

The Journal of the American Boxwood Society – Devoted to Our Oldest Garden Ornamental

# THE BOXWOOD BULLETIN

Gardens of Italy, Companion Plants, Pruning Techniques

*Boxwood Art, Boxwood & Dog Urine, ABS Tribute to 'Joan & Scot'*



The American Boxwood Society is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1961 and devoted to the appreciation, scientific understanding and propagation of *Buxus*. For additional information on the Society visit our website at: [boxwoodsociety.org](http://boxwoodsociety.org)

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# Letter from the President

The only thing that is constant in life is change. That is a tough one to swallow, but the more you think about it, the more you know that it is true.



*Robert, John, and Bennett Saunders propagating English boxwood, 1971*

And so it is at Saunders Brothers. English boxwood, or *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’ was the Number One plant grown in our nursery for many, many years. I recall as a youngster propagating the boxwood and planting them into “boxwood beds” of sand and peat moss. They were tiny things but they would grow to large specimens.

English boxwood were classic, timeless, green meatballs that every landscape had to have. You planted them, and as long as they weren’t run over by a truck, in 10 years you had a volleyball. In another 40 years, you had your Grandma’s yard with no pruning and almost no other maintenance.



*English boxwood after burning*

In August of 2018, our nursery destroyed our last large commercial planting of English boxwood. I had to leave the nursery the day the boxwood were cut because I couldn’t stand to see it.

Because of problems with boxwood blight, boxwood decline, and a host of other issues, English boxwood are no longer in demand. The market for boxwood is changing because of boxwood blight and other diseases and insects which we knew nothing about 25 years ago. It hurts me to say it, but English boxwood are a thing of the past.

The Boxwood Society is changing also. We are putting more and more information on our website and we are distributing less and less hard copies of anything. We are focusing this and upcoming issues more on care, because we are finding that boxwood blight and other boxwood problems can be successfully managed if gardeners simply know how to manage.

Please contribute your own articles to build our *Bulletin* and our website. Shea Powell, our new *Boxwood Bulletin* editor and website manager, is actively searching for people to write articles. Please contribute! Enjoy the *Bulletin*!

*Letter and Photos by Bennett Saunders.*



*A beautiful English boxwood in the author’s yard*

## Adding Color To Your Structure: Perennial Companions For Boxwood

Boxwood are like the little black dress of the fashion world – they're classy and they go with everything. So when asked to present to ABS on color companions for boxwood, I was a little stymied. Box are so versatile – so many sizes and shapes that can be used from normal soil in full sun to deep, dry shade. Unless you're planting in a swamp, box are a pretty safe bet. So I started thinking about what didn't mesh with them stylistically. If box are the quintessential stately evergreen, what's the floofiest, wildest, most exuberant style I can think of? Piet Oudolf's New Perennial Movement. It's very heavy to grasses and flowering perennials with an emphasis on form over flower. Some of his plantings are positively frothy and embrace a wild, dramatic look late in the season when he encourages us to find beauty in the lasting form. This style with its randomness and wildness is the antithesis of boxwood to me, but they still work well together. Piet frequently uses clipped woodies to offset the wild and wooly in his designs.

So I switched gears and started chewing on the toughest sites to garden. One of the worst, the dread of many gardeners, is dry shade – especially if there's deer pressure. Boxwood are awesome in the dry shade of deer country so what can we plant with them there?

The top of my dry shade perennial list is *Epimedium*. We use the common name "Fairy Wings", but it is also known, less adorably, as "horny goat weed" as it is believed to be a goat aphrodisiac. That sort of factoid reassures me that there are many worse career paths than the one I chose. *Epimediums* prefer more soil moisture but perform so well in dry shade (once established) that it's easy to forget that preference. The foliage can vary from deciduous to evergreen, green to red, variegated, elongated, and some even have spiky edges. The foliage is attractive enough to grow them even if they didn't flower. But they do flower, in spring, and come in every major color except blue. Some are clumpers and some are runners so double check if you specifically need one or the other. Most cultivars are 12-18" tall, but there are outliers that hug the ground and some that can reach 3' tall. My favorite at the moment is 'Pink Champagne' bred by *Epimedium* guru Darrell Probst. Pink Champagne is a clumper and at 1.5' – 2' is one of the taller cultivars regularly available. Its foliage boasts a burgundy-on-green variegation which turns steadily more green throughout the season and its



*Epimedium* 'Pink Champagne'



*Epimedium* 'Domino'



*Epimedium* 'Amber Queen'

larger-than-average flowers are two-tone pink and white. Also keep an eye out for 'Domino', and 'Amber Queen' which offer many of the same characteristics in different flower colors.



Helleborus 'Anna's Red' flower and foliage

Another excellent perennial companion for boxwood in challenging dry shade situations is *Helleborus*. While I can't say this about many genera, I've never met a lousy hellebore. Hellebores are evergreen and bloom for months starting in winter or early spring. For many years, the most commonly available were *Helleborus orientalis*. While a terrific plant in its own right, breeding with and between other species has improved the foliage, expanded the bloom window, and resulted in flowers that face out rather than down. In extremely high populations, deer have been known to browse the old foliage in mid-winter, but conventional wisdom is to remove that foliage at that time of year anyway so it doesn't obscure the flowers as they emerge. My favorite series at the moment is the Frostkiss series by Bart Noordhuis. The first of the series, 'Anna's Red', was a breeding breakthrough that combined deep reddish-purple flowers, stunning marbled foliage, and a robust habit. The marbling on the foliage is pink on young growth and turns silver



Helleborus 'Glenda's Gloss'

as the leaf matures. Mature plants can easily reach 18" high and 24" wide with 50 or more open flowers. Successive introductions have added different flower colors, bloom times, and even showier foliage. 'Glenda's Gloss' is worth seeking out for the vibrant two-tone raspberry and white flowers.



Paeonia obovata flower and seed pod



While there are many other superb companions for *Buxus* in the shade garden including but not limited to *Carex*, *Dicentra*, *Heuchera*, and ferns, the last one I'll recommend in detail is a peony. A peony for the shade? You bet. *Paeonia obovata* not only tolerates shade, it requires it. Its similarity to common garden peonies ends with name and deer resistance. Unlike the ostentatious double flowered forms that dominate garden centers, this woodland peony has a single petaled flower in a polite pink. Close inspection of the flower parts remind me of an elfin ballerina stuck trying to crawl into the base of the flower. It's the legs of that little ballerina which elevate this plant to a level of awesome - not seen since Seymore in the Little Shop of Horrors - as they become the seed pods. Long after the flower is gone the seed pods sit atop the foliage like lifeless fingers, but as summer progresses into fall, these pods begin to split open revealing shiny blue-black seeds and little red something-or-others. The pods open further and further until they eventually reflex fully and look like a gaping alien mouth in the fall woodland. It's more awesome (and less creepy) than it sounds.

Happy planting!

Article by Paul Westervelt. Photos, Saunders Brothers, Inc. Paul is the Annual & Perennial Production Manager at Saunders Brothers, Inc.

## Boxwood Pruning Guide



*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica* with faster growing reversion that should be pruned

Perhaps it's merely my penchant for instant gratification, but when asked to write an article on boxwood maintenance, my mind instantly went to pruning. Maybe it's neither, and instead is simply based on my primary activity since taking over the maintenance and development of the National Boxwood and Perennial Collection at the U.S. National Arboretum in early 2016. In starting to write this, it quickly became clear to me how broad the topic of pruning can be, so this article merely summarizes the reasons to prune, the proper methods, timing, biting the bullet when it comes to making tough decisions, and how to prune properly.

