



## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release  
June 11, 2009**

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### New Plantings at Back Cove Demonstration Gardens

PORTLAND—In the next phase of planting, members and volunteers of the Maine YardScaping Partnership will be installing over 400 trees, shrubs, and perennials, in addition to a wildflower meadow, on June 18 and 19, at the site of the Back Cove YardScaping Demonstration Project. The goal of the project 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 six years of planning, meetings, grant writing, and fundraising,” said Gary Fish, coordinator of the Maine YardScaping Partnership. “Last summer’s planting focused on the urban and urban/suburban sections of the gardens. Work this year will extend to the suburban/rural and rural sections, using all native plants suggested for those environments. Low-maintenance lawn areas will be planted in late August. Following the completion of the planting in 2010, we will be able to concentrate on construction of the information kiosk, interpretive signs, and hardscaping. Maintenance will always be a challenge and we welcome all volunteers.”

The Partnership includes more than 30 businesses, organizations, and agencies from around the state. Volunteers include Maine Master Gardeners and members of the local community. Others that will be helping with the planting include Friends of Casco Bay members and City of Portland Department of Public Services staff.

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 majority of plants for this phase were supplied by O’Donal’s Nursery of Gorham and Pierson Nurseries of Biddeford. The wildflower meadow seed came from New England Wetland Plants of Amherst, Massachusetts.

The YardScaping Partnership was formed out of a rising concern about yard care chemicals washing into water bodies, as well as the risks of pesticide exposure to people, pets, and wildlife. Back Cove is an especially suitable site, since it, along with Casco Bay, receives runoff from thousands of yards and lawns in Greater Portland. A recent tabulation of Maine pesticide sales shows that homeowner use of pesticides and fertilizers has risen over 700 percent in the past 12 years and sampling by Friends of Casco Bay has detected multiple yard care pesticides in the waters of the Bay.

To volunteer or for more information on the Back Cove Project and YardScaping, go to [www.yardscaping.org](http://www.yardscaping.org).

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