



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 100 – NOVEMBER 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>

SEEEOG 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 SEEEOG? If not, we offer free membership on receipt of application form!

Time

8.00pm - 10.00pm

Our speakers start at 8.00pm, but Growing Together will be open from 7.00pm to allow members to browse our Library, etc.

Venue

Cheryl Centre, Growing Together Community Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea SS0 9AG (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase)

Please park in Prittlewell Chase and use Fairfax Drive entrance.

Refreshments are available at all meetings.

Talks are open to the public (admission £2)

Please let us know if you have difficulty with transport and we will try to help.

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 Tuesday 15 November at 60 Sandleigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea. at 7.30pm.

Apple Weekend

There are apples available from Growing Together (Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm): Blenheim Orange, Cox, Kidd's Orange Red, Michaelmas Red, Ribston Pippin, Suntan and Tun.

Thanks to everyone for what has been a very busy, hectic but successful weekend. We have learned a lot, made valuable contacts and were visited by many very different and interested people.

We will have an evaluation meeting, so each group needs to report back; maybe people could reflect and give their thoughts. It is challenging at times when working with /collaborating an event; this learning is most valuable, showing it can be done and work for all pretty much! Verbal reports indicate that NFU Mutual had a good day on Saturday, so well done all and thanks for making this happen. There is great interest out there for all the areas that our partnering groups work around. Our Treasurer is pleased to report that the amount of apples sold over the two day event raised £169.50.

NFU Mutual in Chelmsford is proud to be working with
South East Essex Organic Gardeners.

Call our friendly team for an insurance quotation on **01245 898425**

Agent of The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited.



NFU Mutual

SEEOG Group Nights/Events/News

Next year, we would like to feature profiles of members' growing areas – how you grow your fruit and vegetables, including the odd photo for our website.

Monday 21 November

'Love Food, Hate Waste' and the activities of the Waste Buster Volunteers, presented by Alistair Brudenell, PLUS 'Wormeries & Organic Gardening' presented by Jacqueline Wass. Please feel free to bring a few festive cakes along if you wish!

Monday 16 January

The Peckham Experiment, Peckham and Oakley Farm presented by Kate McGeevor. www.thephf.org

Monday 19 March

What's the Problem? What is GM again? Genetic Modification is the process of taking a gene from one thing, and putting it into the DNA of another species, usually with the addition of a virus. This mixing of genes across species barriers is something that fundamentally interferes with the process of evolution that has created life on earth up until now. It is totally different from the selective breeding we've used to develop crops in the past. <http://www.stopgm.org.uk/>

Monday 21 May

Piper Terrett, freelance writer and blogger, Energy Saving Trust's Green Voice of the UK www.piperterrett.co.uk <http://money.uk.msn.com/blog/the-frugal-life.aspx>

Monday 16 July inc. AGM

Andrew Henderson, Organic Crop Specialist, Rijk Zwaan UK Ltd. <http://www.rijkszwaan.co.uk/wps/wcm/connect/RZ+UK/Rijk+Zwaan/home>

Monday 17 September

The vegetable box scheme at St. Mark's Centre presented by Matt King, Growing Together Community Gardens

Monday 19 November

Dan Fisk, Soil Association apprentice at Audley End – to be confirmed

Farmers' Markets 2011

- **Leigh-on-Sea** at Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: Friday 28 October, Saturday 19 November, Saturday 17 December, 09:00 – 12:00
- **Rochford** in the WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 5 November, 09:30 – 12:20

Allotments

Ron attended an Allotment Association training session on 8 October in Chelmsford - training by the National Allotments Garden Trust (NAGT) and *free* to all member and non-member associations. Please contact Ron for a copy of his notes if you are interested.

The programme covered as many of these subjects as time allowed:

NSALG and how it works to support regions, counties, Associations and members. Associations, Why? The Committee, roles and responsibilities of officers and members. Engaging all the members, sub-committees and projects on site. The provision of allotments, relevant legislation, acquisition of land, planning, Defra, LDF. Creating and Regeneration of sites, site facilities for now and the future; Plot sizes. Tenancies and rules for greater protection and understanding. Waiting lists.

