

# THE BOTANICAL THYMES

COASTAL MAINE BOTANICAL GARDENS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

## Bold New Steps into the Gardens' Future

BY JOHN R. GILES, PRESIDENT

**I**n spite of the 2009 season's soggy start, the Gardens flourished to new levels. At 53,000, attendance was up 40 percent from 2007, our opening year. The new Lerner Garden of the Five Senses added a magnificent feature to the Central Gardens. The wonderful two-acre Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden is on schedule for the July 8 opening and is expected to draw 20,000+ additional visitors!

As gratifying as this is, it means we must find creative ways to continue to fulfill our mission, ensure the highest-quality visitor experience, and deserve the generous support and hard work of so many loyal members. The Gardens' rapid growth has presented challenges: A lack of interior space to deliver educational programming—a key component of our mission; the restrooms and Kitchen Garden Café pressed beyond comfortable limits; and the library space, of necessity being occupied by staff, limiting its use for other purposes.

Big challenges require big solutions. The Board of Directors has decided to begin planning an Education Center



Stunning tulips will soon burst into bloom at the Gardens. PHOTO BY BARBARA FREEMAN

adjacent to the Visitor Center. This high-performance, cutting-edge structure will set the highest example of sustainable building design. As a net-zero-energy building, it will produce as much energy as it consumes and will achieve a platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating as a model of what such projects can achieve. In addition to providing classroom and lecture space for our educational programming, along with administrative offices, the building itself will be a teaching tool with tours, interpretative signage, and programs focused on its details. Unique and innovative landscaping

around the building will demonstrate a variety of sustainable features including native plant groupings, rain gardens, and wildlife habitats.

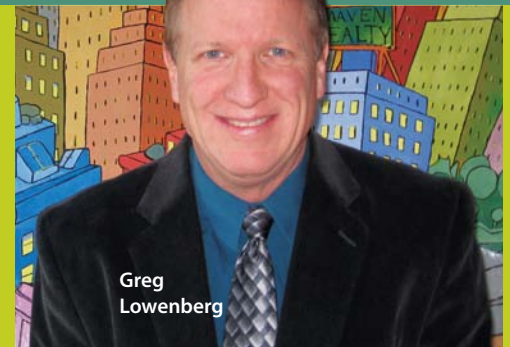
The Board is moving forward on the building design and fundraising front. The capital campaign goal has been increased by \$4.5 million to build the Education Center and fund an endowment to support it. Although planning is under way, construction will not begin until a substantial amount of the building's cost is raised.

The Gardens' success has presented challenges along with opportunities. The Education Center will provide exciting and long-term solutions to these challenges.



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Greg  
Lowenberg

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It's about 10 degrees outside this morning with a frostbiting wind; but the sounds of saws, drills and hammers outside my office window go on unabated. Some very hardy souls have worked nonstop all winter on our new Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden to make sure we have everything ready for the July 8 Grand Opening.

Our team of expert builders, craftsmen and artists has been laying pavers, building a cottage and a barn that will function as a library, and carving boulders into friendly spouting whales and "dragon" boulders that will make a stone wall come alive as a mythical creature.

Our "indoor" team has also been busy as they begin to plan education programs that will make learning about plants, gardening and nature in the new garden fun and meaningful for all ages. Heading this team is our new Director of Education, Dr. Greg Lowenberg. We are very pleased to have Greg here, and I know you'll enjoy seeing all the new programs we'll be offering.

Emily Ellingson has also joined the Gardens' staff and will be with us for nearly a year. Emily, an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator with the Maine Conservation Corps, has been busy researching hundreds of quality children's books that have plant, gardening, or nature themes. These books will be available for all children and families to check out of our "Book Barn" and read anywhere they'd like in the Children's Garden.

Greg and Emily will develop educational programs specifically for families and school groups. Whether it's storytelling, seed starting, worm composting, or looking at flowers and leaves under a microscope, they will design these informal programs so a visit to the new garden will result not only in children having a wonderfully playful and adventurous time, but always coming away having learned something new and interesting about the natural world around them.

