society, which began in the late summer of 1969, came to an end in the early winter of 1975 when a shivering member affixed its proper label to the last of 2,290 plants in the boxwood nurseries at the Missouri Botanical Garden. The study, which spanned seven challenging years, was a learning-by-doing process from start to finish. During these years study group members, who numbered as many as 25, worked to learn as much as possible about "man's oldest garden ornamental;" and to transform themselves from boxwood neophytes into knowledgeable boxwood enthusiasts who then could transfer their enthusiasm to other local gardeners. In the Midwest, this is not always easy.

Many Midwestern gardeners have a deep-rooted distrust of boxwood. They have suffered losses themselves, or have heard of the losses of others. Understandably, they are reluctant to invest their time and money, and to pin their garden hopes on a plant that may not be equal to the vagaries of Midwestern weather. All too often, these same gardeners have been



A cold frame at the Missouri Botanical Garden, filled with young boxwoods awaiting transferral to the nursery.

Photograph, J. C. Horner

would be the Missouri Botanical Garden. Undoubtedly, the key factors to a generous response were the prestige of the Garden coupled with the respect and affection in which Edgar Anderson was held by his peers.

Our first national cuttings arrived in July 1969. They were sent by the late Dr. J. T. Baldwin, Jr. as "a gift from the College of William and Mary." Others soon followed from the Arnold and Holden Arboretums. When these were added to the local and regional cuttings we had acquired, the propagating benches became crowded. "Don't you think you may be getting too many boxwoods?" we were asked one day by the man who then directed our work in the Garden greenhouses.

Our mentor was Mr. Paul A. Kohl, for many years floriculturist at the Missouri Botanical Garden. He took us, to quote a study group member, "when all we knew about cuttings was that the *cut end* of the sprig went into the rooting medium;" and he turned us into good propagators. We learned how to work not only under controlled conditions at the Garden but also under improvised conditions at home.

Probably Mr. Kohl's most valuable lesson was to teach us to make cuttings not of single but of multiple branched sprigs. "This gives you," he pointed out, "a head start on a busy little plant." We learned, over the years, that cuttings could be made successfully at any season except during boxwood's spring and fall periods of active growth. We found, however, that our results generally were superior if cuttings were made in July and August. Cuttings of semi-hard wood rooted faster but, if we had the patience to wait, we obtain some splendid plants from hard old wood.

We cut the stems on a long slant and dipped the cut ends in Rootone No. 10 or Hormodene No. 3. We used various rooting mediums and generally found Perlite best when used under mist while sand did a good job when hand-watering was necessitated. Most cuttings rooted in about two months but, except when a cutting obviously was dead, we did not give up under four or five months. We enjoyed some 100 per cent successes and deplored some 100 per cent failures. Generally speaking, we considered results satisfactory if 60 per cent of any group of cuttings rooted. Over the seven years we rooted between six and seven thousand cuttings. (Here we should note that our two attempts at growing boxwood from seed failed totally. We hope to try again.)

A survey of our Accession Book shows that we obtained boxwood cuttings (and in some few instances plants) from 50 sources which included individuals, institutions and nurseries. Among the institutions, in addition to the three already named, were the United States National Arboretum, Kansas



Our goal in rooting boxwood cuttings was to obtain a vigorous root structure capable of nourishing a sturdy plant. This photograph shows a fair specimen. Note also the multi-stemmed sprig.

Photograph, J. C. Horner

State University, Colonial Williamsburg, Blandy Experimental Farm, Longwood Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and the Secret, Bartlett and Morris Arboretums. Among the many individuals, not previously mentioned, who supplied cuttings and/or plants, as well as invaluable information, we must make special mention of the late Mr. Clarence Barbre, Mr. Martin Bagby and Mr. Henry J. Hohman.

