

SAVE THESE DATES

Urban Wilds Event Stony Brook Winter Walk or Snowshoe

Sunday, January 29, 1:00 p.m.
Stony Brook Reservation
Hyde Park
Meet at parking lot on Enneking
Pkwy opposite Smithfield Rd.,
Hyde Park

The largest woodland in the city of Boston calls you to discover this hidden gem. We'll have snowshoes available to borrow. Contact BNAN to reserve a pair at 617-542-7696 or info@bostonnatural.org.

Boston Gardeners Council Event Building an Effective Community Garden Composting System

Thursday, March 8
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
BNAN Office, 62 Summer
Street, 2nd Floor, Downtown
Crossing

Do you currently compost at your community garden but want better results? Come learn the best techniques for your garden from urban composting expert, Bruce Fulford, of City Soil and Greenhouse Co. **Registration required**, contact Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

BNAN Annual Event 37th Annual Gardeners Gathering

Saturday, March 31
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Northeastern University, Curry
Student Center
360 Huntington Ave., Boston

Kick-off the growing season with BNAN! See page 5 for additional details.

East Boston Celebrates New Greenway Section

On a sun soaked morning on November 9th, Mayor Thomas Menino proudly announced that the East Boston Greenway, on its way to Constitution Beach, would continue on a new 2/3 mile segment to an overlook at Wood Island Bay Marsh across Massport's North Service Area. Officials from Massport and the City, along with East Boston's elected officials, each addressed the crowd of dozens gathered at Bremen Street Park, including Massport Interim CEO and Executive Director David Mackey, State Secretary of Transportation and Massport Chairman Richard Davey, State Representative Carlo Basile, State Senator Anthony Petrucelli, City Councilor Sal LaMattina and Jim Hunt, the city's Chief of Environment and Energy.

BNAN's consulting architect Gretchen Schneider greeted the group with her newborn son in her arms. "Today's dedication is a great milestone for East Boston," she said, "I look forward to the day when little Sam here has the option to safely walk or bike to the airport, the marsh, the T or the library."

The planned Greenway connection crosses through Bremen Street Park and past
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Left: Teacher Matt Poirier (right) works with students (left to right) Cahrina Jackson, Jerome Works, and Rebecca Ilvert to plant trees at the Young Achievers School in Mattapan. Right: Students Shyann Gerald and Devaughn Daley make sure the tree is planted correctly. The trees for this project were provided by the Grow Boston Greener grant program. Trees were installed with students and volunteers on November 30.

Bountiful Harvest for Produce To Pantries in 2011

BNAN's Boston Gardeners Council organized its second successful season connecting community gardeners and local farms with three food pantries - the Saint Mary's Episcopal Church food pantry in Uphams Corner, the Dorchester House food pantry in Fields Corner and the Haitian American Public Health Initiative food pantry in Mattapan. Over 25 volunteer gardeners, farmers, pantry assistants, City Natives harvesters, drivers and cyclists participated in making the program run smoothly.

Eight community gardens throughout Dorchester, Roslindale and Jamaica Plain, along with four regional farms including TTOR's Powisset Farm in Dover, Land's Sake Farm in Weston, Milton's Brookwood Community Farm and TTOR's Bradley Farm in
continued on page 2

Neponset Greenway Completion Seeks Federal Grant

MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has submitted an extraordinary application to the US Department of Transportation for completion of the Neponset River Greenway. The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) III program is a highly competitive stimulus program of USDOT which provides sought-after construction funds for transportation infrastructure improvements. The "Neponset River Greenway Corridor Completion Project" is one of over 800 submissions; so while advocates recognize the competition, both they and DCR officials are very excited about the strength of the proposal. The Neponset Greenway application has strong support from Governor Patrick, Mayor Menino, Senator Kerry, Congressmen Capuano, Keating and Lynch and state senators and representatives and other elected officials.

The Neponset's TIGER III proposal aims to complete three missing sections of the Neponset Greenway: 1) on the southern end from Martini Shell to Neponset Valley Parkway in Hyde Park 2) on the northern end from the former Shaffer Paper site to the Harborwalk Dorchester and 3) The missing middle section between Central Avenue in Milton and Mattapan Square. The proposal in its entirety can be viewed on an illustrative website put together for this application http://www.env.state.ma.us/Neponset_River_Greenway_Corridor.

Lead project planner Cathy Garnett of DCR was overwhelmed by the amount of support letters that were received for the grant application, and enjoyed reading the personal stories of Greenway users. "The number of letters we received were thicker than the application itself," she stated. "I hope the grant reviewers will recognize such widespread support for this project."

DCR held a public meeting in mid-November to update the community regarding the TIGER application as well as to collect feedback on design elements for the section between Central Avenue and Mattapan Square. At a well attended meeting, participants expressed strong support for the alignment and design of what was once a contentious issue. Meeting goers viewed a scale model of the proposed canopy walk section of the trail and offered input on types of bridge structures, access points and safety features. The presentation is available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings.htm>. Another design meeting is expected later this winter.

