

# Boxwood Blight Update

November 13, 2013

## New infections

Boxwood blight has been discovered in several more locations on both the west and east coasts over the past several months. It has been found in small landscapes as well as larger nurseries. It is becoming more and more obvious that we must learn to manage boxwood blight by making good decisions. Saunders Brothers, Inc. plans to:

- Continue to search for resistant cultivars.
- Continue to seek and use wise production practices.
- Inspect regularly for boxwood blight. If we suspect it, we will isolate the area and test immediately.

Unfortunately, we are getting calls daily from people who have misdiagnosed the disease. It seems that anyone with an off-color or sick boxwood is blaming boxwood blight. With the excess rain this past spring and summer, we have seen more than the usual number of cases of phytophthora or "root rot". The plants are yellowing and in some cases branches are dying particularly with *sempervirens* cultivars. This week alone, I got two calls from concerned gardeners who thought they had blight because their boxwood were turning yellow. Both had drainage and nutritional issues not boxwood blight. If you suspect blight, please don't diagnose it yourself. Get samples to a lab and let a professional decide.

## Christmas decorations

Several people have asked us recently if boxwood blight can be carried in boxwood tips that they are buying for boxwood wreaths or roping. The answer is **yes**. If you are using or selling boxwood tips, be smart. We recommend that you:

- Have a conversation with your supplier to ensure that the boxwood tips are coming from reputable sources that are free of boxwood blight.
- Do not keep your boxwood wreaths and roping in an area where you normally sell boxwood.
- At the end of the season, dispose of leftover boxwood debris in a dumpster. Do not keep debris for composting or place it in trash piles in your nursery or yard.

## Save the Date

The American Boxwood Society will have its annual symposium May 14-16, 2014 in Beltsville, Maryland. On May 13, the group will visit the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. and gardens in the Laytonsville, MD area. On May 15, the group will visit Arlington National Cemetery and gardens along the Mall near the Capitol.

On May 14, there will be a one-day conference called **Boxwood and Beyond**. At least half of the focus will be on boxwood blight with the leading worldwide authorities speaking on the issue. There will also be discussions on boxwood leafminer, boxwood breeding programs, and landscape design. Attendees will be able to choose their days *a la carte*.

We will keep you posted as more information is available, but for now, **Save the Date!**

As always, if you have questions feel free to contact us.

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