First, a disclaimer: before starting any pruning job, make sure your tools are sharp, and clean. My preferred tools are a pair of good hand pruners, loppers, a small folding saw, and a 13" pruning saw. A bypass pole pruner will occasionally come in handy for some occasional unruly growth at the top of a tall plant. Some of you might need a ladder—not me, usually (at 6'4" with a nearly 8' reach)! To sanitize your tools and reduce risk of spreading boxwood blight and other fungal diseases, soak them for at least 5 minutes in 70% isopropyl rubbing alcohol, or a 10% bleach and 90% water solution, or 1.5oz Lysol concentrate per gallon of water and wipe clean. I typically sanitize my tools between different bed areas, although sanitizing between plants may be ideal. If a branch is unhealthy, sanitize between cuts. Having multiple pruners may be useful, so that one set is always ready to go. While waiting for tools to soak, it's a good opportunity to take a full look at your boxwood "patient" to fully assess the situation, inspect limbs to be pruned, and other problematic areas to develop a plan before making your first cut. Doing so can easily reduce chances for one of those "oops!" moments. If you have one of those, I won't (can't) judge!

The methods for proper pruning are fairly simple. For most pruning cuts, a perpendicular cut is recommended, as there is less surface area that the plant will have to heal. For smaller branches (under 1" in diameter), a single cut at the desired spot is all that is really necessary. Occasionally, I'll make two cuts, one 6" above the ultimate location for the final cut if I'm concerned about the branch cracking. For larger branches, three cuts are recommended, with the first being about 6 inches above the ultimate cut, on the underside of the branch, called the "notch" cut. This cut will prevent the branch from cracking and bark from being stripped down the trunk when making the second cut. The second cut should be a few inches above the notch cut, and removing the branch there removes the majority of weight that could cause splitting and tearing when making the final cut. The last cut should be just at the branch collar, near the trunk, again at a 90-degree angle. If the cut is too far from the collar, a dead stub will be left, preventing the boxwood from healing properly. If it is too close, or at the trunk, it is more likely to leave a hole where infection could easily begin.

Now that that's out of the way, why do we prune? The reasons are many, but largely fall into three categories: to maintain or alter aesthetics, to improve air circulation, and to ensure structural integrity. Maintaining vigor is also important, but is frequently a bonus when pruning to address issues in any of these other categories. Most often, shearing is done seasonally, to reshape plants in a formal parterre setting or to maintain a desired height in foundation plantings. Guidelines for doing this well have been previously written by our own Lynn Batdorf, so I will focus more on other areas.



*Solid green reversion on B. sempervirens 'Argentea'*

## AESTHETICS

Among the many reasons boxwood are grown is their versatility, uniformity, and plasticity when properly trained. With each of the many growth forms, specific cultivars have particular growth habits. Occasionally though, there may be an errant branch that shows a dwarf growth habit or standard growth pattern on a dwarf plant, leaf shape, or leaf color. Removing those as early as possible, before they begin to outcompete or interfere with the overall shape of the original plant, gives the best results. At the U.S. National Arboretum, certain cultivars like *Buxus microphylla* 'Morris Midget' and 'Curly Locks' seem particularly prone to this.



*Sport on 'Curly Locks'*

Narrowly upright cultivars may routinely require the removal of specific branches, particularly after wind storms, rain, or if new growth begins to lean too far outward. Snow and ice storms also may wreak havoc on an otherwise healthy plant. *B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy', specifically, is prone to wayward branches when not regularly maintained; after adverse weather events, several of its long, thin branches may require a good trim.

In time, some plants may develop a somewhat unruly habit, or hedged boxwood may develop a shape in which the top of the hedge is wider than the base. In this case, the upper branches intercept most of the sunlight, causing lower branches to lose vigor, thin out, and ultimately die, leaving as much as the lower third of the plant completely bare. This can be corrected by thinning out the longest branches near the top of the hedge and heading back the remainder to the appropriate length. With more overgrown plants, it's important to bring the size down carefully over the course of a few months, or perhaps over 2-3 years (depending on severity) to avoid leaving bald spots which may not recover.

## IMPROVING AIR CIRCULATION

Good air circulation is crucial for all boxwood, which can help reduce the incidence of fungal diseases and insect infestation. An added benefit when problems do arise is that any foliar spray (be it compost tea, foliar fertilizer, or pesticide) will more evenly penetrate the entire plant for more consistent results throughout the canopy. In a properly maintained boxwood, sunlight penetrates the center of the plant, encouraging new leaves to grow along interior stems. This new growth both gives the plant a fuller look and offers good places to make cuts in the case that the boxwood needs to be reduced in size at a later date, or in the case of accidental breakage, makes it possible for the plant to more quickly recover its desired shape.

From my experience, there are two primary things to consider when addressing air circulation issues in boxwood: layering, and proper thinning. Layering occurs when low-lying branches around the skirt of a boxwood plant contact the soil surface and develop adventitious roots. If the branches that contact the ground are removed on a yearly basis,



*Narrow crotch angles with bark inclusions*

these layers will not become problematic. If allowed to grow without interference, they compete with the original plant for sunlight, nutrients, and water. The downward growing branches the layered plant originated from should be pruned off entirely, or pruned to an outward facing branch, and the layered plant dug out. Removing layered branches prior to thinning is recommended, since it will make the main plant more easily accessible.

Thinning or plucking your boxwood is extremely important for the health and beauty of the shrub. It allows for better air circulation which is necessary for all boxwood but is especially important for *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' (English Boxwood, dwarf box), to prevent fungal diseases and insect infestation. Again, when properly maintained, sunlight should penetrate the center of the plant, which will encourage new growth along the interior stems.

A boxwood grown in full sun or one that has been sheared are prime candidates for thinning as they may have very dense growth on the outside of the shrub with few leaves along their interior stems. Many vertically-growing stems which prevent sunlight from reaching the interior of the plant may also be present. Boxwood grown in part or full shade tend to have more horizontally oriented branches and are less likely to require thinning. To determine whether a plant needs to be thinned, use your hands to pull branches apart and look inside the shrub.

If green leaves line the interior stems, the plant is thinned properly; if the interior stems are bare, with little or no leaves, the plant needs to be thinned. This is also a good opportunity to check the crown of the plant. If it is congested with dead leaves, blow them out using a blower or strong stream of water to discourage adventitious root formation.

Co-author Helen Hecht's grandfather always said, "the best time to prune is when you have the pruners in your hand." While pruning your boxwood should happen after the coldest temperatures of winter and before bud break, thinning can be done annually and at any time of year. All boxwood enthusiasts thin or pluck in their own way. The goal is to reduce congestion allowing sunlight to penetrate the shrub's interior, by evenly removing small branches throughout the entire plant. Some choose to do this by simply breaking small branches by hand, however Helen and I recommend using pruners as they allow for greater control: with every cut, we control where each new bud will break. Clean cuts also require less time and fewer resources in order to heal. If using water, ensure the plant will have sufficient time to dry before nightfall.

It is best to begin the thinning process at or near the base of the shrub, primarily to remove entire branches that may be growing vertically along the outside of the plant. If one starts thinning from the top down, it becomes evident only later that an entire branch/branches were better off fully removed. Additionally, in starting the thinning process near the base, it is easier to identify and address more pressing structural concerns such as bent, rubbing, or partially broken branches, that may affect which branches are pruned out during the thinning process. Boxwood branches generally grow in groups of



*Branch rubbed smooth from rubbing against larger branch.*

three, and after thinning, reduced to two or even one branch by making cuts at the crotch.

