



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS
NEWSLETTER NO: 98 – JULY 2011
<http://www.seeog.org.uk/>



SE Essex Organic Gardeners
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=43705483846>



Southend Food Growers (and producers)
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=10150117854010788>

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.

Is your local school a member of SEEOG? If not, we offer free membership on receipt of application form!

SEEOG Group Nights/Events/News

Our AGM starts at 7.30pm sharp on Monday 18 July and we look forward to seeing as many members as possible at Growing Together. The month of July is also the time when we must think about re-joining SEEOG (and even introducing a friend, relative or neighbour!) Violet (who, btw, would like some more raffle prizes!), has listed some of the benefits – can you think of any more?

- Discussion and advice with gardening problems
- Six Informative newsletters per year
- Speaker at each bi-monthly meeting and opportunity to associate with like-minded people
- Books/publications/leaflets on relevant topics at each meeting
- Library books available to borrow at meetings
- Plants (sometimes produce) available to buy at meetings
- Outings to places of interest/events
- Increased self-confidence?

Treasurer Wanted!

We thought we would give members some time to think about this next item before the AGM ... our current Treasurer, Brian Slemmonds, will be vacating his position shortly and SEEOG will desperately need a replacement. The position involves a simple book based income and expense account. It is vital to SEEOG that a replacement is found for this important and rewarding position. A smooth handover can be assured. Please get in touch with SEEOG secretary, Carole Shorney, if you are interested. She will be glad to hear from you!

Help Wanted!

For too long we have struggled or soldiered on, whilst often coping behind the scenes with a job, family commitments, grandchildren, etc. Committee members do have other lives to lead and sometimes there is real difficulty. We cannot, for example, keep the Friday Leigh Market dates going unless we receive some kind of help with transport to and from Hockley (even job share?) There is no point in giving us plants if we cannot sell them, give SEEOG some funds and help to 'spread the organic word.' Violet already helps magnificently with the Rochford market. We not only need help with the Leigh market but the Potato Day and our new Apple Day/Weekend coming along in October.

A few months ago we put out an appeal along the lines of 'Website help appeal! Can anybody volunteer to help keep the SEEOG website up to date?' Nothing happened for a little while until John Tate, a member of Garden Organic from Kent, emailed out of the blue to offer his help. However, John is no stranger because Ron, Vic and I met him on our Yalding trip a few years ago whilst we were staring quite bleakly at our rather meagre lunches in the cafe (we understand they are much better now!) And from time to time I forward on John Tate's Yalding Organic Gardens Supporters' Website and Blog. John, we are truly delighted with the result! <http://yaldingorganicgardens.info/>

Carole, you will remember, is trialling new tomatoes for blight resistance, 'Losetto' and 'Koralik', together with 'Red Alert' for comparison, and has given Violet a few spares to try as well. They have now been planted into their final positions in the garden (direct into the soil) and there will be some photos forthcoming in a little while on our website.

News from SEEOG Schools

Nicola Hann is the Eco-schools coordinator at The Sweyne Park School and has a group of very keen Eco-warriors who love to garden. She is currently bringing on plants in the greenhouse for them to take home and grow and harvest over the summer holidays. They are growing different types of tomato, including Tigerella (which they are very excited about), lots of peas and beans, a pumpkin and lettuce to harvest soon.

SEEOG Talks

1. Tuesday 23 August, 7.30pm: Talk to Laindon Westley Heights Townswomen Guild, Laindon Community Hall, Aston Road, Basildon SS15 6NX (Ron)

PS: This is another SEEOG activity that gets done on its own!

SEEOG Visits

Valley Farm Kitchen Garden, Flatford Mill: Saturday 30 July, arriving 10.30am

Last year we were invited by David Piper, the Warden, to see the restoration that the National Trust is doing on the formal kitchen garden behind Valley Farm, the oldest building at Flatford. David will take us for a tour (donation only) of the kitchen gardens and show us what they have achieved and what they propose for this year. There are currently two unconfirmed bookings, so do please enquire if you are interested in the trip.

Monday 18 July: AGM at 7.30pm followed by normal Group Night!

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of last AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Any other business

After the AGM, Laura Ridley describes Barons Court Primary School's own involvement with the Food for Life Partnership, which brings together the expertise and enthusiasm of four food focused charities: the Soil Association, Focus on Food Campaign, Health Education Trust and Garden Organic.

