

Box (*Buxus sempervirens*)

Areas and status: Extremely local in W Kent, Surrey, Berks, Bucks and W Gloucs (about 10 sites in UK), rarely naturalised in hedges and woods elsewhere in Southern England. Widely planted throughout the British Isles and alien range has increased dramatically since 1960s due to planting and better recording of alien trees and shrubs.

Woodland type: Lowland Broadleaved Woodland, Scrub

Preferred habitat niches: Woods and scrub on chalk and limestone, particularly on steep slopes. Lowland Yew Woods. Can be present as an understorey shrub or as main component of canopy. Tolerant of shade or sun.

Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Produces abundant seed and seedlings and can also be reproduced by layering.
- Slow growing
- Increased human activity at popular sites can damage roots and destroy seedlings.
- Boxwood blight identified in UK in 1990s. Can be fatal to young plants but not recorded in the wild so far. Needs warm and humid conditions.



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Potential habitat management solutions:	
<i>Prescription</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Promote seedling growth	Easily grown. Protect seedlings in gaps.
Promote layering	Layer existing trees
Leave fallen trees to layer	
Watch out for Boxwood blight	Destroy infected plants if necessary
Manage public access	Fence or create attractive alternative access paths to manage visitors away from areas of box