

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 86: MARCH 2009

<http://www.spiralseed.co.uk/seeog/>



Soil Association

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.

Some appreciation! "Thank you for all the effort taken in last Saturday's seminar.

It was a shame more people didn't turn up but I thought the lecture was very informative. I thought the content was good, as was the Powerpoint presentation. The idea of the demonstration was great and especially with a free raffle. I think the £5 was well spent and all the goodies/tea/lecture were very good value for money. I was quite surprised how little some of the audience seemed to know on general gardening techniques."

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/NEWS

Our venue is currently St. David's Church Hall, 400 Rayleigh Road, Eastwood (off The Rodings), at 8.15pm. We are, however, moving to Growing Together Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea when the new building is completed. One of our members wrote to say that he hopes to attend some of our meetings when we transfer to Westcliff, where public transport is so much better, with several routes serving Prittwell Chase, even in the evenings.

Denise at Great Brays Fruit Farm needs help to maintain and retrieve her orchard of apples and pears. She is able to offer people the chance to learn practical orcharding skills - pruning/clearing - which is the labour of long-term investment to ensure successful harvests in the autumn, when people who participate may gather their reward for labour put in. Denise has Mondays as a slot for this working together to save this orchard and give people the chance to connect with local food production. She is prepared to offer refreshment on the day. People who are interested in helping a fellow member reclaim a post-war orchard (1949), and see it through the seasons for fruit in the autumn, please contact Ron or Carole.

Kamil (Transition Town Westcliff) plans to arrange an Edible Garden Crawl in the summer. We have some considerable expertise in arranging this kind of event, as we used to open some of our gardens for Garden Organic many, many years ago. We could publicise the event through our newsletters, joint websites and posters with logos of both groups on them. What would be your ideas for the project? And would you be willing to take part? Please email Kamil as soon as possible, kamilpac@googlemail.com.

Please encourage your local school to apply for FREE membership of SEEOG - best to take the application form in with you (available from Graham). There hasn't been a great take up on this offer; after all, this membership is free year on year!

GARDEN ORGANIC NEWS

They have recently launched their 2009 Endangered Seed Appeal: Johnson's Perfect cauliflower (vanished); Gloucester Special onion (very rare); Best Of All tomato (in danger); Avon Defiance lettuce (thin on the ground); Lingreville cabbage (lost) and Habanero Red pepper (under threat).....

Why are they asking us to help save obscure varieties? Surely one carrot is very much like the next?

Actually, every variation and strain is remarkably different, each with its own taste, growing habits, cultivation time and heritage. Every rare species we save is part of a much bigger biodiversity picture. Just as we value the diversity of plant and animal species, we need to keep the gene pool of the plants we grow to eat as big as

possible, too. So your donation towards their 2009 Endangered Seed Appeal could save not just a vegetable, but a whole ecosystem.

http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/support_us/appeal_vegseed.php

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/>

GARDEN ORGANIC FOR SCHOOLS

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Thurrock), The Bromfords School (Wickford) and Whitmore Infant & Nursery School (Basildon) have joined since January.

SOIL ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Real Food Festival on 8-10 May at Earls Court is an ideal day out for food lovers everywhere. Obtain your ticket with their special offers for new and existing members of the Soil Association...

The Soil Association has free tickets to give away to the first 700 members. Visit the Real Food Festival website and at the checkout enter your Soil Association membership number (found on your membership card). Tickets are offered at half price once the first 700 tickets have been given away. Only one ticket per membership offered; children under the age of 15 go in free.

Obtain your free tickets here at <https://www.seetickets.com/soilassociation/index.asp?>

Join the Soil Association now and you will receive your free ticket to the Real Food Festival. This offer ends on 23 April 2009 and is not in conjunction with any other membership offer.

<https://www.seetickets.com/soilassociation/index.asp?>

<https://www.secureweb->

<services.com/SoilAssocCampaigns/Default.aspx?SG=RealFoodFestival09&DT=0ign%20up%20now>

<http://www.realfoodfestival.co.uk/>

GROWING ORGANIC SEMINARS INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS OF ORGANIC GARDENING

Everybody is welcome at these seminars, for which there will be a nominal charge of £5.00. However, there will be no cost to the unemployed, students in full time education, ex offenders and the registered disabled. Children under the age of 16 are also free if they are accompanied by their parents. Seminars will be for up to 200 delegates per seminar depending on venue. Please book early to avoid disappointment. Other concessions may apply for exemption.