Barons Court is achieving BRONZE. BRONZE schools serve fresh, seasonal school meals 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 his or her time at school, and opportunities are given for cooking and food growing activity.

<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/whats happening/progress.aspx?markid=1&schid=353&r=7&t=&m=&l=&k=&pg=2&map=1>

Monday 19 September

Essex Bees! Home is where the hive is! Essex Bees is a small family concern run by three Essex boys. They originally started keeping bees for the honey but have since realised that, without honey bees, it's not just the honey that we won't be able to have on our tables at mealtimes. Without wishing to sound alarmist the, honey bee is in trouble and needs all the help it can get.

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

Monday 21 November

Brian Arbuckle presents 'Love Food Hate Waste.

One third of world's food is wasted, says UN study

Around one third of all food produced for human consumption goes to waste, according to a study commissioned by the United Nations food agency. That amounts to more than one billion tonnes of waste around the world every year. The study recommends that developing countries should improve production and distribution so as to stop losing so much food. It also says industrialised countries must stop throwing so much away.

BBC News (11 May)

Apple Day/Weekend

Ron has now put together some ideas for our Apple Day/Weekend events (15/16 October), which he envisages would be a collaborative work with Growing Together, Milton Community Partnership, SEEOG, South East Essex WEN, Transition Town Southend and others.

Venues would be various: St. Laurence Orchard, Growing Together and St. Mark's Centre.

Events would include apple displays, pressings, tastings, eating, cooking, allied with perhaps local seasonal food events to illustrate our perhaps lack of local resilience in a time of peak oil, rising food prices, a culture of voyeurs and not cooks, watchers of gardens and garden books and not growing! Or is it?

Do we value our food and growers, like Roy and Rita or any other local growers like Mo Perkins? (Maybe she would let us have a cheap end-of-season scrump?) (Maybe pull in the allotment societies, too?)

Of course, this will all have to be discussed in detail both between ourselves and with all the various organisations, as we did with Potato Day, and more details will follow in our September newsletter.

Ashlyns

The Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles, MP for Brentwood and Ongar, cut the ribbon last month on Ashlyns' new Food Hub in High Laver, near Ongar.

The Hub reflects the success of the "Feeding our Future" project, launched by Ashlyns in 2004, which was borne out of a desire to have school meals cooked in all schools using fresh, local ingredients, and enjoyed by children from all walks of life whilst gaining an understanding of where their food has come from and how it was produced.

Mr Pickles also attended the opening of Ashlyns' Training Kitchen by Jamie Oliver back in 2005 so knows how far the project has come. "I am so proud to have such an innovative and successful community based initiative within my constituency. It was an honour to be invited to cut the ribbon at the opening of the Ashlyn's Food Hub. It was certainly the most creative and representative ribbon (made of fresh fruit and vegetables) I have ever been asked to cut. I am sure with the new facilities, this project will go from strength to strength."

Children from nearby schools played their part on the day, meeting and greeting guests as they arrived, and made sure they didn't miss the chance of a photograph with the local MP. Despite the weather, the day gave an opportunity to local and Government officials, and others from the education and farming sectors, to see the business and its projects in operation and to meet the Ashlyns team.

For those who haven't yet been there, the farm is based near Ongar, West Essex. Over the years the farm has had many diversification projects and environmental improvement schemes which you can read about on their new website at <http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/>

Crapes Fruit Farm

A challenging spring here at Crapes with a considerable change in approach to apple growing with the emphasis on moisture retention and also understanding exactly the effect of the early blossom during the hot spell mid April. Lots of fruit have already, and are about to drop, leaving most clusters in 1s or 2s. 2" rain so far for June which has set things up nicely for a couple of hot days now. Just need to keep on missing the local hail storms. Overall looking a decent crop but we don't want too large apples - they won't keep!

Each year we seem to manage with less and less in the way of chemical input and in particular we are hosting a good spider population within the orchard. So our 'sympathetic' approach is giving returns and it is a lot less time consuming than being involved with the EU single payment subsidies for planting beetle banks! This dry spring has certainly enabled a considerable change in approach to producing a crop. We will have a good spread throughout the season.

Andrew Tann

Farmers' Markets 2011

- **Leigh-on-Sea** at Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: Friday 22 July, Friday 26 August, Saturday 24 September, Friday 28 October, Saturday 19 November, Saturday 17 December, 09:00 – 12:00
- **Rochford** in the WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 2 July, 6 August, 3 September, 1 October, 5 November, 09:30 – 12:20

Food for Life Partnership

The Food for Life Partnership continues to grow in the East of England and now boasts 121 schools enrolled in Essex, with more getting involved every week.

