

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 102 – MARCH 2012

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

SE Essex Organic Gardeners

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43705483846/>Southend Food Growers (and producers)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43705483846/#!/groups/Southendfoodgrowersandproducers>



Soil Association

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!

Venue

Cheryl Centre, Growing Together Community Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea SS0 9AG (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase) - Growing Together is a one-acre community garden and allotment project, primarily supporting adults with mental health needs and learning disabilities; and also educating the public and broader community on organic vegetable growing and all things sustainable. They also have a training centre with all mod cons.

Please park in Prittlewell Chase and use Fairfax Drive entrance. Refreshments are available at all meetings. Talks are open to the public. Please let us know if you have difficulty with transport and we will try to help.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 7 March at 58 Stromness Road, Southend-on-Sea, at 7.30pm.

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.

SE Essex Seed Potato Day

"Great weather, nice people, plenty of potatoes in bags and backpacks... I would call that a fun day to have. See you in 2013" – Kamil

This is the correct link to the Echo story now in case you saw the original last week and wondered why Vic had changed his name to Foyle: http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/local_news/southend/9560366.A_day_to_celebrate_our_love_for_spuds/

The second South East Essex Seed Potato Day was hosted at the Growing Together site where we (SEEEOG) meet bi-monthly. It is a collaborative partnership with SEEEOG and LOSALGA providing the logistics of ordering and collecting (using GT's truck) from the East Anglia Potato Day at Stonham Barns on 11th February and storing them at GT ready for display and purchase in the polytunnel.

There were 49 varieties for sale, a third organic seed; this has increased from 30 last year. 25th February saw over 150 people come to purchase their seed potatoes along with the chance to savour baked potatoes and drinks from GT's cafe in the Cheryl Centre, their sales of plants and crafts and the information stalls - Local Energy Advice Forum, Transition Town Southend and our own SEEEOG. The SEEEOG stall brought in £16.10 (booklets, jam and chutney) and Graham gained a new membership. It was a contrast from last year's rainy weather, when we needed the gazebos for protection, but this year for shade (these are via Leigh Town Council). We owe thanks to all who have given time and energy to enable these days to happen and help us learn to do it better each time. It has been a financial success for us and also for Growing Together with their cafe and sales of produce and plants.

There are potatoes left for sale, which may last till the talk evening this month. Look out for future events at Growing Together like the Women's Environmental Network's EARTH DAY which will again give more collaborative opportunities. Thanks again to all. Ron Bates.

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.



Simon put together a short (not too serious) factsheet on the mighty spud. The factsheet (PDF) is available for download from <http://seeog.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2012/02/Cheap-as-chips-factsheet-feb-2012.pdf> and will also be available at Group Night.

We have recently discovered www.blightwatch.co.uk, although I think we have mentioned it before in a previous newsletter. They will alert you as soon as blight seems to be coming your way. It's free to register and might just save a lot of your produce.

SEEOG Group Nights/Events/News

Southend in Bloom are once again creating a show garden and information display at this year's Aztec Southend Spring Garden Show on 5th, 6th and 7th May 2012 (at Garons Park) http://www.aztecevents.co.uk/southendgardenshow_home.htm SIB is able to offer three different community groups the chance each to share their stand **for one day** during the show and have included SEEOG. Entrance/parking is free for exhibitors. We can sell plants, publications and promote our group to the many visitors on our selected day, **Monday 7 May**. Staffing of our display will need to come from SEEOG volunteers.

We would still love to receive a (short) Member's Profile for a future newsletter - and we're always more than happy to receive items on compost making, pests, no-dig, raised beds, planting density, varieties, preserving crops, biodynamic gardening, etc. And, as some of you may have noticed in January, we have a few copies available of Eileen's new book, 'Thundersley on Foot.'