The seminars are based on the same material although demonstrations will vary depending on what is relevant to the season in which it is being delivered. There will be opportunity to develop skills further, either via some sessions which are being planned in conjunction with "Growing Together" or via e-learning courses, which will be available via Robert's website <http://www.gardencoursesessex.org.uk>. If there are sufficient numbers, it may be feasible to run a 2- or 3- day event in the summer.

For more information, please contact Robert Wiseman, robert.wiseman@talk21.com, or telephone 07941 078135.

However, these seminars won't run at all smoothly unless we are successful in enlisting help from you, our valuable supporters. At Eastwood, we had to set up tables and chairs, take money, give out a raffle ticket, prepare refreshments and deal with enquiries. At the end of the session, we had to take down the tables, stack the chairs, wash the teacups and pack everything away. We needed three volunteers and we had three! We won't have to set up in the same way at Ambleside Drive but we still need the same number, as at Shoeburyness, etc.

We have some Heritage seeds and roughly 50 packets of flower seed (plus Lupin Russell Mix) to give to each SEEOG member and volunteer that helps with the seminars!

1. Saturday 14 March, 9.30am-12.30pm: Southend Adult Community College, Ambleside Drive, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2UP
2. Thursday 30 April, 7.00pm-10.00pm: Wendy Owen Hall, Shoeburyness High School. Access to the school is via the Service Entrance on Caulfield Road (opposite the Baptist Church) and then into the school via the Wendy Own Hall.
3. Thursday 7 May, 4.30pm for 5.00pm start: Thameside Infant School, Manor Road, Grays RM17 6EF (closed to invited schools only)
4. Thursday 28 May, 6.00pm-10.00pm: Luncies Hall, Luncies Road, Vange SS14 1SA
5. Friday 19 June, 7.00pm-10.00pm: Richmond Hall, Richmond Avenue, South Benfleet SS7 5HE
6. Saturday 25 July, Rochford (venue to be agreed)
7. Saturday 3 October, 1.30pm-4.30pm: Old Fire Station, 58 Southend Road, Hockley SS5 4QH

Proposed Dates in 2010:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| February | Benfleet |
| March | Rayleigh |
| April | Canvey Island |
| May | Westcliff-on-Sea |
| July | Canewdon |
| September | Leigh-on-Sea |
| November | Hadleigh /Thundersley |

Further dates and venues will be available in 2011.

We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their donations and support:

- The Heritage Seed Library, Garden Organic
- Alan Romans
- Seedy Sunday, Brighton

ARE THESE EVENTS IN YOUR DIARY YET?

MONDAY 16 MARCH

TOMATO GROWING INDOORS AND OUT FOR THE AMATEUR GARDENER

Garden Organically with Mike Thurlow, Head Gardener for the Victorian Kitchen Garden at Audley End. Mike will also talk on Heritage Seeds and the Heritage Seed Library.

MONDAY 18 MAY

We have pleasure in inviting Mo Perkins to talk about soft fruit at Hilltop Farm, Benfleet. They bring apples during late summer and autumn to Leigh Farmers' Market and, at seasonal times, soft fruit and asparagus. Mo grows an impressive list of blackcurrants, redcurrants, whitecurrants, gooseberries, raspberries, tayberries, jostaberries, tummelberries and boysenberries. She will describe the history of her farm, when they took it over, what was there, etc. and will bring along the tools of her trade, some books (including the Berry Yearbook) and photographs.

THURSDAY 21 MAY, 11am - 2pm

SEEOG's Annual Plant Sale at Growing Together Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea SS0 9AG - the time now to plan where to grow those little extras for the sale!