Termination of Tenancies - Non cultivation - Eviction – Compensation – Livestock. The value of allotments - Rents.

General legislation which may affect Allotments; Planning Permission

Disposal of allotments. Criteria. Replacement sites. Revenue from sale of land.

Funding - Tips on funding applications. Creating a budget. Funding sources.

Compost Heap Invertebrate Survey

Relatively little is known of the Invertebrates that live in our compost heaps and no systematic survey of compost faunas has been conducted in the UK. Garden Organic has joined forces with the University of Plymouth in a project to catalogue the fauna of our compost heaps and bins in order to gain a better understanding of their role in the composting process. We are inviting schools to take part in this process.

If you would like to be involved in this exciting project please go to <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/composting/survey/> for details of how to register your interest, and download the instructions and survey form.

Heather Jackson, Project Co-ordinator, Sustainable Waste Team, Garden Organic, Wolston Lane, Coventry, CV8 3LG

Crapes Fruit Farm

Just at the moment Andrew Tann's mind is firmly focused on how to adapt to the apparent unseasonal fluctuations with the weather, a phenomenon which has been creeping up for the last 10 - 15 years. In some ways dry springs aren't such a bad thing, but poor light summers are mixing up ripening processes.

Fantastic Food Exchange

This will be the second Fantastic Food Exchange to be organised by Ian Hurd, Transition Town Southend, on Sunday 30 October at Metal's Kitchen Garden, Chalkwell Park, Westcliff-on-Sea. Be there sharp at 10am as it ends at midday! And don't forget to send any photos to us!

Food for Life Partnership

It is worth noting that December 31st will see the end of the Big Lottery funding for FFLP, which means that the staff on the ground (i.e. me and my team) will be gone by the end of the year and FFLP will be run as an online assessment programme for the foreseeable future. However, schools can still use FFLP, the resources, website and HQ for admin support and can apply as before. It is hoped that further funding may be secured over the coming months on a regional basis and FFLP HQ is currently working very hard to ensure this happens.

We are delighted to have been invited to the Thurrock & Havering FFLP Awards Ceremony 'Celebrating outstanding food culture' on Thursday 1st December 10.00 – 14.45 at High House Production Park, Vellacott Close, Purfleet, Essex, RM19 1AF.

Ian Nutt
East of England Coordinator
Food for Life Partnership
t: 07917 671 416
e: inutt@soilassociation.org
w: foodforlife.org.uk

Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens

Following recent developments (outlined below), John and Mag Tate have formed the 'Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens' (FOYOG) as a central information resource and 'rallying point' for those who have a love of the Gardens and a desire to see them thriving into the future.

Precisely what FOYOG may need to do is presently unclear. It may perhaps just fulfil an information and co-ordination role for now; with an ongoing supporting and promotional role in the future – if there is a workable rescue plan for the Gardens in place.

Alternatively, there may be a need for more pro-active campaigning and action – it is all too early to say, at the moment. It is, however, better to be prepared – and certainly, no bad can come from bringing together those who care about the Gardens.

A new website has been created at www.foyog.org – where you can sign up to the group (they will formalise the group's management once they know what kind of response there has been) and where other content will be added in due course.

The website yaldingorganicgardens.info will become secondary to www.foyog.org. FOYOG will now be used for all new items and articles. Please note: you must now join the FOYOG mailing list in order to receive any updates.

Their Twitter account YaldingOrganicG has been changed to FOYOG and their Facebook page will change shortly. The informational and media content from the old site will also be transferred to the new one.

Garden Organic – Member Benefits

If you are still wondering whether to renew your subscription to SEEEOG, you may wish to consider the following benefits which are available but not widely known. In the last year, SEEEOG has renewed its membership of both the Soil Association and Garden Organic (HDRA). As a member group, we are therefore able to share certain membership benefits of each of these organisations. We also joined Pesticide Action Network UK several years ago. I will start with Garden Organic in this newsletter, continue with the Soil Association in January and conclude with the Pesticide Action Network in March.