When choosing which branch(es) to cut, remove those growing vertically and/or those that are growing toward the interior of the plant. If heading back, make the cut just above an outward facing branch or leaf to encourage horizontal growth. It is also recommended to remove inward-facing buds that could result in inward-facing branches in subsequent years. After thinning, the boxwood should not be overly dense. Ideally, you should be able to just see through the plant, which will allow for the next flush of growth to fill in the evenly spaced holes you've created.



*Branch after smaller of two branches was removed due to bark inclusion*

## STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

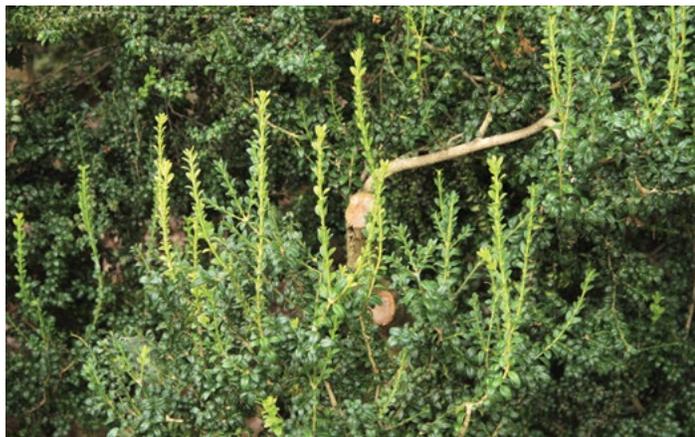
If done well, proper pruning can dramatically reduce the amount of maintenance a boxwood will require as it matures, both making things easier for its caretakers, and extending its useful lifespan as an ornamental shrub. Many things can interfere with a boxwood's structural integrity and need intervention for best results over the long haul, including inward-facing branches, narrow crotch angles, and accidental breakage.

As with all trees and shrubs, branches should radiate out from the center of the plant rather like the spokes of an umbrella with no branch crossing back toward, or over, the center line. When interior-facing branches are allowed to develop, they may interfere with the plant's shape, or worse, crowd other branches and rub against them, inviting opportunistic pests. As an example, I distinctly recall an angry swarm of carpenter ants exiting a hole that had been chewed where two larger branches had been rubbing for several years. Due to the additional damage they had caused to weaken the remaining, more desirable branch, more of the branch had to be removed.

Narrow crotch angles can also pose major problems for boxwood, although they are not as prevalent an issue as they are for other plants like the notorious ornamental pears. Some plants produce numerous branches in close proximity, leading to numerous narrow crotch angles. These are highly prone to splitting during wind and ice events. Where the split occurs, the top half is generally flat, and darker in color (due to the bark inclusion), with jagged tears below. As the branches expand, the diameter of each branch increases, ultimately squeezing the inner portion of each branch together. If not addressed, bark inclusions develop, creating a very weak spot that is likely to break, creating a hole, and potentially damaging other limbs when the weaker of the two branches falls. To correct the problem, remove the smaller of the two branches, and make the cut perpendicular to the direction the branch was growing. Larger limbs may first be reduced to allow the plant to begin to fill in before removing the entire limb.



*Narrow crotch angles with bark inclusions*



*Vigorous, upright regrowth on B. sempervirens 'Handsworthensis' after a hard prune to reshape it last year*

In some of our gardens, maintenance was perfect (maybe dreaming here, but who's to know?!), yet problems still popped up: a branch fell and damaged the boxwood, a limb suddenly declined, or snow caused a branch to partially split, leading to tough decisions. Do I remove the damaged portions and leave a hole? Should I try to let it heal on its own, and hope for the best? Sometimes it's not a matter of damage from natural causes; rather it might instead be a desire to change the aesthetics of a plant. In some cases, as the one pictured, it is a combination of all three. My approach, and recommendation (after consulting with Helen Hecht): do what's best for the plant in the long run and bite the bullet. Cut the broken limb off above the damaged portion to an outward or upward facing branch and allow healthy limbs to develop in the direction that will cause the least amount of crowding within the plant's canopy. If not removed, the bent, broken, or partially split branch may continue to grow, but will be unable to heal properly, leading to a larger hole when the branch ultimately fails years later.

As a disclaimer (many of you already know this well), it's of paramount importance to recognize the natural tendencies of various cultivars, particularly when it comes to their growth habits and branching patterns. Upright and narrow cultivars ('Graham Blandy', 'Dee Runk') are best maintained as a single central leader, with any competing branches cut back to an outward facing bud. Each season, vigorous vertical branches may appear, and should likewise be removed so that they do not interfere with the central leader. Such competing branches may not look problematic for a young specimen, but as they grow older, they become more likely to splay outward, causing unruly growth patterns and possible breakage, not to mention poor airflow and leaf litter accumulating adjacent to the leader near the base of the plant. For most of the

other boxwood selections out there, the guidelines are largely the same:

1. Inspect regularly—even with established plants, it's possible to miss something that, once noticed, cannot be overlooked. Sometimes looking for rubbing branches is best done on a windy day, because the rubbing branches may be more easily heard than seen.
2. Choose which branches to cut, first looking at what will be left with each of the possible choices.
3. Cut the necessary branch(es) using the three-cut process provided earlier in the article. If necessary, making additional cuts in the targeted branch will make removal easier.
4. Inspect the cut after several months and remove any unwanted regrowth, to direct energy into well-placed, and well-spaced branches

Pruning can be a time-consuming exercise but is a worthy investment when done properly. Once an area is finished, do make sure to remove your trimmings. Any unhealthy branch that was cut is best bagged and disposed of in a landfill, while other material may be composted if you have the space to do so. An added bonus (in addition to the instant gratification of having a better-looking boxwood) is that new plants may be started from the trimmings left after boxwood have been trimmed, but that's a topic for another article!

*Article by Chris von Kohn and Helen Hecht.  
Photos by Chris von Kohn  
Chris is a Horticulturist for the National Boxwood and Perennial Collections at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.  
Helen is a horticulturist in Maryland who manages the landscapes of several historic properties.*

Check out the newly updated Care page of our website for more information on how proper pruning can help fight diseases such as boxwood blight.

**boxwoodsociety.org**

## The Golden Rule - Boxwood and Urine



I went from loving Mick Jagger to hating him in 2 seconds flat. Mick, the perfect poodle, hiked his leg and the floodgates opened. I washed the urine off the boxwood but obviously I had missed it previously; the damage there was already done.

Our gardens can represent what we imagine our ideal universe to be, the ordered world we create and show to the world. Our gardens may be the one place that we can control. And/or die trying.

I've marveled at perfect boxwood and topiary at grand estates and historical houses. I've adored so many symmetrical boxwood grand entrances to English manor houses and French châteaux. However, in the real world, we have to contend with drunken guests, willful and pee-ful children and our beloved dogs and cats.



*Mick Jagger, the perfect poodle*

ABS member Louise Smith of Indiana said that she had even seen deer pee damage higher up on her boxwood when she had deer roaming in her neck of the woods. That seemed a bit farfetched to me, but yes, the Sage o' Fishers (Indiana) is correct. Certainly it isn't a regular occurrence but it has been documented by naturalists.

ABS member, Helen Hecht has also 'documented' inebriated humans spraying human urine, creating the same brown death hole in the shrub. However, we'll focus on the main culprit: dogs.

Louise mentioned that she didn't have a dog problem in her garden. She has female dogs who do not raise their legs to spray. However, when dog sitting, she has had some issues with the visiting male dogs. She just doesn't do much dog sitting anymore.

