

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS
NEWSLETTER NO: 88 - SEPTEMBER 2009
<http://www.spiralseed.co.uk/seeog/>



The group was formed in 1994, to promote the principles of organic gardening by:

- *Composting organic waste;*
- *Protecting wildlife;*
- *Reducing pollution;*
- *Encouraging species diversity.*

Membership is currently £7.00 per annum, £10.00 family.
Guest Fee for Group Nights is £2.00



Soil Association

"Proponents of GM technology have been claiming to be on the brink of developing a range of benefits for years, but these have not delivered. The claims of increased yields have been widely discredited. Once these GM crops are released into the environment, they will spread, and transfer GM traits to related native plants. Once released, they can never be recalled."

Emma Hockridge, policy campaigner, commenting on Supermarkets in 'secret talks to introduce GM foods, The Daily Mail, 1 September 2009

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/NEWS

Our venue is St. David's Church Hall, 400 Rayleigh Road, Eastwood (off The Rodings) at 8.15pm.

We have much pleasure in welcoming our new Treasurer, Brian Slemmonds, and take the opportunity to thank Pat for her hard work and dedication to the SEEOG funds for the past five or so years.

After the Canewdon seminar, we're preparing seriously for our Apple Day Ceilidh on Friday 23 October at Hawkwell Village Hall, dancing to Garlic Spread's very lively music and tasting Maureen's delicious and freshly-prepared Ploughman's Supper. You can contact Carole for tickets – perhaps pass the word around your friends and neighbours, too?

One of Carole's neighbours was rather curious as to the paraphernalia coming out of the house on Leigh Market Day – we gave her a newsletter afterwards!

Once you've looked a little closer, you'll see that we're using a brand new Ecofont for our newsletter, called SPRANQ ECO SANS. Each letter is designed with small circles in the letters, which means you use 20% less ink every time you print. Fancy seeing if it would work for you? It's free to download from http://www.ecofont.eu/ecofont_en.html

Maureen and Phil Rooksby are smallholders in southern Spain who wish to swap ideas/expertise/plants and seeds. They are gardeners living in the Sierra de Aracena, Andalucia. After many years of searching, they have just bought 2.5 hectares of land to create a forest garden, the culmination of a long-held dream, to live more simply, healthily and sustainably.

And the reason for telling you all this is because, like gardeners everywhere, they want to swap ideas/expertise/ plants and seeds with likeminded souls. Even encourage us to go and visit. By linking what happens in Spain with our newsletter/website. Either through a feature, regular column, or just posting their blog address. Whatever we think is appropriate.

Right now they have a basic blogsite for friends and readers of their books, to let them know what they're up to. Soon that will be joined by another, dedicated to the garden, and their efforts at self-sufficiency.

Their contact details are: Maureen & Phil Rooksby, El Pocito, Almonaster La Real 21350, Huelva, Andalucia, Spain.

monkeyandsofia@yahoo.co.uk
monkeyandsofia.blogspot.com

MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

WORLD-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES ON ORGANIC FARMS (WWOOF)

Like to feel the sun on your back, the earth beneath your feet and the satisfaction of a job well done? They can't absolutely guarantee sunshine but by going WWOOFing you will definitely make contact with the earth and be kept busy!

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) maintains a list of host farmers – people who are developing lifestyles that demonstrate, in practical ways, a responsible attitude to the planet and all her creatures. These hosts welcome visitors into their homes, farms and smallholdings and expect the visitors to participate in the activities of the farm.

WWOOFing is a non-monetary exchange of practical help in return for food and accommodation. There are over thirty WWOOF hosts in the Organic East region and we will be finding out more with volunteer Trudi Warner, who is now living in Lancashire but is planning to come down on the day!! Dedication.....!! She hopes the talk can be very informal as she says she might be car lagged!
<http://www.wwooof.org.uk/>

CEILIDH

We are celebrating Apple Day with a Ceilidh on Friday, 23 October. 8pm – 11pm. Local band 'GARLIC SPREAD' with caller SIBBY. At Hawkwell Village Hall, Main Road, Hawkwell SS5 4EH. Ticket - £11 (adult); £5 (child under 14), which includes our delicious full Ploughman's Supper and glass of Apple Juice.

We do need some more prizes for the Raffle. Please contact Vi Poulten if you can give a prize.

