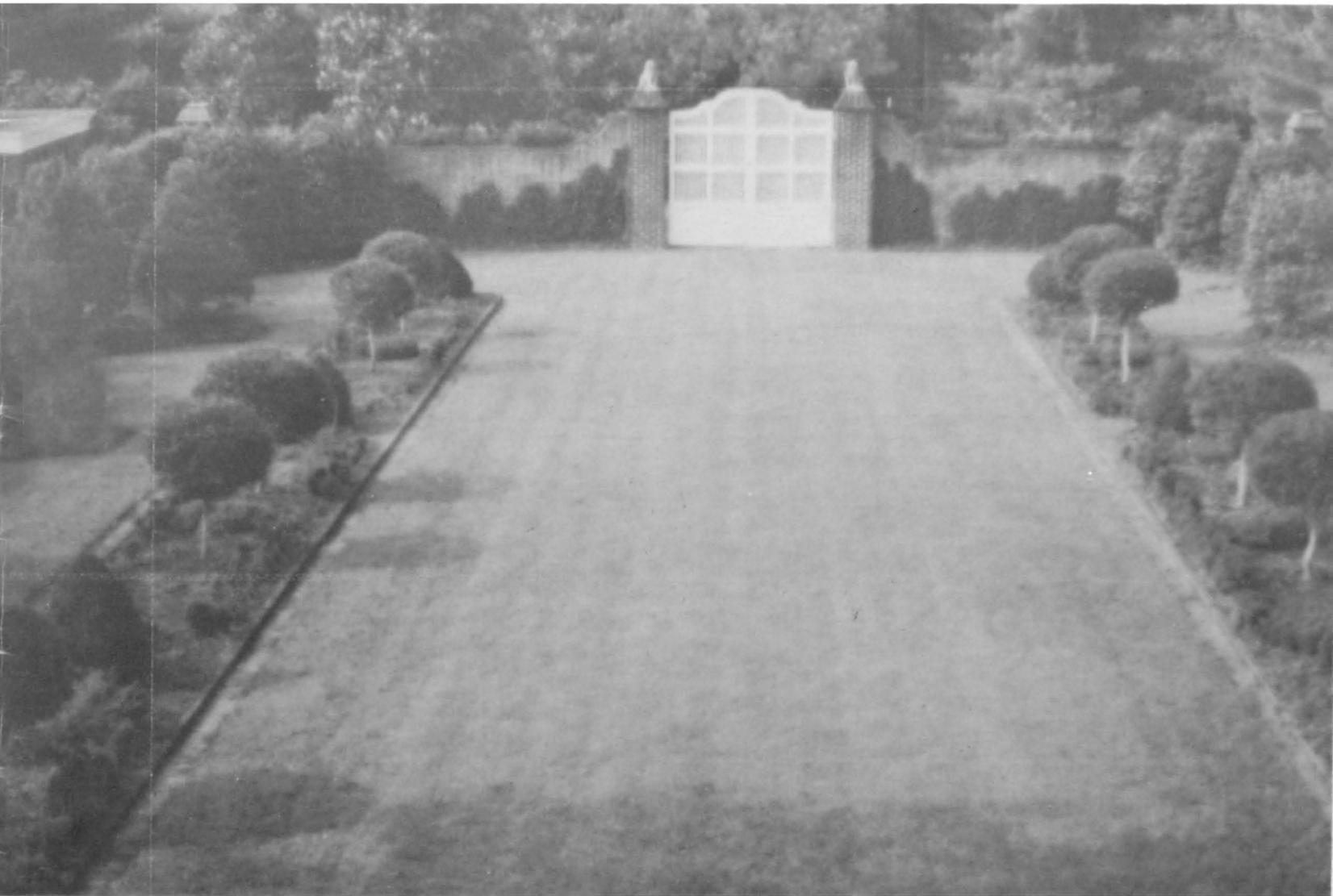


October 1982

*The*

# Boxwood Bulletin

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO MAN'S OLDEST GARDEN ORNAMENTAL



*William B. Farrar Garden, Summerville, Georgia*

*photo by William B. Farrar*

Edited Under The Direction Of

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# BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

William A. Gray

## Introduction

This discussion, prepared for a Boxwood Workshop, is based on a review of past articles published in the *ABS Boxwood Bulletin*, supplemented by material contained in a few books. Of the thirty or so listed species of *Buxus*, most box planted in Virginia is *Buxus sempervirens* — either the common species plant or its dwarf form, *suffruticosa*. Boxwood, “man’s oldest garden ornamental,” over the years has been widely used as landscaping material, as a source of lumber, occasionally as a medicinal, and in a symbolic role. The natural habitat of *Buxus sempervirens* is in the chalk and limestone regions of Europe and western Asia, extending from Britain to the Caspian Sea shores of Iran, and possibly points east. It has been around a long time: fossil remains in France date back to the Pliocene period — 10 million years ago or more.

## Early History

Up to the Roman era, the record is sparse and largely legendary. Around 4000 B.C., a garden plan was inscribed on an Egyptian tomb; it is presumed that ornamental box was part of that plan. The ancient Greeks certainly employed the hard, fine-grained wood in the manufacture of cosmetic boxes, combs and wind instruments. According to tradition, the four-acre garden of Alcinoüs contained box as an ornamental planting. In the botanical papers of Theophrastus (372 - 287 B.C.), one finds the first documentary mention of box; its virtues as lumber were stressed.

At the time of Emperor Augustus during the first century B.C., the villas of many affluent Romans were landscaped with formal boxwood plantings; topiary work was a big thing. Augustus was proud of converting Rome from functional brick to luxurious Carrara marble. Perhaps unfortunately, both Carrara marble and *Buxus sempervirens* since then have been frequently symbolic of ostentatious display. In his “*Naturalis Historia*” (77 A.D.), Pliny covered box in detail, both as a garden ornamental and a material for instruments. He listed three forms: larger, smaller and Italian. Much later, in the 18th century A.D., Karl von Linne (Linnaeus) classified the European Box as *Buxus sempervirens*, with two varieties: *arborescens* (tree form) and *suffruticosa* (dwarf form).

## Box in Britain

A common myth implied that box was introduced into Britain by the Romans. However, as rigorously shown by Mr. Staples’ “History of Box in the British Isles” (in a series of articles in 1970 and 1971 *Bulletins*), *Buxus* grew wild in England long before either Celt or Roman appeared. The plant had migrated from the Continent

at least twice, only to be wiped out by succeeding glacial periods. Finally, after the last (Wurm) Ice Age, it was again re-established when the climate warmed, at least 7000 years ago. The above conclusions were based on studies of pollen records. Charcoal remains from Neolithic camps in the South Downs date back to about 2000 B.C. Archeological finds of the Roman period include parts of a boxwood comb, box twigs in lead-lined coffins, clippings in a trash deposit and (near Chichester) the evidence of box roots in a villa’s formal garden. Apparently, Ancient Britons used *Buxus* as fuel; by the Roman period, box was employed as a garden ornamental, as wood for fancy goods, and as a symbol of immortality in funeral rites.

## Box in Colonial America

“When Boxwood was introduced into this country (the U.S.), we do not know.” This 1921 quote from Dr. Ernest “Chinese” Wilson of Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum still holds. Virginia mythology claims that boxwood was brought from England by the original emigrating gentry — from the hedges around their family castles. Unfortunately for tradition, the evidence suggests that *Buxus sempervirens* was introduced first into the Long Island area in the mid-17th century; and that it may well have come from Holland, not England. According to the *Bulletin* of January 1969, the earliest definite record of boxwood in the U.S. was the establishment of a hedge (possibly *suffruticosa*) on Shelter Island by Miss Grissel Gardiner, at about the time that she married Nathaniel Sylvester in 1652.