My own (not) very disciplined dog training methods tried to establish a fixed place for the dog's elimination. This may help to stop the damage on your boxwood, by directing them to a specific place until it is imprinted that that's the place to pee.

If you can catch your dog peeing, immediately drenching the plant with water is the best solution. Keeping dogs hydrated helps the urine to be as diluted as possible and lessens damage to the



*Evidence of dog pee damage on boxwood*

boxwood. Certainly my devil dog will find a way while I'm not looking so it may be futile.

The heat of the urine (especially in the winter) and the uric acid cause the damage.

Fencing out visiting neighborhood dogs and a motion activated sprinkler may be a foil for that persistent dog tinkler. However, keeping the same or other dogs from visiting that same spot may be impossible.

My experience has been to pick off all obviously dead leaves and leave the bare stems. It is not obvious how bad the true damage is, so patience with some bare boxwood stems is prudent. It may still be alive and push forth fresh leaves; the damage may not be as bad as first thought.

Sometimes we can simply turn the boxwood around and get a fresh view of new leaves.

For a 'perfect' garden wedding with strategic pee damage, one gardener I know spray painted the dead leaves with some florist paint. I don't know how well the color matched or if anyone even noticed. A couple of well placed cut branches for the big day may work too. And then there are those that would simply

change out the boxwood for the party.

All lessons can be learned in the garden... so maybe there's one here. How do I reconcile my ideal world with the practical real world? What really matters in my world, in my own garden?

After my anger at Mick peeing there again, I recalled my wild and wonderful Mick Jagger poodle and all the joy my dog has given me over the years... and my flash of anger subsided. I resolved that my old Mick Jagger can pee just about anywhere he darn well pleases.

*Written by John Makar. Photos by John Makar and Mick Jagger's owner, Laura Anthony*



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### Note from Lynn Batdorf on the effects of dog urine on boxwood:

I do recall an article or two somewhere in *The Boxwood Bulletin* which the author observed male dogs repeatedly urinating on lower box leaves. Those boxwood leaves die, but the urine exposure does not adversely affect the stem or trunk. The boxwood will be unable to grow new leaves in those locations until the urination is discontinued.

Boxwood leaves are highly protected by their thick, hydrophobic epidermis. Nevertheless, the acidic urine effectively burns through this epidermis killing the mesophyll cells which can only result in the death, and abscission, of the leaf.



## The Question Box

**Q:** I accidentally cut about 1/5 of the way into a 3-4 inch boxwood branch with by small chain saw. Is there anything I can do to help it recover?

**A:** Filling the cavity or other remedial treatments are ineffective or even detrimental to the long term survivability of this damaged boxwood trunk. This errant chain saw cut is best left untouched. Boxwood wood is extremely hard, with a specific gravity averaging as high as 1.13 kg per cubic meter. This strength will most likely keep the trunk structurally intact. The unknown variable is the amount of cambium

damage. It is possible that up to 1/3 of this thin and life giving tissue was cut away. While the unusually thick leaf cuticle of boxwood leaves keeps the water evaporation rate very low, the reduced capacity of the cambium may not be able to provide adequate water to the leaves. In one to three or four months from now, this may result in the death of the trunk. If your boxwood is otherwise healthy and growing (as it should) in a shady site, or one with morning only sunlight, the boxwood may be able to overcome this recent trauma. Boxwood is very tenacious and over the next several months you will be able to determine if it will survive.

## The Gardens of Italy



*Alley of a Hundred Fountains at Villa d'Este in Tivoli*

Some 40 years ago on our first trip to Italy, we were young, driving a “small” compact car, frequently getting lost, drinking cheap wine and loving every minute of this adventure. In spite of all of this we managed to visit our first European boxwood garden, Villa d’Este in Tivoli. This 16th century Renaissance garden was astounding. At the time, we had a home garden devoid of any boxwood but full of daylilies and hosta as was typical of any good Midwest garden. As we walked through the garden, I remembered my mother, who was from North Carolina, wanting to plant boxwood in our garden at home, and my father told her they would not grow. This was the end of my boxwood education until we visited Villa d’Este.

Italians have had boxwood gardens since Roman times, and according to Pliny the Younger, these gardens had boxwood, parterres, fountains, and statues. The Italian Renaissance gardens were modeled after these and the French Renaissance

gardens; the early English gardens were modeled after the Italian Renaissance gardens. The idea of having people arriving at the villa be able to see the garden, but being able to see the garden from the villa was born in the Italian Renaissance. In fact, many Renaissance gardens were best seen from above. It also gave the owner of the villa a spot to view what was going on in his garden. Most gardens had a hill or terraces, a central axis, allées, statues, and water features. The advance in hydraulics made it possible to have many fountains in a garden and to have those fountains entertain the guests. The guests were delighted by the “water tricks” even if it meant getting wet. One plant became the glue for these gardens and it was boxwood. The boxwood was planted in symmetrical patterns which became more elaborate during the Baroque era. Boxwood was easy to grow and to reproduce, and added a smell that many found pleasing,



*Fountain of the Organ at Villa d'Este in Tivoli*

Villa d’Este was transformed from a monastery into a villa for Cardinal Ipolito d’Este. The gardens were constructed between 1560 and 1575 on what at one time was a steep hill. The hill was lost with the addition on stone arches covered with lead. The area became flat when soil was moved so that the garden could be planted. Today you enter the garden from the villa but when it was built you entered the garden from below. Water is a major feature here with two of the main features being the Fountain of the Organ which sounds like a trumpet (well, at least somewhat like a trumpet) and the Alley of a Hundred Fountains which consists of three rows of fountains (totaling nearly 200). These wonderful water features combined with trimmed boxwood contribute to filling



*Villa Lante*

this garden with much pleasure and surprise. For many years after our first visit, any time we visited a boxwood garden we said, “this smells like Europe.”

Two other less well known but historically important boxwood gardens not far from Villa d’Este are Villa Lante and Castello Ruspoli. These two gardens have been virtually unchanged since the 16th or beginning of the 17th century. Villa Lante like Villa d’Este is a mannerist garden which takes the visitor from the “golden age of man” where man lived contently with nature to where man controlled nature. It is in the latter where boxwood is predominant. The trimmed boxwood parterre making up the flat part of the garden is intricate and beautifully maintained. In addition to the boxwood, this garden uses water masterfully. The water step, chain of water, is one of the earliest and uses stone carvings of crayfish, the family symbol of the gardens original owner (the Cardinal who built this garden was Cardinal Gambara). Cardinal Gambara was modern thinking and loved dining outside. Hence, the dining table here is not only outside but has a water rill running down

the middle which helped cool food and beverage. This table also has a “water trick”. When the Cardinal wished, he could press a pedal and squirt his guests seated at the table. The Italians were famous for these tricks and many are still in existence today.

The gardens of the 9th century Castello Ruspoli were built in 1611, and, like Lante, are essentially unchanged. The garden is all boxwood, and forms an intricate pattern with O’s in it which represent the marriage of an Orsini to a Ruspoli. The Ruspoli family still owns and maintains the castle and garden after 500 years. There is also a hanging garden here which was meant to be viewed from above. This garden is an important Renaissance garden because of the curved lines in the parterre. Princess Claudia Ruspoli, one of the two sisters managing the estate today, is a wealth of knowledge about the family, and a joy to talk to.