MONDAY 20 JULY

AGM, followed by "The Maximise Recycling Scheme one year on" - Rochford District Council

UK RECYCLING MARKETS RECOVERING

Last October, prices for recyclable materials in Europe fell sharply, mainly due to the decline in demand from major overseas buyers such as China. However, a survey carried out by WRAP in late December found that markets for recyclable materials in the UK recovered somewhat at the end of 2008 but remain "fragile". It reported "prices for recovered materials are slowly stabilising and more materials are now moving through the export market". Local authorities reported that 95 per cent of their recycling services are continuing as normal despite the recent price volatility.

For more on the current situation see WRAP's website:

http://www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/current_market_for_recycled_materials/get_the_latest_news.html

MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

What is WWOOF?

WWOOF is a world wide network - It started in the UK in 1971 and has since become an international movement that is helping people share more sustainable ways of living.

WWOOF is an exchange - In return for volunteer help, WWOOF hosts offer food, accommodation and opportunities to learn about organic lifestyles.

WWOOF organisations link people who want to volunteer on organic farms or smallholdings with people who are looking for volunteer help. Find out more with volunteer Trudi Warner!

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER: APPLE DAY CEILIDH, HAWKWELL VILLAGE HALL

Please put this date in your diary now!

MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER

We have invited Alan Wilson again, on either *A History of the Potato* or his work with Waitrose. The content of this meeting may change at short notice, however, due to Alan's work commitments at this time of year, in which case we will show the DVD *Arthur's Plough 2008, The Story of Fordhall Farm*.

MINIBUS TO MARRIAGE'S AND KINGS SEEDS: SATURDAY 28 MARCH

At the end of March we make a return visit to Marriage's in Chelmsford, this time to learn how their animal feeds are produced. We will arrive at 10.00am (with coffee very kindly provided), leave at 12.00 noon to arrive at Kings Seeds in Kelvedon for a guided tour around the plant. Approximate pick-up times are as follows - and please note, they are only approximate, so give or take five to ten minutes either way picking up along the London Road, etc!! Please bring something to eat on the way! There is currently a waiting list!

8.00am: Folly Lane

8.05am: Old Fire Station, opposite Hockley Library

8.10am: Rectory Road

8.15am: Sapwood's

8.30am: Southend, Queensway, Sainsbury

8.40am: Chalkwell Park

8.40am: Chalkwell Schools

8.45am: The Elms

8.50am: Thames Drive

8.55am: Hadleigh Church

9.00am: Bread and Cheese (Kenneth Road)

OPEN FARM SUNDAY: 7 JUNE

Minibus to Ashlyns Organic Farm, North Weald - more details in the May newsletter as the Ashlyns website has not been updated yet with this event. A booking form is attached.

<http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/>

COACH TO GARDEN ORGANIC RYTON: SATURDAY 18 JULY

As many of you already know, Ryton is the site of our headquarters. Ten acres of display gardens are managed entirely organically and all aspects of domestic horticulture are on show, including composting, pest and disease control, fruit and vegetable production, herbs, roses, lawns, shrubberies and herbaceous plantings.

A large conservation area includes native trees, a wildflower meadow and lake, and wildflowers are also much in evidence as part of the landscaping and in a back garden setting in their RSPB Wildlife Garden. Other interesting features include the Paradise Garden (a memorial to Geoff Hamilton), a bee garden, living willow structures and, newly opened in 2003, The Vegetable Kingdom visitor's centre.

So far, we have approximately 20 people booked on the coach. Please don't leave it too late to book, however, as we need to know numbers early so we can gauge the viability of the trip! We will leave Kirby's depot in Princess Road, Rayleigh, very sharp at 7.30am. Another booking form is attached.

SEEOG TALKS/EVENTS

1. Monday 23 March, 8.00pm: Winter Gardens Baptist Church, Hilton Road, Canvey Island - Joan has kindly agreed to attend this one.
 2. Wednesday 8 April: Burges Estate Residents Association AGM at St. Augustine's Church Hall, Thorpe Bay, specifically to talk about our seminars. Ron Woodley advises an 8.00pm start "but get there a bit early!"
 3. Tuesday 14 April 2009, 7.30pm: Talk to the Westcliff Crowstone Townswomen's Guild, with venue to be confirmed.
 4. Tuesday 5 May, 2.30-4.30p: Talk to "We'll Meet Again" - Monthly Senior Citizens Afternoon at St. Clement's Church, Broadway Leigh-on-Sea. On average, around 50 people have been attending each month.
 5. Sunday 17 May, 10.30am-4.00pm: Two Tree Island Open Day, Leigh-on-Sea
 6. Tuesday 14 September, 7.30pm: Hawkwell Ladies Club, Old Fire Station, Hockley
- We need some assistance with all these events, please!

