



PRESS RELEASE

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A Truly “Green” Garden is Coming to Life Along Back Cove

PORTLAND—A truly “green” garden is coming to life along Back Cove. On May 25 and 26, volunteers, including employees from Portland Hannaford stores, Cumberland and York County Master Gardeners and many other YardScaping partners will continue the work on the Sustainable Landscaping Demonstration Gardens at the Back Cove. Trails will be spruced-up, weeds pulled, mulch applied and a few plants replaced. After last year’s challenging weather a lot of work remains to be done. Come join us—as a volunteer or just to learn about the gardens.

The goal of the gardens is to show the range of plants available to Mainers that can be used to create attractive, yet low-maintenance, landscapes that help reduce the need for pesticides, fertilizers and water. The two-and-a-half-acre site was provided by the City of Portland, a YardScaping partner.

“This year’s work will put the finishing touches on our project that’s taken more than seven years of planning, meetings, grant writing, fundraising and planting” said Gary Fish the YardScaping Partnership Coordinator. “Last year we planted the suburban/rural and rural sections of the gardens. This year we will focus on improving the gardens, planting the low-maintenance lawn areas and installing interpretive signs and hardscaping.”

Partially funded by grants from the EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program and the Davis Conservation Foundation, the total cost of the project is estimated at \$130,000. Fundraising is ongoing and any donations are greatly appreciated.

The YardScaping Partnership was formed out of a rising concern about yard care chemicals washing into nearby waters, as well as the risks of pesticide exposure to people, pets and wildlife. The Partnership includes more than 30 businesses, organizations and agencies from around the state. Most of the work on the gardens has been done by volunteers from those organizations and from many of the neighborhoods that surround the cove.

Back Cove is an especially suitable site, since it, along with Casco Bay, receives runoff from thousands of yards and lawns in Greater Portland. Sediment samples taken in 2008 from the Back Cove contained bifenthrin, a common lawn insect and ant control insecticide. Bifenthrin is found in 171 pesticide products registered for use in Maine and is highly toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates. The levels found in Back Cove sediments exceeded concentrations harmful to aquatic invertebrates that live in those sediments.

Ongoing maintenance of the gardens is always needed and we welcome all volunteers. To volunteer or for more information on the Back Cove Project and YardScaping, go to www.yardscaping.org.

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