*Dining table at Villa Lante*



*Castello Ruspoli*



Palazzo Corsini

Florence and the surrounding environs abound with art, culture, food, and boxwood gardens. The largest and most crowded of these is Boboli behind the Pitti Palace. A must-see garden, the Boboli is 111 acres and contains about anything one would expect in an Italian Renaissance garden. There are boxwood enough to satisfy any *Buxus* enthusiast as well as numerous fountains, a lake, sculptures, and shade which can be most welcome on a hot Florence day. There are several great views of the city from the garden, and many places that invite you to sit down and relax. The Medici family established these gardens in the 16th century, creating the Italian style that would be copied by many of the courts of Europe in years to come. They are geometrical and symmetrical, and while in the beginning they were only for family use, became the venue for entertainment. The grottos that were built in these gardens are certainly works of art. The many statues only add to the fact that this is an outdoor museum.

Also, in Florence is a gem of a Baroque garden built in the late 16th century, the garden of the Palazzo Corsini. Still owned by the family who originally were merchants and then bankers in Florence, this is a hidden gem. The garden is flat and has several boxwood parterres highlighted by potted lemon trees, many in pots 300 years old. The garden is divided into two parts by a central path which is lined with 1st century Roman statues of different heights making the garden appear much larger than it actually is—forced diminishing perspective. We have been fortunate to visit several times with Princess Georgianna Corsini as our hostess. She told us that it was not in keeping with the 16th century to have flowers in the parterre, but that she liked them. They were beautiful. Because this garden has been in the

same family, again it is essentially unchanged. It must be said that the garden and villa are special, but it is the family that makes this place magical.

Speaking of the Corsinis, our next stop in Le Corti which is another Corsini property that has been a winery for about as long as anyone can remember. (This was a direct quote from Prince Filippo one evening at dinner.) Duccio Corsini and his wife Clotilde moved into an essentially abandoned villa and restored the villa, garden, and winery to its former grandeur. In fact, their organic wine and olive oil surpasses anything that was produced here previously. The garden, a formal boxwood parterre infilled with roses and other flowers, is not the largest of Italian boxwood gardens, but one of the prettiest. Le Corti has the whole package: a wonderful garden that is both a hanging garden and one to walk through, an antique wine cellar, nicely restored villa, and a great lunch. You cannot have a day out in Tuscany any better than this!



Le Corti



*The Town of Stresa*

Another great garden near Florence in Settignano is Villa Gamberia. The first comment to be made about this garden is that it appears much larger than it actually is. While built a little later than most of the gardens mentioned previously, this small garden has most of the features of the great Italian gardens. There are parterres with boxwood, water features, terraces, citrus trees, and green lawns. The garden reached its peak in the mid 1700's when it was characterized as a perfect garden. Although severely damaged in WWII, the garden has been restored and looks perfect once again today. The first time we visited this garden we made a wrong turn and went down a street where you could easily touch the buildings from both the driver and passenger sides. A little scary, but well worth it when we finally arrived at our destination.

After many years of driving past the Italian lakes, we finally stopped and have visited as often as possible ever since. One of the main reasons is the town of Stresa and the gardens nearby. Isola Bella was finished in 1671, and is one of our favorite villas and gardens. The island contains the villa, garden, and some shops and restaurants where the small village was. The gardens which are full of exotic plants, boxwood, hydrangea, and white peacocks, have ten terraces resembling the tiers of a wedding cake. Actually it holds a reservoir which feeds the many fountains. This Italian garden contains more color than most. It is easy to see why a grotto was an important feature for coolness. The villa is still owned by the original family.

Madre is another villa and garden on an island. This garden is very different from Bella. Because of the mild climate and the attention to the environment, the visitors almost feel that they are in a tropical area. It certainly is lush. Although the villa was finished in 1590, the gardens have been maintained since 1823 in the English style. Again, this garden has more color, but less boxwood than the typical Italian Renaissance garden. This is the largest of the islands, but no one lives on the island.



*Isola Bella*

There are numerous other Italian gardens both old and new which we have visited over the past 35-40 years (and many more that we plan to visit). At any given time any one of them could be our favorite. The last one we mention here is not only a favorite because of the garden, but because of the friends who own it. Villa Cicogna Mozzoni was a hunting lodge in the 1400's, and later turned into the villa and garden we see today. The water stairway was added in the 1700's and is one of the oldest in Europe. The boxwood garden commissioned in the 1600's is essentially Roman in nature. The family maintains the villa and garden as closely as possible to what was there in the 1600's. Over many years of visiting we have become friends with Count Jacapo and enjoy his wonderful hospitality often.

We have indeed been fortunate to visit these and other Italian gardens, to become friends with many we have met, and to learn much from their past. The one thing that comes to mind is that we have learned that a boxwood hedge is not just a formal element in a garden but often becomes a frame for something wonderful.

*Article and Photos by Ron and Linda Williams  
Garden Travelers. info@gardentravelers.com 317-408-3880*

## Want to Explore Rome and the Gardens of Italy with ABS?



*Palazzo Corsini*



*Le Corti*

Join the American Boxwood Society on an adventure of a life time as we travel with fellow boxwood and garden enthusiasts through Italy, May 8-18, 2020. We will start in Rome where we visit the highlights as well as some lesser-known sites. As we leave Rome our garden adventure will begin with stops at Landriana, Villa d'Este, and Ninfa, a truly magical spot. We will continue into Tuscany with featured stops at Castello Ruspoli and the Park of Monsters as well as Lante. One of our favorite stops will be Villa Corti where we will have another great lunch, wine tasting, with a visit to the Villa and garden included. Florence will bring much pleasure not only with the art, but the added pleasure of visiting more gardens with one very special place indeed. Do not forget the small towns that we will visit and the Italian charm (and good food) that comes with them. If you continue to the Lake District on the extension that runs May 18-21, great gardens, great food, and wonderful scenery will fill your days. And last, but by no means least, enjoy gelato from some of Italy's best gelato shops. A dream come true!

Join Us in Italy!

Email ABS at [info@boxwoodsociety.org](mailto:info@boxwoodsociety.org) for a full itinerary and to get on the waiting list.

*Trip coordinated by ABS members Ron and Linda Williams of Garden Travelers.*



*Isola Bella*

## ABS Tribute to “Joan and Scot”

When I joined the American Boxwood Society (ABS) in 1977, one of the first people I met were Joan and Scot Butler. The entire ABS Board always spoke of them as if they were one. It was always “Joan and Scot”, occasionally “The Butler’s”, rarely “Joan” or “Scot”. They were a closely united, caring and giving couple. When I entered the world of boxwood, it was natural enough that Joan and Scot were the first to help and mentor me. Their insightful assistance was so complete and important, I could never begin to properly acknowledge, enumerate, and especially, repay them for all their efforts on my behalf. They freely gave important unlimited support and they generously gave their valuable time to all things ABS. I was one of their many fortunate recipients.

Scot joined the ABS in August 1971 using his address on Old Dominion Drive in McLean, VA. In fall 1972, he became and maintained ABS Membership as a Contributing Member. Through the 1970’s and for decades later, Joan and Scot participated in many of the ABS Workshops, including Garden Tours and Annual Meetings. In one example, the second annual ABS Boxwood Garden Tour of the greater Washington, D.C. area occurred on September 29 and 30, 1979. Naturally, the Butler home and garden in McLean was on the tour. A reviewer noted, “The Butler’s Williamsburg styled home was a special treat with its antiques and unique memorabilia. The warmth of the house and of the guests quickly dispelled dampness from rain and chill. Out the windows beautiful views could be seen. A barn and corral for their daughter’s horse presented a rustic quality. Boxwood planting are everywhere the eye looks. Along the tennis court are small new plantings. Joan and Scot are utilizing their spacious grounds with design and practicality.” Joan and Scot provided “wine and delicious cheeses” and hosted a buffet for the participants.