In general, however, it seems clear that boxwood plantings were established in Colonial America not by the original settlers, but by more affluent members of the second, third, or fourth generations — after capital had been acquired for mansions and their appurtenances. During the hundred years from 1650 to 1750, *Buxus sempervirens* proliferated from Massachusetts to the Carolinas; in particular, after 1700 boxwood became associated with the evolution of the larger tobacco plantations in tidewater Maryland and Virginia. Various sources suggest that the stock was imported from England, France and Holland; after 1700, many plants could have been of domestic origin. Individuals probably continued to import stock from Europe; later, in the 19th century, American nurserymen imported box, largely from Holland. The published literature contains no contemporary reports of actual transactions during the Colonial period. Possibly, some boxwood was acquired as a luxury item from Europe through the illicit trade channels that flourished from 1640 to the 1760’s. This activity, called free trade by Americans, smuggling by the British, provided a largely undocumented source of disposal income for the Colonists, including the tidewater tobacco planters.

### *As an Ornamental*

*Buxus sempervirens* flourished in the gardens of affluent Greeks and was an important element in Roman estate landscaping. During that dimly perceived period of stress between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Italian Renaissance, *Buxus* as an ornamental apparently survived mainly in isolated monastery gardens. It is mentioned in British documents of 893 A.D., 931 A.D. and 1381 A.D., for example, but not as a garden ornamental. Beginning with the Italian Renaissance at Florence during the late 15th century, *Buxus sempervirens* again became important as a basic element of the partly formal, partly natural design of the famous Italian gardens. By the late 16th century, dwarf and tree box were part of the garden scene in both England and France. Dwarf box was frequently employed as edging plants and in the knot gardens of the period. In his "Paradisi in Sole" (1629 A.D.), the British horticulturist John Parkinson recommended "the dwarfe kinde called French or Dutch Box" for such purposes.

After 1700 A.D., we see the establishment of impressive boxwood plantings in the famous formal gardens of the tidewater tobacco plantations. In the U.S., and possibly Britain, *Buxus sempervirens* reached its peak popularity during the early 19th century; by 1900, other exotic ornamentals were more generally favored. A narrow market for "antique box" appeared in the early years of this century, to provide instant landscaping at large country estates. Otherwise, general interest in boxwood as an ornamental was not revived until about the 1950's, and apparently then in the U.S., not Britain.

Nearly all of the historical literature relates to box as "the rich man's hedge" and is confined to descriptions of the ostentatious gardens of the affluent minority. We all know from observation, however, that the appeal of box was much wider than that. Modest plantings on small 19th century farms from Cape Cod to the Carolinas and at mountain cabins in Appalachia confirm that fact. The current market for *Buxus* is provided by the ordinary citizen, and is not dependent on the large estates.

### *As a Forest Product*

We think of *Buxus sempervirens* solely as an evergreen woody ornamental. No commercial exploitation of the species as a source of hardwood has occurred in the U.S. It is a heavy wood: about 80 lbs/cu. ft. green, 70 lbs fully seasoned. Its hardness has been measured as twice that of oak. With its close grain and (when properly seasoned) freedom from warping and splitting, *Buxus sempervirens* is an ideal material for fine wood-working. Over the centuries, the importance of *Buxus* as a forest product has matched its status as an ornamental.

The wood of *Buxus sempervirens* was used by the early Greeks and Romans for musical instruments, tools and small fancy goods. Similar applications continued through the Middle Ages. In 1381 A.D., Chaucer referred to it as "the Boxtree piper", alluding to the use of the wood for wind instruments. Box was the first wood chosen for fine-detail engraving blocks; between 1400 A.D. and 1430 A.D., this technique was employed for the

quantity production of religious books and playing cards — predating the printing press. Subject to limitations in supply, *Buxus sempervirens* was still the preferred material for engravers' blocks in the 20th century.

By the 18th century, this wood was in considerable demand for the production of musical instruments, mathematical instruments, lapidary tools, engravers' blocks, sundry fancy goods and cabinet inlays. Native stands of *Buxus* in Britain were harvested, but by the 19th century, the principal source of supply was the Georgian area of Russia, south of the Caucasus near the Black Sea. Other sources included Iran, Turkey and Corsica, but the Caucasus source was preferred for quality and availability. The last reported commercial cutting in England occurred in 1941 and 1942, when trees at Chequers were harvested for use in some unspecified war program.

The 19th century expansion of the British textile industry came close to decimating the *Buxus* forests of the world, since the shuttles and rollers had been designed around boxwood. By 1860, British imports reached 6000 tons/year — most of it from the Russian Caucasus. It was not long before the Russians jacked up the price and imposed a heavy export tax. Coming at a time when the Russian advance into central Asia had created friction with England, this boxwood affair was the straw that could have turned an existing cold war hot. In 1865, a combined action by Virginia foresters and Boston merchants provided a solution by shipping James River valley dogwood and persimmon logs to Liverpool, as a replacement for boxwood. By 1871, Virginia dogwood and persimmon was an accepted substitute for Russian boxwood in this application. One might speculate that a second Crimean War thereby has been avoided.

### *As a Medicinal*

*Buxus sempervirens* contains an alkaloid poison (buxene) in its leaves and twigs. The leaves and stems of box are bitter; animals are likely to be restrained in eating them. Small amounts ingested cause nausea and diarrhea; larger amounts bring on nervous symptoms, with lameness, vertigo and coma. Large amounts consumed cause death. Many alkaloids derived from plants are accepted medicinals, such as quinine and morphine; buxene, however, has not been widely accepted. Nevertheless, any bitter and poisonous plant was traditionally a potential medicinal and in the past *Buxus* foliage found its place in pharmacology. It was presumably employed mainly as an emetic and purgative, but also (in France) as a substance for reducing fever. One will find dried *Buxus* leaves in the Colonial Williamsburg pharmacy exhibit; according to the CW staff, the 18th century Williamsburg pharmacist imported this medicinal from England, despite the presence of boxwood hedges at nearby plantations. Other intriguing and dubious historical uses for *buxus* foliage included its substitution for hops in French beer (a bitter and dangerous beverage) and, in England, a method for tinting hair auburn (leaves boiled with lye).

Finally, we find a long history of *Buxus sempervirens* in a symbolic role. Representing immortality, box twigs were interred in coffins of Roman Britain; box trees were planted at shrines and graves by early Europeans. The funerary association has continued into the 20th century: many American families feel a grave site incomplete without a boxwood planting.

Medieval Europeans commonly used box sprigs in lieu of palm fronds on Palm Sunday, and as interior decorations during the Christmas season. The religious and festive association with the holiday season has continued to the present time; the production of boxwood clippings for Christmas decorations is a respectable business in the U.S.

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<i>Vol.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>	
8	3	Jan 1969	46	Baldwin, "Oldest Box in the U.S."
8	4	Apr 1969	61	Lancaster, "Common Box in Britain"
10	1	Jul 1970	9	Anderson, "Paradisi in Sole"
10	2	Oct 1970	19	Staples, "History of Box in British Isles, Part I"
10	3	Jan 1971	45	Wilson, "Boxwood"
10	4	Apr 1971	57	Staples, "History, Part III"
12	1	Jul 1972	12	Gray, "Colonial Hedges on Dogue's Neck"
14	1	Jul 1974	11	Baldwin, "Boxwood"
16	1	Jul 1976	1	McClure, "Boxwood in North

				Carolina"
16	2	Oct 1976	24	"Scarcity of True Boxwood"
16	2	Oct 1976	25	Record, "An Old Friend in New Dress"
16	2	Oct 1976	29	McClure, "Boxwood"
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20	4	Apr 1981	83	Flemming, "Boxwooding in England"
20	4	Apr 1981	71	Plowden-Wardlaw, "History of Boxwood"



*Photo: William B. Farrar*

*Farrar garden, Summerville, Ga.*



*Photo: William B. Farrar*

*Farrar garden, Summerville, Ga.*

# SCOTCHTOWN BOXWOOD WORKSHOP

The Scotchtown Boxwood Workshop, sponsored by the American Boxwood Society in cooperation with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, was held on the lawn of Scotchtown, Hanover County, Virginia, on July 21, 1982. In addition to the workshop, those attending had an opportunity to tour the house and grounds. Scotchtown is one of the oldest homes in Hanover County. It is now owned by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and the grounds have been landscaped by the Garden Club of Virginia. There are some excellent boxwood specimens growing on the grounds. The *Boxwood Bulletin* for October, 1980 contains a "Historical Sketch of Scotchtown".

