



# PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Paul Schlein, 207-287-2731  
[paul.b.schlein@maine.gov](mailto:paul.b.schlein@maine.gov)

## Portland Gardens Receive International Award

AUGUSTA—The Maine Board of Pesticides Control received the 2011 Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Landscape Beautification Activities from the New England Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture for its work on the YardScaping Gardens at Back Cove in Portland. The award was presented to Gary Fish, the Board's manager of pesticide programs, at the society's forty-fifth annual conference, held in Bath at the end of October. Fish is also the coordinator of the Maine YardScaping Partnership, the organization that oversaw the planning and installation of the gardens.

The Gold Leaf Award "recognizes individuals, organizations, or municipalities that have made significant contributions through tree planting and landscaping which enhances environmental protection, conservation, beautification, air purification, or wildlife protection." With the idea conceived over ten years ago to create a demonstration site that showcases ecological landscaping with low-maintenance plants, two-and-one-half acres of unused field along the Back Cove were made available by the City of Portland. Over the past five years, the area has been landscaped, with trails added to the existing Back Cove trail system, and over two thousand specially chosen plants have been installed.

"This award goes to the many donors and volunteers who helped make the YardScaping Gardens at Back Cove a reality," said Fish. "Mainers now have a garden that features trees, shrubs, perennials, and wildflower and grass mixes that can be planted around the state to make gardens more sustainable and help gardeners and landscapers reduce their reliance on pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation water."

The gardens were made possible initially through seed grants from the US EPA Region 1 Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program and the Davis Conservation Foundation, but it was only with significant donations from local businesses and garden clubs, and the tremendous efforts of local volunteers, that the gardens were brought to completion. A complete list of donors and volunteers can be found at [www.yardscaping.org/demo/donors.htm](http://www.yardscaping.org/demo/donors.htm).

Fish and the gardens also garnered the Friend of Casco Bay Award in 2008.

More information about the YardScaping Gardens at Back Cove and YardScaping can be found at [www.yardscaping.org](http://www.yardscaping.org).

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*Captions for accompanying photos:*

*Photo 1: Gary Fish (right) of the Board of Pesticides Control/Maine YardScaping Partnership accepting the Gold Leaf Award from Portland City Arborist Jeff Tarling.*

*Photo 2: The Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Landscape Beautification Activities.*

*Photo 3: View of the YardScaping Gardens at Back Cove.*

*Photo 4: The information kiosk and jogger along one of the trails at the YardScaping Gardens at Back Cove.*

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