It was only natural that Scot was selected by the Nominating Committee, then voted on by acclamation, to become an ABS Director at the 19th Annual ABS Meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 1979. He remained on the ABS Board until 1985.



Scot was born in Washington, D.C. in 1923. He received a B.A. degree from Swarthmore College in 1946 after completing three years of military service in World War II. He earned his M.A. degree at Columbia University. He served with the U.S. Government for over 30 years as a Russian

language specialist engaged in economic research and analysis. He had been a resident of McLean, Virginia, since 1950, and an ABS member since 1971. His interest in boxwood predates his membership in the Society by some 15 years, as he explains below.

“Although I grew up with an appreciation of trees (my father was editor of *American Forests* magazine for 25 years) I did not really become aware of boxwood until early in my marriage when my wife [Joan] confided that since visiting Williamsburg as a child she hoped to live in Virginia and raise boxwood. The first step was taken when we settled in Arlington, Virginia, in 1948, but it was another eight years before the second step materialized.

“In 1950 we bought an old farmhouse on five acres in McLean and like many young couples who move from an apartment to the country (which McLean then was) we wanted to improve on what nature had already provided by planting specimens of many additional kinds of trees and shrubs...But it was not until 1956 that the first boxwoods [sic] were acquired – and what specimens they were!”



Tour members fan out to inspect the varieties of boxwood that edge the Butlers' yard in Bluemont. (Photo: D. Frackelton)

### The Boxwood Bulletin

In 1980, Scot volunteered to serve as chair for *The Boxwood Bulletin* committee. He was responsible for “review minutes, solicit educational material, and see and review the complete dummy [draft] of

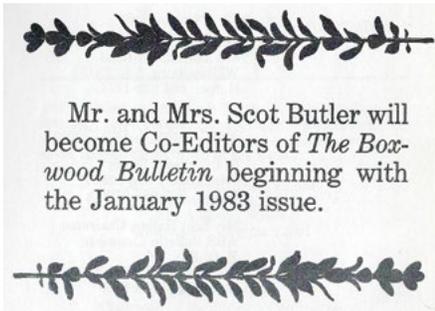


Photo: Robert L. Frackelton  
Two Editors: Mrs. D. Goodrich Gamble and Mr. Scot Butler.

articles before final approval for publication.” Of course, Scot didn’t stop here; he took the onerous task maintaining the ABS membership list for mailing *The Boxwood Bulletin* which included a domestic and international list of complimentary issues to botanical institutions. He began to manage the details of printing and mailing of *The Boxwood Bulletin*. This included the enumeration of complimentary copies to international botanical institutions, “...drafting bylaws setting forth the duties of the Editor for consideration by the [ABS] Board.”

Scot’s first article for *The Boxwood Bulletin* appeared in October 1980, a “Historical Sketch of Scotchtown”. It was a 6-page article describing the ABS workshop. It was typical of the many articles he would write – scholarly, engaging and fact-filled.

In a watershed moment, Selma Dick, who always wrote her name as “Mrs. Charles H. Dick” resigned as editor of *The Boxwood Bulletin* with the October 1976 issue. She had edited 27 issues, all without any compensation. So, with the January 1983 Vol 22, No. 3 the new editor was Scot Butler and a new position, that of co-editor, was filled by Joan Butler.



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

Describing Joan and Scot as editors is an incomplete portrayal of the herculean tasks they quietly accepted and aptly executed. In one measure of their energy and productivity, the page count exploded and 34 pages per issue, four times a year, became the new norm. The issues had a rich and exciting variety of historical, boxwood culture and botanical articles with society news and activities. Joan and Scot wrote most of the articles, many without attribution.

Their final issue as co-editors was the April 1987 issue. Without any compensation, they edited 18 issues. In this era, it was not typical to publish an editorial. More importantly, in their quiet demeanor,



ABS Tour Group at Point of Honor, September 19, 1982 Photo: Robert L. Frackelton

it wasn’t their preference. This makes their rare editorial, in their final issue, even more compelling, “We wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the support we have received from many persons in many quarters during the last four and a half years. The names of our abettors are too numerous to acknowledge here in writing, but without their help in many forms we would have been unable to fulfill our editorial responsibilities. The experience of editor has been an enriching one, especially in terms of our contacts with many interesting persons, learning about the genus *Buxus* from the inside, and feelings that we were contributing in a tangible way to the growth and influence of the ABS.” Of course, they continued to write articles for *The Boxwood Bulletin* and support the ABS.

At the May 9, 1987 ABS Meeting in St. Louis Joan and Scot were “...praised for their outstanding work as co-editor and editor of *The Boxwood Bulletin*.” They were presented with a bound copy of the *Bulletins*



Photo: Scot Butler  
Officers and Directors at Fall Board Meeting. Front row, from left: Mays, Symmes, Beecher, Batdorf, Holekamp, Mahone. Back row, from left: Ewert, Frackelton, J. Butler, S. Butler.

they had produced and each given a letter opener made from solid boxwood. A resolution adopted by the Board of Directors and presented at this Annual Meeting read acknowledged their many contributions to the society. Included was a bound copy of the 18 issues in which they served as editors.



Photo: Scot Butler  
Pleased at having found the oldest known 'Graham Blandy'—now about 45 years old and 13 feet tall—the work day volunteers pose for a picture. Left to right: Elizabeth Braimbridge, Gene Sytsma, Joan Butler and Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Parker.

## ABS Memorial Boxwood Garden

First conceived in 1974, the garden received significant improvement during Joan's curation from 1983 to 1985, then again from 1993 to 2004. She was involved with its expansion in 1983, verified the correct nomenclature of each cultivar then ordered the first metal photo plant

labels for each boxwood. She created an accurate and comprehensive inventory with maps documenting the location of each accession. Conceived by Joan and Scot, the first ABS-sponsored workday at the ABS Memorial Boxwood Garden occurred on September 28, 1983. Beginning in 1994, the three year plan to relocate, redesign and substantially enlarge the ABS Memorial Garden was designed by Nancy Takahashi, University of Virginia Landscape Architect. It was Joan who implemented this herculean project including propagation, storing of hundreds of specimen boxwood, plot layout, marking plants for transplanting, and creating a self-guided garden brochure. Solely through Joan's leadership and personal involvement, the ABS Memorial Boxwood Garden was coming of age, with all the hallmarks of a world-class public garden.

## International collaboration

Naturally, Joan and Scot became close friends with both Elizabeth and Mark Braimbridge. Joan and Scot flew to London to visit Elizabeth and Mark. During their visit the Butler's sage council was a significant contribution to the founding and successful launching of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society.

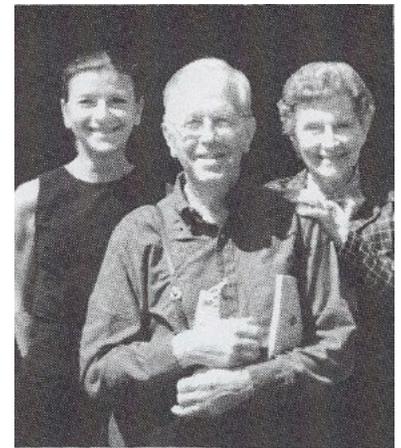
## ABS Secretary and much more

When Joan stepped down as co-editor in 1987, she immediately assumed the responsibilities as ABS



Secretary. Well known by the society, Joan was born in India, grew up in New York State, graduated from Swarthmore College and lived in northern Virginia since 1948. Joan would go on to serve as Secretary until 1998. She also served as chairman of the ABS Research Committee

from 1993 to 1997. In 1995-6, Joan served on the committee appointed to revise the By-Laws to the ABS Constitution. She also participated in many programs sponsored by the State Arboretum of VA, most notably their annual Garden Fair. For several years in the 1990's she prepared the annual ABS budget and was instrumental in planning the ABS Annual Meetings. She was a proofreader for Lynn Batdorf's *Boxwood Handbook: A Practical Guide to Knowing and Growing Boxwood* as well as *Boxwood: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, two important tomes for the ABS. At the May 21, 1999 ABS Annual Meeting, Joan was awarded a citation for her decades of significant, numerous and various contributions to support the ABS. In her honor, a *Styrax japonica* was planted next to the entrance roadway into the Virginia State Arboretum, Boyce, Virginia, in her name.