This is the second Boxwood Workshop that has been held at Scotchtown by the American Boxwood Society, the first having been held in July, 1980. Arrangements for these two workshops have been spearheaded by Prof. James A. Faiszt, Extension Horticulturist at Virginia Tech, and Mr. Ralph E. LaRue, Extension Agent, Hanover County.

At the morning session Mr. LaRue served as moderator. A welcome to Scotchtown was given by the Resident Hostess, Mrs. Rosalie Fulwinder. Mr. Richard Mahone, President of the American Boxwood Society, extended greetings and spoke briefly on the purpose and major activities of the American Boxwood Society. An invitation was extended to those in the audience who were not members to consider joining and to become acquainted with others interested in the culture of boxwood as well as to benefit from reading the *Boxwood Bulletin* which is published quarterly. Mr. Mahone mentioned that the Society maintains a Memorial Boxwood Garden at Boyce, Virginia on the Blandy Experimental Farm and that in this garden there is a fine labeled collection of different boxwood varieties. He also announced that a 1982 Boxwood Tour would be held in September in the Amherst-Lynchburg area.

"Helping People With Boxwood Problems" was the title of the first item on the program. It was conducted by Mr. LaRue who briefly outlined how the Hanover Extension Office serves the growers of boxwood by answering their telephone calls or through visits, or by providing printed material on boxwood culture and insect control measures. Since coming to Hanover County, Mr. LaRue has compiled a list of growers who have called asking for boxwood information. This list was used to invite growers to the Scotchtown Workshop. Each year a workshop on Christmas decorations featuring boxwoods has been sponsored by the Hanover Extension Service in cooperation with the Scotchtown Foundation.

Mr. LaRue then invited audience participation in asking questions and invited "the boxwood experts" in the audience to help answer them. A lively discussion followed on such topics as transplanting, feeding and watering. Some in the audience, indicated that they had better success transplanting in the fall and others, in early spring. Mr. Mahone said that late February or early March has been the best time for transplanting at Colonial Williamsburg. Large plants should be root pruned a year before transplanting if possible. During the transplanting process some of the roots will be

destroyed so it is important to thin some of the top growth to establish a balance between the top and the root system.

In the questions and responses on feeding there was a variety of feeding formulas advanced by the boxwood growers; however, the general consensus was that early spring feeding was best and that late summer feeding should be avoided. In applying fertilizer, it is important to irrigate if there is not an adequate supply of soil moisture. Careless application of fertilizer can cause damage to boxwood roots which are close to the surface.

The questions raised on watering boxwood were prompted in part by the fact that both Hanover and Henrico Counties have had, during recent years, a deficiency of rainfall. It was stressed that anyone planning to grow boxwoods commercially should select a site where an adequate supply of water is available. During periods of drought, large boxwoods may suffer and begin to wilt and die back at the tips. Replacing the lost soil moisture will help, but this may not always be possible if there is a restriction on the use of water by the local government or the well system is not adequate. Pruning back heavily some of the top growth to reduce the amount of top that the root system has to support can be beneficial. In drought periods mulches are important in the conservation of moisture, but avoid over-mulching. A mulch to a depth of one and one-half to two inches is adequate.

"Historical Facts About Boxwood" was the final event of the morning session. It was presented by Mr. William Gray, a Director of the American Boxwood Society. His paper is printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Boxwood Bulletin*.

After a delightful catered lunch under the shade of two large red maple trees against a backdrop of boxwood, Mr. Charles K. Curry, Extension Agent for Henrico County, served as moderator and introduced Albert S. Beecher, Professor Emeritus, Horticulture, Virginia Tech, who discussed "Preventing Winter Injury in Boxwood". Professor Beecher outlined several management practices that may help prevent winter damage:

1. Make sure that plants enter the dormant season in a healthy and vigorous condition with adequate soil moisture. If fertilizer is needed, apply it before July and do corrective thinning during the spring. Check especially to see that the centers of plants are free of dead leaves and other debris.
2. During dry periods in the spring, summer, fall or winter, water as needed.
3. Provide wind protection for plants in exposed situations by using snow fences or lattice frames covered with burlap or pine boughs stuck in the ground.
4. Boxwoods recently transplanted will benefit if partially shaded and barriers are erected to cut down on wind penetration.

5. Provide a mulch of wood chips, leaf mold, or similar materials. A mulch protects by preventing rapid temperature change at the soil surface, deep penetration of frost, and excessive loss of surface water. Do not bank mulch up against plant stems as it may encourage aerial rooting.

6. Remove snow from boxwood during or after a snow storm or as soon as practical by shaking the bush with a broom or stick. However, do not attempt to remove snow if branches are frozen because breakage will occur. The weight of heavy snow may cause the stems to break, especially if they are weak.

7. Large American boxwood may be protected against snow damage by wrapping the outer branches with strong nylon cord. Tie the cord securely to a low branch, pressing the boughs upward and inward; wrap cord in an upward spiral around the bush, having cords 8 to 10 inches apart. Have cord tight enough to prevent breakage from excess weight of snow or ice, but not enough to exclude air circulation around the plant.

Professor James A. Faiszt, Extension Horticulturist at Virginia Tech, discussed "Insects of Boxwood". He stated that boxwoods have no more insect problems than do most other commonly grown woody ornamentals. Four major insect pests of boxwood include the psyllid, leaf miner, mite and scale. These pests are easily identified and can be effectively controlled. It is important to be familiar with the life cycle of these insect pests so that control measures can be applied at the proper time in the development stage of the insect. Mites, for example, breed rapidly and produce four or five generations during a season; therefore, several control treatments must be applied.

The final talk, given by Mr. Tom Ewert, Director, Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, Virginia was on "Propagating Boxwood from Cuttings". Size of cuttings, time of year, rooting medium, hormones, moisture requirements and some "home tips" were discussed. Mr. Ewert used many good visual aids in his presentation. Mr. Ewert's suggestions on propagation have been published previously in the *Boxwood Bulletin* and members who would like to review his recommendations may want to consult the April 1979 *Boxwood Bulletin*, Pages 69 - 70, or the October 1980 *Boxwood Bulletin*, Pages 29 - 30.

At the close of the speaking program the group was taken on a guided tour of the house and grounds.



*Grounds with boxwood*

*Photo: William B. Farrar*



*Photo: Estellita Hart*

*Director Al Beecher on grounds tour*



*Photo: Estellita Hart*

*Director Jim Faiszt on grounds tour*



*Photo: Estellita Hart*

*Director Tom Ewert on grounds tour*

# SCOTCHTOWN BOXWOOD WORKSHOP

July 21, 1982

Hanover County Virginia

Sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, the Department of Horticulture and the Cooperative Extension office of Hanover County in cooperation with the American Boxwood Society.

## PROGRAM

Morning Session - 9:30 AM - Moderator, Ralph E. LaRue, Extension Agent, Hanover County

*Welcome to Scotchtown* - Mrs. Rosalie Fulwinder, Resident Hostess

*The American Boxwood Society* - Mr. Richard Mahone, President, The American Boxwood Society

*Helping People with Boxwood Problems* - Panel - Boxwood growers from Hanover County

*Historical Facts about Boxwood* - Mr. William Gray, Director, American Boxwood Society

12:00 Noon - *Lunch*

Afternoon Session - 1:00 PM - Moderator, Charles K. Curry, Extension Agent, Henrico County

*Preventing Winter Injury in Boxwood* - Mr. Albert S. Beecher, Professor Emeritus, Horticulture, Virginia Tech

*Insects of Boxwood* - James A. Faiszt, Extension Horticulturist, Virginia Tech

*Propagating Boxwood from Cuttings* - Mr. Tom Ewert, Director, Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, VA

*Tour* - House and Grounds at Scotchtown

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## CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP AT BLANDY

The Blandy Experimental Farm will be offering its eleventh annual Holiday Greenery Workshop in December. The Workshop, open to the public, provides an opportunity to create four distinctive holiday arrangements; traditionally, a seasonal basket, a pine cone wreath, a fresh greens wreath and a fresh greens table arrangement.

