



## News Release

Contact: Barbara Freeman ([bfreeman@mainegardens.org](mailto:bfreeman@mainegardens.org) or 207-380-9566)

### It's Final: Bill Cullina Is the Gardens' New Executive Director

At Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, members and visitors first heard William Cullina as a guest speaker in 2006 at the spring symposium. Then, in 2008, he joined the Gardens as director of horticulture and plant curator. This August, when Maureen Heffernan left after more than seven years as executive director to take up new challenges at a garden in Oklahoma, Cullina was asked to step in as acting director.

On Thursday, November 10, the board of directors finalized Cullina's appointment as executive director. President Susan Russell announced the board's unanimous vote at a reception for the Gardens staff that afternoon.

"Bill has impressed staff, volunteers, and board members alike with his vision, presence, management skill, business head, and calm-yet-fun demeanor," said Russell as she announced the appointment. She pointed out how fortunate the organization has been to have on its staff an individual with Cullina's expertise and nationwide reputation as a horticulturist.

In his new post, Cullina will not only manage the staff and operations of the non-profit organization founded in 1991 as Maine's first and only botanical garden; he will also help plan the exciting next phase of the 250-acre waterfront garden's growth. Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, which opened to the public in 2007, is already acknowledged as one of Maine's top attractions; and among garden professionals has been called "The Miracle in Maine." Plans are already under way for projects that will add to the Gardens' future appeal and to visitors' enjoyment.

Bill Cullina and his wife, Melissa, who is the Gardens' director of education and staff botanist, live on Southport Island and are active in their adopted community. In addition to all their endeavors at the Gardens, Bill is a volunteer fireman on Southport and serves on the board of the Boothbay Region Land Trust; and he and Melissa both volunteer at the Southport School their three children attend.

He is widely recognized for his expertise in horticulture, particularly in the realm of native plants. In just over a decade, he has had five books published (all by Houghton Mifflin): *Wildflowers* (2000); *Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants* (2002); *Understanding Orchids* (2004); *Native Ferns, Moss, and Grasses: From Emerald Carpet*

*to Amber Wave, Serene and Sensuous Plants for the Garden* (2008); and *Understanding Perennials* (2009). Each contains spectacular photos of plants, another of his specialties. He has been a regular contributor to many magazines and journals, among them “Horticulture” and “Fine Gardening.”

Cullina has also appeared on a number of TV and radio shows, including the “Martha Stewart Show,” “Living on Earth,” “The Victory Garden,” and others. He joined host Joe Lampl in two segments of the national public-television show “Garden Smart” filmed at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens.

He has received numerous major awards; most recently the Sarah Chapman Francis Medal from the Garden Club of America for outstanding literary achievement and the 2012 Scott Horticultural Medal, perhaps the most prestigious horticulture-related award in the nation. He has long been a sought-after speaker, educating and entertaining groups through his presentations across the U.S. and Canada.

Cullina received a B.A., cum laude, in psychology from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, N.Y. Then, at the University of Connecticut, he earned a B.S., summa cum laude, in plant sciences, with concentrations in landscape architecture and horticulture.

For more than a decade before joining the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens staff, he was nursery director and head propagator for the New England Wild Flower Society, where he developed the largest native plant nursery in New England. Prior to his work there, he was nursery manager at Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill, N.C. During his time at NEWFS and Niche Gardens, he was instrumental in developing and introducing eight new plants – and hopes to introduce others at the Gardens.

Earlier in his career, he was a greenhouse manager in the University of Connecticut’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; served as a horticulturist for a design/build landscape firm, Morgan’s Gardening; worked with scientists in Connecticut’s Department of Forestry and Horticulture; and managed a retail greenhouse.

Fortunately, even though he’s now the executive director, Bill Cullina will not spend all his time behind a desk. Those who enjoy learning about his approach to plants and gardening will still be able to enjoy his presentations and workshops. And all who admire the look and feel of Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens will be glad to hear that he’ll continue to take an active part in the Gardens’ exceptional horticulture. He can’t help it!

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