

A Bonsai Close Up on Kingsville Boxwood

Buxus microphylla "Kingsville"

By Pauline Muth

Description

Kingsville Boxwood belongs to the genus *Buxus* of the *Buxaceae* Family. This family is widely varied to include both *Pachysandra* of ground cover fame as well as the common boxwoods. Boxwoods are evergreen trees and shrubs with opposite, short-stalked, undivided leathery leaves. The plant is very slow growing. The flowers are petal-less. The fruits are three lobed and when ripe, they explode on contact. The hardiest boxwoods are the *Buxus microphylla*, which includes the Kingsville variety. The wood is very fine grained and durable. The leaves are dark green in the warmth of the growing season and turn lime green or even yellowish in colder weather in the Northeast. The color returns to green in the spring. Leaves that grow old and turn yellow must be removed.

Growing Conditions

Although this boxwood is hardy to zone four, they survive better in cool indoor or greenhouse conditions in the winter in the Northeast. This is imperative if you style and work with the roots late in the growing season. In zones 5 and 6, they will survive in winter storage.

Indoors place them in bright light or under artificial light. Outdoors partial shade is beneficial for potted specimens. The ideal indoor temperature is less than 65 degrees F.

Boxwood prefers well-drained soil mixes and will tolerate slightly alkaline soil. They transplant well in spring. Roots can be halved in volume in the spring. When transplanting during other times of the year, try not to cut roots. Usually transplanting is only needed every other year. In group plantings every 4 or 5 years is adequate. Add fertilizer and iron to the soil when transplanting.

When kept indoors, begin fertilizing after winter solace. A good organic fertilizer such as Bio Gold works well in combination with added iron. Fertilize until about August 15. Then allow a rest period until late December.

Water when dry. Water thoroughly and then allow to dry in-between waterings, but not to the point of dehydration. Be careful especially in cool conditions. It responds well to daily misting of the foliage.

Pruning and styling

Severe cuts can be made into fall and in early spring. As with most angiosperms, spring is the optimal time for pruning. Keeping the shape is relatively easy because of the slow growth habit of this tree. When branches are exposed to the sun, hard break back easily occurs allowing for the development of foliage pads.

Wiring can be done year round but be careful as the branches are brittle.

Propagation

Propagation by mature cutting in fall works well if placed in a cool greenhouse. Air layering from larger specimens also works well.

Bonsai Styles

The plant does well in many bonsai styles and is ideal for landscape plantings.

Comment or questions to

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