Ceilidh (pronounced 'Kaylee') is a Scottish word meaning a party-style social event with music, dancing and song. The Grand Ceilidh Club is in no way Scottish but there doesn't seem to be a suitable English word, so the Scottish word has been adopted in England for this kind of event where the dancing is in barn dance style.

Common Ground started Apple Day in 1990 and hundreds of events have sprung up around the country in each subsequent year, organised spontaneously in many locations, including country and city farms, community orchards, schools, gardens and other public places.

You can read more here at <http://www.commonground.org.uk/>

We organised the first ceilidh in 2004, when we were asked by Garden Organic to host their AGM, the ceilidh being held on the evening before the AGM.

We are already selling tickets, so please don't leave it too late!

NB: We are unsure as to whether there is going to be an Open Day at St. Laurence Orchard – please contact Growing Together on 01702 354227.

MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER

'Potatoes and their Varieties' – Alan Wilson, author of The Story of the Potato and potato technical advisor to a leading supermarket, will share his passion for potatoes with us

ALLOTMENTS

Karen Kenny is the Eastern Region NSALG representative. Her mobile number is 07712 766916 and her email address is karen.kenny@homecall.co.uk

Darren Fazackerley is the Essex representative of the NSALG and his email address is darren.fazackerley@harlow.gov.uk. His home number is 01245 490700. Please don't hesitate to contact them if you want help.

The Allotments Regeneration Initiative's Mentor for the East of England is Frank Owens.
Tel: 0845 313 8461 fowens.ari@googlemail.com

N.B. ARI is not able to provide assistance with legal issues (e.g. site disposal threats), disputes between councils and ploholders, or internal disputes. Please contact [NSALG](#) if you require this type of assistance.

Hockley Parish Council's Environmental Working Group has been looking for suitable land within Hockley for the provision of allotments.

This has proved to be no easy task, as there is little land within the confines of the Green Belt that has not been built on. What there is would be too small to provide enough growing space with the necessary hard standing and easy access for vehicles.

The Working Group has been in touch with neighbouring councils who have their own allotments and a number of organisations, in particular the NSALG (Eastern Region), which has offered advice and support. Rochford District Council was also contacted in an effort to identify land and they replied that they were undertaking a review of open spaces within the district which would include allotment provision.

Having drawn a blank in Hockley itself, the Working Group is at present liaising with local landowners/farmers to see if there is any way good agricultural land can be made available.

Courtesy of Hockley News, Summer 2009

ASHLYNS ORGANIC FARM

Eyebrows lifted when we saw this item on their website, but '**Organic food is no healthier**' was the finding of a new study published by the Food Standards Agency at the end of July. The findings contradict many previous reports. They did find that organic foods were superior in several areas but not at a statistically significant level.

No doubt the toss will be argued on this way into the future. What is not in doubt is that chemical residues will be higher on conventional foods and that they may be genetically modified. A poll of organic consumers by the Soil Association this year found people chose organic because they wanted:

- Quality and taste
- To avoid pesticide residues
- Better animal welfare
- Fair prices/wages for farmers
- Wildlife conservation
- To avoid food additives
- To avoid GM ingredients
- To know where food comes from
- Plus concern about climate change

For a detailed response to the FSA's report, please check out the Soil Association's website – www.soilassociation.org

Ashlyns' address is The Courtyard, High Laver Hall, High Laver, Essex CM5 0DU
Telephone: 01277 890821, Email gary@ashlyns.co.uk, Website: <http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/>

CRAPES FRUIT FARM

There are many commercial orchards in Essex, where they enjoy a warmer and drier climate. Andrew Tann's enterprise is different in many respects in that he grows over 150 varieties of apples in his 15-acre orchard, most of which are sold direct by mail order.

Different mixes of apple varieties are available throughout the season, from August to January, from 7lbs to 20 lbs, including Apple Day Gift Boxes. Cherries, plums, quince, medlar and apples are available from the farm shop, which is open Monday-Saturday 8.00am – 5.00pm.

Andrew is an authority on top fruit, and is a great enthusiast. He is in great demand to identify mystery apples that people bring from their gardens to Apple Days.