Simon recently enjoyed further adventures in the Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle and the Wakefield Rhubarb Festival. All rather marvellous and, at the risk of boring you all, he's going to do a fact sheet on this awesome superfood. He's sent us some photos taken at Oldroyds Farm (where they enjoyed a guided tour of the forcing sheds by the "High Priestess of Rhubarb" no less), which will be on our website in due course. Hot off the press, there's also the first recipe book specifically devoted to rhubarb.

And, just for interest, we're attaching a piece on Lady Eve Balfour written by Peter Anderson, Norfolk Organic Group.

Monday 19 March

'Nature reserves – our last sanctuaries'

We have had to change the content of this evening's talk, due to unforeseen circumstances. We are, however, delighted to welcome Graham Mee, Group Leader, South East Essex RSPB Local Group, who will present 'Nature reserves - our last sanctuaries.' Graham hopes that we haven't got too many members who have heard this talk before but he thinks that you will enjoy it. His wife told him that the last third of the nature reserves talk is very apt for organic gardeners so this would probably be the best choice! Graham is also most generous in publicising our events on his website, as you will see by visiting <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk> and clicking on Future Events in the middle of the page.

Monday 21 May

'From gardener to grower - the business of growing salad'

Essex-born author Piper Terrett and her husband Douglas Smith began growing vegetables and keeping chickens in their back garden in Billericay in 2005. Doug had always been green-fingered and Piper became interested in home-grown food while writing the popular Frugal Life blog for MSN.co.uk and publishing her book *The Frugal Life: How to spend less and live more*. After Doug won first prize in Billericay in Bloom in 2010 for his vegetable patch, and attended a course run by salad guru Charles Dowding, he was inspired to take things further. Now based in Hertford, he is setting up his own small-scale loose-leaf salad business, grown along organic lines and locally sold. In this talk, Piper explains their journey from gardeners to small-scale commercial growers.

It's still early stages at the moment. Douglas has found a plot at a local farm and Charles Dowding has agreed to give him some mentoring and help him with the planting plan, which is great news. All of this is on top of a day job in IT - so interesting!

Monday 16 July inc. AGM

'From selection to consumption, a seeds story' presented by Andrew Henderson

Please note that we will be holding our AGM before Andrew's presentation. This is usually brief but it is your forum for commenting on how SEEOG is performing and what you wish to see happening in the

next year. It is therefore helpful if as many members as possible attend so that your views are made known.

Andrew is an Organic Crop Specialist at Rijk Zwaan UK Ltd and said he will include a bit about RZ/Tuckers Seeds, breeding, species available, sowing and seed storage.
<http://www.rijkszwaan.co.uk/wps/wcm/connect/RZ+UK/Rijk+Zwaan/home>

Monday 17 September

'Nurturing Health Project led by Milton Community Partnership - promoting the growing of fresh fruit and vegetables in the community, growing productive trees in community spaces in urban Southend-on-Sea, applying permaculture in practice' presented by Matt King, Chair of Milton Community Partnership. Growing Together is doing a £3 per week vegetable bag scheme - organically grown vegetables and fruit grown on site by their members (with mental health problems & learning disabilities). Just go to the site (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase) to order your weekly bag. Open Mon - Fri 9 am - 4 pm.

Monday 19 November

Dan Fisk, Soil Association apprentice at Audley End – to be confirmed pending his future work placement at the end of his apprenticeship.

A Pocket Guide to Plants & Gardening

From the author of the best-selling *Kids in the Wild Garden* and *Kids in the Garden* (already on SEEEOG's Sales Table), *A Pocket Guide to Plants & Gardening* is a beautifully illustrated, informative reference book, designed to provide ready, simple answers to all the basic questions about plants. With clear, comprehensive illustrations, simple instructions and tool diagrams; as well as maps, timelines, portraits, keys and much, much more, this is the perfect guide to plants for gardeners of all ages and experience! To order at the discounted price, simply email jess@blackdogonline.com with your delivery address and she will dispatch the book with an invoice.

