

American Boxwood Society Boxwood Memorial Garden

The American Boxwood Society was organized here at Blandy Experimental Farm in 1961 by a group of gardeners and botanists who were deeply concerned at the continuing spread of “boxwood decline” throughout Virginia. Extensive plantings of old ‘Suffruticosa’ boxwoods were dying in stages, with the disease moving from one plant to another.

The Society’s mission was defined as education and scientific investigation; therefore funds were provided to support a lengthy study at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University searching for the causes of “English boxwood decline.” The disease did not seem to affect any other type of boxwood. The results from the work at Virginia Tech indicated that decline was usually associated with an organism which attacked the root system, *Paecilomyces buxi*. No cure was found, but stressful conditions (years of drought or poor cultural practices) did seem to predispose the plants to damage. Recommended action for prevention included annual thinning and cleaning, provision of adequate moisture but not soggy soil conditions, maintenance of soil pH at levels between 6.5 and 7.2, and occasional fertilization in the late fall or winter with 10-10-10 or other non-acid-forming material.

ABS is also the International Registration Authority for *Buxus*, ensuring that known varieties are not assigned new, unverified names. Memberships in the American Boxwood Society are available for \$25 per year from ABS, P.O. Box 85, Boyce VA 22620.



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State Arboretum of Virginia
At the University of Virginia’s
Blandy Experimental Farm

Boxwoods have grown here at the Arboretum since the late 1920s. By 1936 there were about 70 kinds of box, although most were unidentified. The plants of Korean box ‘Nana’ growing along the front entrance walk have been there since the addition to the Quarters was constructed in the early 1940s. Today the Boxwood Memorial Garden displays more than 100 different species and varieties, all labeled.

The Boxwood Memorial Garden was first envisioned in 1975 to honor two fine plantsmen, botanists and boxwood enthusiasts who died in 1974, Henry Hohman of the Kingsville Nursery, Maryland, and Dr. John T. Baldwin of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Long-time supporters of the American Boxwood Society, both men had donated many plants to the ABS boxwood collection here at Blandy Experimental Farm, the Orland E. White Arboretum. The Society wanted to use these plants in an educational display garden to exhibit the wide range of sizes, shapes, and textures available in the genus *Buxus*, to create a living museum.

The garden was begun in 1977 using all the plants which could be positively identified by name, but no particular systematic groupings were attempted. Over the next dozen years the plants grew well and additional cultivars were added. Many specimens began to outgrow their allotted spaces. The designation as the State Arboretum of Virginia in 1986 and subsequent construction of the Amphitheater brought about a transfer of the Boxwood Garden to a new location. A more rational and scientific design

for the placement of plants was adopted. Now plants are located according to species, so that similarities and differences can be more easily compared. Groupings of collections have become possible, such as those developed from Dr. Edgar Anderson’s 1934 Balkan explorations and those chosen for hardiness in the Midwestern United States by testing in St. Louis, as well as those which are hardy in Canada and the northern U.S.

The Garden’s south bed exhibits *Buxus microphylla* and *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis*, the Asian boxwoods such as Japanese and Korean.



The center bed contains the Edgar Anderson collection together with its seedlings and some of the Missouri Botanical Garden Midwestern selections. The North bed displays cultivars of *Buxus sempervirens*, hardy northern plants and some of Dr. J. T. Baldwin’s own choices. Space still remains for additional plants and newly-registered cultivars will be added as they become available.



The Blandy Boxwood Story

The Graham Blandy Boxwood featured on the cover of this brochure, *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Graham Blandy,’ was developed from a specimen that can still be seen here at Blandy Experimental Farm. It is a striking plant with straight sides that form a very narrow, upright, dense plant. A 20-year-old plant will be about 9 feet tall and only 1 to 1-1/2 feet wide. Mature height is 15 to 18 feet, and it is probably hardy to Zone 5.