Brief History

Garden Organic is the current trading style of The Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA). This organisation was started by Laurence Hills in 1954 on an acre of land in Bocking, adjacent to Braintree. The idea of the Association was to carry out research into growing plants organically. Laurence's initial inspiration came after reading of Henry Doubleday's experiences with comfrey in the 1900s and this was the subject of early trials – hence the name of the organisation and the name given to the strain of comfrey now used by most organic gardeners – Bocking 14.

This 'club for experimenting gardeners' grew slowly but surely and, by the early eighties, had outgrown its Bocking site. (Do you remember it, did you go there, have you any photos?) A derelict, 22-acre smallholding at Ryton-on-Dunsmore near Coventry was purchased in 1985 and this has gradually been developed and improved, boasting an organic restaurant and shop, conferencing facilities and 20 acres of trial and demonstration gardens. (SEEEOG visited in 2009) Although still constituted as HDRA, the organisation has recently adopted the more informative styling of 'Garden Organic' and has over 40,000 supporters worldwide, of which SEEEOG and its members are included.

Current Aims

From simple aims, Garden Organic now boasts a huge variety of major projects and influences all aspects of organic thinking.

- They carry out research into organic growing methods;
- they have an international development arm which assists overseas farming communities;
- they provide 'Organic Gardening Guidelines' and give advice on organic growing methods;
- they provide advice for schools interested in giving pupils the opportunity to learn about food and growing;
- the site at Ryton is open to members and the public and is set out as 30 different demonstration gardens, including the world's first public biodynamic garden they operate a Heritage Seed library to preserve old varieties of garden vegetables and they have helped in the restoration of Audley End Organic Kitchen Garden, which is now run on organic principles.

For those of you with Internet access, take a look at the Garden Organic website at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/index.php> - there is a huge amount of information on both the organisation and on organic growing. For those without Internet access, nip around to a friend's and ask them to show you the Garden Organic website – you may make another convert!

Member Benefits

Member benefits are obviously wide and ever changing, the latest information being given in the quarterly magazine 'The Organic Way' which is available for reference on our library table. The following are some of the more obvious benefits:

Organic Factsheets on growing and organic methods (available at SEEEOG's bi-monthly meetings)
Growing Cards on popular and not-so-popular fruit and vegetables
Participation in an internet Forum to swap ideas and opinions
'Ask the Experts' facility
Seed saving guidelines and tips
Access to past editions of The Organic Way, the quarterly magazine of Garden Organic
Current editions are available for reference at our bi-monthly meetings
Taking part in Members' Experiments

Most of these are available through the Members' Area of the Garden Organic website (see above), but you will need a 'login name' and password to access this area. SEEEOG members can obtain these from Carole (SEEEOG'S Secretary). Contact details are on the last page of this newsletter.

SEEEOG's involvement

Since 2008, SEEEOG has always encouraged all Essex schools to register with the Food for Life Partnership which brings together the expertise of four focused food charities, the Soil Association, Focus on Food Campaign, Health Education Trust and Garden Organic.

As you will have gathered, Garden Organic is one of the foremost organic organisations in this country and we look forward to further interaction with them in the coming years.

With grateful thanks for the idea to Peter Robinson, Membership Secretary, Norfolk Organic Group

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. For instance, this item on GM presentations raise concerns over human health
Barry Alston, Farmers Guardian, 12 October 2011 |
<http://www.farmersguardian.com/home/arable/gm-presentations-raise-concerns-over-human-health/42200.article>
<http://www.gmwatch.org/>

Huntington's Disease Association Southend Branch

As you know by now, please save all your used postage stamps either to send or take to Pat Nelson at 137 Rochford Garden Way, Rochford SS4 1QL.
terrynelson123@btinternet.com. Anything that you have and don't want, please ask either Pat 01702 544606 or David 01702 304698.
<http://www.hda-southend.org.uk/>

Letters

Dear All,

Thank you so much for all your hard work over Apple Weekend and in the weeks of planning beforehand.

I had such a good time in the orchard on Saturday. I met some lovely people and gorgeous children, who were all more fascinated by the mini-wildlife around us than the stories, but I think that's quite a good thing. It was lovely to hear the stories they made up as they played with snails and woodlice!

