

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 93 – SEPTEMBER 2010

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

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/?ref=home>

Southend Food Growers (and producers)

[http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/?group.php?](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/?group.php?gid=10150117854010788&ref=ts)

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Soil Association

SEEOG 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 £8.00 per annum, £12.00 family.

Thanks (to you and the committee) for organising the Brogdale trip We enjoyed it, as did our friends Dave & Jenny. A really nice day out - and cup cakes we bought were delicious!

Eileen

SEEOG Group Nights/Events/News

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

The next Rochford market is on Saturday 4 September. The next two Leigh markets are on Saturday 25 September and Friday 29 October. We are most grateful both to Violet and to John (and Sue!) for their help with these and other stalls. However, the most important event on your calendar this year will be our Apple Day Ceilidh, as per details below!

We thank Leigh Town Council for inviting us to their Allotments Open Day at Manchester Drive on Sunday 5 September between 11am and 3pm, with further details below.

We have just started to prepare our calendar of talks for next year. So far, we have booked Maïke in January to talk on *Growing for Self-Sufficiency* and Keith Tyrrell from Pesticide Action Network UK to discuss *Birds and Pesticides - Is the threat of a silent spring really behind us?*

Monday 20 September

Damien Errington has just embarked on his third season as Horticulture tutor at Hadleigh Training Centre. Damien will discuss the practice of social and therapeutic horticulture, the land at Hadleigh and how that relates to his work. He will also do a small workshop to highlight issues for practitioners. He's also hoping for an element of interaction from our audience!

APPLE DAY CEILIDH: FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER, 8pm – 11pm

We're celebrating Apple Day with a Ceilidh and local band 'Garlic Spread' with Sibby

At Hawkwell Village Hall, Main Road, Hawkwell, SS5 4EH

Ticket: £11 (adult) - £5 (child under 14)

Inc. freshly-made Ploughman's Supper and Apple Juice

Prepared by Maureen and her team!

(You won't need to bring additional food!)

(Vegan option available by prior request)

Bring your own drink

Raffle

(Please ring/email Violet if you can donate anything violetpoulten@talktalk.net

Or 01268 768391

Tickets now available from Carole on 01702 201914

A little bit of information for you, which is that Apple Day was initiated by the national charity Common Ground on 21 October in 1990 in London's Covent Garden and thereafter encouraged and promoted across the country. It was inspired by the revelation that we have grown about 3,000 varieties of eating, cooking and cider apples in this country, most of which have established provenances, and in discovering the richness of orchards as habitats for wildlife. Every event is conceived and run by people locally.

We held our first ceilidh, as many members know, in 2004 when we were asked to host the Garden Organic AGM and they asked if we could organise one for the Friday evening. We have held one ever since and look upon it as a major fundraiser for SEEOG; that is, of course, if it is well supported by both members, friends and family alike! It is a major event, because we cater for 80 guests, plus children, the band and our very kind volunteers, bringing the total to around 100! Last year, we had twenty unsold tickets – let's try to sell every one this year!

Monday 15 November

John Williams, who works in the Storehouse Community Centre, Southend-on-Sea, tells us about Landshare, where the landowner, grower or helper posts a listing, telling others where you are and what you are offering or looking for; hopefully, you get responses using their mail system to receive and send messages and then you have a chat and see what happens! New season, new website at <http://www.landshare.net/>

Allotments

Allotments Open Day

If you ever wanted an allotment or wondered how they operate, Leigh Town Council organises an Allotments Open Day each year. On Sunday 5 September, between 11am and 3pm, there will be tours of plots, 'minibug hunts', special question time for gardeners, plant and equipment sales, refreshments and activities for youngsters. The event is held at their allotment site on Manchester Drive, Leigh-on-Sea and admission is free. The entrance is opposite Cricketfield Grove.

Activities for all the family include children's activities, nature trail & bug hunt, scarecrow competition,

Yardarm Orchestra, 'Borderdash' Morris dancing, barbecue, refreshments, raffle, wildflower quiz, orchard display, plot tours, various stalls, wood-turning sales and gardenalia!

Allotments need a green tax boost, say council chiefs
Council chiefs have called for some of the £660million a year landfill tax to be used to fund new plots for allotments. There are about 100,000 gardeners on allotment waiting lists. Demand has also risen thanks to TV chefs such as Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Soil Association President Monty Don.

[Daily Express](#), 11 August

Food for Life Partnership

Approximately **85** Essex schools have now registered. See their website

<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/in-your-region/east-anglia>

For more information, please contact Rebecca White, Administration Team, Food For Life Partnership, Garden Organic, Wolston Lane, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry CV8 3LG; fllp@gardenorganic.org.uk; 02476 217 747

Ready, Steady, Cook - The Pass It On: 1 October 2010 The Ockendon School, Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5AY

If your school is in or near Thurrock, please contact The Ockendon to take part in their Food for Life Partnership lead Ready, Steady, Cook competition. Teams are invited from primary

schools to compete, whilst learning all about local, seasonal and organic food.