Contact: Andrew Tann
Crapes Fruit Farm, Aldham, nr Colchester, CO6 3RR, 01206 212 375, email: andrew.tann1@virgin.net

We are planning a visit, as usual at this time of year, but have found that the cheapest minibus quotation is £25 more than last year so the cost will increase to £12 for members and £13 for non-members. The date we have booked is Saturday 14 November (Booking Form attached). Andrew reports that apples will be small this year.

ENERGY MONITORS FROM SOUTHEND LIBRARIES

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Telephone: 01702 534125 / 534144

Textphone: 01702 600579

Website: www.southend.gov.uk/library

EU ORGANIC FARMING CAMPAIGN: "ORGANIC FARMING. GOOD FOR NATURE, GOOD FOR YOU"

In 2008, the European Commission launched a promotional campaign for organic farming and production: "**Organic Farming. Good for nature, good for you**".

Since then, an online platform has been established at www.organic-farming.europa.eu that serves as the central point of information for all questions related to the Commission's policies on organic farming. To give assistance for local organic promotion campaigns, visitors to the website and interested parties can download material such as information materials on organic farming for consumers, information packs for different target groups, photographs, presentations and brochure templates free of charge. The information material is provided in 22 European languages and is widely being used by organic organisations, national authorities, producers, school teachers, the media, consumers and others from all over Europe.

To promote their website still further, they have produced an online banner linking to the organic farming website. The banner is available in 22 EU official languages. If we would like to support the EU organic farming campaign, we are welcome to place this banner on SEEORG's website and link it to the organic farming website in the appropriate language version.

For any further questions, please contact Sofia Ylén, Senior Account Executive, Media Consulta UK Ltd, www.media-consulta.co.uk, Tel: 020 7313 6770, Email: s.ylen@media-consulta.com

FARMERS' MARKETS

- **Leigh-on-Sea:** In Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road, on Saturday 26 September, Friday 30 October, Saturday 21 November and Saturday 19 December, 9.00am – 12.00 noon.
- **Rochford:** In the WI Hall, Market Square, on (Saturday) 5 September, 3 October and 7 November, 9.30am – 12.30pm.

We have stalls only at Leigh-on-Sea and Rochford.

- **Hadleigh:** At the Salvation Army, Home Farm, Castle Lane, held on every second Wednesday of the month from 12.00 onwards.
- **The Southend-on-Sea Farmers' Market** takes place in the High Street every second and fourth Saturday of every month, 8.30am - 4.00pm.
- **Rayleigh:** 30 September, 28 October, 25 November and 23 December at Rayleigh Market Place opposite Rayleigh Church from 9am to 2pm on the last Wednesday monthly.

FOOD FOR LIFE PARTNERSHIP

This programme works with schools and their communities to transform food culture and has ended the school year on a high. There are now more than 1,100 schools enrolled on the programme and they have all committed to achieve at least the Food for Life Partnership Bronze Mark. This means they will be serving seasonal school meals with at least 75% of dishes freshly prepared by a well-trained school cook; pupils and parents are involved in planning improvements to school menus and the dining

experience via a School Nutrition Action Group, boosting school meal take-up. Every pupil has the opportunity to visit a farm during their time at school and opportunities are given for groups of pupils to do cooking and food growing activities.

Free Organic Gardening Workshop for Schools
29 September 2009, 10.00am - 3.00pm
Audley End, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JG

As part of the Food for Life Partnership, Garden Organic offers a Continuing Professional Development Event for school staff and associated colleagues such as caterers. The training event will support schools to learn about growing skills and how these relate to achieving a Food for Life Partnership Mark award.

The day will enable participants to work with pupils to ensure food is successfully grown through to harvest; to make successful compost and to engage the wider school and community in growing activities. Interactive sessions will cover starting out, sowing techniques, planning your plot, growing in containers, Health & Safety issues and curriculum links.