We weren't able to be there at the beginning, but I brought family and friends to the evening event and we all had a great time. The pumpkin soup was lovely, and so were all the desserts. The apple quiz was jolly difficult, but apparently we should've read the fact sheet first!

The films were very informative, although I didn't have time to watch all through.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to take part in Sunday's activities, which was a disappointment, but I'm a good Mum so my daughter's birthday came first! (Which I had a feeling it might do when we were doing the initial planning)

I hope it all went well and everyone had a great time, and made lots of money! I'm really looking forward to doing it again next year, hope you are too!

Best Wishes

Jane

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. 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

S E Essex Women's Environmental Network

We are working hard to prepare our 'DIG IN' allotment in Manchester Drive for the winter. A new rotation plan for the beds is ready for next year and we are collecting lots of burnable stuff for our BONFIRE NIGHT PARTY on Saturday Nov 5.

Our Harvest Supper at St Mark's Church Hall, part of the Apple Weekend event, was a happy evening among friends old and new. Corinne turned the massive (34lb) pumpkin into wonderful soup for the 50 or so people who turned up and this was supplemented by a lovely Borlotti bean soup made by Carol (Ferrett) – a special 'Thank You' goes to Corinne and Carol for the soup, and to Graham for compiling the films. The pumpkin was kindly donated by Vic (Shorney) who won it by guessing its weight in an allotment open day competition. I guess he gave it to us because, now that he and Carole are grandparents (congratulations!), they won't have time for cutting up a 34lb pumpkin! Desserts at the supper were many - all made by various people who produced recipes and all based on apples. Ron & Ane (Bates) were selling a wonderfully varied selection of apples from Crapes Fruit Farm.

On Sunday morning, people were invited to visit the Essex Orchard and WEN allotment at Manchester Drive. During the course of the morning several family groups were shown around the two sites. Visitors were able to talk to David about the history and purpose of the Orchard. They were also able to talk to some of the volunteers who regularly help out at the WEN plot and hopefully able to gain a good insight into how the plot operates.

One of our members (Gwen) brought some exciting news to our attention recently. A Free Shop has opened in Southend where goods can be donated or taken free of charge, a sort of Freecycle shop - to find out more visit www.chaseroad.webeden.co.uk

Members had a fun afternoon tea party at the house of Anna-Lisa and Martin (Murrell) in Rayleigh on Oct 8th. A sumptuous tea was followed by a session making Nordic Christmas decorations.

WEN has various activities planned and always welcomes new members. Whether you have a lot of time to give, or just want to be kept on our mailing list and come along to a meeting now and then, please get in touch with Sharon Chan on 079 47655947 (after 6.00pm) - Eileen

Soil Association News

The Soil Association has recently published its new corporate strategy, *The Road to 2020*. Building on their past successes, and putting a strong emphasis on innovation and on reaching out to a wider audience, the strategy is based around two major themes: 'facing the future' and 'good food for all'.

Their first major work theme, 'facing the future', will promote solutions that meet the needs of people for healthy food, fuel and fibre while protecting the natural world. They will also seek to ensure that their role in public health should be as powerful as it is in environment and farming.

'Good food for all', their second major theme, commits them to ensuring that organic, seasonal, healthy food is accessible to everyone, especially those who will most benefit from the most nutritious diet.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/News/Newsstory/tabid/91/ArticleId/2647/The-road-to-2020-Soil-Association-launches-new-corporate-strategy.aspx>

SE Essex Seed Potato Day *Bookmark now!!!*

In association with Leigh-on-Sea Allotment & Leisure Garden Association and SE Essex Organic Gardeners

Date and time

Saturday 25 February, 10am - 2pm

Details of event

Over 40 varieties of potato (one third organic) sold individually at 14p per tuber

Venue

Growing Together Community Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea. SSO 9AG
(corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase)

Please park in Prittlewell Chase and use Fairfax Drive entrance.

Admission price

£1.00 - Refreshments available

Useful Websites

1. The Food Commission – <http://www.foodmagazine.org.uk>
2. Speech by Annie Mauger, Chief Executive of CILIP addressing the National Federation of Women's Institutes' AGM 8 June 2011, Liverpool Echo Arena
http://www.cilip.org.uk/news-media/Documents/Annie_Mauger_WI_speech_080611.pdf

Yalding Gardens Close - Again

Remembering our visits in the past, we think that you will be as saddened as we are to read the following Press Release that we have received from the Yalding Gardens...