To see photos and read about the construction progress of the Children's Garden, visit our *Dig It!* blog on our website, [www.MaineGardens.org](http://www.MaineGardens.org).



*All best wishes,*  
**Maureen Heffernan**  
Executive Director

**Mission Statement:** Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is committed to the protection, preservation and enhancement of the botanical heritage of coastal Maine for people of all ages through horticulture, education and research.

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**Barbara Freeman**, Director of Communications  
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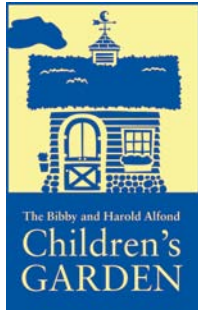
## Contact Us

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Boothbay  
**Mailing:** P.O. Box 234  
Boothbay, ME 04537



SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, July 8  
**GRAND OPENING**  
of the Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden

- ❖ Free admission all day.
- ❖ Free round-trip trolley shuttle 9-5 from the Boothbay Region Schools parking lot.
- ❖ Live entertainment.
- ❖ Parade with children's book characters, the community band, and more.
- ❖ Dress like your favorite book characters.
- ❖ Free make-'n'-take activities.
- ❖ Opening ceremonies and ribbon cutting.
- ❖ Lots of activities and fun all weekend long!



Thank you to our sponsor:



*Emily Ellingson: Helping to Bring the Children's Garden to Life*

In early January, we welcomed Emily Ellingson to our staff as an environmental educator. Emily comes to us by way of the Maine Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps. She'll be at the Gardens through mid-November, and we're delighted with her enthusiasm, knowledge, and accomplishments.

Her current focus is on the Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden. She's putting together the large collection of books that will teach and entertain young visitors—about nature, gardening, Wabanaki culture, Maine, or, as Emily says, “just generally awesome children's books.” She's also working with Education Director Greg Lowenberg to develop classes and programs for children. In the spring and summer, she'll have the opportunity to help the horticulture crew plant and care for the gardens, and in particular the Children's Garden.

Emily is no stranger to winter weather. Her hometown is North Mankato, Minnesota. She attended St. Olaf College, also in Minnesota, and last spring graduated with a B.A. in biology and a minor in environmental studies.

Emily Ellingson will be working at the Gardens until November.



**A Hearty Welcome to Greg Lowenberg!**

BY BARBARA FREEMAN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Gardens' full range of educational programming—from fun-filled activities for kids to the scholarly annual symposium—is now in the capable hands of our new Director of Education, Dr. Greg Lowenberg. For a taste of the captivating programs he's creating, check out the calendar and symposium insert; but stay tuned because he's just getting started!

“Joining the staff at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is like a dream come true,” says Greg, who transplanted from Massachusetts to take up his new post. “I am truly thrilled, and I'm proud to be able to help the Gardens become a mecca for plant enthusiasts and nature lovers from Maine and beyond.”

Greg may be familiar to members and other visitors from his 10 years as education director at the New England Wild Flower Society in Massachusetts, where his accomplishments were many. He also founded and directed an Audubon research center for teens and, before that, taught biology at Middlebury College in Vermont. Prior to moving east, he served as scientific advisor in California's Endangered Plant Program. He has two degrees in botany: a B.S. from the University of Iowa and a doctorate from the University of California at Davis.

As a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Accredited Professional, Greg comes on board just in time to help us plan the new education building. The environment will also be an underlying theme of the programs he creates. “Learning about Maine's diversity of native, adapted, and edible plants, as well as the art, science, and pure fun of gardening with them, has never been more important,” he says. “The Gardens offers an outstanding array of opportunities for visitors and students to learn about, grow, conserve, and enjoy our beautiful botanical heritage.”