ALLOTMENTS

There are no allotments in my area, what can I do?

Each allotment authority decides for itself how much of its resources to devote to allotments. However, if an authority believes there is a demand, it has a statutory duty to provide a sufficient quantity of plots and to let them to people living in its area. If local people feel there is a need for allotments which is not being met, they can get together a group of any six residents who are registered on the electoral roll and put their case to the local authority.

Courtesy of NSALG website

We have recently contacted our Parish and Town Council representatives to ask the following questions:

- Can you please tell us the number of people currently on your allotment waiting list?
- If you do not have an allotment site within your Parish, can you please tell us how many people have expressed an interest?

So far, these are the results:

- Canewdon Parish Council currently has one resident and four non residents on their waiting list.
- Canvey Island Town Council has approximately 70 people on their waiting list, which covers both Smallgains and Waterside.
- Great Wakering Parish Council currently has 46 people on their waiting list.

- Hockley Parish Council now has 27 people who have expressed an interest.
- Leigh-on-Sea Town Council: "On our Marshall Close waiting list, there are 40 people, and we estimate that the waiting time is 20 years as it is a very small site with a stable tenancy. On our Leigh site, the waiting list is 21 and we estimate that the waiting time is about a year. This is a much larger site and the turnover is much higher than on Marshall Close."

A year ago, they did not have a waiting list for Leigh and five years ago only 20% of the plots were let. However, Marshall Close has always had a waiting list.

- Rayleigh Town Council has four allotment sites in Rayleigh:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Lower Wyburns, Daws Heath Road | 22 on waiting list |
| Kenilworth Gardens, Kenilworth Gardens | 12 on waiting list |
| Sweyne Park, Downhall Park Avenue | 15 on waiting list |
| Grove Road, Bramfield Road East | 7 on waiting list |
| No preference: | <u>10</u> on waiting list |
| Total 66 on waiting list | |

They may be able to rent more land for allotments but will need to put in the facilities such as water, fencing, car park etc., for which they will need a grant - see note on ARI below!

- Rawreth Parish Council does not have an allotment site in and in the last two years has only ever had one enquiry.

The newly formed Mersea Island Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Association Committee is actively continuing the struggle to find an area of land for use as allotments. Although a number of potential sites have been identified, the work continues in order to secure a site contractually. Have a look at their most interesting website at <http://www.mialqa.org/> This story made the news on BBC Essex on Thursday 26 February.

Karen Kenny is the Eastern Region NSALG representative. Her mobile number is 07712766916 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 do not hesitate to contact them if you want help.

The Allotments Regeneration Network Mentor Network consists of a team of volunteer experts trained to give advice and support to anyone involved in regenerating allotments in the UK. Their Mentors are people who have direct experience of managing and regenerating allotments at a local level. They have provided help with:

- where to go for funding
- how to set up an association
- becoming self-managed
- disability access
- different ways to promote your plots
- working with community groups
- what to do about security concerns
- setting up an allotment project

There is currently no Mentor for the East of England and you are therefore advised to use the contact form at <http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari/mentors>. They will do their best to assist you.

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

ALLOTMENT SCHEME TO 'LOCALISE' FOOD

How stately home land could soon provide your allotment

In an attempt to encourage a renaissance in small-scale horticulture, the National Trust, which is one of Britain's biggest landowners, will provide land ranging from small allotment-style plots to communal vegetable gardens at locations from Blickling Hall in Norfolk, the one-time home of Anne Boleyn's family, to Kingston Lacy, the former seat of the Earls of Lincoln. The project, to run over the next three years, will see an area of

National Trust land capable of producing about £1.5m of fruit and vegetables entrusted to individuals and community groups on about 75 of its 200 historic houses and gardens and some of its 250,000 hectares of land. Soil Association, Today's News, 19 February

Garden Organic has approved of the National Trust's announcement that it will make areas of unused land available for food growing but urges that, while access to land is important, re-skilling people in 'how to grow your own' is essential.