Join us at a monthly meeting of the Neponset River Greenway Council, the first Wednesday of the month (schedule on this page), or keep up-to-date on our email list by contacting Candice Cook at candice@bostonnatural.org.

Bountiful Harvest continued from page 1

Canton, contributed to the program this season. This dedicated network of people generated a total of 6,100 pounds of fresh produce for pantry goers. Using a combination of USDA, Whole Foods and Farmer CSA's average prices for organic food, it is estimated that close to \$15,500 worth of produce was donated to approximately 1000 families and individuals who visited the pantries each week between July and October.

Sarah Coburn Borgeson from the food pantry at St. Mary's Episcopal Church had this to say about the impact of the program for the people who visit the pantry each week: "Access to fresh, healthy, locally grown produce is a real challenge for many of our low-income families. The Produce-to-Pantries program has allowed us to put beautiful produce directly into the hands of those who need it most." Thanks to all of the Produce to Pantries volunteers, gardeners and farmers for all of your hard work and generosity this season! We look forward to working with you again next year.



Fresh tomatoes are weighed by a youth volunteer at St. Mary's Episcopal Church before they are donated through the Produce to Pantries program.

The 10th Annual Pumpkin Float was the biggest yet, held at Pope John Paul II Park on the Neponset River in October. Over 600 children and families watched the spectacle of nearly 200 jack-o-lanterns lit and bobbing on the water. Thanks to the dozens of volunteers and DCR staff who made the event a success!



NEPONSET RIVER GREENWAY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Wednesday January 4, 2012 7:00 p.m.**
Baker Square Community Room
1243 Adams Street, Dorchester
- Wednesday February 1, 2012 7:00 p.m.**
Hyde Square Police Station District 18
1249 Hyde Park Ave., Hyde Park
- Wednesday March 7, 2012 7:00 p.m.**
St. Brendan's Church
589 Gallivan Blvd., Dorchester

Learn with the Boston Gardeners Council

The BGC is currently organizing two events this season: a workshop on composting for community gardens led by expert urban composter, Bruce Fulford, and a Community Garden Leadership 101 discussion led by BNAN staff and a panel of experienced Community Garden coordinators. Please see the calendar on page 5 for more details. The BGC meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month in February, May, August and November. To get involved in the Boston Gardeners Council or the Produce to Pantries program please contact Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org.

City Natives Notebook

by Jeremy Dick, BNAN Horticulturist

It's that time of year again. It seems that every time I open the fridge a plastic bag of seeds falls to the floor. Despite the trouble of having to continually pick up and replace the same bag of hickory seeds, the process is an effective reminder that it is time to start sowing these seeds to fill the storage frames at City Natives. This is one of my favorite tasks of the year.

I was recently asked the common question, "How do you produce all these plants?" Answer, I grow them from seed, mostly. During the growing season I collect fruits from plants I visit in gardens and parks. I then extract the seeds from the fruits and store the seeds in zip top bags in the refrigerator until the time of sowing. Storing in a cool, dark, moisture retentive environment helps to prolong the vigor of the seeds and can accelerate the germination process when sown.

Over millions of years the plants that grow in temperate regions of the world have developed inhibitions to restrict the environmental conditions under which the seeds can germinate. These plants evolved requirements to break dormancy to survive fluctuating temperatures, light conditions and moisture availability in order to grow in harmony with the seasons. In other words, plants have developed inhibitions to prevent seeds from germinating in November only to have the seedlings killed by freezing temperatures in December.

Plant propagators manipulate the environment to which seeds are exposed to provide the proper conditions for germination. This process is called stratification. I sow the seeds of many of the tree and shrub species in flats or 4" pots in November to provide four to six months of cold, moist conditions prior to my target germination period of March through May. An insulated storage frame, which effectively mimics a layer of leaves and topsoil, provides these conditions while protecting the seeds from rodents and other pests.

I will be offering a propagation program as part of the 2012 Seed, Sow & Grow series for those who wish to learn more about growing plants from seed. Looking to add some native plants to your garden? Check www.bostonnatural.org/citynatives in March for an updated list of the trees, shrubs and perennials offered. Questions, sales inquiries and volunteering requests can be submitted to citynatives@bostonnatural.org.

"New Homes, New Gardens" Brightens Homes Across Boston

From Dorchester to East Boston, fifteen new homeowners of formerly foreclosed properties received professional landscape services and training from BNAN staff and volunteers to make improvements to their new yards, porches and decks.



Stewardship Manager Karen Chaffee and New Homes, New Gardens homeowner Tania Rivera on Julian Street in Roxbury prepare window boxes for her front porch.

The "New Homes, New Gardens" program is funded through the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development New Home Center that selects eligible participants.

Homeowners were guided through the site analysis and design process of their home landscapes and then received hands-on training while working side by side with BNAN staff, led by BNAN's Karen Chaffee, to plant window boxes, hanging baskets or in-ground perennials and trees. In some cases a large number of family members and neighbors of all ages have participated in the installations, serving to build new relationships between generations and community members.