Allotments

At Springfield Drive allotments, in Westclif-on-Sea, they have created a plot with 11 raised beds - most around 60cm high. They would be interested in hearing from any group who feel that they would be able to use this facility. For more information, please contact Keith Baxter on 01702 341889.

So, in fact, what about a SEEEOG/Southend in Transition Community Allotment?

This is still very early days but I have spoken with Colin from Southend East Allotment Society and he does not see a problem in us taking one of the new plots and using it as a community allotment. I thought maybe we can do it under the SEEEOG patronage to give the organisation a practical playground and way to publicise its work and to spread the organic message. We will discuss it thoroughly at our next committee meeting. This is how I envisage the initial plan:

Sunday 11 March: View and choose plot, time tba
March: Society marks out the plot for us
March: Advertising the plot through the newsletter and SIT website
March: Meeting of a core group to plan allotment
Publicity: Contacting councillors to do the first dig etc
1 April: Work day, digging as there are loads of brambles to clear
Tool and seed appeal and collection, Freecycle, Coop Community Fund
Continued publicity to local residents
Regular weekly work days
2013: a community allotment in every allotment site - Kamil Pachalko, 07411457259

And still a long way off, National Allotments Week: Monday 6 August - Sunday 12 August
<http://thehorticulturalchannel.info/nationalallotmentweek/>

Crapes Fruit Farm

If throwing out apples from the garage, don't put those with apple scab lesions on the compost heap. Your problem will multiply rapidly on the new season's buds, leaves and apples. Active lesions on the fruit have a soot black appearance - obvious round spots of varying size just peel deep.

If anyone has had trouble with woolly aphis on apple or pear it is worthwhile removing the grass from around the tree trunk where they overwinter under the grass level and amongst any sucker growth. Let the birds do the rest! A periodic rake under the trees to encourage further prodding by birds will help keep down sawfly emerging from their pupae – mid-April onwards they are flying and laying.

Hope that this will be helpful. Andrew Tann, andrew.tann1@virgin.net

Farmers' Markets 2012

- **Leigh-on-Sea** at Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: Saturday 17 March, Friday 13 April, Saturday 26 May, Friday 29 June, Friday 20 July, Friday 24 August, Saturday 22 September, Friday 26 October, Saturday 17 November and Saturday 22 December, 09:00 – 12:00
- **Rochford** in the WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 3 March, 7 April, 5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September, 6 October, 3 November and 1 December, 09:30 – 12:30

Yes, we are covering these two markets again (if transport allows) and would appreciate something to sell – this is the best way to encourage folks to visit our stall and make contact.

Food for Life Partnership/Garden Organic

Compost Awareness Week (6-11 May) is fast approaching and this year we will be running **two competitions** to raise awareness of the benefits of composting organic waste and using compost in the garden.

A **Poster Competition**: be imaginative and creative to produce an A4 sized poster which advertises Compost Awareness Week and the Painted Bin Competition.

Secondly, our '**Paint a bin**' competition; hold your own competition amongst friends, family, community groups, allotment associations or schools. Be creative and make sure you send us a picture of your bin.

Entry to both competitions is open to all ages and abilities. Please send entries either by email or post to the address below stating your name, age, address and contact telephone number (include school/organisation if sending as a group).

Deadlines for entry to the competitions are 31st March for the Poster Competition and 12th May for the Painted Bin Competition. Garden Organic experts with a team of Master Composters will judge entries to both competitions. **Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in both competitions.** Entry by post: Composting Competition, Sustainable Waste Team, Garden Organic, Ryton, Coventry CV8 3LG. Entry by email: dgarrett@gardenorganic.org.uk. Please circulate this to all of your networks and whoever may be interested in entering.