New ABS Director Scot Butler with his daughter Susan (l.) and wife Joan. (Photo: Frances Frazier)

## ABS Director

Approved at the 1997 ABS Annual Meeting, Scot was appointed as an ABS board member. He served with dis-

tinction until the end of his term in 2000. He passed only five years later on February 23, 2005.

## A heartfelt and personal observation

Not wishing to misrepresent Joan and Scot, it is folly to single out one event in the decades they were so intimately involved with the ABS. Yet, for me, the April 2005 issue of *The Boxwood Bulletin* still resonates. I believe it typified Joan and Scot. To explain, with the October 2004 *Boxwood Bulletin*, John

McCarthy stepped down after aptly served as editor for many years. Decca Frackelton, always accepting new challenges, began to edit the January 2005, but she unexpectedly passed away on December 18, 2004. That issue fell to her daughter, Rebecca Frackelton. Joan, widowed only one month earlier, without attribution or compensation, edited and singularly ensured the April 2005 issue was completed and released on schedule. How was it possible for Joan to do this? Very simply, it acutely demonstrated Joan's apt, quiet and devoted dedication to the American Boxwood Society.

For ten more years, Joan would go on and intermittently fill in as ABS secretary, or treasurer, or garden chairman, and much more, always to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the society. She had long ago earned the respect of every board member and her sage opinion, on all matters brought before the board, was highly prized. In the almost 60 year history of the ABS, she had the singular distinction of being the only ABS Director with a life-long appointment. In loving tribute, her passing was noted on page 9 of the Winter 2016 (Vol. 55, No. 2) Boxwood Bulletin.

*Written by Lynn R. Batdorf\**

Lynn R Batdorf joined the ABS in 1977. He has served as International Cultivar Registration Authority for Buxus since 1981. He is an Honorary Life Member of the ABS and EBTS and has authored three books and dozens of articles on boxwood. The writing of this tribute has allowed Lynn to fondly recall a few of his many delightful and productive conversations with Joan and Scot.

*Photos sourced from past issues of The Boxwood Bulletin*



*Mrs. Scot Butler sets up display for the Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration in Annandale. (Photos: Scot Butler)*

# The Boxwood Bulletin

January 1983

Vol. 22, No. 3

Editor — Scot Butler  
Co-Editor — Joan Butler

Articles written by either Joan or Scot in The Boxwood Bulletin:

- 23rd Annual Meeting of the ABS — April 1983
- 24th Annual Meeting of the ABS — April 1984
- 25th Annual Meeting of the ABS — April 1985
- 37th ABS Annual Meeting Educational Program — July 1997
- ABS 22nd Annual Meeting — July and October 1982
- ABS 43rd Annual Meeting on Shore of Chesapeake Bay — July 2003
- ABS Announces Tenth Garden Tour — January 1992
- ABS Annual Meeting Report, May 24-25, 1996 — July 1996
- ABS Annual Meeting Rings Bell in Richmond, Va. — July 1999
- ABS Spring Tour a Resounding Success — July 1981
- An Evening at Belle Grove Plantation — July 2001
- Annual Meeting Boxwood Tour — July 2000
- Annual Meeting Celebrates 25th Birthday of ABS — July 1986
- Annual Meeting Garden Tour — July 1997
- Annual Meeting Tour Visits Historic Maryland Sites — July 1998
- A Survey of The Boxwood Bulletin, 1961-1986 — July 1986
- Boscobel on the Hudson — January 1992
- Box Tree Grows in Winchester, Virginia — October 2000
- Boxwoods at Highbury — October 1988
- Boxwood Workday at Blandly Yields Results — January 1984
- Boxwood Workshop at Gunston Hall — October 1983
- Braimbridges and the Cuban Boxwood Project — July 1999
- Eight ABS Tour — July 1988
- Eleventh ABS Tour, Southside Virginia — July 1993
- Fall Workday at Blandly Attracts Nine Volunteers — January 1985
- Fifth ABS Garden Tour — January 1984
- Fifth ABS Garden Tour Scores Success in NC — July 1984
- Fourth ABS Tour Sets New High Mark — January 1983
- Heronwood Revisited — July 2001
- Historical Sketch of Scotchtown — October 1980
- Joan Butler and Katherine Ward Represent ABS at Green Spring Farm — January 1986
- Meet Me in St. Louis — We Did! — July 1987
- Memorial Garden Expands — April 1983
- New ABS Memorial Garden Takes Shape — January 1995
- New Cultivar Added to the Memorial Garden — July 1983
- Ninth ABS Tour "Fabulous" — July 1991
- Spring Garden Tours Beckon to Boxwood Fanciers — April 1982
- Report on the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the ABS — July 1983
- Report on the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the ABS — July 1984
- Report on the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the ABS — July 1985
- Salute to Oatlands — October 1985
- Six ABS Members Enjoy Third Annual Boxwood Work Day at Blandly — January 1986
- Sixth ABS Tour Captivated by Maryland Homes and Gardens — July 1985
- Symposium Marks Publication of Boxwood Encyclopedia — July 2004
- Tenth ABS Tour Surveys Loudoun Boxwood Gardens — July 1992
- 'Vardar Valley' Wins 2002 Gold Medal Plant Award — July 2002
- Visit to Oak Spring (Paul Mellon Estate) — July 2001
- Who Can Top the Boxwood at Tosalma? — October 1980

## Boxwood Reimagined



Clockwise from left: *Colonizers*, *Branch to Branch*, *Fecundity*, *Liminal Space*, *Genesis*, *Subterranean Life*, and *Hill Top*.

Wood artist, Lynda Smith-Bugge, exhibited recent works at the beautifully landscaped State Arboretum of Virginia near Winchester from August 11 – September 27, 2018. Her organic sculptures, made from local trees, fit naturally within the educational and aesthetic attractions of the arboretum. Boxwood was the focus of the show, which paid tribute to the 162 varieties displayed at the site, where the American Boxwood Society has its headquarters.

Boxwood is commonly known for its foliage and arrangements in formal gardens. At the end of its long life as a landscaping design element, boxwood offers another opportunity for aesthetic expression through recycling. Boxwood enthusiasts may be unaware of the interior beauty of the wood, with its own distinct appeal—its creamy color, silky texture, density, and fine grain. It has a venerable history within woodworking, toolmaking, and woodwind fabrication. Sculptors and period-instrument makers often are hard pressed to find boxwood logs large enough for their uses. Smith-Bugge, however, managed to exploit even the smallest limbs to create floral forms also reminiscent of mushrooms and trumpets. Their apparent delicacy is belied by the density and toughness of the wood—one of the world’s hardest in temperate zones.