As of October, ten project participants have completed the program with new, greener yards. Each will receive a resource guide that will provide them with tips on how to best care for their new landscape improvements. Initial consultations and site visits with a group of additional participants will continue into the winter with final designs determined and put into action next spring. For Master Urban Gardener and Master Urban Gardener at Home graduates, the New Homes, New Gardens program is a meaningful volunteer opportunity and a chance to work on new landscapes with their neighbors.



Volunteers from the "Do Good Bus" lent a hand planting trees at Pope John Paul II Park in Dorchester. This fall, 115 volunteers helped plant trees at this park and at the East Boston Greenway.



This fall, fifteen teens from our summer Youth Conservation Corps were the proud recipients of a free bike, courtesy of the City of Boston's Roll It Forward bike donation program. The program collects donated bikes and then fixes them up to give away to deserving Boston youth. Roll It Forward is actively collecting bikes of all sizes. If you have an old bike or two in your basement or garage, consider donating it by visiting rollitforward.blogspot.com.

New Trees Green Neighborhoods

This fall, eight local community organizations received grants from the Grow Boston Greener (GBG) program to plant over fifty new trees in Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury, Allston-Brighton, Roslindale, Charlestown and South Boston.

Organizations that received grants in the fall of 2011 are: Affordable Housing and Services Collaborative, Inc., Charles River Watershed Association, Friends of Young Achievers, Greening Rozzie, Mishawum Park Tenants Association, Presentation School Foundation, Inc., South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation, Southie Trees and West Broadway Neighborhood Association.



On November 5 volunteers from Southie Trees and the West Broadway Neighborhood Association planted ten trees in South Boston as part of the Grow Boston Greener program.

The Grow Boston Greener program is a competitive mini-grant program of Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) in partnership with the City of Boston that provides funding of up to \$2,500 for tree plantings in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Funding for the GBG program is provided by the support of corporate and

philanthropic donors through the Fund for Parks and Recreation in Boston.

An inventory of Boston's trees shows that the city has an overall tree canopy cover of 29 percent. The GBG vision is to plant an additional 100,000 trees by 2020 to increase the urban tree canopy to 35 percent and make Boston a cooler, cleaner, healthier city. The goals of GBG are to increase tree canopy, mitigate heat island effect, reduce energy consumption, improve air quality and improve storm water management. GBG focuses not only on planting trees, but also on the community-based stewardship activities necessary to ensure the trees' survival.

For more information visit www.growbostongreener.org. Look for information on the next grant round in February 2012.



MA DCR Commissioner Edward Lambert presents BNAN President Valerie Burns with the award of an Urban Forestry Challenge Grant on November 10. The award is supporting BNAN's efforts to organize the Boston Urban Forest Council and manage tree planting and stewardship programs in Boston. The event took place at the Presentation School Foundation Community Center in Brighton.

BNAN Organizes Council to Talk Trees

BNAN is convening the Boston Urban Forest Council (BUFC) to bring tree enthusiasts and Boston residents together to share information and coordinate efforts to promote tree planting, education and appreciation in the City of Boston. By addressing the need to raise visibility of the impact of trees and the benefits of the urban forest, the BUFC will increase awareness of the relationship between public health, quality of life and a sustainable urban forest. In addition, the Council will support open dialogue among residents, tree activists and public agencies to support policy decisions that positively impact Boston's tree canopy.

BNAN will staff the BUFC by facilitating meetings, organizing outreach efforts, managing communication platforms and contributing to the urban forest discourse. BNAN will spark conversation by scheduling experts to present information about trees and how they benefit the urban environment.

The BUFC will meet for the second time on Tuesday, January 24 at 6:30 p.m. and plans to continue meeting bi-monthly. BNAN hosted an initial meeting in November to gather feedback and identify action items for 2012. The BUFC needs your voice and support. All are welcome and we encourage you to spread the word to fellow tree enthusiasts.

All programs are free and open to the public. Please check our website at www.bostonnatural.org for updates, maps to locations and further details.

To register and for further information call BNAN at 617-542-7696 or email info@bostonnatural.org.

Dorchester Winter Farmers Market

Sundays, January through March, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Great Hall, Codman Square, 6 Norfolk Street, Dorchester

Support local agriculture at the Dorchester Winter Farmers Market that will feature farm-fresh produce, local meat and food, bread and cheese, and entertainment.

Urban Wilds Speaker Series: Why We Need Wilds in the City

Thursday, January 19

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

BNAN Office, 62 Summer Street, 2nd Floor, Downtown Crossing

Dan Driscoll, Director of Recreational Facilities Planning, MA DCR and featured green space advocate in “My Green Manifesto,” will speak about the need for accessible, “wild” spaces in the city. He will talk about his work along the Charles River to transform a polluted, once feared space into a home for urban wildlife and an opportunity for human discovery and peace. **Registration required.** To register and for more information contact Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

Urban Wilds Event

Stony Brook Winter Walk or Snowshoe

Sunday, January 29, 1:00 p.m.