"...It is with the deepest regret that Loddington Farm Ltd has made the decision to close the Yalding Gardens and Bushel Box Café and Farmshop as of the 13th October 2011 for the foreseeable future. No events will be held at the gardens and we can only apologise for any inconvenience or disappointment that this will cause.

With our very best efforts we have made great progress in restoring the gardens and have greatly appreciated all our local support. However, in spite of those efforts we have been unable to make the site a commercial success.

We are in working with our landlord – The Congelow Trust – and will be using our website www.yaldinggardens.org to announce further developments. Thank you once again for your support..."

Clearly, it is still early days - but we wanted you to be aware of the situation - especially if you were planning on attending one of the scheduled public events at the Gardens before Christmas.

SEEOG committee

Ron Bates	Chair	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Ray How	Vice-Chair	01702 544632	ray.how@btopenworld.com
Brian Slemmonds	Treasurer	01702 200572	audrey4brian@talktalk.net
Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership	01702 558871	grahamoster@aol.com
Violet Poulten	Minutes	01268 768391	violetpoulten@talktalk.net
Carole Shorney	Secretary	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Vic Shorney	Committee	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Jane Ponton	Committee	01268 565776	JaneAPonton@hotmail.com
Kamil Pachalko	Committee	07707 676308	kamilpac@googlemail.com

Garden Organic – Members’ Experiments: Blight resistant tomatoes

Violet lives in a 'frost pocket' – she put out her tomatoes at the bottom of her garden where blight has previously occurred.

Blight arrived approx. mid-August (people living near her had blight much earlier than this).

Koralik - most affected

Losetto - slightly better than Koralik

Red Alert - fared much better

Garden Organic – Members’ experiments: Blight resistant tomatoes

Blight resistant varieties have been available for some years but, following the evolution of the fungus, the resistance is lower than it used to be. Varieties like Ferline and Legend give some protection against blight if the summer is on the dry side and there is not much disease about but, in warm wet conditions, the resistance is not good enough. Garden Organic want to test out newer varieties that they believe have improved resistance; two of these varieties were provided for this experiment for comparison with a 'control' variety.

This experiment is being conducted in collaboration with David Shaw of the Savari Research Trust and Simon Crawford of ProVeg Seeds Ltd.

Aim: to trial three varieties of bush tomato to find out if any give a heavier crop of healthy, ripe fruits.

In due course, Carole received seed of three tomato varieties (Losetto F1, Koralik and Red Alert). She passed a few seedlings to Violet and both followed the instructions for planting up, recording the results and sending in a blight sample where applicable, ie:

Date seed sown	21 April 2011
Date transplanted to large container	18 – 22 May
Date plants moved outside	28 – 29 May
What did you feed your plants with?	Chopped comfrey leaves
Description of your experimental site	Cottage garden’s small vegetable plot
Did you grow potatoes	
or other tomatoes nearby?	Yes
If yes, did they suffer from blight?	No
Any other comments?	Maybe we would have had a better crop if we had taken out the side shoots and allowed plants to grow up the cane.

Crop performance and blight resistance

	Losetto	Koralik	Red Alert
Date of first flowering	21/6	21/6	24/6
Date when first fruit ripe		15/8	
Date of Harvest 1		15/8 (4 in all)	
Date of Harvest 2	27/8 - 12oz	10oz	12oz (all healthy)
Date of Harvest 3	5/9 - 12oz	13oz	14oz
Date of Harvest 4	11/9 - 475g	400g	220g
Date of Harvest 5	21/9 - 580g	188g	Nil
Date of Harvest 6	27/9 - 400g	450g	Nil
Date of Harvest 7	3/10 – 180g	30g	Nil

Tomato blight appeared on 5/9/11

Fruit quality - Please rate the taste on a score of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) with reasons	Bland – no real flavour (2)		Pleasant flavour
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Sample of blight sent in	No	No	No
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