On the snowy Martin Luther King Day of Service, volunteers and staff made 100 cheerful floral arrangements for Meals on Wheels recipients in neighboring communities and St. Andrews Village residents. Shown are, from left, Mary Chase, Joan Vargas, Rochelle Runge, environmental educator Emily Ellingson, Volunteer Coordinator Amanda Russell, and Mary Neal. Carolyn Dolbear made snacks for this program made possible by an award from the Maine Commission for Community Service. PHOTO BY MARGARET HOFFMAN

## HIGH, HOW DO YOU MOW?

BY JUSTIN NICHOLS, HORTICULTURIST

The grasses, sedges, and forbs that comprise your yard are waiting for the snow to melt and the sun to warm the soil. If one thing is certain, that lawn of yours is going to grow. And I'm sure that most of you made a New Year's resolution to improve your lawn in 2010. With that in mind, here are some basic mowing tips for a healthier lawn.

- **Sharpen those lawnmower blades.** Dull mower blades rip the grass, increasing its vulnerability to disease.
- **Mow at 3" or higher.** Mowing high means that more photosynthetic material remains on the plant, which helps build root strength, lessens water needs, and shade out weeds.
- **Leave the clippings on the lawn.** They are a source of nitrogen and other nutrients and organic matter for your lawn. Clippings break down quickly and, contrary to rumor, they are not a significant cause of thatch. Consider using serrated or "gator" mower blades which more finely chop the clippings.

- **Mow consistently, removing a third or less of the grass blade.** Please do not let your grass grow to 10" and then guillotine it back to 2". This stresses the grass by removing too much of its food source. And if you look back at the house while you are doing this, you will note that as your clogging, choking power mower spews lumps of wet grass on the lawn, your spouse is cursing you from behind the bay window.
- **If your lawn is smaller, why not try a non-motorized reel mower like grandpa used?** These human-powered push mowers are far less compacting to the soil than commercial and riding mowers. Your neighbors will praise your reduced carbon emissions, and your spouse will admire your increasingly great calves through the bay window.
- **If possible, mow when dry.** Mowing when the grass is wet increases clumping and tearing of grass blades, and the spread of fungal turf diseases.
- **Mow in different directions or patterns.** This helps prevent compacted areas and ruts from mower tires.

## Volunteer...There's Something for Everyone

BY AMANDA RUSSELL, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

This will be an exciting year to volunteer at the Gardens. In addition to the "usual" array of volunteer opportunities, the opening of the Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden and the expansion of several existing programs will provide plenty of ways to give the gift of time to this special place. Be sure to contact me even if you are a veteran volunteer; it goes without saying, if you are a new volunteer, I can't wait to meet you!

Below are a few of our volunteer needs. There are lots more! Check the complete list at [MaineGardens.org](http://MaineGardens.org), or call me at (207) 633-4333. I hope to hear from you.

- **NEW! Visitor Center Ambassadors:** During peak hours in the busy season, one or two volunteers will be in Kerr Hall to explain the map to visitors and answer questions that the Front Desk usually handles.
- **Volunteers at the Membership Table:** Many visitors leap at the

opportunity to become a member after only a polite request. Seated volunteers use their outgoing and inviting personality to sign up members.

- **NEW! Membership Admissions Clickers:** To expedite member admissions, volunteers sit on the shady entrance porch to welcome and "click in" members with a hand-held counter and distribute member stickers.
- **Volunteer Shuttle Drivers:** Volunteer drivers follow a set itinerary driving visitors in our courtesy shuttle through selected areas of the Gardens and the parking lots. New this year—an extra shift from 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- **Gardens Docents:** The Gardens' Docents are comprehensively trained in a series of classes that prepares them to give all types of guided tours at the Gardens. All veteran docents are expected to complete additional training.
- **Accessible Cart Tour Volunteers:** Beginning in May, this program—half shuttle driving and half docent touring—will expand to seven days a week.

## Be a Docent!

Our dedicated volunteer docents learn all they can about the Gardens and then present guided tours for groups of visitors. Please consider becoming a docent; and if you're already a docent, we hope you'll return. To sign up, call Volunteer Coordinator Amanda Russell at (207) 633-4333, or e-mail [arusell@mainegardens.org](mailto:arusell@mainegardens.org).

The new-docent program includes three days of free classes and practice sessions. Returning docents are expected to attend sessions to update their learning. Optional walking tours/classes with experts are a chance to learn still more.

All docents commit to completing the training and providing three or more tours in 2010.