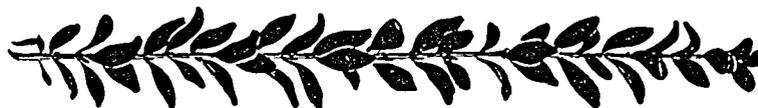
All of the basic materials are provided, mostly from plantings in the Orland E. White Arboretum at Blandy, but participants are asked to bring pruning shears, work gloves and such other materials as they may wish to incorporate in their projects. Lunch will be served in the course of the workshop, which extends from 9:30 a. m. to 3:30 p. m.

Because of the popularity of this Workshop it will be offered twice. The first session will be held on Saturday,

December 4 and the second session, on Saturday, December 11. It is not too early to register now because the sessions are limited in size and registrants will be accepted on a first-come basis. The fee is moderate and the opportunity to create unique Christmas decorations under skilled instruction makes this event a "must" with many people who return year after year. (The 1981 Workshop experience was glowingly described in the January 1982 *Boxwood Bulletin* by Jane Harris Ghramm, one of the ABS members who participated.)

For more information about registration or other aspects of the Workshop, please write to:

Holiday Greenery Workshop  
Blandy Experimental Farm  
University of Virginia  
P. O. Box 175  
Boyce, VA 22620  
(703) 837-1758



# A PRESENCE OF BOXWOODS

Mary A. Gamble



*The main axis of the Lehmann garden runs westward from the house which can be glimpsed in the background. Cultivars of *Buxus sempervirens* line both sides of the broad pathway.*

*Photo by Jack Horner*

An unobtrusive elegance distinguishes the garden of Mrs. John S. Lehmann in the St. Louis suburb of Ladue. It is a large garden possessed of dignity and charm, both enhanced by boxwood. It is not a boxwood garden; rather, it is a garden in which boxwood is a presence.

Mrs. Lehmann tells the story of her garden. "My husband and I," she says, "were early settlers in Ladue. My husband, who was from Iowa, loved the soil. We bought a field; he didn't want any trees. 'I want to plant my own'."

And he did. The original tract of five acres was doubled and then two more acres were added. Almost seven of the acres are in the garden.

Mrs. Lehmann and her late husband worked together to develop their garden. He loved old-fashioned roses and assembled a fine collection, many of which still bloom in the garden. He also loved apple trees and throughout the garden magnificent specimens he planted have been pruned poetically to display the forms of trunks and branches, and to make a background for

plantings of boxwood. As the garden grew it became a haven for small wild life and birds; often birdsong was the only sound. "On Saturdays and Sundays you couldn't budge John from the place," Mrs. Lehmann recalls.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Lehmann loved boxwood and planted it throughout the grounds. Mr. Lehmann liked to study garden catalogs and to order from them. He ordered boxwood by name, which leads to a story.

In summer 1982 LaVerne Jaudes, incumbent president of the Boxwood Society of the Midwest, and her husband visited White Flower Farm in Connecticut, one source of the Lehmann boxwoods. As a staff member showed the visitors around the discussion turned to boxwood. The staff member said, "Some years ago Mrs. Lehmann of St. Louis told us she had ordered — by name — the same boxwood from five nurseries. She received five identically labeled boxwoods — but all were different!" Mrs. Lehmann confirms the story but says her husband placed the orders and there were three, not five.

In St. Louis the name Lehmann is almost synonymous with Garden, spelled with a capital G for the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Lehmann Building, which houses the Garden's great botanical library and herbarium, is named for John S. Lehmann; the exquisite Anne Lehmann Rose Garden is named for Mrs. Lehmann. Their love for and knowledge of plants is evident throughout their garden.

The south facade of the Lehmann house — which has the same unobtrusive elegance as the garden — looks out on a great sweep of lawn, its perimeters contained by trees and shrubs. When a visitor steps through French doors its serenity sets the mood for the garden reached by a sharp right turn and a few steps upward. The garden entrance, framed by specimen boxwoods, opens on the garden's major axis which runs westward and which is bordered loosely by boxwood.

This axis and the long beds which parallel it were laid out by the Virginia landscape architect William Gillette who came to St. Louis in the 1920s and 1930s. The elements he designed form the solid, geometric shape upon which the garden rests. The northern side of the axis is banked by trees. The southern side is more open allowing light and shadow to play across the garden and enabling plants of varying requirements to thrive. Comfortably wide turf paths turn off to the south from the broad axis. These walkways lead to specialized garden beds, for example: a sunlit bed of tea roses, a bed of old-fashioned lavender chrysanthemums. Skillfully chosen perennials keep the garden in continuous seasonal bloom. And always, there are boxwoods: their odor and presence pervasive.

The garden design is geometric, but there are occasional free form exceptions. For example, a long row of hosta lilies curves along a path which returns the visitor to the lawn, and thus the house.

In recent years Mrs. Lehmann, like many gardeners, has taken steps to reduce maintenance. In some beds ground covers have replaced blooming annuals and perennials; in other beds river gravel has succeeded ground covers. For many years burlap shields protected her largest and most prized boxwoods from the treacherous Midwestern winters; now they face the elements alone, and have done very well.

Pruning is light and airy so that the boxwoods show their natural grace. Juxtaposed are a number of boxwoods to display their obvious differences in size and form and their subtle variations in color and leaf shape. For example: *Buxus microphylla japonica* against *Buxus sempervirens* 'Rotundifolia'; and *B. m. japonica* interspersed with *B. m. koreana*. Mrs. Lehmann has boxwood growing in full sunlight, in dappled shade, and "in too much shade", she says as she points out how the trees she and Mr. Lehmann planted have grown over the years. "My garden has come of age," says Anne Lehmann.

Mrs. Lehmann was a founding member of the Boxwood Society of the Midwest. Presently, the Society is propagating a clone of her garden plant of *B. semp.* 'Rotundifolia' (which we think may have come from Switzerland). It is one of Mrs. Lehmann's favorites; handsome, sturdy, Midwest-tested. When we asked permission to take cuttings so that the plant could be includ-

ed in the Edgar Anderson Boxwood Garden collection, Mrs. Lehmann said, "I would be happy to have my boxwoods perpetuated."



Photo by Mary Gamble

In the background, an apple tree pruned with lyrical grace. In the foreground, a boxwood pruned to display its natural form.



Photo by Mary Gamble

Boxwood plantings comparable to this group of *Buxus sempervirens* can be seen through the garden. The Asian boxwoods are represented by *Buxus microphylla japonica* and *koreana*.

# NEW ABS SECOND VICE PRESIDENT



Mary A. Gamble

Mary A. (Mrs. D. Goodrich) Gamble, a frequent contributor to the pages of *The Boxwood Bulletin* and a founder of the Boxwood Society of the Midwest, was elected Second Vice President of the ABS at the Annual Meeting in May. She brings to this office valuable experience with boxwood in the Middle West and great enthusiasm for the work of the American Boxwood Society. Mrs. Gamble settled in St. Louis, Missouri in 1930. She and her husband have made their home in Olivette, a St. Louis suburb, for the past 30 years. Mrs. Gamble describes her early life, career and belated discovery of boxwood in the following biographical statement.

“I am a fifth-generation Missourian whose great-great grandfather moved to Missouri from Virginia in 1826. I grew up on a central Missouri farm which gave me a lifelong appreciation of soil, weather, plants and wild life. I took my higher education at Lindenwood College for Women and the University of Missouri where I graduated from the School of Journalism in 1928.

“An inborn country shyness made me a diffident reporter and I turned to advertising. My business career of 22 years was entirely in that field; the last of my jobs was that of publicity and advertising director of the old St. Louis department store that is now, unhappily, defunct. In 1952, when my husband’s newspaper hours and my department store hours conflicted, I decided to quit working. For a birthday present

my husband gave me a course in plant propagation at the Missouri Botanical (Shaw’s) Garden and I re-discovered gardening. It has been a primary interest ever since.

