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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Now's the time to Garden in Dorchester's Community Gardens

Free Garden plot information and programs in Dorchester hosted by Boston Natural Areas Network

BOSTON, MA, May 1, 2010 – Want to grow healthy vegetables in your neighborhood? Community garden plots are available in Dorchester! Join BNAN for a series of workshops and community meetings to help you get growing. In its role as a resource to Boston's 10,000 community gardeners, Boston Natural Areas Network is offering a series of free programs intended to introduce Dorchester residents to the joy of community gardening. Here is how you can learn more about community gardens in Dorchester:

GET A GARDEN PLOT:

Nightingale Community Garden Information Meeting--Saturday, May 14th 9 a.m.-11 a.m.—
450 Washington Street, Dorchester—What's happening at 512 Park Street? Join us for our spring meeting to learn more about the newly expanded and completely renovated Nightingale Community Garden. This is an opportunity for residents to join the garden, learn how a community garden works, and review garden rules. We will have a special "sneak peek" of the garden.

Nightingale Community Garden Plot Sign-Up-- Saturday, June 4th, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
Nightingale Community Garden, 512 Park Street, Dorchester--Come out to the Nightingale Garden to choose your garden plot! The new garden will have 125 plots and one is waiting for you!

LEARN MORE ABOUT GARDENING--BNAN is offering free workshops for everyone from the beginner to the seasoned veteran, wherever you garden:

Planning Your Plot-- Saturday, May 7th 9 a.m.-11 a.m.-- Barry Street Community Garden, 39 Barry Street, Dorchester--In this hands-on workshop for beginner gardeners, we'll prepare you for a successful season of growing vegetables in your garden plot.

Planting Seedlings and Helping Them Thrive-- Thursday, May 19th 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Barry Street Community Garden, 39 Barry Street, Dorchester. Learn how to grow heat-loving vegetables in your plot this season. Now is the time to plant your delicious tomatoes and peppers! **Garden Coaches** will be available all summer to help. BNAN staff and Master Urban Gardening Volunteers will be in the Dorchester gardens, working to assist gardeners, offering tips on how to improve your harvest. Call BNAN at 617-542-7696 or email at info@bostonnatural.org for more.

With funding from the "Communities Putting Prevention to Work" program through the Boston Public Health Commission, BNAN is working with local residents to double the number of community garden plots in Dorchester over the next two years from 249 to 501 through the Boston Is Growing Gardens program. BIGG project manager and Dorchester resident Grantley Payne has been reaching out to Dorchester residents raising awareness of the availability and benefits of community gardening. Payne has promoted BIGG and community gardening at community organizations and neighborhood associations including: Codman Square Health Council, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Uphams Corner Health Center, Dynamic Seniors in Action, Fit-4-Life at Kit Clark, Eat Green Save Green, BU IMPACT, Codman Square Neighborhood Association, 5 Streets Association, Hancock Street Civic Association, and Torrey Street Association. The result has been a new excitement about community gardening in Dorchester.

As community gardening gains momentum with the renovation of the Nightingale Community Garden, BNAN has created the Dorchester Garden Council, the first neighborhood garden council in the city. The Council of gardeners and garden supporters, staffed by BNAN, will be a local clearinghouse of support and ideas for gardening in Dorchester, connecting to residents, local groups and institutions and programs serving all ages. The Council will advise on the development of new and existing Dorchester gardens; will help recruit and network to connect

new gardeners to available plots and will help to generate ideas and coordinate garden based events intended to promote nutritional and physical well-being as well as community building.

The council meets in Dorchester the first Tuesday of the month in the evening from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. If you would like to learn more about BIGG, the garden council, or how to get involved in community gardening in your Dorchester neighborhood, please contact BNAN at info@bostonnatural.org or call the BIGG Project Manager Grantley Payne at 617-542-7696 x21.

Boston Natural Areas Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing together local residents, partner organizations, public officials and foundations to preserve, expand and enhance urban open space, including community gardens, greenways and urban wilds. For further information about the organization, becoming a member or the calendar of events, visit www.bostonnatural.org, or call 617-542-7696.

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