The show’s title, “Inflorescence,” refers to a group or cluster of flowers arranged on a stem or branch. The blossoms in this exhibition are lathe-turned boxwood trumpets embedded in a variety of natural wood forms. Since the diameter of the trunks is limited,

turning small flowers is a solution to making best use of the wood for wall sculptures, such as *Colonizers*, *Hilltop*, and *Fecundity*.

Besides boxwood, the exhibition also featured native woods, such as cherry, oak, burl maple, dogwood and cherry. One laminated cherry sculpture stretched 7 feet along one wall. In the two floor sculptures of the exhibition, *Gnosis* and *Liminal Space*, the dark rich tones of black walnut provided the ideal bases for their boxwood tops. In *Subterranean Life*, the boxwood is embedded in the burl maple sphere.

Smith-Bugge is an artist working in Washington DC and Virginia. Through the woodworking process, she reconstructs nature into evocative abstract sculptures that highlight and honor the original organic forms and material. Her sculptures evoke a strong environmental response, encouraging contemplation and respect for nature. As an established wood artist, she creates art for private and public spaces through commissions and gallery exhibitions. Smith-Bugge has shown her work in Washington, New York, Rome, and other places. She is represented by Zenith Gallery, one of Washington’s oldest independent galleries in Washington DC. She has also served as Fellow for the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and is a member of the Collectors of Wood Art, Capital Area Woodturners, and the Board of the Washington Sculptors Group.

*Written by David Fry, Lynda Smith-Bugge*

*Photos by Mark Finkenstaedt*

*Visit [SculptureForTheSoul.com](http://SculptureForTheSoul.com) or call 703-201-4443 for more info*

## BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Kevin Collard has two loves in his life—family and boxwood. Kevin, a newly elected board member of the American Boxwood Society, has essentially been a lifelong resident of Leitchfield, KY which is approximately a 30 minute drive from Elizabethtown KY. (Or, for those who only know



Louisville, it's about an hour southwest.) After high school, Kevin attended Western Kentucky University, graduating in 1992. After graduation, he studied the Gardens of Great Britain in England for a summer and in the spring of 1993, opened Pine View Nursery.

The infatuation with boxwood started about 2000. It was Kevin's desire to not only acquire boxwood, but it became a quest to learn as much about them as he possibly could. As a result, he amassed a collection of over 100 varieties. Certainly one of the highlights during this time period was meeting Paul Saunders in 2002. As we all know, Paul is not only a wealth of knowledge when it comes to anything boxwood, but also a delightful person.

Kevin grows plants in the field as well as in containers, and does less shearing than most growers. His desire is to grow plants as naturally as possible allowing the boxwood to achieve their natural beauty and growth habit. Around 2011 the use of pesticides was discontinued at Pine View. Today, beneficial insects and organically approved control measures are being used at the nursery.

Kevin has introduced several boxwood varieties, with probably the most popular being Chloe, named after his oldest daughter. Kevin has several boxwood presently under evaluation for introduction. Hopefully some of these will be registered soon.

The year 2000 was a good one for Kevin not only because this is when his passion for *Buxus* developed, but also the year he met the love of his life Tricia. Together they have four beautiful children—Chloe, Forrest, Kale, and Meadow and continue to live and flourish in Leitchfield. Let's hope that soon the other three children will have boxwood named for them!

## BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Justin Stelter has devoted his entire professional career to the better understanding of gardens and the role they play in enhancing our lives. He has had the distinct pleasure of holding key gardening positions at three public historical sites in middle Tennessee. Along with his services at these historical gardens, he creates and maintains gardens for over two hundred private clients and manages approximately twenty-five employees.



He has served as the Director of Garden and Grounds at Carnton Plantation for over fifteen years. The garden at Carnton is a reconstructed mid-19th century kitchen/ornamental garden located in historic Franklin, Tennessee.

At The Hermitage, Justin served as the Historic Garden Consultant from 2009–2012. There he created a comprehensive maintenance plan and guided the staff on period plant selection and editing.

At The Carter House, Justin lead a representative replanting of the 1869 orchard and is planning the recreation of a one acre mid-nineteenth century vegetable garden based on Mr. Carter's 1869/70 diary entries, archaeology, and photographic evidence.

Justin serves on the following boards:

1. American Boxwood Society
2. Franklin Tree Commission
3. Nashville City Cemetery Association
4. Southern Garden History Society
5. Tennessee Nursery & Landscape Association (President)

He has his sights set on holding the largest private gardening library in the southeast and with well over 600 collectible volumes, including Batdorf's *Boxwood Handbook* and Lloyd's *Garden Craftsmanship in Yew & Box*, he is well on this way.

As a plant preservationist, he is particularly proud of saving boxwood from bulldozers. In the last ten years, Justin has successfully transplanted well over 100 8' x 8' or larger "Aristocrats of the South".

## Indianapolis Symposium - June 7-9, 2019



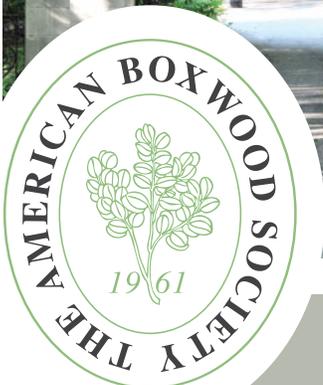
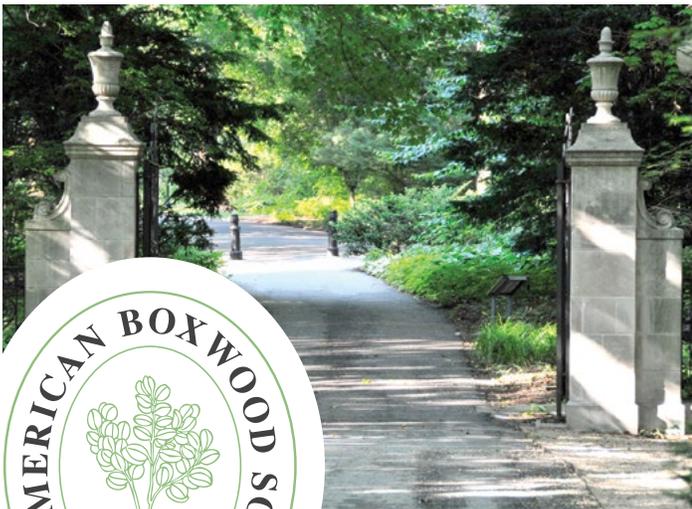
Indianapolis, declared by the National Park Service to be the “Capital at the Crossroads of America”, is anxious to show you Hoosier Hospitality as we host the annual Boxwood Symposium June 7-9, 2019. We are planning three great days of tours for your enjoyment!

Several private gardens are included in the tours which range from estate gardens to backyard Midwest gardens. Diversity is the spice of life after all! We will be visiting two ABS members’ home gardens, those of Louise and Larry Smith, and Ron and Linda Williams. Both gardens are in Fishers, Indiana, just north of Indianapolis. We will enjoy appetizers and cocktails at one, and dinner at the other.

In addition to these private gardens, we will be visiting *Newfields*, a 152-acre campus for Nature and the Arts. *Newfields* encompasses the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the J.K. Lilly Home, the Hundred Acres Park, the Elder Greenhouse, and the Garden which was designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm. This “campus approach” to art and nature is new to the former Lilly estate and has been enthusiastically received. We are pleased that you will have the opportunity to experience it all!

Join Us In Indianapolis!

Visit [boxwoodsociety.org](http://boxwoodsociety.org) for a full itinerary and to register for the event



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Discover more boxwood events at [boxwoodsociety.org](http://boxwoodsociety.org)