- **New-Docent Training** (select one)
  - Session 1:* Mon.–Wed., May 24–26, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. each day
  - Session 2:* Mon.–Wed., June 7–9, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. each day
- **Veteran-Docent Training**
  - Thurs. & Fri., June 10 & 11, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. each day



# Calendar of Events

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is on Barbers Island Road in Boothbay, just over a mile from the Boothbay common. To sign up for events or for more information, stop by the Visitor Center, call (207) 633-4333, or visit [www.MaineGardens.org](http://www.MaineGardens.org). Because numbers are limited for some programs, pre-registration is often advised and sometimes required.



**SYMBOL KEY:** 🕒 Time 📍 Location 💰 Cost 📌 Note 🌟 Sponsor

**EVENT TYPE COLOR CODE:**

- |                  |                              |                         |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 🟢 Ongoing Events | 🟡 Music at the Gardens       | 🟠 Special Events        |
| 🟠 Art & Exhibits | 🟢 Kids & Family Programs     | 🟡 Kitchen Garden Series |
| 🟡 Travel         | 🟠 Adult Educational Programs |                         |

## ONGOING

### First Wednesdays: **FREE ADMISSION**

▶ Free admission for all year-round residents of Lincoln County, Maine. Admission is free for all visitors until April 1.

### April 1: **GARDENS GIFT SHOP OPENS**

### May 1: **KITCHEN GARDEN CAFÉ OPENS**

### Thursdays & Saturdays: **GUIDED WALKS**

🕒 11 a.m. & 1 p.m., beginning in May  
 📍 Meet in the Visitor Center 💰 Free  
 ▶ Knowledgeable docents lead walking tours of many areas of the Gardens. No reservations are necessary. Begins in May

### Daily: **SHUTTLE SERVICE**

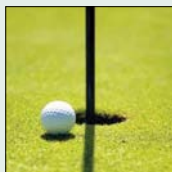
🕒 11 a.m.-3 p.m., beg. in May 💰 Free

### Daily: **ACCESSIBLE CART TOURS**

🕒 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.  
 💰 \$10 for adults and \$8 for visitors with disabilities and senior citizens, in addition to Gardens admission; Wednesdays: free with Gardens admission  
 📌 Reservations required

### **BOOTHBAY COUNTRY CLUB STAY & PLAY VOUCHER**

▶ With eighteen championship holes, Boothbay Country Club is the perfect Maine golf course: breathtaking vistas, challenging holes... and a sea breeze. Although the course is normally only open to its members, the Gardens has made special arrangements so our visitors may also play at our hometown course. Advance reservations are required; call the course directly at (207) 633-6085. Mention code BOT2010.



### Held over until April 30: **"RE-IMAGINED: SCULPTURE BY WENDY KLEMPERER"**

🕒 9-5 daily 💰 Free with Gardens admission  
 ▶ In this exhibit curated by June LaCombe, Wendy Klemperer's gestural sketches in steel depicting two dozen life-size animals are sited throughout the Gardens. All the work is for sale, with proceeds benefiting the Gardens.

### Thursday, April 1–Sunday, May 9: **BOOTHBAY REGION SCHOOLS ART SHOW**

🕒 9:00–5:00 daily 📍 Visitor Center  
 💰 Free with Gardens admission  
 ▶ See artwork by creative K–12 students from the Boothbay Region, Edgecomb, and Southport schools. Why not attend the "Build Your Own Birdhouse" program and stay for the reception? The last day of the exhibit falls on Mother's Day, when all moms are admitted to the Gardens free.  
 ▶ **Reception:** Saturday, April 10, noon–2:00 p.m. Lemonade and cookies will be served; free with no Gardens admission charge.

### Saturday, April 10: **BUILD YOUR OWN BIRDHOUSE**

🕒 10:00–11:30 a.m.  
 📍 Meet in the Visitor Center  
 💰 \$7 members, \$10 non-members (per child or adult), includes materials for one birdhouse. Pre-register, please.



▶ In this program for all ages, learn about the behavior of several local bird species, and then build and decorate a wooden house to attract nesting birds to your yard.