Stony Brook Reservation
Hyde Park

Meet at parking lot on Enneking Pkwy opposite Smithfield Rd., Hyde Park

The largest woodland in the city of Boston calls you to discover this hidden gem. We’ll explore the woods and look for signs of creatures that make Stony Brook their winter home. If there is snow on the ground, we’ll have snowshoes available to borrow. Contact BNAN to reserve a pair: info@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

Boston Gardeners Council Event Community Garden Leadership 101

Thursday, February 9

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

BNAN Office, 62 Summer Street, 2nd Floor, Downtown Crossing

Come learn from long-time community garden coordinators about how to develop an effective leadership structure for your garden. Whether you are a veteran coordinator or new to the role, you’ll discover tools to build a collective sense of responsibility and action in your garden. All gardeners welcome! For more information contact Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

Registration required.

Gladeside Urban Wild Winter Wildlife Tracking and Snowshoe

Saturday, February 11

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Gladeside Urban Wild, end of Lorna Rd., Mattapan

Join as we follow evidence of winter wildlife through the woods on snowshoes in this special Mattapan forest. We will snowshoe if there is a good layer of snow on the ground, otherwise, we’ll walk. Dress warmly. Snowshoes to borrow are limited, **registration required.** Contact BNAN at 617-542-7696 or info@bostonnatural.org.

Volunteer Opportunity Farmers Market Assistants

Sunday, February 26

11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Great Hall, Codman Square, 6 Norfolk Street, Dorchester

The Dot Grows Garden Council is looking for volunteers to lend a helping hand at the Dorchester Winter Farmers Market. Activities will include set-up and break-down as well as meet and greet vendors and customers. To volunteer, contact grantley@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

Volunteer Opportunity Heating up the Greenhouse!

Saturday, March 3

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

City Natives, 30 Edgewater Drive, Mattapan

Help BNAN build a new composting system in the City Natives greenhouse that

will extend the growing season earlier into the spring! To volunteer, contact erika@bostonnatural.org or phone 617-542-7696.

Boston Gardeners Council Event Building an Effective Community Garden Composting System

Thursday, March 8

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

BNAN Office, 62 Summer Street, 2nd Floor, Downtown Crossing

Do you currently compost at your community garden but want better results? Are you interested in composting but don’t know where to begin? Come troubleshoot and learn the best techniques for your garden from urban composting expert, Bruce Fulford, of City Soil and Greenhouse Co. For more information contact Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org or 617-542-7696.

Registration required.

Neponset Greenway Event Annual Neponset Spring Cycle

Sunday, March 18, 10:00 a.m.

Meet at concession stand at Fort Independence/Castle Island, Day Blvd., South Boston

We’ll usher out winter and welcome spring by riding the entire Neponset Greenway, end to end, exploring the present and future paths. A 13-mile flat ride (one way) both on-road and on paths. Helmets required. Pre-registration recommended by contacting info@bostonnatural.org.

BNAN Annual Event 37th Annual Gardeners Gathering

Saturday, March 31

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Northeastern University, Curry Student Center
360 Huntington Ave., Boston

Kick-off the growing season with BNAN! Join over 400 community and residential gardeners for a full day of lectures and hands-on workshops. Dive into your favorite gardening topics and rub elbows with agriculturalists from across the city. Plus, the perennially popular community garden awards will honor Bostonians who’ve made extraordinary contributions to our gardening community.



BPS teachers craft flowers for a pollinator demonstration. This is one of many activities that supports BPS curricula while bringing gardening into the classroom.

Bring Gardening into Boston Classrooms

The ground in Boston will be frozen for months to come, but students and teachers in fifteen Boston Public Schools (BPS) are getting their hands dirty. Thanks to generous support from the Bernice B. Godine Family Foundation, the Students Learning Through Urban Gardening (SLUG) program is getting gardening into BPS classrooms for the sixth school year running.

BNAN is thrilled to welcome Wendy Simard on board as the new SLUG Program Assistant. After participating in the 2011 Master Urban Gardener program, Wendy served as a devoted volunteer at City Natives throughout the growing season. In her new role, Wendy will be supporting BPS teachers with the information, materials and support they need to incorporate gardening into the school day while meeting BPS curricular standards. Wendy will be busy this spring delivering gardening materials to schools across Boston, growing vegetable seedlings and hosting the Spring Teacher Training.

In 2012, the Spring Teacher Training will be hosted in March at City Natives. This full-day event features sample gardening activities, skill-building workshops and teacher-driven discussion. All BPS teachers are welcome to attend. For more information about the Teacher Training, write to Wendy Simard at slug@bostonnatural.org or call 617-542-7696.

Now is the Time to Plan for Spring Planting

Though it may be cold outside, garden coordinators are not just dreaming of spring but they are planning for spring planting. In January BNAN will send Boston garden coordinators forms to request vegetable seeds and compost offered free to gardeners. Coordinators will check in with their gardeners to determine amounts to request and return the completed forms to BNAN.