For further information about this event, or the next planned event in your region, please contact the Garden Organic Administrator, Angela Bridge: Tel: 02476 217 747; Email: FFLP@gardenorganic.org.uk

Liz Davies is the new Garden Education Officer for the East of England Food for Life Partnership. Her contact details are:

E: ldavies@gardenorganic.org.uk

M: 07554 450650

W: www.foodforlife.org.uk

Garden Organic, Wolston Lane, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, CV8 3LG

Ian Nutt is the new Food for Life Partnership coordinator for the East of England. His contact details are:

Email: inutt@soilassociation.org

Phone: 07917 671416

Currently some 47 Essex schools have joined the FfLP, including Barons Court Infant School and Nursery (Bronze), Westcliff-on-Sea; Castledon School, Wickford; Chafford Hundred Primary School, Chafford Hundred; Fairways Primary School, Leigh-on-Sea; Futures Community College, Southend-on-Sea; Ghyllgrove Community Junior and Infant Schools Wickford; Great Wakering Primary School; Hilltop Infant School, Wickford; Lancaster School, Westcliff-on-Sea; Priory School, Prittlewell; Swayne Park School, Rayleigh (Flagship School); Temple Sutton Primary School, Southend-on-Sea; , The Cornelius Vermuyden School & Arts College, Canvey Island; Thameside Infant Primary, Grays; The Gateway Academy, Tilbury; The James Hornsby High School, Basildon; The Ockendon School, South Ockendon (Flagship School); Westwood Primary School, Hadleigh.

GARDEN ORGANIC: AUGUST 2009 UPDATE - CONTAMINATED MANURE ISSUES REAPPEAR

Last summer (2008) reports began to emerge of deformed, distorted and dying vegetable crops in gardens and allotments. It soon became clear that the problem was widespread. It was finally identified as damage caused by the weedkiller, Aminopyralid. The source? Contaminated manure!

As a result, the product was voluntarily withdrawn by the Dow Chemical Company.

The Advisory Committee on Pesticides, on June 30 2009, recommended that the approvals be reinstated, subject to strict conditions of the stewardship scheme being met.

Other than questioning the supplier, there is no way of knowing that manure brought in to allotments and gardens is not contaminated - and it seems that even if the manure has been stored for a couple of years, residues of Aminopyralid can still damage plants. For these reasons, a petition has been drawn up to protest against this recommendation.

If you would like to add your name to the petition, go to

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/aminopyralidban/> **Deadline to sign up by: 23 October 2009**

Ideal for use by schools, community groups and families, these downloadable resources in PDF format are practical, educational & fun!

This resource is produced by Garden Organic as part of the Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) and was funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growyourown/growing_cards.php

GARDEN ORGANIC FOR SCHOOLS

These schools have joined since beginning of May:

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Leigh-on-Sea; Great Berry Primary School, Langdon Hills; Lancaster School, Westcliff-on-Sea and The Gateway Academy, Grays.

GM WATCH

The new site, which launched on 22 July, replaces an older version which was forced off the web by over a year of cyber attacks.

The website comprises sections devoted to all areas of the subject, including detailed reports on GM myths, the people behind the myths and the GM companies peddling them and reaping the benefits, as well as frequent news updates on global developments and a guide to how the media are manipulated by misleading claims.

Visit the new site at www.gmwatch.org

GROWING ORGANIC: OUR VERY OWN SEMINARS INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS OF ORGANIC GARDENING!

As you know, we've been running a series of organic gardening seminars in the community across the south east of our county, which are being led by one of our members, Robert Wiseman.

This project has been funded by a Grassroots Grant from the Office of the Third Sector, which is managed by Essex Community Foundation.

Our seminars are designed to encourage the "growing of your own food" both on an allotment, in your own garden and even on the patio using the principles of organic gardening.

Everybody is welcome at these seminars, for which there will be a nominal charge of £5.00. However, there is a wide range of concessions available. Children under the age of 16 are also free if they are with their parents. Seminars will be for up to 50 delegates per seminar, depending on venue. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Please pass the word around for us – and there are plenty of leaflets if you want a few to give to your neighbours and friends.

Details for Canewdon and 2010 are as follows:

Saturday 3 October	:	Canewdon Village Hall, SS4 3PG, 1.30pm
Saturday 20 February:		Great Wakering Community Centre, SS3 0EJ, 9.30am
Saturday 20 March	:	Rettendon Memorial Hall, CM3 8DP, 9.30am
Saturday 1 May	:	Hall 3, The Paddocks, Canvey Island, SS8 0JA, 9.30am
Saturday 5 June	:	Crowstone Christian Centre, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 8LH, 9.30am
Saturday 3 July	:	Rochford, venue to be confirmed
October	:	Leigh Community Centre, SS9 1SP, 10.00am
Saturday 6 November:		South Woodham Ferrers Village Hall, CM3 5PL, 9.30am

