

Tree Profile: Boxwood—*Buxus*

General Information: This is a family of about 70 different species. Box is very popular for bonsai due to its tiny leaves and flowers and its tolerance for extensive pruning and shaping. One note of caution: box leaves are poisonous!

Lighting: Sun or shade both work well. *Buxus harlandii* and *Kingsville* prefer shade or semi-shade.

Temperature: Hardiness depends on variety, but boxwoods need protection from frost and cold winds even when grown in the proper climate. In the summer, box appreciates fresh air.

Watering: Moderate, doesn't like wet soil. Allow the box to dry somewhat between watering.

Feeding: Every two weeks during growth. Harland Box, every 20-30 days. Use a liquid bonsai fertilizer with one application of pulverized organic fertilizer during active growth. Fertilize with general purpose fertilizer at other times.

Pruning and wiring: Growth on the dwarf varieties can be very slow. Box can be wired at any time. It is tolerant of radical treatments, such as Jin, Shari and being grown root over rock. Leaves may turn reddish brown in winter. Control shape by thinning and by pinching of new growth.

Propagation: By division in spring, or from hardwood cuttings taken in late summer or autumn. Air-layering is also possible.

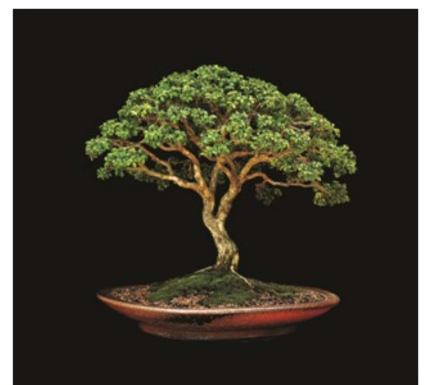
Repotting: Suggested every one to two years in well drained soil. Spring is the best time, but can be repotted in summer and autumn if need be, but avoid repotting during very hot weather or during a growth spurt. Box dislikes acid soil, adding an occasional dose of lime is recommended.

Pests and diseases: Nematodes, mites and leaf miners, blackfly, greenfly, and red spider mites. Although box is very disease resistant, honey fungus and rust are sometimes encountered.

Species suitable for Bonsai:

- ***Buxus harlandii*:** Harland box - A native of Taiwan, the Harland box can grow to 33 feet. Its leaves are thinner than other box species. This box doesn't like cold, and should not be exposed to temperatures below 3C, but it has been grown successfully as an indoor plant. If the temperature goes above 18C, the Harland box enjoys a daily misting, and the amount of food should be reduced. During the winter, keep the tree at a temperature below 65F; between 8C and 10C is best.
- ***Buxus microphylla*:** Japanese box - Grows to 5 feet, and has evergreen leaves under 1 inch long. It tolerates both sun and shade. All *B. microphylla* varieties are scentless.
- ***Buxus microphylla* 'Compacta':** dwarf boxwood, '*Kingsville*' box. Quarterly spray with Black Leaf 40 or similar mixed with soap.
- ***Buxus microphylla* 'Koreana':** Korean boxwood - the most hardy box, but expect the foliage to brown in the winter. It is a low, spreading variety, growing to only 3 feet.
- ***Buxus sempervirens*:** common box, English box - this box appears as both hedges and small trees. Its evergreen leaves grow to 1 1/2 inches. This box is hardy with some winter protection.
- ***Buxus sinica*:** A native of China, similar to other small boxes.

There're great articles in **Bonsai Today** issue **97** and in issue **107**, which are showing the styling and development of the tree pictured here. Well worthwhile reading - we've got them in our Library!



Printing Services

The club has been very fortunate in developing a relationship with Dynamite Printing, a printing services company in Dandenong which supports the craft of bonsai wherever possible, by providing highly discounted prices on printing jobs to bonsai clubs. We have recently received new print runs of the club business and general information cards, and will be using Dynamite in the future for posters, flyers and possibly a calendar.

Let's return their consideration—if any members are in the market for printing services, give them a call for a quote.

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