The Ockendon School <http://www.ockendonschool.com/>

Ian Nutt 07917 671 416 inutt@soilassociation.org

Garden Organic News

Weather conditions in many parts of the country have been warm and wet over the last few days - ideal for the spread of the blight disease. Read their Potato and Tomato Blight factsheet for advice on dealing with this disease or turn to page 30 of the latest (Summer) issue of The Organic Way.

GM Watch

GMWatch has a fan page on Facebook - please join and invite all your friends, too. And don't forget to follow them on Twitter for all the breaking news.

Monthly Review editor: Claire Robinson

Website: <http://www.gmwatch.org>

Profiles: http://www.spinprofiles.org/index.php/GM_Watch:_Portal

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/GMWatch>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/GMWatch/276951472985?ref=nf>

Growing Organic: Our Very Own Seminars Introducing the Concepts of Organic Gardening!

Saturday 6 November Village Hall, 25 Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers CM3 5PL, 9.30am

Event contact details

Carole Shorney, 01702 201914, caroleshorney@hotmail.com

Robert Wiseman, 0794 107 8135, robert.wiseman@talk21.com

Huntington's Disease Association Southend Branch

The Southend branch also collects used postage stamps for their charity. Please send or take yours to Pat Nelson, 137 Rochford Garden Way, Rochford SS4 1QL or email terrynelson123@btinternet.com

<http://www.hda-southend.org.uk/> Anything that you have and don't want, please ask them, as they would be so grateful: 01702 544606 (Pat) or David on 01702 304698

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 have another provider of free manure, chemical free, in Barling, near Wakering.

Tel. 01702 219835

Open Garden

SEEOG members John and Corinne Layton are opening their garden for the National Gardens Scheme on Sunday 26 September from 2 to 6 pm – you will be very welcome! There will be plants for sale and homemade teas. They are hoping for lots of visitors. Almost all the money made at the garden gate goes to support nursing and caring charities including Macmillan and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Their address is 1 Brook Hall Cottages, Steeple Road, Latchingdon, CM3 6LB, 01621 741680.

Admission is £3.00. Corinne has the prettiest pond we know! Full details on the NGS website www.ngs.org.uk

Publications & Books

Simon Wallace has very kindly compiled the attached Green Reads, summer 2010. For simplicity, however, we have printed off his full 4-page information sheet which will be able at our September meeting.

There are a few Steiner titles in library stock: Classification/ Category 631.584

All authors Steiner, Rudolf, 1861-1925.

Title: Agriculture course: the birth of the biodynamic method: eight lectures given in Koberwitz, Silesia, between 7 and 16 June 1924/Rudolf Steiner.

Publisher/Date: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2004

When Rudolf Steiner gave these lectures 80 years ago, industrial farming was on the rise and organic methods were being replaced in the name of science, efficiency and technology. With the widespread alarm over the quality of food in recent years this course of lectures is critical to the current debate.

Topical subject: Agriculture; Organic farming; Spiritual life-New Age movement; Anthroposophy.

ISBN: 9781855841482(pbk); 1855841487(pbk)

RSPB Wallasea Island Wild Coast Weekend: 18/19 September, 11am – 5pm

We were invited to this event at the recent Leigh Farmers' Market by Hilary Hunter, the Wallasea Island Public Engagement Manager. It began as an opportunity for visitors to learn about their project, but she has turned it into a kind of celebration of the marshland heritage of the island, with local food, drink, music and craft. She hasn't had long to organise it this year, but hopes to develop it into an annual festival. They will have marquee space so she has reserved a table for us. John and Bob have already kindly offered to help – is there anyone else who fancies a trip out to Wallasea on one of these days? We also need some plants to sell.

Recipes: Raspberry Leather

1. Combine the raspberries and 40ml water in a saucepan then add the honey and bring to a simmer. Cook until the raspberries begin to soften then take off the heat to cool slightly.
2. Pass the fruit mix through a fine-meshed sieve to remove any seeds (press down with the back of a spoon to get the most liquid out). You should end up with about 500ml of purée.
3. Now line a baking tray with heat-proof clingfilm (the kind you can microwave). Note that an average baking tray (about 30cm x 42cm) will hold about 500ml of purée.
4. Add the purée to the covered baking tray, spread evenly with a spatula (you want a depth of about 4mm) then place in an oven pre-heated to 140°C. Place the baking tray in the oven but leave the door ajar (you want the steam to escape, as you are drying the leather) and cook for about 6 hours, or until the fruit leather is very dry. The exact drying time will depend on the sugar levels; the more sugar, the longer it will take to dry.
5. The leather must be completely dry, or it will not keep. To ensure the leather is dry, simply try to pull it away from the clingfilm). If it comes away easily and holds its shape then it is dry (make sure it's not too dry though, as then it will crumble but it can still be eaten as a candy).
6. To store, cover the fruit leather in clingfilm and roll loosely. Place in a clean, dry container and seal (perhaps a pasta jar with a bung). It will keep in the store cupboard for between 4 and 12 months or you can refrigerate and keep even longer.
7. If you wish to use the raspberry leather instead of dried fruit, chop very finely and store in a jar, just as you would currants or raisins.