Testing the various cultivars for hardiness went forward in our own gardens and in the nursery area which the Garden soon made available to us. Mindful of Mr. Kohl's advice that "a three-year-old plant will have a better chance of surviving a Midwestern winter," we set up an ideal three-year plan. The plant's first winter would be spent in a greenhouse,

its second in a cold frame where it would harden off, and in its third spring it would be set either in the nursery or in its permanent garden location. Needless to say, this ideal schedule was subject to the limitations of greenhouse and cold frame space, to the availability of manpower to prepare nursery beds, and to the problems inherent in a program which depended for success upon the meshing of volunteer and professional staff enthusiasm and endeavor. "We all do the best we can," we said as we learned from our mistakes as well as our successes.

An immediate problem was keeping the plants straight and separate. In our Accession Book each donor received a number. Each group of cuttings was then identified by that number, plus the year in which it was received and a lot number. For example, if a donor's number was 4 (as was Dr. Baldwin's) and in 1969 we received five lots of cuttings from him the first lot would be numbered 4:69:1, the second 4:69:2, etc. Each cultivar was then given a page in our work record book in which we noted all available information about the cultivar, plus its propagation and hardiness records. A crosscheck of the two books revealed quickly all we knew about any given cultivar.

When cuttings went into the propagating bench a label gave plant number and date of insertion. When the rooted cuttings were potted this label went with them from greenhouse to cold frame. This standard procedure worked perfectly until some one made a mistake such as lining up the wrong pots back of a label, which is easy to do when cultivars look alike. The solution was also easy. A staff member suggested that we mark the plant number on each pot, using a waterproof marker. Later, we learned to place an upended pot between each group of cultivars in the cold frames, making it easier to locate each group. And if all this sounds like a housewife's problems in keeping her pantry inventory straight, don't laugh.

There is nothing more important in a project such as ours than correct labeling. There is nothing more frustrating than to look at a plant and realize you don't know what it is. There is nothing more wasteful — in time, energy and space — than first growing and then having to discard perfectly good plants because you can't identify them absolutely. The answer is to label early, attaching securely a weatherproof label.

Last year (1975) we began the practice of attaching a metal tag to each plant as we potted it out of the propagating bench. This label gives the Garden number of the plant (which can be crosschecked quickly with our Accession Book number) together with the species and name of the plant if it is registered, or species only if it is unnamed. Hopefully, this label will accompany its plant from greenhouse to cold frame to garden. Happiness, we believe, is a permanent label!

Our two boxwood nursery areas provide good garden soil and good drainage. One which we call the Old Nursery, because it came first, lies in full sun. The other, the New Nursery, is partially shaded in the afternoon by a row of tall trees. The plots were cultivated before planting but received no further treatment. The plants do well in both nurseries. They are not fed and, except for a ritual pre-winter soaking, are watered only when a dry spell persists. The first winter the old nursery was mulched but this has not been repeated.

Weeding and cultivating have been sporadic; but when possible, care is reasonably good. In sum, the boxwood nurseries receive adequate care but no babying. Once, when needed work was delayed, a study group member was heard to mutter, "Any plant that can survive in our nursery can survive anywhere." But we concluded that since survival quality was what we were looking for in a plant, our nursery provided a true test and we were well served.

Our annual inventory counted 883 plants in the old nursery and 1407 in the new. In addition there are 330 plants in one cold frame and 217 in another. These will be moved into the nurseries as nursery plants move into the Edgar Anderson Memorial Boxwood Garden when planting starts in spring 1976.



It was a sunny but cold day when the last label was affixed to one of the larger plants in the Old Nursery at the Garden.

Photograph, Mary A. Gamble

To date, we have had no problems with insects or disease. Our troubles, as expected, have been weather related. Even that hasn't been too bad. Out of six winters passed, five were good. We were, in fact, lulled into a false sense of security. The terrible winter of 1973/1974 cured that. We were forced to re-evaluate a number of cultivars. We despaired when we looked at rows of browned boxwood, wondering if they were dead or irretrievably damaged. We found them alive and the damage relatively superficial. It could be treated by therapeutic pruning. We learned other valuable lessons. We are glad that the terrible winter happened; but we hope it won't be repeated in this century!