“When I joined the St. Louis Herb Society I met Dr. Edgar Anderson, a founding member of the Society. In 1968 a young, herber friend gave my husband and me a great armload of boxwood boughs for Christmas and I discovered boxwood! I learned that Edgar Anderson knew a great deal about boxwood; he said “yes” when I asked him if he would direct me on a study of it. He introduced me to the American Boxwood Society and a number of its authorities, as well as other enthusiasts. It has been a happy and rewarding association which will reach its climax when the Edgar Anderson Memorial Boxwood Garden becomes a reality.

“To round out my affiliations — which relate in varying degrees to my professional experience — I am a lifetime board member of the Visiting Nurse Association of Greater St. Louis, a 55-year member of Women in Communications, Inc. (formerly Theta Sigma Phi), an honorary member of the St. Louis Herb Society, a founding member of the Boxwood Society of the Midwest, and a member of the American Boxwood Society (who feels honored to have been elected an officer).”

# AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY DIRECTOR



*Lynn R. Batdorf*

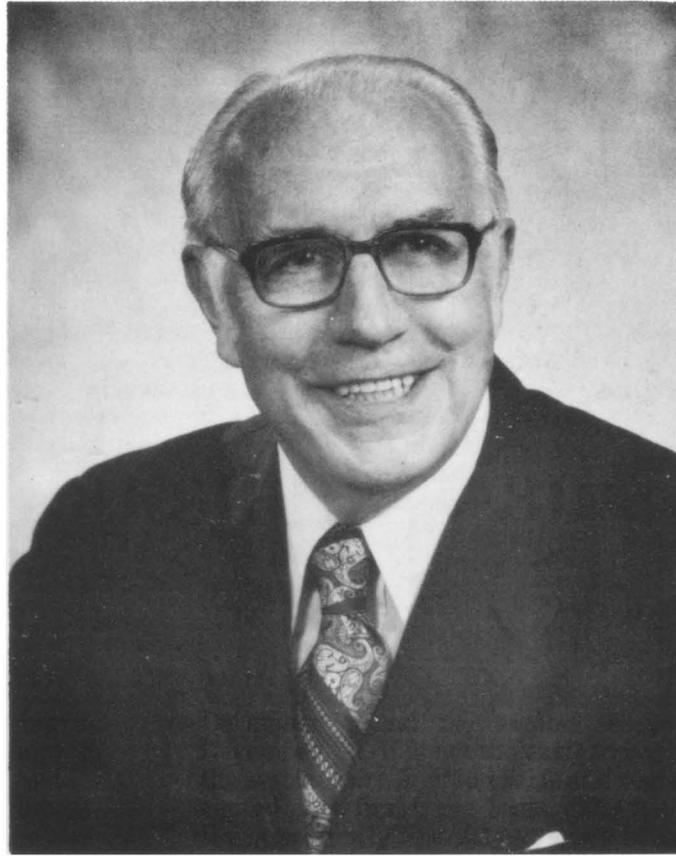
The youngest ABS Director on record is Mr. Lynn R. Batdorf, who was elected to the Board at the Annual Meeting in May. Mr. Batdorf was also a guest speaker at the meeting; notes on his illustrated lecture entitled "The Heritage, Taxonomy and Culture of Boxwood" appear elsewhere in this issue. Mr. Batdorf was born in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and currently lives with his wife and five year old daughter in Burtonsville, Maryland. He is presently Curator of the Boxwood, Daylily and Peony Collections at the U. S. National Arboretum in Washington, D. C. In the following biographical statement Mr. Batdorf describes his work at the Arboretum as well as some of the other activities that keep him busy.

"After graduating in 1974 from the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture I joined the staff of the U. S. National Arboretum in April 1977. The Boxwood, Daylily and Peony Collections, with which I am charged, occupy an area of 22 acres. The Boxwood Collection contains 5 species and more than 80 cultivars of boxwood. My responsibilities include: propagation of new material; establishing and maintaining the plants; insect, disease and weed control; record keeping; lectures; and conducting tours for the general public, foreign visitors and professional groups. In addition I teach classes, present workshops, prepare exhibits and publish pamphlets and articles.

"However, I cannot imagine doing anything else. I feel fortunate to be in this position because it suits me perfectly. I do not regard my work as a job that has to be done for eight hours a day, but rather as an essential part of my life. My background was in perennial flowers and I didn't know a great deal about boxwoods when I first came to the Arboretum. But after working with them for five years I have gained quite a bit of familiarity. I feel, however, that my knowledge still falls short of that of some of the members of the ABS whom I consider experts.

"In addition to my work as a Horticulturist at the Arboretum I am a Director of the National Capital Daylily Club and a member of the American Horticultural Society. I am working to complete a B. S. degree in Business Administration at the University of Maryland and I am also studying Advanced Sign Language Communication at Gallaudet College. To complete the list, I am a member of the Maryland Army National Guard. I am very pleased to have been elected a Director of the American Boxwood Society and will endeavor to further its aims, which closely coincide with the educational function of the National Arboretum."

# AMERICAN BOXWOOD SOCIETY DIRECTOR



*Dr. Walter S. Flory*

Dr. Walter S. Flory was a co-founder of the American Boxwood Society in 1961, served both as ABS Treasurer and as Editor of *The Boxwood Bulletin* during 1961-1963, and was named to the Advisory Board in 1961. He has been an honorary Life Member of the Society since 1963.

In addition to an outstanding academic career Dr. Flory has held office in countless scientific, civic and institutional organizations. He has been a frequent contributor over the years to professional, trade and scientific journals. His field of specialization is plant genetics, a subject of great interest to many boxwood growers.

Dr. Flory is married, the father of a daughter and two sons, and the grandfather of three boys and one girl. He has lived at 2025 Colonial Place, Winston-Salem, North Carolina since 1963. Dr. Flory's biographical statement follows:

"My place of birth was Bridgewater, Virginia where I attended high school and college, receiving a B. A. degree in 1928 from Bridgewater College. The following year I received an M. A. degree in biology from the University of Virginia. Upon completion of a doctoral thesis in plant genetics I received a Ph. D. degree in 1931, also from the University of Virginia. Then in 1935-36 I spent a post-doctoral year at Harvard as a National Research Fellow; my work was in plant cytogenetics.

"Although I have lived in Virginia for more than 40 years of my life I have also lived for various periods in

West Virginia, Florida, Mississippi, Massachusetts, Texas and North Carolina. From 1934 to 1944 I first was professor of biology at Bridgewater College and then horticulturist at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and a professor on the graduate faculty of Texas A & M College. From 1944 to 1947 I was horticulturist in charge of fruit research at the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station. My association with Blandy Experimental Farm dates from 1947 when I became the Vice Director and Manager there as well as Professor of Experimental Horticulture, University of Virginia. I held these positions until 1963, having meanwhile been additionally appointed Curator of the Orland E. White Research Arboretum in 1955. In 1963 I was named Babcock Professor of Botany at Wake Forest University, a position I held until my retirement in 1980. I was made Professor Emeritus in May 1980. During 1964-1976 I simultaneously served as Director of Reynolda Gardens.

"My interest in boxwood began early in life. I was present when some of the boxwoods at Blandy Farm were planted during 1928-1931. I supervised the planting of many more boxwoods at Blandy from 1947 to 1963. It was my good fortune to have my interest in, and love of, boxwood whetted and expanded by such good friends and knowledgeable people as Orland E. White, Edgar Anderson, A. G. Smith and Churchill Newcomb. My interest in 'Man's oldest garden ornamental' has continued down through the years. In my yard in Winston-Salem I have some 15 or more types or varieties of *Buxus sempervirens* as well as *Buxus harlandii* and *Buxus chinensis* (which may be a form of *Buxus microphylla*)."

## MR. BATDORF, DR. SPEESE ADDRESS ANNUAL MEETING

(Continuation from *The Boxwood Bulletin*,  
Vol. 22, No. 1, July 1982, P. 9)

Following lunch on May 12, 1982, the Annual Meeting first heard Mr. Lynn R. Batdorf, Curator of the Boxwood, Daylily and Peony Collections at the U. S. National Arboretum, Washington, D. C., speak on "Heritage, Taxonomy and Culture of Boxwood". Following some introductory remarks concerning the origins of boxwood and its history Mr. Batdorf gave a sketch of each of 41 species, varieties or cultivars of boxwood found at the National Arboretum.