Sustainable Waste Team, Garden Organic, Ryton, Coventry, CV8 3LG

Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens

Volunteers Needed! We have recently been talking with some interested parties; exploring a number of suggestions and ideas towards securing the Gardens' future in the longer term. More immediately however, we have been asked to assist in getting together a group of volunteers to assist the current tenants with ongoing garden upkeep and maintenance to ensure that the Gardens remain in the superb condition that they were in, prior to closure. If you are able to spare a couple of hours to join one of weekly working groups on a fairly regular basis, we would love to hear from you. No payment can be offered, of course, but there will certainly be good and like minded company and deeply rewarding work, helping to maintain these magnificent and truly unique gardens.

Website: foyog.org FOYOG Sign-up: foyog.org Twitter: twitter.com/FOYOG Facebook: facebook.com

Please keep on with the sign-ups! Many thanks for your continuing support. Please contact us via the website contact page if you have any questions, observations, or suggestions - John & Mag Tate

Garden Organic – how to grow your seed potatoes

Just pop potatoes 'rose' end up – the end with most buds – in a clean egg box. Label the variety and put in a cool, light place for four to six weeks. They'll grow sturdy green shoots ready to offer a keen start and earlier harvest.

Chitting tips: Keep your young spuds out of very bright sunlight, but not too dark, otherwise pale brittle shoots develop that easily break off. Chit potatoes that are already sprouting straight away, otherwise leave in a cool, dark place until you are ready to chit them.

Plant your chitted spuds 15cm deep, spacing 'early' varieties 30-50cm apart from mid-March for June-July harvest; maincrop' varieties 35-70cm apart from April for September-October harvest. Please go to <http://mastergardeners.org.uk/2012/01/25/how-to-grow-your-seed-potatoes/> for more detailed information.

The number of tubers you can plant in a container will depend on the diameter of the pot. Try five in a dustbin size container and read their Factsheet GG36 for more advice.

Read Factsheet GG9 on 'Growing potatoes' plus PC24 for 'Potato pests and diseases.' Although February began with a cold start that not everything in the garden has appreciated, there are methods you can use to reduce the damage caused by 'Jack's' visit. Read also their Factsheet GG49 for tips and tricks. All these factsheets are in our Library.

A special collection of tomatoes from the Heritage Seed Library has gone on sale. All plants will be grown and packed by Delfland Nurseries, see

[http://www.organicplants.co.uk/acatalog/Heritage_Seed_Library_Collection.html?](http://www.organicplants.co.uk/acatalog/Heritage_Seed_Library_Collection.html?dm_i=4UO,NIP2,JCIKA,1WFWF,1)

[dm_i=4UO,NIP2,JCIKA,1WFWF,1](http://www.organicplants.co.uk/acatalog/Heritage_Seed_Library_Collection.html?dm_i=4UO,NIP2,JCIKA,1WFWF,1)

Not ordered your seeds yet? They've over 500 organic varieties to choose from...

Finally, May 12-13th: Garden Organic Members' weekend

We have the option of staying at the NFU Mutual's B&B facilities at their head office in Stratford-upon-Avon, which they'll happily make available (free of charge, subject to availability) for us.

[tp://gardenorganic.org.uk/events/show_event.php?id=766](http://gardenorganic.org.uk/events/show_event.php?id=766)

PS: just arrived, Garden Organic is undertaking its first large scale survey in five years and wants to know your opinions on organic growing, their work and future

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/gardenorganic2012?dm_i=4UO,PY3R,JCIKA,23G81,1

GM Watch

PLENTY OF NON-GM BLIGHT-RESISTANT SPUDS AVAILABLE!

A GM blight-resistant potato is not needed, points out a 2006 briefing by GM Freeze. The briefing says that, of 120 trialled non-GM potatoes from the UK official list, 20% have good resistance to blight. Ten are classed as having high resistance.

<http://www.gmfreeze.org/publications/briefings/70/>

NON-GM BLIGHT RESISTANT POTATOES DO NOT NEED TO BE SPRAYED

The internet has been swarming with GM pushers claiming that the alternative to the GM spud is non-GM spuds heavily sprayed with fungicides to control blight. But a researcher at the Sarvari Trust, the UK leader in developing non-GM blight-resistant potatoes, said the Trust's potatoes can be grown sustainably without any need to spray 15-20 times a year to control blight.