EVENT CONTACT DETAILS

Carole Shorney, 01702 201914, caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Robert Wiseman, 0794 107 8135, robert.wiseman@talk21.com

MANURE

1. Pam Mitchell, The Grange, Murrells Lane, Hockley (Tel. 01702 207491) has a very good, old supply of manure. If you ring her first, giving a couple of days' notice, she will arrange for a load to be brought to the gate to ease bagging up.
2. We now have another provider of free manure - chemical free - in Barling, near Wakering. Tel. 01702 219835

OPEN DAY AT GROWING TOGETHER (Award-winning gardens)

Saturday 5 September

10.00am to 4.00pm

Free admission – donations welcome

Corner of 47 Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell-Chase, SS0 9AG

Tel: 01702 213134

Find out about:

- The Growing Together gardens
- The Garden Maintenance Team
- Horticultural Training
- Mental health awareness/ help
- Volunteering opportunities
- Carer's project
- St. Laurence historic orchard

Plants and vegetables for sale

See their 'Straw-bale' building

Ask the experts – Information on growing vegetables and ornamentals

PICK YOUR OWN -SEASONAL, LOCAL, FRESH, FAIRLY PRICED AND FUN!

Why not pay a visit to a very local farm that offers a wide range of Pick Your Own (PYO) fruit and vegetables?

Hilltop Farm is on Vicarage Hill, Benfleet and is easily reached by bike, bus (with a short walk from Hadleigh) or by rail from Benfleet Station then a rather (steep) walk uphill to the farm...but it is all downhill on the return trip!!

The farm is located in a small secluded valley - and in a very peaceful and beautiful setting. Mr and Mrs Perkins, who run the place, are very friendly and knowledgeable. They also sell their fruit at the Hadleigh Farmer's market, but the real fun is to be had picking your own, especially the delicious plums, greengages and apples, including both cooking and eating varieties.

The valley also has lots of wildlife, including badgers, woodpeckers and foxes, and is a lovely spot just to relax in and enjoy after picking fruit etc.

To find out what is available before you visit, call 01268 752734 and listen to a recorded message telling you what is ready to pick and yet to come. The farm is open Tuesday - Sunday (closed Mondays), 10.30am - 4.30 pm.

Don't forget to take some (recycled) pots or baskets for your fruit!

Nice Jam? Victoria plums and walnuts make a rather tasty jam and the two seem to go together really well. Please ask Simon Wallace for his recipe - it comes (slightly adapted) from one of his favourite cookery books "**A Glut of Plums**" by Ann Carr, published by Merehurst Press in 1988.

PLANT LABELS

Have you tried Graham Oster-Ritter's used aluminium litho plates yet for your plant labels? We've found them very useful when we've run out of juice or margarine cartons! They can be cut with scissors quite easily and make sturdier labels than our cartons! If you're interested, please either ring him on 01702 558871 or email grahamoster@aol.com - he can bring some aluminium to Group Night. There will be no charge for the above but a small donation to SEEEOG would be appreciated.

RYTON ORGANIC GARDEN TRIP 18/07/09

Ann, Nicola and James have kindly sent in an appreciation of our Ryton visit and Dr Francis Ryns, Horticulture Research Manager at Ryton, has also sent in some interesting comments as attached.

SEEOG EVENTS TO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN INVITED

1. Leigh Allotments Open Day, organised by Leigh Town Council, with the support of the Manchester Drive Allotments Society, on Sunday 13 September, 11.00am – 3.00pm, entrance free, at Manchester Drive Allotments (Opposite Cricketfield Grove) – SEEOG stall as in previous years.

SEEOG TALKS

We need some assistance with the daytime events – heavy bags and plants on the bus are not good!

1. Wednesday 9 September, 8.00pm: Trinity Ladies Club, Trinity Church, corner of Argyll Road/London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea
2. Monday 14 September, 7.30pm: Hawkwell Ladies Club, Old Fire Station, Hockley
3. Thursday 4 March 2010, 10.00am: Vange Village 'M' Townswomen's Guild, Youth Hall, Trinity Methodist Church, Clayhill Road, Basildon
4. Monday 12 April 2010, 8.00pm: Southend & District Wine & Gardening Club, St. Augustine's Church Hall, Thorpe Bay.
5. Thursday 15 April 2010, 7.30pm: Ladies' Club, Belfairs Methodist Church, Eastwood Road North, Leigh-on-Sea
6. Tuesday 7 September 2010, 2.00pm: Bournemouth Park Ladies Club, United Reform Church Hall, junction of Bournemouth Park Road/Central Avenue

SOIL ASSOCIATION NEWS

They have recently launched their new website at

<http://www.soilassociation.org/Whatwedo/tabid/58/Default.aspx>

They've been highlighting the Children's Food Festival, the Organic Apprentice Scheme and the Organic Farm School courses.

