



PRESS RELEASE

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Major Work at Back Cove Demonstration Gardens

PORTLAND—Members and volunteers of the Maine YardScaping Partnership will be installing over 1,000 trees, shrubs, and perennials on June 26 and 27 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 donated by the City of Portland, a YardScaping partner.

“This is what we’ve all been working towards for a long time,” said Gary Fish, coordinator of the Maine YardScaping Partnership. “It’s taken nearly five years of planning, meetings, grant writing, and fundraising. Getting the paths in last summer was exciting enough, but this is what the gardens are all about—the plants. In this first phase of planting, we will be working in the urban and urban/suburban sections of the gardens. Later this summer we will plant low-maintenance grasses around the new plants and, next year, we hope to finish the project by planting the suburban/rural and rural gardens and installing interpretive signs and hardscaping.”

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 Maine Conservation Corps members from the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District and City of Portland Department of Public Services staff.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$160,000. The EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program and the Davis Conservation Foundation have awarded grants of \$34,000 and \$10,000, respectively, and fundraising is ongoing to raise the additional funds. Plants were either donated or purchased at significantly reduced prices from local nurseries including Gammon Landscape Nursery, Libby’s Landscaping & Greenhouse, Moody’s Nursery & Garden Center, O’Donal’s Nursery, and Pierson’s Nurseries.

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 and testing by Friends of Casco Bay has detected multiple yard care pesticides in the water.

For more information on the Back Cove Project and YardScaping, go to www.yardscaping.org.

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