Ian Nutt is the East of England regional co-ordinator. 07917 671 416 inutt@soilassociation.org
<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/Whatshappening/Inyourregion/EastofEngland.aspx>

Garden Organic News

Garden Organic has now had its base at Ryton for 25 years, once a neglected, windswept, treeless site. The local wildlife has certainly appreciated the developments since then, which include the reedbed purification system that they installed to treat their wastewater.

Last month we received details of their "Don't Dig Peat" campaign. Garden Organic was an active player in the original campaign in the 1990s to cut peat use. The use of peat (other than "recycled" peat dredged from reservoirs) is not acceptable under their *Organic Gardening Guidelines*. Sadly, the Government targets set for peat reduction were nowhere near met and peat use seems to be creeping up again, which is why the campaign has been reignited. You can read more either on page 27 of *The Organic Way (Summer)* or online at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/index.php>

Finally, they've launched a new website for their Sowing New Seeds project, which enables people to keep up-to-date and encourages more to take part. Find out what's been happening by visiting www.sowingnewseeds.org.uk

GM Watch

Keep up to date with the latest news on the issue of genetically modified (GM) food and crops and find out about the deceptive PR campaigns being used to promote GM worldwide.

New Coalition Government GM Policy – Westminster realising GM doesn't deliver?

GM Freeze, 21 Jun 2011

<http://www.gmfreeze.org/news-releases/157/> Pete Riley was one of our guests some years ago at the old Green Baize.

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

Huntington's Disease Association Southend Branch

Southend Huntington's Disease allotment(s) at the Manners Way site progressed very nicely with a lot of hard work in its second year. We are benefitting from the advice given by others and find that we are growing better salad lettuce and potatoes, beans, garlic, beetroot, onion, cabbage, parsnip and tomatoes, (and masses of strawberries) now that the ground is currently well tended and manured. As we did last year, we will harvest on a Wednesday and take all of the food to our group on a Thursday morning (at the Ekco Social Club). We share it out so that everyone has a bag of food for their Sunday lunch.

STRAWBERRIES WITH CREAM FOR 30+ PEOPLE ON A THURSDAY MORNING IS AN AMAZING FEAT!

We are reorganising the site now so that we can have better shelter for our members and, with the help of Southend Council, we now have a disabled toilet on our plot, which is so desperately needed. This will allow more of our disabled people to enjoy days out instead of sitting in staring at the walls. Amazingly, one of our members had almost given up all hope last year (at the age of 37!) but the allotment has given him a new lease of life and he is there every week, he has even started walking (he was totally wheelchair bound) and he is talking much better - albeit being severely disabled! This is all down to the therapeutic effects of our allotment, his mother tells us.

Our raised beds are made from planks from Southend Pier and this October our Chairman and some of the Branch members are giving a talk about the allotment at the National Annual General Meeting of the Huntington's Disease Association - having been asked to by the National Executive. Happy days!

David McDonagh

But the Southend branch is still collecting used postage stamps and wishes to thank all SEEOG members for their kindness! Please send or take yours to Pat Nelson, 137 Rochford Garden Way, Rochford SS4 1QL or email terrnelson123@btinternet.com. Anything that you have and don't want, please ask them, as they would be so grateful. Please telephone 01702 544606 (Pat) or 01702 304698 (David).

<http://www.hda-southend.org.uk/>

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
3. Our third provider is Julie Davis who has a large, well rotted manure pile in Great Wakering, ready to be taken away and put to good use, with good vehicle access. You can help yourself to a bagful, a car load or a lorry load if you want it, but please contact her first to arrange a time as her yard is kept locked for security reasons. Julie says she can't say it's organic, but she has run her land along organic guidelines, so there have been no sprays, medicines, etc. used and all their livestock were fed on organic feed, with no growth promoters or hexane, so it is completely safe for organic vegetables, etc. Tel: 07742107855

Open Days

1. Sunday 21 August: WLCS, Springfield Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea
2. Sunday 21 August: Broad Oak Herbs, Broad Oak Farm, Wadham Park Avenue, Hockley SS5 6AL, midday to about 4.30pm. People can bring a picnic or packed lunch if they want. They will provide refreshments of tea, coffee etc.
3. Sunday 4 September: Manchester Drive Allotments Society, Leigh-on-Sea (opposite Cricketfield Grove)
4. Saturday 24 September, 2. 00 – 5.00pm: Maïke and Gerhard Windhorst, Mount Holly, Castledon Road, Downham, CM11 1LH, with orchard tour and cider-making demonstration included. Event to support national Friends of the Earth to enable them to keep their independence.