It does work, but you have to keep watching it. Don't let it go brown!

SEEOG Talks/Events (with own stall)

See the RSPB for more details.

Soil Association News

Celebrate Organic Fortnight by visiting the Organic Food Festival in Bristol, 11-12 September. This year's festival features over 150 organic food and drink producers, celebrity chef demos, live bands and much, much more <http://www.organicfoodfestival.co.uk/>

Book your ticket for this year's Lady Eve Lecture, given by Andrew Simms, policy director of the new economics foundation. Free to Soil Association members, the event takes place in London on 6 October.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/Takeaction/Events/LadyEvelecture/tabid/743/Default.aspx>

Sign their petition or write to your MP to protect the school lunch service from budget cuts – they want recognition of the benefits of a good school meal service and the introduction of a minimum spend on ingredients for every child's meal.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/Takeaction/Schoolfood/tabid/237/Default.aspx>

There's an article for the gardener in *Living Earth* on page 26, written by Ben Raskin, on *Short-term fixes* but do read the article on page 18 on *The Peckham Experiment*.

The Food Magazine

The current edition is again loaded with *must to read* articles such as *What is a supply chain and how does it work?* (Ben Raskin, p14); *Vegan – for people, animals and planet* (Amanda Baker, p16); and *Anarchist seeds beneath the snow* (p20), celebrating the life of anarchist and 'utopian dreamer' Colin Ward (1924-2010).

www.foodmagazine.org.uk

Tips and Hints

This new method of slug control, sent to us recently by Maria Tugwell, involves used wine bottles that have had their labels removed and been thoroughly washed and dried. The only other investment, apart from the booze, is a small packet of dry cat food. Put about a dozen grains of dry cat food in each bottle, leave them where you want to catch the slugs, and then inspect them when you go out on the nightly slug hunt.

You can immediately see if any slugs have been caught by the outline of their "feet" on the side of the glass when shining a torch down the neck of the bottle. Put a screw top on the slugged bottles and leave them for the night. If you take the tops off and leave the bottles in a sunny place, the slugs will crawl out by themselves as the interior of the bottle heats up.

Although the slugs are very attracted by the cat food, they don't appear to eat it so, unlike traditional milk and beet, you can re-use the same food until it goes off, so long as it is kept dry. Maria has yet to devise a way of keeping the opening of bottles dry in wet weather, possible by covering with guttering or tiles. And, apart from being more economical than beer and milk, it's much more humane.

But best of all, she says, it seem to work well. She placed these bottles all the way around her beans when she planted them out of their pots and, so far, not a single slug hole has appeared in them. She prefers to use glass bottles since they're too heavy to be carried and can't be gripped by foxes (since they like cat food too).

Useful Websites

1. If you don't have enough space to grow your own fruit, herbs or vegetables then solve the problem by using containers. Pots of all sizes can be ornamental; produce edible treats and it is easy, once you know how. The RHS have a useful section on their website, which neatly explains how to get the most from your containers. Visit www.rhs.org.uk/
2. Want to get back on your bike? Or do you just want to find out how to get more out of your rides? Visit <http://www.cyclesouthend.co.uk/recycle-centre/>

Women's Environmental Network

We have now decided to have our Culture Kitchen event on Saturday 16 October (World Food Day) at St Mark's Church Hall. Just to jog your memory, the aims of the event are -

1. To bring together urban food growers of different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds to celebrate food growing skills, to share ideas for and experiences of food growing and to enjoy a shared meal produced from the fruits of their plots.
2. To provide the opportunity to discuss and address the issue of accessing fresh, healthy and affordable food in their areas, through food growing and other means.
3. To enable people from a variety of backgrounds to coalesce around shared local issues, sharing skills and ideas over a community meal.

Of course you don't have to be food grower to be involved in the culture kitchen world food day celebration - anyone with an interest in food, growing it, cooking it or just eating it will be most welcome. If you'd like to help with plans for the day, please contact sharon_chan14@hotmail.com.

DIG IN on the Manchester Drive allotments. Phone Pauline on 01702 712596 or Eileen on 01268 752264 if you'd like to know more. Even if you have only a small time to join in, you will be very welcome.
Eileen

SEEOG Committee

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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 Tuesday 21 September, kindly hosted by Violet. 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.