

BOXWOOD BLIGHT

An Emerging Disease that Keeps
Landscapers and Gardeners
Awake at Night

By Chuan Hong, Ph.D.
Virginia Tech

Presentation primarily taken from Dr. Huan's article
in VTC Journal



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For centuries, boxwood has been the choice evergreen shrub for home, public gardens, parks, etc.

They are low maintenance, resistant to deer, tolerate heavy pruning, and somewhat tolerant of drought and cold.



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Boxwood vs. Japanese Holly

The leaves are one thing you can use to identify which is which. **Boxwood leaves come with smooth, rounder edges and are arranged opposite each other. Meanwhile, Japanese Holly leaves are arranged alternately and have scalloped edges.**



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This iconic plant is now endangered due to an emerging disease – boxwood blight caused by a fungus

This disease wiped out the English boxwood gardens at the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library in 2016 and disfigured historic boxwood plantings at Colonial Williamsburg, Longwood Gardens, and other iconic locations.



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Boxwood Blight Impact on Production



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PHOTO



Boxwood Blight Impact on Plantings



Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Garden (2016)



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Tudor Palace (2018)



Colonial Williamsburg -



Private gardens (2017)



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The infection affects boxwood, pachysandra, and sweet box (Sarcococca)



Other Plants Affected - Pachysandra



- ▶ *Pachysandra terminalis*
- ▶ *P. procumbens*
- ▶ *P. axillaris*

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PHOTO

Other Plants Affected - Sweet Box



- ▶ *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*
- ▶ *S. confusa*
- ▶ *S. orientalis*
- ▶ *S. vegans*
- ▶ *S. ruscifolia*
- ▶ *S. saligna*
- ▶ *S. wallichii*

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