BNAN raises funds to purchase seeds from a local business that supports community gardening by giving BNAN a generous discount. In addition, some seeds are donated. Volunteers from People Making a Difference fill the seed requests and orders are ready for MUG volunteers to distribute to coordinators at the annual Gardeners Gathering held in March.

Compost is provided through the Boston Public Works Department Recycling Program. BNAN coordinates the requests for compost and submits to the Recycling Program, who contracts for delivery of this soil amendment critical to the productivity of the gardens. BNAN and the gardeners are grateful for the support of Mayor Menino, Public Works Commissioner Joanne Massaro and Recycling Program Director Susan Cascino in providing this valuable program.

This is now the eleventh year that BNAN has provided free seeds and coordinated compost orders for community gardens. This work helps ensure that gardeners in the city are able to consistently grow healthy, nutritious food.

Exploring Urban Wilds

It was a busy fall in Boston's Urban Wilds. For the second year, BNAN worked with the McLaughlin Stewards to host the annual Cider Pressing Festival at the McLaughlin Heritage Orchard in Mission Hill. Local students and families gathered at the McLaughlin Playground to try their hand at pressing apples harvested directly from the orchard. People stayed late into the sunny afternoon to sip cider and chat with neighbors.

BNAN board member Jessica Mink and Stewardship Manager Karen Chaffee worked with the Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation's Director of Community Organizing, Ava Chan, to lead a 10-mile bike tour of seven Urban Wilds in Allston and Brighton. Since many of Allston and Brighton's Urban Wilds have been at least partially lost to development, the theme of the tour focused on why protection of Urban Wilds throughout the city is so essential.

To finish out the season, neighbors from Hyde Park and Roslindale came out on a chilly November morning to admire the accomplishments of the Hyde Park Green Team's trail work and woodland restoration in Sherrin Woods Urban Wild. The youth crew, which is managed through the Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation, meets throughout the summer and fall to make the woods more accessible to neighbors.

In the months ahead, the Urban Wilds Council will be hosting speakers to discuss topics related to the natural history of Urban Wilds, the necessity of protecting Urban Wilds, effective Urban Wilds management and how Urban Wilds serve to help us to build a unique connection to nature in the midst of the city. See the calendar on page 5 for more details. To get involved in Urban Wilds contact Stewardship Manager Karen Chaffee at karen@bostonnatural.org.



Youth members from the Hyde Park Green Team celebrate their newly built trail entrance to Sherrin Woods Urban Wild.

East Boston Celebrates continued from page 1

the location of the new East Boston library, emerging and crossing Frankfort Street, past historic Neptune Road and the MBTA station and continuing between the Blue Line tracks and the bus facility now under construction at Logan Airport. A small overlook park will provide visitors with views of Wood Island Marsh near Short Street. Construction is slated to start next summer and continue into 2013, with Massport to fund, build and manage the walking and biking path.

Prior to the announcement, a community design committee had been meeting bi-weekly throughout the fall with City and Massport officials to discuss potential routes and features of the Greenway connection. The committee is comprised of eighteen individuals including Gail Miller and Chris Marchi of AIR, Inc, BNAN President Valerie Burns, Gretchen Schneider, representatives of elected officials, bicycle advocates and other community members. The group discussed potential routes, design elements such as fencing, seating, lighting and signage, and issues of access and security related to the airport location.

While the Mayor's announcement allowed for a warranted celebration of progress made in this section, work must continue to plan the Greenway another 1/3 mile beyond the overlook to Constitution Beach. Please join the Friends of East Boston Greenway for a complete update and to offer your input on Thursday, January 26, 6:30 p.m. at the East Boston YMCA.



Advocates and members of the Boston Conservation Commission congratulate each other after the announcement of the East Boston Greenway extension. From left: Chris Busch, Valerie Burns, Chris Marchi, Gail Miller, Vivien Li, Gretchen Schneider, Lauri Webster.

EAST BOSTON GREENWAY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Thursday January 26, 2012 6:30 p.m.**
East Boston YMCA, 215 Bremen St., East Boston
- Thursday February 23, 2012 6:30 p.m.**
East Boston YMCA, 215 Bremen St., East Boston
- Thursday March 22, 2012 6:30 p.m.**
East Boston YMCA, 215 Bremen St., East Boston

The Mayor of East Boston is Taking Care of the Greenway

Almost five years ago Frank Spolsino first answered a call for volunteers to help out along the East Boston Greenway. Since then we have all benefitted from his cheerful smile and dedicated work along the greenway. A lifelong resident of East Boston, Frank is the self-proclaimed "Mayor of East Boston." He now lives on the other side of Eastie along Lexington Street, but that does not stop him from loading his wheelbarrow and taking the one-mile walk to start his day as one of the Greenway's most dedicated stewards.

As a young man, Frank remembers the unpleasant, overgrown, rail right of way and the park-and-fly lots packed full of cars. Today he revels in the fact that in their place are trails and parks where kids ride their bikes and families gather and play.