### Saturday, April 24: **THE HOW AND WHY OF KEEPING BEES**

🕒 10:00–11:30 a.m. 📍 Meet in Visitor Center  
 💰 Free with Gardens admission; no pre-registration required  
 ▶ In this hands-on program for all ages, join Christy Hemenway of Gold Star Honeybees to learn about bees and see how easy it is to assemble and maintain a top-bar hive.



### Saturday, May 1: **EVERYBODY PLANT TREES!**

🕒 10:00–11:30 a.m. 📍 Meet in Visitor Center  
 💰 \$7 members, \$10 non-members (per child or adult), includes a bare root seedling  
 ▶ In this program for all ages during Arbor Day weekend, learn how to dig, plant, and care for a tree. Help plant a large tree in the Gardens, and go home with your own seedling to plant.



### Saturday, May 1–Sunday, July 4: **ART EXHIBIT—BENCHES: A SEAT IN THE GARDEN**

🕒 9:00–5:00 daily 📍 Throughout Gardens  
 💰 Free with Gardens admission  
 ▶ You'll enjoy taking a turn on each of the benches in this exhibit of seating in a variety of materials and styles by New England artisans. All the pieces will be for sale, with proceeds benefiting the Gardens.



### Wednesday, May 5: **DESIGN AND PLANT A MIXED-BED GARDEN**

🕒 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
 📍 Meet in the Lerner Garden of the Five Senses  
 💰 \$25 members; \$30 non-members  
 ▶ A well-designed garden bed, using a combination of annuals, perennials and woody plants, creates a panorama that delights the eye. Join Director of Horticulture and Plant Curator Bill Cullina and the horticulture staff in this hands-on workshop to design and plant a mixed bed in the new Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden. Learn how to prepare soil, position the plants, and install a well-orchestrated symphony of color and texture.



### Friday, May 7: **CONCERT BY MATCHING ORANGE**

🕒 7:00 p.m. (gates open at 5:30)  
 📍 Kerr Hall, Visitor Center  
 💰 \$15 members, \$20 non-members; \$5 ages 3–17; under 3 free  
 ▶ The Boston-based three-piece ensemble specializing in Gaelic music will perform acoustic arrangements of traditional music, plus a few surprises. Bring a picnic, and BYOB. Sponsorship opportunities are available.



**Saturday, May 8: TEA AND TULIPS**

🕒 3:30–5:30 p.m. 📍 Kitchen Garden Café  
💰 \$20 members; \$27 for non-members

▶ Celebrate the emerging gardens and spring bulbs galore! Enjoy Mollie Moore's delectable homemade scones with Devonshire cream and jam; four types of tea sandwiches—Mollie's herbed cheese, salmon, cucumber, and tomato; and pots of perfect tea.



**Saturday, May 8: SYMPOSIUM—THE NON-STOP GARDEN**

🕒 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (talks begin 9:30 a.m.)  
📍 Pineland Farms Conference Center, New Gloucester, Maine  
💰 \$90 Gardens members and Maine/New Hampshire Master Gardeners; \$105 non-members  
📌 See insert for additional details

**Sunday, May 9: SEMINAR WITH STEPHANIE COHEN—"NATIVE PERENNIALS: FROM MEADOWS, FIELDS, FORESTS, AND TEST TUBES"**

🕒 10:00 a.m.–noon 📍 Gardens Library  
💰 \$35 members; \$42 non-members  
📌 See insert for additional details

**Sunday, May 9: MOTHER'S DAY AT THE GARDENS**

🕒 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
📍 Free Gardens admission for moms  
▶ All moms are admitted to the Gardens free on Mother's Day, and there will be plenty to see. In addition, the Kitchen Garden Café will offer a special menu that day.

**Saturday, May 15: CELEBRATE SPRING WITH WILDFLOWERS**

🕒 10:00–11:30 a.m. 📍 Meet in Visitor Center  
💰 \$7 members, \$10 non-members (per child or adult), includes planting materials

▶ Maine wildflowers have fascinating stories to tell! In this program for all ages, learn some of our wildflowers' secrets, see them emerging in the woods, and pot up some seedlings to start your own beautiful wildflower garden.



