

Small, Med., & Large Shrubs  
Broadleaf Evergreen

Map #11

**Boxwood**  
(*Buxus spp.*)  
Family: *Buxaceae*



**Leaves:** small, rounded to oval, margins rolled under, midrib the only visible vein, thick and leathery, glossy, dark to light green above, bright yellow-green beneath, turning bronze or brown in winter (except cultivars); new spring leaves are very susceptible to late spring frosts. Leaves give off an ammonia-like smell.

**Buds:** opposite; shingled; leaf buds are greenish brown, flower buds clustered at the tips and yellow-green.

**Stems:** green, four-sided with ridges running between the nodes.

**Bark:** hardly visible; not important.

**Flowers:** greenish-white, without petals, in March, lightly fragrant.

**Fruits:** not important.

**Habit:** Littleleaf Boxwood (*B. microphylla*) mostly dense, low mounded shrubs; Common Boxwood (*B. sempervirens*) grows to 15—20' tall and wide.

**Culture:** prefers cool, moist soil in full sun to partial shade. Full sun in winter leads to winter burning resulting in off color foliage. Root system is very shallow and fibrous. Mulch rootzone and avoid working soil around roots. Can be pruned and sheared extensively. Used for formal hedges and topiary.

**Species:**

Littleleaf Boxwood (*B. microphylla*) - low, mounded, dense shrubs.

*B. microphylla* var. *koreana* 'Winter Gem' - 2' x 2'; 'Wintergreen' - 3-4' x 3-4'; more winter hardy.

Common Boxwood (*B. sempervirens*) - 15—20' tall and wide.

'Suffruticosa' - dense, compact, slow-growing, leaves quite aromatic (ammonia smell); known as the standard or "true edging" boxwood; grows to 4—5' after many years or can be pruned and kept to a few inches tall.

*B. microphylla* var. *koreana* X *B. sempervirens* cultivars:

Chicagoland Green ('Glencoe') - 2—3'; stays green in winter.

'Green Gem' - 2'—2' ; slow-growing; perfectly round ball.

'Green Mountain' - 5' tall x 3' wide; wide pyramidal upright oval; bronzes in winter.

'Green Mound' - 3' x 3' green mound.

'Green Velvet' - 4' x 4', slow-growing, rounded.

**Credits:** **Photos from:** [www.midwestlandscapeplants.org](http://www.midwestlandscapeplants.org) and various other .edu websites unless noted. **Text from:** "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants" by Michael Dirr; "Tree Identification Characteristics (abridged)" from the University of Illinois Extension; [www.midwestlandscapeplants.org](http://www.midwestlandscapeplants.org); and misc. other sources. This publication may not be sold except to cover the cost of reproduction when used as part of an educational program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.