Frank developed his green thumb in the East Boston community gardens and this summer grew a bumper crop of tomatoes in his raised bed garden along Bremen Street at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center garden. The opportunity to help plant daylilies along the greenway in 2008 is what first brought Frank's garden talents to the greenway and he has never left. You will find him raking leaves, trimming brush or watering one of the 50 new trees recently planted along the Greenway by TD Bank volunteers.

The sun is always shining whenever the "Mayor of East Boston" is working on the greenway. BNAN program manager Candice Cook loves working with Frank. "He is a special individual who gives of himself all over East Boston and we're lucky to have him so dedicated to helping on the Greenway. Frank brightens my day!" So if you are on the Greenway, and you see a smiling gentleman working hard to make this open space a little better for everyone, stop by, introduce yourself and offer your thanks.



Volunteer Frank Spolsino with one of the many trees he cares for along the East Boston Greenway.

No Winter Slumber in Dorchester

As the winter frost settles in Dorchester gardens, it would appear that gardening activities in Dorchester have come to an end, right? Well, not so fast. Boston Is Growing Gardens (BIGG) is following up a busy season of food growing, workshops and events with more food growing, garden education and outreach for available plots at newly renovated Dorchester community gardens.

Some Dorchester gardeners, employing knowledge gained from fall BIGG workshops, have built low tunnels made of stakes, plastic hoops, row cover and tarp to cultivate leafy greens and lettuces throughout the fall and into winter. Meanwhile, other gardeners have enthusiastically reported their plans to can and freeze produce harvested in the fall.

To supplement skills gained at Dorchester community gardens this summer, several Dorchester pre-school and youth programs are receiving winter garden education. Ranging in age from 4 to 18 years, budding community gardeners and staff from ABCD Head Start, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation and Grace Christian Academy are learning where their food comes from and how to plan their community garden plots for next season.

As interest in community garden plots continues to grow in Dorchester, renovations at 33 Bullard Street and Julian, Judson and Dean Streets Community Gardens are underway to meet the demand. Features including new fencing, plots and plot dividers, pathways and watering systems are being installed at these sites and, once completed, will offer new gardening opportunities to Dorchester residents. Recruiting is underway.

Rounding out the flurry of winter activity in Dorchester is the Winter Farmers Market. Spearheaded by Nightingale community gardener Jenny Silverman, the farmers market will offer fresh produce, bread and cheese, and meats from local Massachusetts farms. The market runs from January through March on Sundays from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Great Hall in Codman Square. The grand opening is scheduled for January 8.

Dot Grows Garden Council

Monthly Meetings

Tuesday, February 7, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 6, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location to be determined

The newly formed Dot Grows Garden Council serves to support Dorchester community gardeners, residents, families and organizations in practicing and promoting community gardening, sharing resources and ideas and planning for a healthier Dorchester.



Nightingale Community Gardeners and BNAN staff join the family of Mr. Ivis Pitter to celebrate the dedication of the sun shelter at Nightingale in Mr. Pitter's honor.

Nightingale Fosters Sense of Community

As they prepare for a winter of planning and learning, gardeners at Nightingale Community Garden, home to Dorchester's largest community garden with over 130 vegetable growing plots and raised beds, wrapped up a fall whirlwind of community-building activities and workshops with two significant events: the Nightingale Fall Harvest Festival and the Ivis Pitter Dedication.

The first annual Nightingale Fall Harvest Festival was held on Saturday October 15. Planned and coordinated in large part by Nightingale's volunteer event team, the harvest festival featured a garden-wide potluck, raffle, exercise workshop, pickle making demonstration conducted by Bowdoin Street Health Center's Healthy Champions youth program and a live DJ playing music for participants to dance to and enjoy. Community gardeners, friends and residents from as near as Dorchester's Codman Square and as far as Chelsea were on hand for this glorious season-ending celebration.

Two weeks following the Harvest Festival, a group of gardeners gathered to honor the memory of the late Mr. Ivis Pitter, whose remarkable presence in the garden served as an example to many of his fellow gardeners on how to grow food and build community one seed at a time. Longtime Nightingale community gardeners including Elnora Thompson, David Wilson and Arthur James delivered heartfelt sentiments moments before Boston Is Growing Gardens project manager Grantley Payne raised a plaque onto the sun shelter in honor of Pitter. Following the dedication, gardeners planted daffodil bulbs that will outline the garden in early spring.

Due in part to its grand size and proportionate expectations, Nightingale Community Garden has formed a gardener leadership structure that will promote sustainability and stewardship in the large garden. The garden is organized into six sections, each with a volunteer leader whose responsibility is to share information related to garden activities and developments with gardeners in their designated section. Working in tandem, Nightingale coordinator Thompson, section leaders, the event team and maintenance team promise to strengthen, beautify and prepare the garden and its gardeners for next season and long-term success.