Winter is the sword that hangs over the head of the Midwest boxwood grower. A good winter, and we have no more problems than those experienced by tidewater country gardeners. A bad winter and many boxwoods will die or suffer serious damage, unless these cultivars have been selected carefully for hardiness and have been properly placed, planted and cared for. Our study has shown us that there is a good range of handsome boxwood cultivars that will survive in the Midwest. There is no valid reason for the Midwest gardener to deny himself the privilege of boxwood.

In 1976 the Boxwood Study Group is being succeeded by the Boxwood Society of the Midwest. There will be study group members in the new society, but it will not be an extension of the study group. It will shape its own character and define its own purposes as needs, opportunities, challenges and capabilities emerge. Our warmest wish for its members is that they gain as much pleasure and satisfaction as have we from their pursuit of increased knowledge and deepened appreciation of boxwood.

Right, above:

Robert J. Dingwall, Chief Horticulturist at the Missouri Botanical Garden, conducts a pruning demonstration for study group members. This session was especially important because it followed the destructive winter of 1973-1974.

Photograph, Mary A. Gamble

Right, below:

Study group members and Bob Dingwall enjoy a picnic lunch on a field trip to the Missouri Botanical Garden and Nature Reserve at Gray Summit, Mo. It is study group policy to spice its work with fun whenever possible.

Photograph, Mary A. Gamble



The American Boxwood Society

Autumn Meeting of Officers and Directors

A meeting of the officers and directors of the American Boxwood Society was convened at 11 A.M. on Wednesday, November 19, 1975 at Heronwood, Upperville, Va. The President presided. The officers and directors attending were: Admiral Phillips, Mrs. Whiting, Mrs. Kirby, Dr. Singleton, Dr. Skinner, Professor Beecher, Mr. Otey, Mr. Ewert. Others present were Dr. Wills and Dr. Lambe, representatives from VPI, and Larry Steward from the University of Virginia, Department of Buildings & Grounds. The guests for the day were Mrs. Skinner, Mrs. Singleton, Mrs. Beecher and Mrs. Ewert. Mrs. Dove recorded the minutes of the meeting.

Mrs. Kirby presented the report of the Secretary-Treasurer showing assets to date totaling \$4,915.15. The full report is appended. It was agreed Mrs. Kirby should use her own judgment regarding sending out second notices to subscribers who have not renewed their subscriptions. A reminder to late subscribers will be inserted in the Bulletin.

A discussion regarding the \$6.00 copyright fee per issue of the Bulletin followed. It was deemed desirable to continue to copyright each issue for the protection of ABS since the fee is minimal.

The President called Dr. Wagenknecht, ABS Official Registrar, during the meeting and asked for 10 copies of the application form stating the requirements necessary for registration of cultivars. Dr. Wagenknecht agreed to mail these to Admiral Phillips and stated he would have more time to devote to Boxwood Society matters next year due to being relieved of some of his teaching duties and plans to attend the Annual Meeting in May 1976.

Mr. Otey, Director of Morven Park, reported on the loss of English Box plants at Morven Park amounting to approximately \$30,000 and stated he is interested in replacing some of them with plants other than Box. Dr. Wills felt that VPI could cooperate with the Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation on a soil treatment plan at Morven Park. Dr. Skinner suggested the possibility of using an Anderson Box which may do better at Morven Park. Cuttings from Dr. Skinner's collection at The National Arboretum will be sent to Mr. Otey at Morven Park.

Dr. Wills reported that with support from the Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation at Morven Park, a graduate student, Mark Vizvary, is now continuing experimental work at VPI on Boxwood Diseases initiated by a ABS grant in 1973. A write-up on this project will be provided by Dr. Wills for publication in the Bulletin.

Dr. Lambe told us the Garden Club of Virginia is interested in the experimental work being conducted at VPI. There is nothing definite to report at this time but by January they will consider a proposal for possible funding of the program.

Dr. Lambe informed the members of the promising results being obtained at VPI for treatment of Phytophthora. The product under experimentation is being provided by the Dow Chemical Company and is known as NURELLE. Nurelle has been successful on diseased ornamental plants and it is hoped that it will prove effective on Boxwood. VPI is in need of support from The Boxwood Society to provide funds for field work on Phytophthora. There is a need for approximately \$500 to purchase equipment and supplies by next spring in order to get the program underway. The President asked Dr. Lambe to make a formal request so that it may be considered at the March meeting of the officers and directors.