**Saturday & Sunday, May 22 & 23: NATIVE PLANT SALE**

🕒 9:00–4:00 Saturday (members only on Saturday a.m.); 9:00 until sold out on Sunday  
📍 Fir Parking Lot 📍 Free

▶ This is the perfect time and place to purchase hardy, robust, and in some cases rare woodland wildflowers, sun-loving perennials, woody perennials, and other plants that thrive in New England—all selected by Director of Horticulture and Plant Curator William Cullina. There will be a members-only sale 9:00 a.m.–noon on Saturday morning. Join Bill for a free demonstration at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday.



**Saturday, May 22: BILL CULLINA DEMO AND TALK: "CREATING A WOODLAND GARDEN—WHEN ALL YOU HAVE ARE THE TREES"**

🕒 11:00 a.m. 📍 Meet in Visitor Center  
📍 Free with Gardens admission  
▶ Using the Woodland Garden at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Director of Horticulture and Plant Curator Bill Cullina will offer a demo on soil preparation, fertilization, planting techniques, mulching, and selecting and caring for plants for wooded sites.

**Thursday, May 27: UNDERSTANDING LADY-SLIPPER ORCHIDS**

🕒 10 a.m.–noon 📍 Meet in Visitor Center  
💰 \$40 members; \$48 non-members (includes materials and plants)

▶ Director of Horticulture and Plant Curator Bill Cullina will discuss the amazing biology and mysterious ecology of our beloved lady-slipper orchids. See the research underway on the Gardens' pink lady-slipper population, and try your hand at pollination techniques. Learn how to plant nursery-grown seedlings. Each participant will take home seedlings of both yellow lady-slipper and Kentucky lady-slipper to nurture into bloom.



**Tuesday, June 1–Saturday, July 17: ART EXHIBIT—"ROBERT MCCLOSKEY: FROM THE DRAWING BOARD TO THE PAGE"**

🕒 9:00–5:00 daily 📍 Kerr Hall, Visitor Center  
📍 Free with Gardens admission

▶ In this delightful exhibit of works on loan from the May Masee Collection at Emporia State University in Kansas, see how Robert McCloskey transformed his initial sketches for beloved children's books—Blueberries for Sal, Make Way for Ducklings, and others—into the final paintings and drawings for their covers and pages. This is the first time most of the work has been shown in public.  
▶ Reception: Thursday, June 24, 5:00–7:00 p.m., with wine and hors d'oeuvres, free admission.

**Friday–Sunday, June 4–6: ERNIE EGAN RHODODENDRON FESTIVAL**

🕒 9:00–5:00 daily  
📍 Free with Gardens admission

▶ Celebrate the species Rhododendron with us with activities, free presentations, and guided tours of the Giles Rhododendron & Perennial Garden in peak bloom. Discover the world of rhodies, azaleas, mountain laurel, blueberries, and other related plants through our outstanding collection, inaugurated for the Gardens by the late Ernie Egan. We'll offer a fine variety of rhododendrons and companion plants specially selected for New England gardens, with sales benefiting the Gardens. Among the notable experts giving presentations will be Dick Jaynes, Wayne Mezitt, and Carol Yee. Sponsorship opportunities are available.



**Beginning in May: KITCHEN GARDEN DINNER SERIES**

🕒 Dinners begin at 6:00 p.m.  
📍 Kitchen Garden Café  
💰 \$70 members; \$85 non-members (includes wine and gratuity)  
📌 Only 38 tickets/dinner sold. Pre-registration is required. Reserve early.

▶ Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens' immensely popular Kitchen Garden Dinner Series is back! Attending these very special dinners is a wonderful way to experience delicious, innovative multi-course meals prepared in the Kitchen Garden Café by Maine's finest chefs. After the meals, you'll enjoy the chefs' comments about the dishes they've prepared.