Sowing a New Crop of Master Urban Gardeners

Thirty community gardeners are set to begin the sixteenth season of the Master Urban Gardener (MUG) program. Selected from a wide pool of applicants, these gardeners bring their experiences from a broad range of neighborhoods, backgrounds and gardens with them to the classroom. Together, they will spend six Saturdays in early 2012 learning the skills needed to thrive in Boston community gardens-- from vegetable gardening and composting to community organizing.

Rather than paying a fee, participants in the Master Urban Gardener program give back 30 hours of volunteer service to Boston's gardening community. BNAN looks forward to the passion, attention and muscle this year's Master Urban Gardeners will bring to gardens and citywide community garden events. This year's gardeners are in good company as they join a corps of over 400 Master Urban Gardeners who continue to share their passion and expertise with gardeners across the city.

This growing corps of Master Urban Gardeners works with BNAN to do the patient work of teaching neighbors how to grow food together. They are increasing the availability of healthy produce in our neighborhoods, while providing opportunities for physical activity and community building. Master Urban Gardeners give their fellow gardeners the support they need to return to the community garden season after season.

If you attend this year's Gardeners Gathering you will see green apron-clad Master Urban Gardeners busy at work, hosting hundreds of gardeners from across Boston. Introduce yourself to one of the Master Urban Gardeners, thank them for all they contribute and consider applying for the MUG program in 2013.



MUG participants practice the various methods for propagating plants in a hands-on classroom session. MUG classroom sessions include lectures, discussions and hands-on activities on a wide range of topics from composting to organizing a garden clean-up.



MUGatHOME participants present designs for their home landscapes to the rest of the class.

Is there a Master Gardener in Your Boston Backyard?

When gardeners are beginning to dream of spring, it's time to apply for the Master Urban Gardener at Home (MUGatHOME) program. The MUGatHOME program includes 30 hours of classroom instruction taught by landscape professionals and covers all you need to know to garden at home while having a positive impact on Boston's urban environment. Topics include vegetable garden planning, botany and soil science for gardeners, landscape design and fruit tree basics.

Whether you have a small shady backyard, a narrow porch wedged between two buildings or enough space for a large vegetable garden, MUGatHOME will provide you with skills and information to make the most of your space.

Rather than paying a fee, MUGatHOME gardeners give volunteer service to Boston's gardening community. By donating their skills and time, gardeners gain invaluable in-the-field experience, while giving back. The MUGatHOME program is open to Boston residents with any amount of gardening experience who want to contribute to Boston's gardening community.

Applications are due February 15. To download an application, visit <http://bostonnatural.org/MUGatHome.htm>. For more information, write mug@bostonnatural.org or call 617-542-7696.

Summer Jobs for Boston Youth

It may be winter, but it's never too early to start thinking about summer. Especially if you're a Boston resident who will be 15-17 years old this summer. Go to www.bostonyouthzone.com to register for the Mayor's Hopeline/ Boston Youth Fund summer job program. Once registered, you can apply to be part of BNAN's Youth Conservation Corps. More info can be found at www.bostonnatural.org/ycc.htm.



Garden mentor Noel Janka and RIAC youth member work together at the Bromley Heath Community Garden in Jamaica Plain.

Gardening through Refugee Organizations (GRO) Enters New Phase

After three years of working with seven Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), BNAN and the GRO program have introduced 300 immigrant and refugee families to local vegetable gardening. Participants come from Haiti and Vietnam as well as from many African nations including Somalia, Sudan, Congo, and Eritrea.

BNAN has hosted two dozen workshops at City Natives and all over Boston to train over 250 refugees and immigrants on how to grow their own food. A whopping 252 people are gardening in 88 different family plots in nine different community gardens in the city. BNAN also provided technical assistance to help nearly 300 refugees and immigrants start safely growing vegetables in their backyards.

The program has, more importantly, successfully generated a new generation of leaders from among the refugee communities in Boston's community gardens. Participants from the GRO program have participated in the Boston Garden Council, led workshops, advocated for additional gardening plots with policy makers and helped orchestrate the Produce to Pantries project. The new community garden at the Bromley Heath housing development in Jamaica Plain is a GRO project.

BNAN's vice president Vidya Tikku and stewardship manager Karen Chaffee worked closely with GRO program coordinator Caroline Roszell and consultant Larry Dixon to develop and coordinate this program. Haitian-American Public Health Initiative (HAPHI) has served as the lead organization for the MAA's under the direction of Executive Director Jean Marc Jean-Baptiste. With the initial three-year grant to HAPHI expended and with relationships now established between the individual MAAs and BNAN, the GRO program is entering a new phase with BNAN and the individual MAA staff now working more directly together.

The GRO program in its next phase will have the benefit of starting with a network of over 850 refugee community members growing vegetables in Metro Boston in backyard and community gardens. As BNAN and the MAAs work together, the goal is to continue to support refugees and immigrant families to improve their gardening skills, help more interested refugee families start gardening and to strengthen the involvement of refugee youth in urban agriculture.

Fifty New Trees Call the East Boston Greenway Home

As part of their partnership to re-green select communities with new trees, TD Bank and Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) kicked off the first TD Tree Day in the U.S. with a tree planting in East Boston. In partnership with Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, over forty TD Bank employee volunteers planted 50 trees at the East Boston Greenway on Wednesday, October 12.