ASHLYNS ORGANIC FARM

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

See details on our minibus trip in June!

FARMERS' MARKETS

- **Leigh-on-Sea**: In Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road, on **Saturday 21 March (John cannot manage this date - can anyone volunteer, please?)**, Friday 17 April, Friday 29 May, Friday 26 June, Friday 24 July, Friday 28 August, 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) 7 March, 4 April, 2 May (Compost Awareness Week is between 3 - 9 May), 6 June, 4 July, 1 August, 5 September, 3 October and 7 November, 9.30am - 12.30pm.
- **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.

FOOD FOR LIFE PARTNERSHIP

For information, Karen Brenchley is the East of England Regional Co-ordinator. T: 07917 671 416; E: kbrenchley@soilassociation.org
<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>

At the farm links workshop at Manningtree last November, Moya Myerscough gave us these useful websites:

- FACE (Farming and Countryside Education): <http://www.face-online.org.uk/index.php>
- FACE (Farmers Resources): http://www.face-online.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=129&Itemid=825
- The Growing Schools website has been designed to support teachers in using the "outdoor classroom" as a resource across the curriculum for pupils of all ages.
<http://www.growingschools.org.uk/>
- Learning Outside the Classroom: <http://www.lotc.org.uk/>
- Think Food and Farming: <http://www.thinkfoodandfarming.org.uk/index.php>

We have since been informed that Barleylands Farm, Barleylands Road, Billericay CM11 2UD runs a programme for Pre School - KS4. To book a visit or, for more information, telephone 01268 290213 or email nichola@barleylands.co.uk - www.barleylands.co.uk

FOR SALE

Vic has a computer desk for sale for £20.00 - please contact him if you are interested (01702 201914).

MANURE

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.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE CONSERVATION OF PLANTS & GARDENS

Their Suffolk Group has sent details of two very important plant sales to be held in May and September this year in partnership with Helmingham Hall. The entry fee includes the opportunity to view the Grade 1 listed gardens at Helmingham Hall, a magnificent Tudor mansion not far from Stowmarket and Ipswich. These are two of the largest plant sales in East Anglia, bringing together *specialist* nurseries, some straight from exhibiting at Chelsea Flower Show. As one of the Society's aims is to disseminate plants in danger of disappearing, there will be a free plant for the first 800 visitors, a rare form of *Iris sibirica* called 'Roanokes Choice'. To view a photograph of this beautiful plant, see www.helmingham.com Why not pick up a leaflet at St. David's next month?

ORGANIC SEEDS

Graham recently wrote to Garden Organic and the Soil Association regarding the use of non-organic seeds in organic systems. This came about as there was talk of using non-organic seed for the Organic Gardening Seminars (run by Bob Wiseman and SEEOG) and for sale to members on Group Nights. Although I still think this policy is unwise, below is the reply from Garden Organic:

Thank you for your enquiry to Garden Organic.

Non organic seeds can be used in organic systems. However, if you can source organic seeds, you should try. If you are Soil Association registered, then you will need derogation for the use of non organic seeds. Simply send your seed list to your certification officer with the supplier's name and the quantity and they will tell you what is OK and what is not. They only ever say a non organic seed is not acceptable if an organic source is available.

Yours sincerely

Andy Strachan, Knowledge Development, Garden Organic
astrachan@gardenorganic.org.uk 02476 217720

Thank you for your email. I've copied some of the standards below. Our licensees should use organic seeds, but may use non-organic seed and plant material when there are no suitable organic varieties available. A lot of work has gone in to the official UK database of organic seed availability website here: www.organicxseeds.co.uk and the centre for organic seed information website here: www.cosi.org.uk/

Here's what the standards say:

5.2.1 Where appropriate you should use bare root transplants raised on your own organic unit.

5.2.2 You must use organic seeds and plant material when a suitable variety is available. This includes potato tubers, onion sets, strawberry runners, fruit tree root stock and bud material.