A suggestion to make Mr. P. F. Hilbert of Waterford, Va. an honorary member of the Society was discussed and the President stated this was a matter to be voted on by the full membership at the Annual Meeting and would be presented next May.

Mr. Ewert reported on progress being made at Blandy on the Memorial Garden stating several meetings of the Committee had been held this summer and fall and four plants have been moved to the Memorial area. The problem of financing the labor involved in moving and replanting the others was discussed. After deliberation a motion was made by Dr. Singleton, seconded by Dr. Skinner, and approved unanimously to authorize Professor Beecher and Mr. Ewert to go ahead with arrangements to get the job accomplished, using their own judgment about methods bearing in mind the ceiling of \$1,000, authorized at the May 1975 Annual Meeting, for the present Boxwood year (May 1975-76), and if it should exceed that amount contact the Executive Committee.

There was a discussion early in the meeting regarding a letter received from Dr. Speese of the College of William and Mary re the J. T. Baldwin, Jr. Boxwood Collection at the College. After careful consideration of this matter, motion was made by Dr. Singleton, seconded by Mrs. Whiting and unanimously approved that:

"The Boxwood Society invites Dr. Bernice M. Speese of the College of William and Mary to act as a consultant to look after the Boxwood Collection formed by Dr. J. T. Baldwin,

Jr. and any related matters and to give her the title of 'J. T. Baldwin, Jr., Consultant.'"

The President agreed to write Dr. Speese a letter informing her of this resolution and invite her to accept.

Mr. Ewert was asked to provide a write-up for publication in the Bulletin regarding Memorial Plaques to be used in the Memorial Garden at Blandly.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruby P. Dove, Recorder

AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY

November 19, 1975 Officers-Directors Meeting
at Heronwood, Upperville, Va.

Secretary's Report for the period May 1 to November 15, 1975.

I'm unable to give a definite figure as to the number of members enrolled at this time. However, it is probably just a little higher than that reported at the annual meeting (562) since 56 new members have been added (as compared to 35 for this same period last year) and none have been removed to date because of failure to renew their membership. The rolls are usually purged in January.

I have asked Mrs. Whiting to run a reminder concerning membership renewal in the October Bulletin. I would estimate that about 100 members have failed to renew for the current year.

I want to thank Professor Beecher and Dr. Lambe for answering a number of letters concerning boxwood problems that came to me from members. Also, my thanks to Mrs. Ewert for help with a session of enrollment in May when the press of renewals was greatest.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne C. Kirby,
Secretary-Treasurer

November 18, 1975

Treasurer's Report to the Officers and Directors Meeting November 19, 1975

Receipts (May 1 - Nov 3, 1975):

Balance in checking account 5/1/75	_____	\$ 719.32
Memberships	_____ \$3,051.00	
Bulletins sold	_____ 133.20	
Donations/Gifts (23)	_____ 512.00	3,686.20
	_____	_____
Funds Accountable	_____	4,406.52

Disbursements:

The Boxwood Bulletin:

Mailing	_____ 28.28	
Printing	_____ \$640.00	
Copyrights	_____ 12.00	
Cuts/Plates	_____ 143.00	823.28
Office supplies/stamps	_____	45.55
Printing (Carr Pub. Co.)	_____	129.75
P.O. Box Rent	_____	6.00
Recorder (Mrs. Dove)	_____	47.56
	_____	_____

Total Expenses	_____	1,052.14

		3,353.38

Transfer of Life Membership funds to Savings Account 10/7/75 _____ 900.00

Balance in checking 11/17/75 _____ \$2,453.38

plus
Savings & Interest as of 10/7/75 _____ 2,420.77

*Total Assets	_____	\$4,874.15
(Checks on hand for deposit	_____	41.00
		4,915.15

*Deposited in Bank of Clarke County, Berryville, Va.