They suggest celebrating Organic Fortnight (5-20 September) by hosting an organic credit crunch dinner for friends. You can raise money and support the Soil Association's work directly by arranging your dinner through the [Dinner4Good](#) website, which provides everything you need to help you organise your event.

<http://www.dinner4good.com/soilassociation>

THE FUTURE OF OUR FOOD SYSTEM

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published a package of material on food which covers important issues surrounding UK food security and sustainability:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/security/index.htm>

Delivering our aims - How you can be involved

They invite our views on the future of our food system through a new web forum, to help them shape the evolution of Britain's food policy. Please have a look at their online discussion '[Food 2030](#)' and take part in the debate. They want our feedback to help shape their food policy agenda.

Their deadline for comments on all elements of the package is Friday 16 October, either via email to foodpolicyunit@defra.gsi.gov.uk or through the 'Food 2030' online discussion. They invite you to visit the site on a regular basis to see how the conversation on the future of food is progressing.

Ron has already found nothing about allotments as part of food security or any figures for the estimate of contribution to UK food (any idea who might have?) The whole document, he says, is about market security and the idea of home produce is discounted with no consideration of new ways of production as found in the Permaculture film.

GREAT BRAYS FRUIT FARM

Denise has phoned Ron to say that the fruit is now ready for picking as from Saturday 5 September at 10.00am. You can phone Ron for more detail - 01702 477681.

USEFUL WEBSITES

1. Anyone who is keen on beekeeping should contact the unit for advice and register on Beebase at www.nationalbeeunit.com, where they can access extensive and helpful beekeeping information and request a free visit from their local bee officer. The more keepers who register, the healthier our bee populations will become.
2. Plots are hot! Check out this recent research by LV on allotment waiting times!!
http://www.lv.com/media_centre/press_releases/brits-discover-good-life
3. You might enjoy the nostalgic dig for victory film stuff on the Imperial War Museum website at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.24028>
4. Landshare – How it works, at <http://landshare.channel4.com/how-it-works>
5. We thought you might be interested in this new website set up by Graham Burnett and, of course, their article/drawings of sheds at <http://www.humbledesigns.co.uk/>
6. **Searchable Database Reveals Toxicology of Pesticide Residue** -
What's On My Food, a brand-new searchable database launched by the Pesticide Action Network will tell exactly what chemicals are on the food you eat. You can view the toxicology risk and known pesticide residues on everything from almonds to oats to winter squash.
What's on my food: <http://www.whatsonmyfood.org/>
7. Welcome to Living Orchards - <http://www.livingorchards.com/> Name a tree and start collecting apples to redeem for fabulous gifts and help to support The Wildlife Trusts!
8. *I'm in season* at <http://www.iminseason.com/> and we've already been recommended their Chocolate Pumpkin Brownies with caramelised Apples & Pears courtesy of Fordhall Farm, Shropshire.

COMPOST BIN OFFER

Brian Arbuckle, Recycle Now, has asked us to make our members aware of the following free offer available from Thursday 3 September!

Southend are running a final offer for their residents. They are in a position to offer 1500 free bins – the resident to choose either the 220ltr or 330ltr but the offer is limited to one bin per household. They will be advertising this through a press release, going out this week.

http://www.recyclenow.com/home_composting/get_advice/advisers/brian_arbuckle.html

COMMENT ON WEB SITE

Graham (Burnett) asks what do we think of the website? He gave me a link via spiralseed. I personally like it very much. That's me, what do others think?

SEEOG COMMITTEE

Ron Bates	Chair	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Brian Slemmonds	Treasurer	01702 200572	audrey4brian@talktalk.net
Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership Secretary	01702 558871	grahamoster@aol.com
Violet Poulten	Minutes Secretary	01268 768391	violetpoulten@talktalk.net
Carole Shorney	Secretary	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Vic Shorney	Committee Member	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Ray How	Committee Member	01702 544632	ray.how@btopenworld.com
Maureen Nightingale	Committee Member	01702 540030	
Martine Vyse	Committee Member	01268 781694	

Please post/phone/email your contributions for the November newsletter to Carole by the end of October at the very latest.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 30 September at 7.30pm at Violet's.