5.2.3 With our permission, you may use non-organic seed and plant material when there are no suitable organic varieties available. You must send us a completed seed derogation form before we can give you permission. Note - seed derogation forms are available from us on request. You can also submit them on-line, and find details of available organic varieties, at www.organicxseeds.co.uk and you can find details of variety performance on www.cosi.org.uk

5.2.4 You must not use seed treated with anything that is not allowed under section 4.11.

5.2.5 To produce organic seeds you must grow the mother plant to organic standards for at least one generation, or for perennial plants, two growing seasons.

5.2.6 To produce organic propagating material you must grow the mother plant to organic standards for at least one generation or, in the case of perennial plants, two growing seasons.

5.2.7 If you use transplants (bare root, blocks, modules) they must have been grown to organic standards by a registered organic producer.

5.2.8 You must use organic propagating material (sets, root stock and bud material) when available.

5.2.9 With our permission, you may use non-organic propagating material (not including transplants) when organic material is not available.

5.2.10 In propagating substrates you may use clay, including bentonite and zeolites, and vermiculite and perlite. These must not have been treated with materials we do not allow.

I hope this information is of use to you.

Best wishes

Marisa Vaughan, Soil Association

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.

SE ESSEX WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

Work is going ahead pretty fast on the WEN 'grow your own food project' allotment in Manchester Drive, Leigh.

- Much of the plot has been cleared
- A mulch of cardboard and manure has been laid down
- Early potatoes are waiting for planting time in March
- A badger expert has been consulted about the newly worked holes at the back of the plot
- Quotes are in hand for the erection of the shed and storage box
- Publicity is going the rounds and we are gradually building up a group of members
- Our potato planting day is planned for March 14
- An Open Day is planned for March 21 so if you'd like to come along put it in your diary now!

If you know someone who would like to grow their own food but can't face doing it on their own please put them in touch with -

Carol on 01702 342148 or Pauline on 712596 - they can be sure of a warm welcome!

Eileen

www.seewen-allotment.org.uk

SEND A COW

If you are anywhere near Lindisfarne Florist (near Chalkwell Hall Schools), 935 London Road, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 3LQ between Monday 2nd - Saturday 7th March, 10.00am - 5.00pm, pop in to introduce yourself to Cicely Morris.

Cicely is the South Essex Ambassador for Send a Cow, a charity that is successfully solving poverty in Africa by practical gardening methods, upheld by teaching and support. We are also, in the UK, being encouraged to grow our own fruit and vegetables.

If you are unfortunate enough to have a small garden, very little spare time, no gardening skills, a reduced housekeeping budget, but a wish to eat more healthily, why don't you go along to a demonstration of achievable methods of growing your own fruit and vegetables in a small space? These methods have already proven to be very successful in many African countries and within the UK.

This free demonstration will include how to construct and maintain both keyhole kitchen gardens and sack gardens, showing how easy and sustainable these methods are, and how small spaces can be used effectively.

Advice, information and kits to make the gardens will be available at the venue. For further information, please call 01702 479031.

STONHAM BARNs TRIP ON SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14TH 2009

Eight of set off in a 16-seater minibus for the Potato Day; on arrival, we went into the marquee and viewed the potatoes on offer, then went round and picked the varieties we wanted. There was a large variety, all in boxes well marked. We then went outside and sat at tables and benches and had a hot drink under a warm sun. We then went back in to the marquee where we sampled three different varieties of potatoes chips, also two Madeira cakes made with potatoes. Then back on to the minibus to go to The Victoria Pub at East Soham where Carole had booked us in for lunch, a very nice oldy-type with a log fire burning in the grate. On the way back we stopped at Andrew Tann's to pick up some apples. It was a most enjoyable day with good weather. It was unfortunate that there were only eight of us. All the hard work Carole puts in to organise these trips and it was only half full. That does not cover the cost of the minibus.