SeeKay Hort Supplies

Colin Turner and his wife from Hamstel Road Allotments run a seed supply company and are just breaking into the organic market. They have been trading for about a year and are Fera (Defra) registered so all their seeds are of top quality and supplied to them by registered suppliers in the UK. He believes they possibly offer the cheapest seeds on the market (they might be wrong!) and as such wondered if we would be interested in purchasing seeds.

Tel: 01702 293988

ct006b6308@blueyonder.co.uk

Soil Association News

The Soil Association continue to campaign against mega pig farms as Midland Pig Producers have resubmitted their plans for the intensive pig unit in Foston. SEEOG had to respond to the planning application by the end of June. They've been working with the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) to produce a new report, *Old MacDonald had a farm: The possible impact of proposed mega dairies and massive pig factories on the small family farm*. You can read more and download the report by visiting <http://www.soilassociation.org/News/NewsItem/tabid/91/ArticleId/2111/Mega-farms-could-drive-100-s-of-UK-farmers-out-of-business.aspx>

Rachel Harries, Programmes Department, sent us this note a few days ago: 'Thought you might be interested in this anti GM protest happening in Norfolk. Apologies if you have heard about it already! Join us for a family-friendly rally against ongoing blight-resistant GM potato trials! Gather for organic chips before travelling by coach, bike or tractor to the John Innes Research Centre to deliver to them our tried and tested non-GM blight-resistant spuds! Meet 12 noon, The Forum, Norwich, on Saturday 23rd July 2011. For more info email: info@stopgm.org.uk or to book coach seats / enquire about accommodation ring 01271 850 616. To gather under the Soil Association 'No GM' banner at the event contact ehockridge@soilassociation.org.' Further updates on the event are on our website.

Spring 2011: Full 72-hour Permaculture Design Course, Westcliff-on-Sea

The last weekend is being held 2 – 3 July between 10 am – 6 pm, with optional additional sessions and/or social events on the Saturday evenings. Cost: £450 - £300 depending on income, some concessionary places available.

£50 deposit secures a place, led by: Graham Burnett and guest tutors

Full course details including syllabus:

<http://www.spiralseed.co.uk/westcliffpdc.html>

For enquiries and bookings contact Milton Community Partnership
miltoncommunity@hotmail.com or telephone 01702 213264

St. Luke's Community Allotment Project

This is based at St. Luke's Church, St. Luke's Road, Southend-on-Sea SS2 4AB and is a community partnership between Cecil Jones College, Cluny Residents Association, Peartree Plus Residents Association, St. Luke's Church, St. Luke's Healthy Living CIC, Temple Sutton Primary School and South Essex Homes. Like us, sometimes, they need Resident Volunteers! For more information, please contact Gareth Gault, St. Luke's Healthy Living CIC, Temple Sutton Children's Centre, Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 4BA. Mobile: 07527 806520 - Email: st.lukeshlc@hotmail.co.uk - www.stlukeshlccic.org.uk

Storehouse Garden Project

John Williams reports that the garden project is now in full swing and produce from it is being used for community lunches at the project and for food parcels.

Useful Websites

1. The Food Commission -Bookmark this site! <http://www.foodmagazine.org.uk/>
2. This is the Findhorn Foundation's website, which Jacqui Apostolides mentioned in May: <http://www.findhorn.org/aboutus/>
3. South East Essex Conservation Volunteers – we see Annette Payne from time to time at Growing Together - www.seecv.org.uk
4. Buzz Organics - www.buzzorganics.co.uk
5. Urban Herbals - www.urbanherbals.co.uk

Publications

The Norfolk Organic Group's latest newsletter contains an article by the Organiser of East Anglia Potato Day, Julian Turner, entitled 'Potato Blight' which we shall bring with us to Group Night.

SEEOG Committee

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Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership	01702 558871	grahamoster@aol.com
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Please post/phone/email your contributions for the September newsletter to Carole by the end of August at the very latest. Please also notify Graham Oster-Ritter on grahamoster@aol.com if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 13 July at Violet's (7.30pm).