He identified the plants by their proper scientific names and discussed cultural differences between them. He singled out some plants for particularly desirable characteristics and others for weaknesses, as observed in their growth at the Arboretum. Mr. Batdorf's presentation included color slides of each plant to supplement his verbal description.

These color slides are available to the public on a loan basis and may be duplicated. Also, cuttings of most of the boxwoods that Mr. Batdorf discussed during his lecture (see list below) are available from the National Arboretum and are mailed each fall. Inquiries about the slides and cuttings should be addressed to:

Mr. Lynn R. Batdorf  
Curator, Boxwood, Daylily, Peony Collections  
U. S. National Arboretum  
24th & R Streets, N. E.  
Washington, DC 20002

*National Arboretum Boxwoods Discussed by Mr. Batdorf  
at Annual Meeting*

*Buxus balearica*

*Buxus colchica*

*Buxus harlandii*

*B. h.* 'Richard'

*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*

*B. m.* var. *japonica* 'Morris Dwarf'

*B. m.* var. *japonica* 'Morris Midget'

*B. m.* var. *japonica* 'National'

*B. m.* var. *koreana* 'Tide Hill'

*B. m.* var. *microphylla*

*B. m.* var. *sinica*

*B. m.* 'Grace Hendricks Phillips'

*B. m.* 'John Baldwin'

*Buxus sempervirens* var. *suffruticosa*

*B. s.* 'Angustifolia'

*B. s.* 'Aristocrat'

*B. s.* 'Aurea'

*B. s.* Aurea Pendula (synonym *B. s.* 'Aurea Maculata Pendula')

*B. s.* 'Aurea Variegata'

*B. s.* 'Belleville'

*B. s.* 'Denmark'

*B. s.* 'Elegantissima'

*B. s.* 'Fastigiata'

*B. s.* 'Field Row'

*B. s.* 'Handsworthiensis'

*B. s.* 'Hardwickensis'

*B. s.* 'Inglis'

*B. s.* 'Ipek'

*B. s.* 'Joe Gable'

*B. s.* 'Latifolia Bullata' (synonym *B. s.* 'Bullata')

*B. s.* 'Latifolia Maculata'

*B. s.* 'Latifolia Rotundifolia'

*B. s.* 'Macrophylla'

*B. s.* 'Myrtifolia'

*B. s.* 'Northern New York'

*B. s.* 'Prostrata'

*B. s.* 'Pyramidalis'

*B. s.* 'Salicifolia Elata'

*B. s.* 'Vardar Valley'

*B. s.* 'Washington Missouri'

*B. s.* 'Welleri'

The educational program continued with a talk by Dr. Bernice M. Speese, Registrar of the American Boxwood Society. Observations on plants selected by Dr. Baldwin from open-pollinated seedlings of *Buxus microphylla*, and on the progeny of certain of these plants, were discussed. The plants selected by Dr. Baldwin for possible introduction as new cultivars of boxwood are growing on the campus of the College of William and Mary. Dr. Speese used herbarium specimens and live plant material to illustrate her talk. Three sets of observations were discussed.

The first concerned floral differences among four sister seedlings selected from a single population. One plant with perfect flowers produces many flowers followed by such heavy fruiting that seedlings are established by the hundreds around this plant (seedlings so established were available for those present at the meeting who wished to plant them and observe their characteristics). Another plant with perfect flowers produces only a few scattered flowering and fruiting branches. A third plant produces many female flowers and a few perfect flowers, while a fourth plant has all male flowers.

The next set of observations concerned the apparent pollination of a dwarf plant, with leaves suggestive of *Buxus koreana* with respect to shape, size, color and texture, by *Buxus Harlandii* (Hohman form of *Harlandii*). Of nine plants established from open-pollinated seedlings of the dwarf plant only two show any characteristics of this parent. All nine plants have the hardiness and early-growth habit of *B. Harlandii*. Seven plants are like *B. Harlandii* in growth habit and in leaf characters.

Dr. Speese's final observations were reserved for an individual plant, originally selected for its small, beautiful bluish-green leaves, that has matured into one of Dr. Baldwin's best and most exciting selections. Data were presented for the consideration of this plant as a hybrid of *B. microphylla* x *Buxus sempervirens* or some cultivar of *B. sempervirens*.

## PARTICIPANTS AT THE 22ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ABS

May 12, 1982

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 Michael Brown, Rt. 2, Box 218, The Plains, VA 22171  
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 Lot & Joan Butler, P. O. Box 190, Bluemont, VA 22012  
 William & Ruby Chism, 1610 N. Taylor St., Arlington, VA 22209  
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 Mrs. Charles H. Dick, 514 Amherst St., Winchester, VA 22601  
 Lloyd G. Edwards, 9100 Riggs Rd., Adelphi, MD 20783  
 LaVerne & Bernice Ewert, 3616 24th St., Rock Island, IL 61201  
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 Susanne Schrage, Mount Vernon, VA 22121  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Solenberger, 138 Amherst St., Winchester, VA 22601  
 Dr. Bernice Speese, P. O. Box 1589, Williamsburg, VA 23185  
 Marian Sturm, Rt. 2, Box 77, Berryville, VA 22611  
 Harrison Symmes, 6908 Baylor Dr., Alexandria, VA 22307  
 Katherine Ward, Front Royal, VA 22630  
 Mr. & Mrs. Everett C. Weitzell, 818 Weitzell Pl., Winchester, VA 22601  
 Walter D. Wisecarver, Jr., P. O. Box 146, Berryville, VA 22611

## Christmas Decorations

### Made with Natural Beauty



*Thomas E. Ewert, Director*

*Blandy Experimental Farm*

Deck the Halls with boughs of Holly — Bring in the Yule Log — Hang the mistletoe in just the right spot — Decorate a young fir tree to brighten the home — Hang garlands of pine or boxwood — Bring home a brilliant, red poinsettia.

What part do plants play in your Christmas celebration? At Blandy we emphasize the use of natural materials in making Christmas decorations. In decorating your home, you should, of course, use those things which appeal to you. But with such an abundance of natural beauty in the world around us, we think it's kind of a shame to fill our homes with plastic and chrome.

We have many "Christmas Plants" at Blandy. It's December, our "Plant of the Month" will feature just one group of these special plants. We will be featuring the genus *Juniperus*.

The traditional Christmas tree for many families in the Shenandoah Valley is "Red Cedar." Undoubtedly, one of the reasons is its abundance. The early settlers brought the trees into their home at Christmas to brighten up what must have been rather dismal surroundings at times. It can be found growing wild almost anywhere. Despite an eradication program many years ago in many of the local counties, you can still find "Red Cedars" growing along fence rows and in abandoned pastures all over the area.

The eradication program came about when it was discovered that "Red Cedars" were an alternate host for Cedar-Apple Rust, a disease which can cause tremendous financial loss for apple producers. By eliminating one host plant — in this case the "Red Cedar" — you eliminate the disease. So it was decided the "Red Cedars" should be destroyed. Since then, we have developed effective fungicides to control the disease on apple trees, and the need to do away with the persistent "Red Cedars" no longer exists.

"Red Cedar" is one of those troublesome, common names. Last month's "Plant of the Month" at Blandy was Deodar Cedar. This was one of the true cedars belonging to the genus *Cedrus*. "Red Cedar" is not a cedar at all. It is *Juniperus virginiana*.



### Hints

December is an excellent month to trim some of the evergreens and holly, removing selected end pieces and longer sections to properly shape the plant. The greens can be used for holiday decorating within the home or to pass on to friends.

Try not to let snow remain on your boxwood. The weight may break down the branches and the snow crystals act as a burning-glass through which the sun can give a severe scorch. After a snowfall, give your plant a good shake and then brush off the remaining snow clots with a broom.

Kissing balls probably began as a bunch of greens rather than as the formal ball we know. Boxwood has been associated with the balls, which usually have a bit of mistletoe and streamers at the bottom.