TWILIGHT TRAINING

Alison Findlay, Regional Adviser at RHS Hyde Hall, is encouraging schools to plant fruit this year as part of the RHS Grow your Own fruit campaign. Hyde Hall have planted soft fruit in the vegetable growing area last autumn and have a new RHS Campaign for School Gardening demonstration garden for schools made of Linkabord, which will include soft fruit growing.

She is running a spring term twilight training session at Hyde Hall on 12 March, as per details below:

Thursday 12th March 4.00 - 5.30pm

RHS Hyde Hall Garden Buckhatch Lane, Rettendon, Chelmsford, CM38ET. To book, please download the booking form in the right hand column at

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/teachershome/news/east/twilighttraining.aspa>. You can complete it electronically and either email or fax it in.

USEFUL WEBSITES

1. Hill Holme, Beckingham Road, Great Totham, CM9 8DY
Phone 01621 891304
www.hillholmejuice.co.uk
2. Grow Your Neighbour's Own garden share scheme
Been waiting years on allotment waiting lists? Ever seen an unused garden or plot of land and wished you could grow your own food there? Or do you have a garden or area of land on which you'd love to see food grown? Grow Your Neighbour's Own wants to help remedy the situation...
<http://grow.transitionbrightonandhove.org.uk/>
So simple but beautiful!
3. Nick and Lesley thought you would be interested in the website with the River Nene environmental details, www.riverfordenvironment.co.uk
4. Brogdale Farm has just circulated its 2009 leaflet, which includes three fruit festival dates. Brogdale Farm is open to the public seven days a week, Easter - end of October, 10.00am-5.00pm; November-Easter 10am-4.30pm. For more information on festivals, events, courses, workshops and demonstrations please email sallyroger@brogdalecollections.co.uk or write to Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ.
www.brogdalecollections.co.uk
5. Margaret thought you may be interested in this article:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/feb/16/set-aside-payments-farming>
6. Try this link, <http://www.growveg.com>. Their 30-day free trial enables you to use all the features of their Garden Planning Tool - the interactive way to plan your vegetable garden.

SEEOG COMMITTEE

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| Ron Bates | Chair | 01702 477681 |
| Penny Dally | Vice-Chair | 01268 750994 |
| Patricia Wortley | Treasurer | 01702 588115 |
| 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 |
| 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 May newsletter to Carole by the end of April at the very latest.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 28 March at 7.30pm, courtesy of Graham and Penny.

SE ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

BOOKING FORM: RYTON - SATURDAY, 18th JULY

- COST PER PERSON
- £16.50 member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS
 - £18.50 non-member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS
 - £22.50 member of SEEEOG and non-member of Garden Organic or RHS
 - £24.50 non-member of SEEEOG and non-member of Garden Organic or RHS
 - £16.00 member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS aged over 60 years
 - £18.00 non-member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS aged over 60 years
 - £22.00 member of SEEEOG and non-member of Garden Organic or RHS aged over 60 years
 - £24.00 non-member of SEEEOG and non-member of GO or RHS aged over 60 years
 - £12.50 child aged 5-16 years
 - £7.00 child aged under 5 years who requires a seat on the coach
 - £0.00 child aged under 5 years who does not require a seat on the coach

The price includes coach to Ryton and guided tour.

For details of pick-up places and times, please see Newsletter or contact Carole

The following meals can be booked and paid for in advance:

Package A - Hot, filled jacket potato, served with a side salad and apple juice - £7.50 per person

Package B - Chef's soup of the day, lemon tart and tea or coffee - £8.95 per person

Visitors are also welcome to picnic in the garden or to enjoy their organic café, which offers a selection of hot and cold snacks and drinks. Please note that the café may not be suitable for larger groups.

Name..... Telephone.....

Address.....