- ▶ **Wednesday, May 12:** Chef Rob Evans of Hugo's in Portland
- ▶ **June, Date TBA:** Chef Jonathan Cartwright of the White Barn Inn in Kennebunkport (reservations will be taken when date is set)
- ▶ **Wednesday, September 15:** Chef Lee Skawinski of Vignola and Cinque Terre, both in Portland
- ▶ **Tuesday, October 12:** Chef Jeff Landry of The Farmer's Table in Portland
- ▶ **Tuesday, November 16:** Chef Larry Matthews of Back Bay Grill in Portland
- ▶ **Monday, December 13:** Chef Pierre Gignac of 98 Provence in Ogunquit

**SOLD OUT**

July 8, 2010

**GRAND OPENING** of The Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden

See page 3 for details

Visit [www.MaineGardens.org](http://www.MaineGardens.org) for more details on these and other upcoming events.



# You're in Good Company: A Membership Update for 2010

BY JEN MCKANE, MEMBERSHIP & ANNUAL FUND ASSISTANT MANAGER

As we measure the success of our membership program in 2009, we send our gratitude to those of you who support us by being members. Because of your commitment, the Gardens ended the year more than 6,000 members strong! In 2009 we renewed 2,307 memberships (about 4,000 members), and we also welcomed another 1,083 new memberships (about 2,000 new members) to our ranks. While three-quarters of our members have roots here in Maine, Gardens members hail from 40 states and 2 Canadian provinces. Amazing!

## Bring-A-Guest!

We hope you're already marking your 2010 calendar for the days and events you will attend at the Gardens. While you're at it, be sure to make that list of family and friends you've been meaning to introduce to the Gardens. In 2010, we're offering the perfect opportunity to make those introductions! **Now, when you enroll in our *Bring-A-Guest!* Program, you can upgrade your membership to include free admission for any guest you accompany on any visit to the Gardens.** You can even tailor your membership to allow more than one guest per visit. For details, contact the Membership office.

# Success Comes from Support!

BY CONNIE CAMERON, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The Gardens' 2009 Annual Fund set a new record with total gifts of nearly \$190,000, exceeding the goal of \$175,000 by 8 percent, and growing by a solid and very exciting 20 percent over the previous year. In addition, the Gardens achieved a new record for donor participation, ending the year with 516 donors to the Annual Fund, representing a more than 45 percent increase over 2008.

Thank you to all who showed your enthusiasm and belief in the mission of the Gardens by supporting the 2009 Annual Fund. Gifts to the Annual Fund benefit every aspect of the Gardens and our activities, including garden enhancements and regular maintenance; seasonal displays; and special programs like Nature Camp for children, the Growing Greens Youth Gardening Program, free Storytime in the Forest sessions for young visitors, the Docent Program, special arts and music events, and myriad other activities too numerous to list.

We hope you'll consider a gift to the Gardens' 2010 Annual Fund. Your support makes a difference!

# Of Cucumbers & Canaries

BY WILLIAM CULLINA, DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE AND PLANT CURATOR

As winter begins to lose its grip on Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, some of the first trees to herald the return of spring are the deciduous magnolias. Though less common in Maine landscapes than they are further south, pink saucer magnolias (*Magnolia × soulangeana*) and white star magnolias (*Magnolia stellata*) are easy to spot amid the general gray of early spring. Precocious as they are, these early bloomers are often nipped in the bud by late spring frosts. There is nothing more pitiable than the sight of a desperate gardener with shoulders slumped in despair, standing before the muddy brown mass of frost-killed flowers covering a magnolia that was simply resplendent the day before.

Enter the cucumber tree. Cucumber tree magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) is our largest and most cold-hardy native magnolia. It grows wild as far north as Lake Ontario, and in the wild or in cultivation it can grow to over 100 feet tall with a girth of two feet or more. What is interesting about this tree besides its size are the greenish-yellow flowers it produces high in its canopy. Not only is the color somewhat unusual among magnolias, but the flowers appear a bit later than the typical deciduous magnolias folks are familiar with.