For a quick kissing ball, try sticking the boxwood into a styrofoam globe. The inner ball does not need to be more than one-third of the size of the completed kissing ball. Straight woody stems are the easiest with which to work.

# IN MEMORIAM

## Dr. W. Ralph Singleton

Dr. W. Ralph Singleton, a charter member of the American Boxwood Society, died in Charlottesville, Virginia on Wednesday, July 28, 1982 following a long illness. He was 82 years of age. He served as Vice President at the time the ABS was organized in 1961 and briefly assumed Presidential responsibilities in 1962 when President J. Churchill Newcomb died in office. Dr. Singleton was Director of the Blandy Experimental Farm from 1955 to 1965. During 1962-1966, Dr. Singleton served as a Director Ex-Officio of the ABS. In 1966 he was elected a Director and continued to serve in that capacity until he was forced by illness to tender his resignation in October 1980.

Dr. Singleton was professor emeritus and former Miller professor of biology and agriculture at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. He was a specialist in genetics and plant breeding.

A native of Jacksonville, Missouri, Dr. Singleton was with the Connecticut Experimental Station for 21 years where he helped to develop new sweet corn hybrids by

means of irradiation. He then went to Brookhaven Laboratory in New York where he worked until his appointment to the faculty of the University of Virginia in 1955.

Dr. Singleton was the author of numerous scientific papers as well as a book, *Elementary Genetics*. He was president of the American Genetic Association and held graduate degrees from Washington State University and Harvard University. In 1976 he was named "father of hybrid sweet corn breeding" by the National Sweet Corn Breeders Association.

A member and elder of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dr. Singleton is survived by his wife, Dorothy, and four children. He is buried at the University cemetery.

Ralph Singleton was a loyal and dedicated member of the ABS. We are indeed grateful for his many contributions through the years. Friends may wish to consider making a gift in his name to the Boxwood Memorial Fund.

## THE NUCLEAR PLOWMEN OF BLANDY FARM

(Reprinted from the *The Commonwealth* December 1963)

Helen C. Milius

*Lively international interest in Blandy Farm is evident from the high percentage of graduate students enrolled from abroad. A typical recent class included Smritimoy Bose of India, Te-Hsiu Ma of China, Argos Rodriguez-Machado of Argentina, Huseyin Gokcora of Turkey, Mlle. Françoise Bernard of France, Josip Gotlin of Yugoslavia and Raymond Flagg of West Virginia.*

A visitor to the Blandy Experimental Farm in the Shenandoah Valley stayed so silent that his guide grew uneasy.

"Does this bore you?" the guide asked. "You haven't said a word."

The visitor finally spoke. "I'm dumbfounded. I can hardly believe such a place as this could exist in Virginia without my having heard of it. And to find it out here in the country many miles from nowhere, attracting scientists from thousands of miles away, even changing the food I eat — it's incredible."

The incredible place is a tract of some 700 acres

halfway between Winchester and the Blue Ridge Mountains near the town of Boyce. Part of the land pastures Herefords and a flock of sheep. Part is planted in alfalfa and cultivated crops. But there the resemblance to other farms ends. For this one is operated by the University of Virginia for research in genetics. Its importance increases as the world's population explosion speeds the race between improved agriculture and famine. Its geneticists are studying the microscopic forces that produce better seed for better crops. And some day it may be a superior seed no bigger than a grain of corn — and not a bigger bomb — that will control the balance of power in a hungry world.

Blandy's facilities include a radiation field with a "hot" core of radioactive cobalt-60; the most comprehensive arboretum between Washington and Miami, flaunting bamboo, tea and orange trees; fully equipped cytological laboratories; experimental livestock; a warehouse of genetic reference material; and a program of graduate study that attracts scientists literally from around the world. About 30 percent of the students come from outside the United States.

One of the astonishing features is that the entire operation is practically self-supporting. Though state-owned, it receives little from the state except a fraction of the salary of the director, Dr. W. Ralph Singleton, the Miller Professor of Biology at the University of Virginia.

Blandy Experimental Farm owes its existence to an unlikely combination of circumstances — a platonic love affair, an enigmatic last will and testament, a shortage of castor oil, the sinking of a ship, some canny college professors.

It began with a tired businessman, the New York stockbroker and railroad magnate Graham F. Blandy. He came to Virginia for a summer vacation about 1904 and got entangled in a lifelong love affair with the Shenandoah Valley.

Weary of the big-city rush, he was captivated by the quiet, the fertile rolling land, the blue mountain backdrop, the romantic association of the countryside around Boyce. Five historic old plantations cluster within four or five miles of the town, the oldest dating from Revolutionary times. A neighborhood chapel graveyard there commemorates their former masters; stones bear distinguished names of Pages, Nelsons, Pendletons, and Burwells — of John Esten Cooke, novelist and historian; of Philip Pendleton Cooke Jr., poet; of Edmund Randolph, Virginia Governor and first attorney general of the young United States; of a dozen forgotten Confederate soldiers.

Mr. Blandy was attracted particularly to the Tuleyries estate. The spacious mansion with an inviting portico and a carved eagle over the door had been built and named in 1833 by Col. Joseph Tuly, had emerged undamaged from the Civil War battles between Jackson and Sheridan. Its dependencies included an even older brick building called the Quarters, presumably because slaves had been quartered there. The New York stockholder in 1904-05 bought Tuleyries and several adjoining tracts, making a 912-acre Shangri-La that became his summer home for the rest of his life.

At his death in 1926 his will left Tuleyries Mansion and surrounding acreage to his wife. But the rest of the estate, including a trust fund, was bequeathed to his other love — his adopted state of Virginia, its people, and its future. Some 700 acres and the Quarters were left to the University of Virginia on this condition: that “the University will agree to call said farm ‘The Blandy Experimental Farm’ and will run it to teach boys farming in the various branches....”

Anyone who knows Virginia as well as Mr. Blandy did realizes that the Virginia Polytechnic Institute is the state’s center for eminently practical agricultural experiments. Obviously he was clearing the way for something different.

A University of Virginia faculty committee, headed by the late Dr. Bruce D. Reynolds, concluded that the donor would have been interested in experiments on fundamentals rather than practical applications. The development of hybrid corn was just starting to revolutionize the yield of American cornfields. What could be more fundamental than research into the mysteries of heredity that unpredictably produce such dazzling phenomena? Today we’d call it “breaking the genetic code of the DNA molecule.” But in 1926 there were still scientists who scoffed at geneticists’ talk of chromosomes and genes. The recent hullabaloo over Darwinism at the Scopes “monkey trial” had not died down completely. Genetics, the study of heredity and the variations that give origin to new species, was frequently suspected of being subversive. But the Univer-

sity committee assumed the responsibilities for executing Mr. Blandy’s wish “to teach boys farming” from the inside out — starting inside the seed, with the determiners of heredity carried in the chromosomes, regardless of whether you called them genes, factors, DNA, or the will of God.

As Dr. Reynolds quietly looked over the nation’s leading geneticists for a future director of Blandy Experimental Farm, all indications seemed to point to Dr. Orland E. White, Curator of Plant Breeding at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Dr. Reynolds had seen him in action during World War I. Engines of the somewhat flimsy combat planes of that war had been kept in the air mainly by the hand of the Almighty, the daring of man, and regular lubrication with castor oil. As submarine warfare dried up the supply of castor oil from India, a desperate appeal went out to Americans to grow their own. A shipload of castor beans was handed out to Southern farmers. But then what? Who knew the where and when and how of planting them? Dr. White was hastily yanked out of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and dispatched as a one-man task force to get castor beans into the ground and combat planes into the air. His success helped make history.

He was one of the pioneer geneticists in the United States. The relatively young science of genetics usually gives its birthdate as the year 1900, when independent investigators rediscovered the lost Mendel’s Laws. And Orland White, still at college in south Dakota, received special permission to teach a vanguard genetics course there in 1904. From his post at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden he explored the world for rare plants. One by-product of his explorations was his description of the flora of Amazon jungles for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Another was an invitation to lecture on economic plants of Bolivia at the University of Virginia. After the lecture he was taken to inspect the sprawling 700-acre white elephant of a farm in the Shenandoah Valley that University professors hoped could “teach boys farming” from the inside out. Dr. White accepted the challenge — and the job as Director of Blandy Experimental Farm.