PENNYROYAL
609 Hilltop Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21228

Dear Mrs. Kirby

P - l - e - a - s - e ! Don't take me off your mailing list! I just returned home!

Enclosed is my check for my 1975-76 dues to the A. B. S. Jacqueline Phillips and I regretfully will not be at the May Meeting. We're taking off for London and Dublin on May 3 — however, I know it will be an interesting meeting. Perhaps next year, I too will become a life member — that's one way to get around dues, wouldn't you say?

O. N. Rodgers

(Mrs. Antone Rodgers)



above:

Fig. 1. *Buvus microphylla* Sieb. & Zucc. var. *compacta* 'Curly Locks' Henry Hohman 'Locket' J. T. Baldwin, Jr.
Photograph, Lyle Rosbotham, 1973

New Cultivars of the Buxus Microphylla Complex

J. T. Baldwin, Jr.

1. Published as found in a first draft prepared by Doctor Baldwin in July of 1973. Footnotes and figure legends were added.

Sixty years ago Mr. Sam Appleby grew boxwood seedlings near Baltimore, Maryland. When Mr. Appleby died in the 1920s, Henry J. Hohman, Kingsville Nurseries, Kingsville, Maryland, bought some of the seedlings and began propagating them. One of the most interesting of all boxwoods was among those plants: it originated in 1912 and came to be known as *compacta*, The Kingsville Dwarf Boxwood. At the suggestion of Donald Wyman of The Arnold Arboretum and with a description by Alfred Rehder, "very compact depressed globose shrub broader than high, the original plant reaching in 25 years the height of only 10 inches by 19 inches in width," Hohman in 1937 named the plant *compacta* and released it to the trade. This variety of *Buxus microphylla* is now a most significant cultivar.

In 1948 I obtained for the College of William and Mary ten seven-year-old plants: at thirty-one years they are 13 inches tall and 20 inches wide. With too much sun they become bronzed; the stems are exceedingly brittle and easily break; sports occur with amazing frequency and variety and are often so vigorous that they "take-over" the parent and, utilizing the established root system, grow rapidly. That some of the sports fall within the phenotypic range of *Buxus microphylla sinensis* suggests some relationship to that plant. The variety of sports is evidence that *compacta* is a complex periclinal chimera. And the sports themselves sometimes sport. So Mr. Appleby's seedling is a rich source of cultivars.

The most striking sport of *compacta* now in the trade is 'Curly Locks', a Hohman introduction that all lovers of box cherish. Through *compacta* itself does not flower, 'Curly Locks' flowers and fruits profusely but with seed approaching one hundred per cent in abortiveness. I have succeeded in growing two seedlings: one of them, worthless; the other, a most distinctive and valuable plant that I here name 'Locket.'

This plant is now eighteen years old and is fruiting; it is 44 inches tall, 22 inches wide (Fig.). I am hopeful that some of the seed just harvested