Finally, please notify Graham Oster-Ritter on grahamoster@aol.com if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address,

RYTON ORGANIC GARDEN TRIP 18/07/09

From Ann ... 25 of us met at Kirby's yard at 7.30am and boarded the coach to Ryton. Simon was our driver and we had a trouble free journey, arriving just after 10 am. We were not meeting our guides until 11 am so we went into the snack bar and had a coffee.

The weather was very good so some of us sat outside; we then walked round some of the gardens until 11.am when we met our guides, who split us up into two groups.

We began our trip at the Herb Gardens: there were two of them, one for Cooking and the other for Medicinal Purposes.

We then went to the Vegetable Inspirations, where there were flowers amongst the vegetables, and on to the Pest and Disease Control, where there were many different varieties; then on to the Composting Display, which was very interesting - all the different ways of composting, showing you how you can turn muck into magic.

Our next destination was the worlds biggest Flowerpot, which is 7 foot high, with a rim circumference of 16 feet, it holds a small border of flowers, then onto the Top Fruit Gardens where the trees were full of Apples, Pears, Greengages, etc.

The soft fruit garden was next with all the soft fruits we know of, and some new ones including Tay berry, Marion berry and Sylvanberry.

We then came to the Amelanchiers and then the bee garden. All the flowers here are attractive to Bees and we saw quite a few.

The next garden was the Allotment where the vegetables are all grown in four sections and it is 4 years of rotation before they are in the original position.

We then had the Weed control Display where no Chemical weed killing sprays are used on the gardens. There are quite a lot of different methods that are used i.e.: mulching, growing in gravel, egg shells, beer traps, copper, etc.

The Paradise Garden is dedicated to Geoff Hamilton (BBC Gardeners World) and was a peaceful place to sit and relax.

There was the Wildlife Garden which has a rich mixture of diverse habitat in Summer and winter you will see a variety of birds and insects also plants there is also a marshy area beside the pond.

We then go on to the Rose Garden which has a new Pergola built for the climbing roses to cover.

The next place is the Sun Clock: you stand on the date that it is and face the time and you see your shadow on the ground.

There is a large mound that when they dug the garden it piled up and they left it it is covered in grass and if you climb to the top you can see all the gardens.

We now come to the Cooks Garden, not actually a vegetable garden but everything can be eaten. Then we come to the Children's Garden the have some activity models for them to play with, The last Garden is the Memorial where you can sit with your memories. We all had a most enjoyable day leaving at 5.pm and arriving back at Kirby's at 7pm .

Dr Francis Ryns, Horticulture Research Manager wrote later:.....There are several reasons for the apparent emptiness of the 'research plots'. We do still use this field for research, for example, in 2009 we are conducting variety trials of leafy salads as part of an EU project and field trials on coriander to test disease control in herb production. However, over the past ten years an increasing amount of our research has been done on other sites around the country. This enables us to gain information from a wider range of soil and environmental conditions. I am attaching a leaflet which outlines some of our current research projects.

The field is mainly used for commercial production of vegetables for the shop and cafe on site. There is a 12 year rotation including four years of fertility building. Some of the 'empty' areas you saw were recently mown green manures, or areas of crops not yet planted (eg late season salad crops). We also use the field for production of some of the HSL vegetable seed and this is planted up quite extensively so as to ensure satisfactory isolation distances etc.

NB: The 4-page leaflet is available on request.

From Nicola and James DingleWe had a most enjoyable day at Garden Organic Ryton. The 25 gardens at Ryton were beautiful with inspirational designs and plantings. Many contained delicious fruit and vegetables (we collected a selection of berries for our tea). The guide told us all about the gardens and walked at just about the right speed around the place, not stopping too long in any one garden.

We had ample time to revisit each garden in turn; there were places to sit and just look and a cafe' to get a cup of coffee. We have never been to these gardens before, but after such an easy journey we would like to return to them at another time of year to see the changes; especially in the long naturalistic borders that are just cut down once a year.



