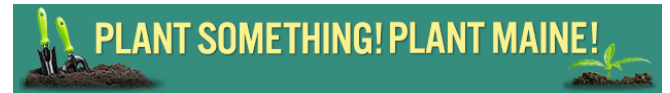


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Linda Varrell
Broadreach Public Relations
(207) 619-7350



Jobs growing on trees as Maine's horticulture industry hits double-digit economic growth

The Annual Grow Maine Green Expo to highlight 2018 industry projections

PORTLAND, Maine (January 2, 2018) – New projections from the Maine Landscape and Nursery Association (MELNA) indicate that the horticulture industry will hit double-digit growth in 2018. With Maine horticulture generating over \$70 million in the annual sale of specialty crops, the industry will continue to create jobs and attract young workers from both in-and-out of the state.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, Maine had 320 horticultural operations that sold \$70.5 million in horticultural products in 2014, compared to 250 horticultural operations that sold \$49.1 million in horticultural products in 2009. Horticulture operation sales continue to rise, and Maine's market potential is growing, with more than 1,000 statewide firms collectively employing 12,000 people; 40% of which are on a full-time basis.

In 2016, MELNA launched the *Plant Something! Plant Maine!* campaign, which emphasizes planting for better health, economic value, and the environment. In the first year of the campaign, 15 statewide garden centers saw a 22.3% increase in sales and a job growth rate of 13.1%.

Not only is the horticulture industry an economic driver for the state of Maine, the *Plant Something! Plant Maine!* campaign emphasizes the benefits associated with planting. Quality, low-maintenance landscaping can increase home resale value by 15%, and just three carefully positioned trees can reduce energy consumption up to 25%. More surprisingly, one tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide annually or 11,000 miles of car emissions.

Horticulture and landscape professionals can learn more about planting benefits and projected trends heading into 2018 at this year's Grow Maine Green Expo, presented by MELNA and the Maine Arborists Association. Maine's premier horticultural industry event will feature networking opportunities, keynotes and educational seminars, updates from the Maine Department of Agriculture, as well as industry awards.

The business-to-business trade show will include more than 70 exhibits of plants, hardscape, arborists and nursery professionals, equipment suppliers, and business management service providers. The event aims to highlight horticulture growth and connect professionals across the industry to resources that will help them attract new customers and grow their sales in the new year.

This year's Grow Maine Green Expo will take place at the at the Augusta Civic Center on January 24, 2018.

About Maine Landscape & Nursery Association

Established in 1970, the Maine Landscape and Nursery Association (MELNA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the encouragement and promotion of its members throughout the industry, including financial support of secondary horticultural education and product research, website connectivity, media representation, and a professional certification program. For more information, please visit www.melna.org and www.plantsomethingmaine.org.

About Plant Something! Plant Maine!

Plant Something! Plant Maine! is nationally established campaign designed to increase the public's support of local growers, nurseries, garden centers, and landscapers through awareness of the benefits of planting specialty crops for the landscape and garden. By focusing on key themes of "plant for better health (nutrition and physical activity), economic value, the environment and your local community," the program is steadily building an online and on-the-ground presence and community for all things related to planting and landscaping in Maine. Plant Something Maine is a program of The Maine Landscape & Nursery Association (MELNA).