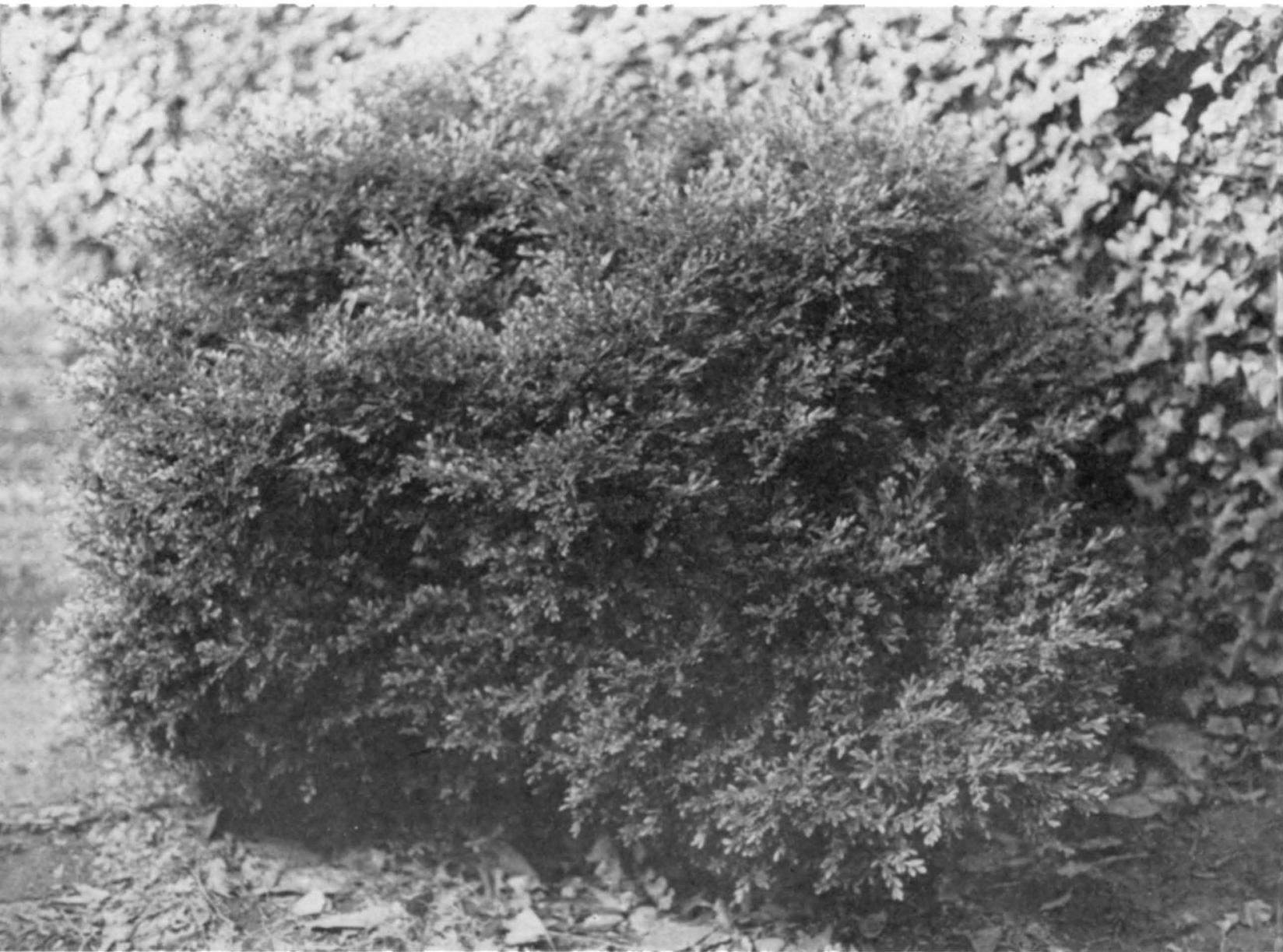
(July 23, 1973) will germinate. The foliage of 'Locket' is delicate and light green — vastly different from that of any other box that I know. The leaves are narrowly lanceolate (maximum length, 3/4 inches) with acuminate bases and acute tips. The tips are usually yellowish, perhaps a nutritional condition rather than a genetic one.

Another sport of *compacta*, of 1960 origin, I designate 'Helen Whiting' in recognition of the dedicated editor of The Boxwood Bulletin.² This sport,

2. As reported in the *Boxwood Bulletin*, April 1974, Doctor Baldwin gave a brief talk at the conclusion of the routine business program of the spring meeting of the officers and directors of the Society. He told of a sport of *Buxus microphylla* var. *compacta* which he had propagated, had named 'Helen Whiting,' and would register as a new cultivar. "This announcement was applauded. Dr. Baldwin then gave out small potted specimens of this beautiful little plant."

which has not fruited, is 42 inches tall and 63 inches broad as of July 23, 1973. I sacrificed the parent for the much more rapidly growing sport (Figs. 2 and 3). The leaves are light green and are lanceolate (maximum length ca. 3/4 inches) with acuminate bases and tips, which, on occasion, are somewhat cuspidate. This plant, I am confident, will become a much-used cultivar.