Please book the following:

| | |
|--|--------|
| seats @ £16.50 member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS | £..... |
| seats @ £18.50 non-member of SEEEOG and member of Garden Organic or RHS | £..... |
| seats @ £22.50 member of SEEEOG and non-member of Garden Organic or RHS | £..... |
| seats @ £24.50 non-member of SEEEOG and non-member of Garden Organic or RHS | £..... |
| seats @ £16.00 member of SEEEOG and member of GO or RHS aged over 60 years | £..... |
| seats @ £18.00 non-member of SEEEOG and member of GO or RHS aged over 60 years | £..... |
| seats @ £22.00 member of SEEEOG and non-member of GO or RHS aged over 60 years | £..... |
| seats @ £24.00 non-member of SEEEOG and non-member of GO or RHS aged over 60 years | £..... |
| seats @ £12.50 child aged 5-16 years | £..... |
| seats @ £7.00 child aged under 5 years who requires a seat on the coach | £..... |
| lunch(es) package A @ £7.50 | £..... |
| lunch(es) package B @ £8.95 | £..... |
| TOTAL | £..... |

I enclose cheque / cash for £..... Cheques should be made payable to SEEEOG and sent to Carole Shorney at 19 Folly Lane, Hockley. SS5 4SE. Telephone: 01702 201914

Saving

Introduction to Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library



HSL Seed packets waiting to go out

[Download the complete Seed Saving Guidelines as a PDF here](#) (3.4Mb)

Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library (HSL) aims to conserve and make available vegetable varieties that are not widely accessible. HSL maintains a collection of vegetables pertinent to the UK and Northern Europe that are not readily available in seed catalogues. Some of the varieties were commercially available once but have now disappeared from catalogues and seed lists. Others have never been offered in catalogues but have been developed by gardeners and passed on through the generations until they were donated to us. There are also some varieties that have a special local significance. Many have a story to tell. We collect not only the seed, but also information on their characteristics, methods of use, origins, and what this can tell us about our gardening and culinary heritage.

We are not a gene bank. We do not simply preserve the seeds in cold storage. Instead we grow them and make them available to other gardeners so that they remain alive and able to adapt to new conditions. Any new characteristics then have a good chance of being spotted and made use of.

We are not legally allowed to sell our seed

Under European law only seed that is listed on a National List (and ultimately the EU Common Catalogue) can be marketed. To be on the list a variety must go through a series of tests, termed **DUS** tests. The **D** stands for distinctiveness, as in different from another variety, the **U** for uniformity, or all plants are the same, and the **S** for stability, which means the same over generations. Many of the varieties we look after would not pass these tests as they are inherently highly variable. The tests cost money. There is also a cost for maintaining a variety on the list.

With the costs incurred in breeding and maintenance of a variety, a large, profitable market is sought. This means that seed companies often decide against maintaining varieties suitable

for 'niche markets', e.g. gardeners, in favour of those more acceptable to large scale growers. The varieties available are therefore more likely to ripen at the same time to make harvesting with machinery easier, tough enough to withstand travel and handling in supermarkets, and familiar in visual characteristics so that they are acceptable to the average shopper. Flavour often takes a back seat.



A basket of choice

To overcome the restrictions of regulations and facilitate distribution we currently run a membership scheme. Those who wish to support our work pay an annual fee which goes towards the costs of collecting, growing, storing and distributing the seed. We produce articles on seed saving, research and the latest on the international seed scene in the Garden Organic members' magazine, *The Organic Way*. Every winter we send out a Catalogue detailing a portion of the collection, containing information about the varieties from which members may choose a packet of each of up to six varieties.

The Heritage Seed Library collection

Currently we look after over 800 accessions of open-pollinated varieties (not F1 hybrids), of which around 200 are detailed in our HSL Seed Catalogue each year. As well as research on the varieties and testing of previously untried varieties that come in from time to time, we grow some of the seed required at Garden Organic Ryton. Whilst more is grown by Seed Guardians - special members who volunteer their resources to look after and bulk up selected varieties. These are then available for distribution to our members.

The collection is still expanding. Every year we receive samples of vegetable seed that gardeners have been looking after and keeping alive. We ask a lot of questions about each one to determine its place in our culture. We then conduct our own trials on it, taking notes and making assessments throughout its growing life to find out as much as possible about it. This gives us the opportunity to ensure that it is different to anything else we are looking after, not obviously diseased, has not crossed (and is not a hybrid) and is something gardeners would be interested in growing. If we decide it is something we should be keeping we add it to the collection, so there's always something new coming in.

[Download the complete Seed Saving Guidelines as a PDF here](#) (3.4Mb)