He started in September, 1927, in the ten-room Quarters. The upstairs rooms were dormitories. Two downstairs rooms were equipped as laboratories, one as a library, one as a dining room where professor and students together would share the food and the costs. Principal extra-curricular activities of this unorthodox college facility were dish-washing and bed-making, as Ph. D candidates took turns at KP and other household chores. Dubbing themselves Blandy Farmers, the half-dozen students established a tradition of rugged self-sufficiency.

When endowments more than doubled the accommodations in 1941, the common dining room was retained. And today at Blandy Farm the students still have the stimulus of informal association with the faculty that Mr. Jefferson intended when he planned the University of Virginia. Blandy Farmers pursue their research on the farm from June to September, attend classes at the University in Charlottesville during winter months and receive their degrees there.

A major triumph of Dr. White and his successive classes is an arboretum unsurpassed in the South — with the possible exception of Miami’s Fairchild Gardens. Some 5,000 species are represented. Specimens of every botanical family hardy in this climate, plus others never raised here before, grow around an oval valley in ornamental profusion. They are arranged in textbook

sequence, from the botanically primitive families like barberries and magnolias through gradations to the more complex forms.

At first Dr. White collected seed, swapped seedlings and cuttings with botanic gardens, wheedled bargains from nurseries. Students contributed hybrids their experiments produced. Students themselves planted and cultivated, resting their aching backs while studying. About 1936 the collection was extensive enough for transplanting into the arboretum by family groupings. Visitors who've never opened a botany book gape at such novelties as hollies with black berries, camellias blooming in November, hybrid oaks that are evergreen, the smoke tree, the parasol pine of Japan, the Chinese table-top pine, green and blue *Cunninghamias*, specimens of the elusive native pawpaw with fruit six inches long.

The wealth of boxwood, that traditional stand-by of Virginia's finest old gardens, is considered the largest collection of varieties in the United States. Some 90 types are represented by mature specimens, with an estimated 150 more still in the adjoining nurseries. The American Boxwood Society convenes there each May for its annual meeting and regular inspection of plant specimens.

Though planned for study, the arboretum is paying unexpected dividends in the form of commercial possibilities. Its ponderosa pines are demonstrating the suitability of this species for commercial growth in Virginia, reaching pulpwood size in ten years and timber size in twenty.

Another surprise is the Arizona cypress, a pale blue-green evergreen, shaped like a Walt Disney dream of a Christmas tree. Dr. White planted 200 seeds. Three-quarters of the seedlings were soon winterkilled. But the several dozen which survived constitute a winter-hardy strain valuable for ornamentals and Christmas trees. Independent nurserymen are now discussing arrangements for propagating stock.

When Dr. White retired in 1955, University officials gratefully attached his name to the collection he had created — the Orland E. White Arboretum.

In picking his successor, University officials looked among that hardy new breed of geneticists who play with the lightning of nuclear radiation. By then, the once-controversial chromosome had been brought into clear focus by the electron microscope, and a change in heredity — called a mutation — was equated with a change in one of the chromosome's molecules. Blasting those molecules with powerful radiation was genetics' newest research technique. And the man selected as new Director of Blandy Farm — the present incumbent, Dr. Ralph Singleton — was a pioneer in this field.

He had already successfully manipulated the chromosomes of corn in his career as plant breeder at the Connecticut Agricultural Station. One of his products was a compact corn with full-size ears but a short stalk, less subject to wind damages than taller stalks. Another, now commercially available, is a late sweet corn for home gardens that supplies corn on the cob several weeks longer than any other variety. A farmer's son, after a day's work in an experimental corn field he still enjoyed the pleasures of home gardening. Even now tends a plastic-covered propagating bed for azaleas, heated through a window from the furnace room.

But his bucolic pleasures were shattered in 1939 as he started home from an international genetics congress in Europe. He sailed on the fateful *Athenia*, first ship sunk

in World War II. In the lifeboat waiting for rescue, he foresaw the end of scientific isolation from world problems, particularly the problem of feeding hungry millions.



Dear Officers and Members  
of the American Boxwood Society

It is with real regret that personal responsibilities make it necessary for me to resign as Editor of *The Boxwood Bulletin*. The work has always been interesting and a pleasure. The best part was getting to know many of you which will continue in the times ahead.

I greatly appreciate the many helps and kindnesses extended to me. Each and every one will always be remembered.

Thanking you for a most rewarding experience, I am

Sincerely,

(Mrs. Charles H. Dick)

"Selma"  
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Mr. and Mrs. Scot Butler will become Co-Editors of *The Boxwood Bulletin* beginning with the January 1983 issue.



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DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Regular membership dues of The American Boxwood Society are now \$10.00. This includes a subscription to *The Boxwood Bulletin*.

Non-member subscriptions are for groups and institutions such as botanic gardens, libraries, etc. They are \$10.00 a year, and run by the calendar year.

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

At the present time any or all *Bulletins* are available, back to Vol. 1, No. 1 (Vol. 1 consists of three issues only, there was no Vol. 1, No. 4). Price per single copy is \$2.00.

Besides regular membership dues at \$10.00 per year, there are other classes of membership available:

Category	Annual Dues
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Contributions are welcome for the Research Fund, the Boxwood Memorial Garden, and the Boxwood Handbook.

Gift memberships are announced to the recipients by boxwood-decorated cards which carry the information that *The Boxwood Bulletin* will come as your gift four times a year.

Members of The American Boxwood Society are reminded of the 1968 IRS decision that contributions to and for the use of the Society, are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code.

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Boyce, Virginia 22620

In some cases, depending upon the nature of your request, your letter may be forwarded to a member of the Board or another appropriate member who can provide the help you have requested.

You are also welcome to write directly to the president of the American Boxwood Society:

Mr. Richard D. Mahone  
P. O. Box 751  
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

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If you have contributions for the Boxwood Bulletin — articles, news notes, photographs, suggestions of anything of probable interest to boxwood people, it saves time to direct them to the Editor:

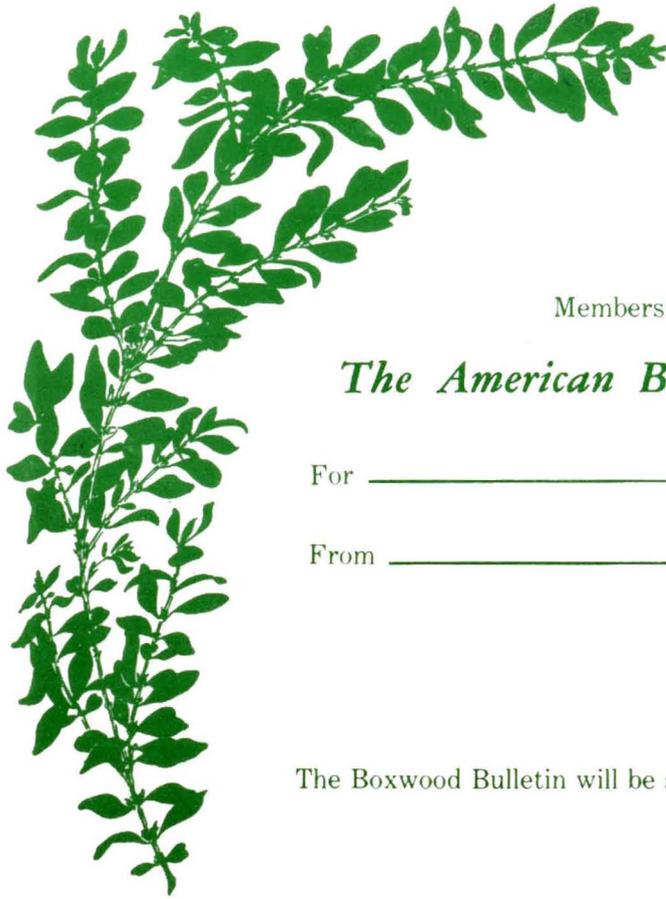
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