Hohman called another of Appleby's seedlings 'Green Pillow'; I purchased in 1953 for the College the first two plants released to the trade. During the Kennedy administration Mrs. Paul Mellon used 'Green Pillow' extensively in landscaping the Rose Garden at the White House. Our plants at an estimated age of thirty years are 30 inches high, 40 inches wide. They have a rather coarse appearance,



brittle stems, dense green leaves. This cultivar too seems to be a chimera, but it sports much less frequently than *compacta* and the sports exhibit less variability. I here describe one of the sports as 'Green Sofa': more vigorous than parent and its leaves coarser; leaves deep green, elliptic (3/4 inches long by 1/2 inch broad), bases acute, tips cuspidate. 'Green Pillow' does not flower; 'Green Sofa' is too young to assess in this respect.

Fig. 2. *Buxus microphylla* Sieb. & Zucc. var. *compacta* Henry Hohman 'Helen Whiting' J. T. Baldwin, Jr.

Photograph, Lyle Rosbotham, 1973.



Fig. 3. The parent *compacta* plant with sport 'Helen Whiting' balled for transplanting.
Photograph, Bernice M. Speese, 1963.

The American Boxwood Society

January 1976

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Annual Meeting

American Boxwood Society

May 12th, 1976

More Information in April Issue

Please Put It on Your Calendar

Boxwood Diseases

R. C. Lambe and W. H. Wills



Fig. 1. American boxwood — *Phytophthora* root rot. Note yellowing and defoliation of portions of top.

A serious decline of epiphytotic proportions in English boxwood has occurred in recent years in various portions of Virginia, especially Northern Virginia. In contrast to the prevailing situation where only English boxwood plantings, but not the American variety, are declining, both are regularly affected by the water mold *Phytophthora parasitica* in the Piedmont, Tidewater and Southside, Virginia. Previous VPI & SU extension publications on boxwood have emphasized the importance of *Phytophthora* root rot in both English and American boxwood plantings, but English boxwood root rot and decline severity during the last five or six years exceeds any previously published accounts.

Prevention of Diseases

Attention to proper maintenance of plants is basic in disease prevention. Because the boxwood plant has been reasonably free of serious disease, less attention has been paid to good cultural practices in boxwood culture than for ornamentals that are historically more susceptible to serious diseases.

If cuttings are collected from diseased stock plants, or the rooting media used in propagation are infested with plant pathogens, stem and root diseases may develop. Boxwood plantings should never be made in locations from which root rot diseases have been identified unless the soil is fumigated first. If cuttings are rooted in pathogen-free rooting media like peat moss, Weblite®, Perlite®, or vermiculite, healthy plants will be produced. Treatment of previously used pots, flats, and benches with steam or antiseptic chemicals will eliminate plant pathogens. Fumigation of fields with broad spectrum fumigants as recommended in the Virginia Plant Disease Guide before planting will eradicate nematodes and disease-causing fungi from the soil.

Phytophthora Root Rot

The symptoms of this disease on both English and American boxwood caused by the fungus *P. parasitica* are poor growth, and foliage which loses its normal green color and rapidly changes to a light pale green in shade, and becoming bright yellow in sunlight. Leaves turn upward and lateral leaf margins roll inward, suggesting drought. Leaf symptoms may appear on just a few branches or on the entire plant, depending on the extent of fungus infection of the roots. Blackening of the base of the stem usually occurs for two or three inches above the soil line only. Usually the bark at the base of the infected plant dies and may be easily separated from the