The staff at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden had the unusual idea to hybridize this tree with the parents of the saucer magnolia. The result was a trove of new, later-blooming magnolias sporting yellow or sunset-shaded flowers. The first and most widely known is 'Elizabeth' (a cross of *M. acuminata* × *M. denudata*, the Yulan magnolia), but this beautiful pale yellow cultivar can reach prodigious size. The next generation of hybrids combined the cucumber tree with smaller species like the lily magnolia (*Magnolia liliflora*) and star magnolia to yield plants with vibrant color and modest stature more appropriate for most gardens. One of the finest I have seen is *Magnolia* 'Sunburst' which is a hybrid involving the cucumbertree, lily, and star magnolias. We planted two in the Lerner Garden of the Five Senses last spring and they were simply stunning. Visitors and staff constantly remarked on the vibrant canary-yellow blooms that graced the small trees from late April into early May. I hope you'll come by this spring to see for yourself why these yellow magnolias have taken the gardening world by storm.

Emerging in late April, the vibrant canary-yellow blooms of the *Magnolia* 'Sunburst' trees planted last year in the Lerner Garden of the Five Senses are not to be missed.



# The Gardens Wins Major Tourism Award

At this year's Governor's Conference on Tourism in Augusta, the Gardens received the award for Commitment to Innovation and Creativity. Governor John Baldacci and Maine Office of Tourism Director Patricia Eltman presented this year's awards, which honor individuals and businesses who lead by example.

"Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens has created a unique attraction that exposes visitors to much more than beautiful ornamental gardens," said Eltman. "The Gardens are a favorite spot for walkers, children, art lovers, birders and anyone looking for a moment of solitude."

Executive Director Maureen Heffernan accepted the award on behalf of the Gardens. "This award is so meaningful," she explains, "because we as an organization are committed and work hard to develop a uniquely beautiful, creative and innovative public garden—from designing and creating beautiful ornamental gardens that complement the natural coastal landscape of Maine to planning innovative and creative programs for all ages. We could not be prouder."



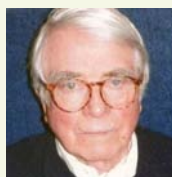
Presenting the award for Commitment to Innovation and Creativity to Executive Director Maureen Heffernan (center) are Governor John Baldacci and Maine Office of Tourism Director Patricia Eltman.



## DONOR PROFILE

### Filling the Book Barn with Books

BY **CONNIE CAMERON**, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



**Tom Hilton** and his wife, **Alice**, both natives of Bangor, Maine, attended college in Boston where Tom earned a BS from MIT and a PhD from Harvard in education research and Alice earned a BA from nearby Wellesley College and pursued a lifelong career as a writer.

Although they lived away for many years, Maine was always "home," the place they returned to with their three sons and where the family gathered for reunions on Squirrel Island and at their camp on Phillips Lake.

In 2000, Alice and Tom returned to Maine and were among the first residents of St. Andrews Village in Boothbay Harbor. Shortly after settling in to their new home, Tom was recruited to help clear trails at the Gardens on Saturday mornings. In 2006, he became a regular docent volunteer giving free guided tours to visitors two days a week. Today, Tom continues to be an active volunteer with the shuttle program, and especially enjoys conducting the popular Accessible Cart Tours.

In 2008, following Alice's death, Tom made a \$3,000 donation for the purchase and maintenance of children's books to help fill the Book Barn in the Bibby and Harold Alford Children's Garden, opening July 8. E.B. White, who was one of Alice's favorite authors and a resident of Brooklin, Maine, will be one of several well-known Maine authors featured in the Garden, and each book purchased will have an individual nameplate in memory of Alice Hilton. The books will be available for children to read on their own or as part of regular story times in the Children's Garden.

Tom's gift is a wonderful example of how donors can make a difference at the Gardens—from helping to fill the Book Barn to providing funds to expand the summer internship program, or underwriting a variety of programs such as the free story times and the spring-bulb and annuals displays, or helping to buy supplies for the Growing Greens Youth Gardening Program. Every gift helps the Gardens continue to grow and ensures a memorable and rewarding experience for every visitor.

If you are interested in making a donation to help fill the Book Barn or support one of our other funding priorities, please contact Connie Cameron, Director of Development.