

For Immediate Release

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Norfolk Botanical Garden
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Norfolk Botanical Garden Elects New President/CEO Michael P. Desplaines to Lead Organization



Announcement

(Norfolk, VA) – Michael P. Desplaines has been elected President/CEO of Norfolk Botanical Garden Society. He will start his new position on June 16, 2014. Don Buma, the present Executive Director, is retiring. Desplaines brings a background in horticulture, historic property development/restoration and education.

“Michael combines a deep love for public gardens with a capable business acumen that will serve Norfolk Botanical Garden well,” says Ann P. Stokes, Chairman of the Board of Norfolk Botanical Garden. “He brings a wealth of energy and enthusiasm to everything he does. I’m excited to see how the Garden will grow under his leadership.”

Desplaines is the former Executive Director of Castle in the Clouds, a 136-acre estate in the mountains above Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire. He was appointed the first-ever Executive Director of the Castle and charged to develop and restore the property, which includes a historic 16-room mansion, formal gardens, horse stables, gate houses, gift shop, visitor center and an art gallery. During his tenure, he doubled the organization’s budget, increased all revenue streams and delivered four annual budget surpluses, in addition to overseeing more than one million dollars in capital investments in renovations and improvements.

Prior to the Castle, Desplaines served as the Executive Director of The McLaughlin Garden & Homestead in South Paris, Maine. He originally joined the Garden to coordinate educational programs and volunteers for The McLaughlin Foundation (owners and operators of the Garden) and was promoted to Executive Director shortly thereafter. His early career path includes serving as the director of a 21st Century Community Learning Center in the Rhode Island Public School system; a successful career with the YMCA, where he was in charge of grant writing, program development and board training; and teaching environmental science to inner city youth with the AmeriCorps program.

“I’m so excited to have the opportunity to work on behalf of this wonderful resource that has served the area in so many ways for more than 75 years,” says Desplaines. “Don Buma has done an excellent job of leading the Garden and has stewarded great accomplishments here, and I look forward to building on that success.”

Desplaines received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Horticulture from the University of Rhode Island and is pursuing a Master’s degree in Education specializing in Historic Preservation at Plymouth State University. He is an avid skier and traveler, enjoys water sports and is very excited to be moving back near the ocean after 12 years in the mountains.

About Norfolk Botanical Garden

Norfolk Botanical Garden represents an oasis of more than 40 themed gardens encompassing 155 beautiful acres. From stunning plant collections to *WOW - World of Wonders: A Children's Adventure Garden*, this diverse natural beauty can be explored by tram, boat, or walking tours. The Garden is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is recognized as a Virginia Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a Virginia Green attraction, and is managed by the Norfolk Botanical Garden Society supported by the City of Norfolk. Norfolk Botanical Garden is dedicated to enriching life by promoting the enjoyment of plants and the environment through beautiful gardens and education programs. Admission is \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors and military, \$9 for ages 3-17, 2 and under are free. For more information, visit www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org

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