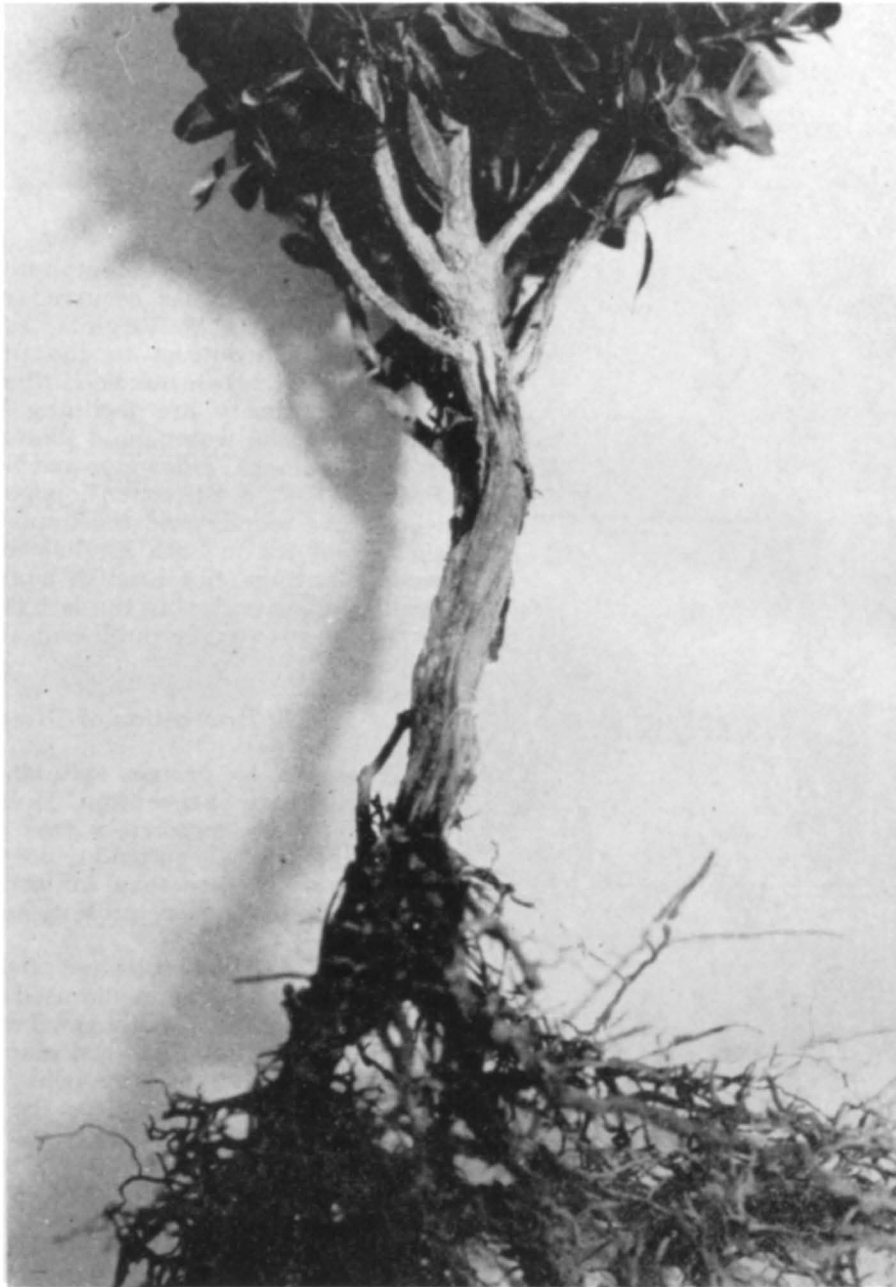


Fig. 2. American boxwood — *Phytophthora* root rot.
Note: discoloration at base of stem, healthy
where branches occur.

wood. When the roots are examined, many are dark in color and they are few in number. The lack of functioning roots is the result of fungus decay and precedes the yellowing and death of the top. (Fig. 1)

Plants growing in soils which have become water-logged following heavy rains in the summer, or which have been over-watered, especially where sub-soil drainage is poor, are predisposed to fungus infection. The abundant moisture allows *Phytophthora* motile spores to move in the soil, infecting new roots or adjacent plants. *Avoid excessive watering.*

New plantings should always be made with healthy-appearing plants in well-drained soil, preferably where boxwood has never been planted before. If it is necessary to replant in a site where a boxwood plant has died, remove the dead plant and as much of the diseased root system and soil from the hole as feasible. Boxwood nurseries should be established in well-drained fields previously treated with a broad spectrum fumigant.

There is no chemical control recommended for this at present. Pruning to remove dead limbs and reduce the top is suggested.

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