TD Bank employees, BNAN and community volunteers rolled up their sleeves to bring the benefits of new trees to East Boston: cleaner air greener streets, and a healthier, more beautiful neighborhood. "At TD Bank, we are passionate about helping the environment, and we are proud that so many volunteers from TD and local communities are coming together to plant trees in their neighborhoods. The trees will enhance the local environment and provide important benefits, including increased shade and improved air quality," said Gerry Guidice, SVP, Head of U.S. Real Estate and Chairman of TD Bank's Green Council.

TD Tree Days events are taking place during National NeighborWoods Month, ACT's annual October celebration of trees in communities, sponsored in part by TD Bank. The aftercare and maintenance for the new trees will be provided by Friends of the East Boston Greenway, Greenway Gardeners and the BNAN Youth Conservation Corps. TD Tree Days in the United States is part of a tree planting initiative with events also taking place across Canada and in the United Kingdom.



Dozens of volunteers planted 50 trees on the East Boston Greenway in October. Photo Courtesy TD Bank /Alliance for Community Trees.

Renovations and More for Gardens

BNAN is taking advantage of the off-season to complete much needed work in select community gardens. The projects range from gate repairs to complete garden reconstruction. The work addresses storm-related damage, deferred maintenance and complete garden renovation projects. Work began in September and continues through 2012.

The gardens sustained an increased level of damage in 2011. This damage included major underground water line breaks in the Eagle Hill and Symphony Road Community Gardens. The repair work was completed in November to ensure no disruption to the spring garden season.

Renovation work is occurring in two Dorchester community gardens, as part of the BIGG program. The first is the complete reconstruction of the 33 Bullard Street Garden. This project includes the installation of new water service, concrete pathways, block retaining walls, plot dividers and fencing. The Bullard Street Garden is the last of the gardens transferred to BNAN from Boston Urban Gardeners to be improved. The Julian, Judson and Dean Streets Garden in Dorchester is undergoing renovation with removal of old wooden timbers and installation of new plot dividers, soil, accessible concrete pathways and water system. BNAN staff is currently working on outreach to promote the renovated gardens and recruit additional gardeners to new plots available for spring 2012.

In addition, Roslindale's Southwest Boston Garden Club Community Garden will receive upgraded fencing and water lines and spigots. BNAN has been working with the current gardeners to make renovation decisions and build community support for the gardens.

Seeds of Appreciation for Members

BNAN continues the annual tradition of providing native plant seeds to all new and renewing members. The seeds are a small token of appreciation for the support offered by our membership. This year's selection is a flowering shrub named American cranberrybush (*Viburnum opulus var. americanum*).



American cranberrybush is a large suckering shrub growing 8-12' in height and nearly equal width. The three-lobed foliage is reminiscent of red maple and emerges green in spring only to develop bright yellows and reds by fall. The upright branches bear showy clusters of white flowers in May followed by scarlet fruits lasting into winter. The fruits are tart and bear a resemblance in flavor to the true American cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*).

The seeds were collected from plants raised at City Natives in Mattapan.

Special Membership Offer

Now is a great time to become a member of Boston Natural Areas Network and support the important work we do. As a result of our affiliation with The Trustees of Reservations, new and renewing members who contribute \$50 or above for a one-year BNAN membership will also receive a complimentary, introductory one-year membership to The Trustees, the world's oldest regional land trust. Trustees' members receive free or reduced admission to all 105 properties, discounts on programs and special events, a complimentary copy of The Trustees 200-page Property Guide, a subscription to the membership quarterly and more. Please join or renew now by completing the form below. Offer ends June 30, 2012.

BNAN MEMBERSHIP FORM

Boston Natural Areas Network, Inc.

62 Summer Street

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I/We support Boston Natural Areas Network, Inc. and its work to protect, preserve and improve Urban Wilds, Community Gardens and Greenways.

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A gift of \$25 or more entitles you to a full year membership.

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MEMBER BENEFITS

Urban & Green, One year subscription
Allendale Farm, Jamaica Plain. 10% off plants

Arborway Tree Care, Jamaica Plain. 10% off services

Boston Building Resources, Mission Hill. 5% off member price on lawn & garden tools

City Farm Florist and Nurseries, Roslindale. 10% off plants & floral arrangements, 5% off fertilizers

Advance Notice of all BNAN special events and programs

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Dorchester Community Food Coop sponsors Dorchester's first Winter Farmers Market featuring farm-fresh produce, local meat and food. For more information see article on page 8. Contact the Dorchester Community Food Coop at dotcommcoop@gmail.com.

Boston Natural Areas Network, organized in 1977, works to preserve, expand and improve urban open space through community organizing, acquisition, ownerships, programming, development and management of special kinds of urban land – Urban Wilds, Greenways and Community Gardens. In all its endeavors, BNAN is guided by local citizens advocating for their open space and assisting them to preserve and shape their community.