<http://www.gmfreeze.org/publications/briefings/100/>

And you can 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, by subscribing to GM Watch Newsletters at <http://www.gmwatch.org/newsletters>

Grow it Yourself – Organically

Suitable for those wishing to grow their own vegetables and fruit organically

At The Growing Together Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea

A series of seven sessions on alternate Saturdays beginning 24 March 9.30am – 12.30pm

Course fees: £70 (Benefit £35)

For more information, call 01702 213134 or email training@trustlinks.org

Grow your own Seminar: Mon 16 April or Sat 21 April 9:30-3:00

A seminar from local organic grower Robert Wiseman to encourage, help and support you to grow fresh fruit and vegetables in your own space whether it's a balcony, window box, patio or allotment. This 1-day seminar is designed for novices, amateurs and the more experienced to gain information on easy-to-grow vegetables and salads in both containers and in the garden. Areas covered include Cultivation, Pest control, Composting, Fertilisers and feeds, Container types, Raised beds, no dig concepts.

The Dragon Enterprise Centre, 28 Stevenson Road (off Progress Road), Leigh-on-Sea SS9 5LY – cost is £15.00 per delegate (numbers strictly limited). Price includes free CD, seeds and a sandwich lunch.

Please book your place in advance by email to Bancroftgardens@gmail.com or phone Robert on 07941078135.

Hockley and District Horticultural Society

They're organising an outing to Nymans (described as an 'Outstanding 20th-century garden, set around a romantic house and ruins') in Haywards Heath on Saturday 14 July.

Cost: £13 for National Trust members; £21.50 for non National Trust members

Please book early – limited availability on coach

Deadline for booking: Sunday 3 June

Various pick ups, to be determined

Guided tours and walks available @ £2 per person and will last 1½ to 2hrs. Booking for tours needs to be made at least 6 weeks before and are subject to availability.

Cold lunch and/or tea and cake is bookable in advance (prices not yet available)

To book your place, please email Lindsey at lindseyrussell717@btinternet.com

Huntington's Disease Association Southend Branch

Last year Southend HD allotment won a national gardening competition – 'Gardening Against the Odds' – which is run by the Sunday Telegraph. They have been on local radio, in two local papers and had a film made for the community channel, and now even more interest is coming in all the time. You can read their December newsletter in full at <http://hda-southend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Southend-HD-Newsletter-December-20113.pdf>

And Pat Nelson still needs all your stamps, which you can either take/send to 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/>

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

Membership Benefits – Pesticide Action Network UK

To continue the series of articles on the organisations with which SEEOG are associated, this month we look at **Pesticide Action Network UK**.

On 24 May 2010, Keith Tyrell joined PAN UK as its 4th director. Keith has long been committed to sustainable agriculture. He first came into contact with PAN UK (then the Pesticides Trust) some fifteen years ago while conducting research into integrated pest management for his Master's Degree. It was the first time he'd seen how an NGO worked up close and he was struck by the sheer professionalism of the organisation. He's continued to keep tabs on PAN UK as he moved forward in his career and was really excited to be appointed as its new Director.

PAN-UK has been around for over twenty years now and believes it is possible to eliminate the use of hazardous pesticides, reduce dependence on pesticides and to increase the use of sustainable alternatives to chemical pest control in agriculture, urban areas, public health and homes and gardens.

PAN UK is part of a global network. They work closely with partners in developing countries, where pesticide problems are sometimes far worse. In developing countries, there are as many as three million poisonings and 20,000 deaths each year from pesticide incidents. Unnecessary use puts farmers on an expensive pesticide treadmill.

They have:

- Achieved a ban on Lindane, a hazardous pesticide once used in agriculture and homes.
- Campaigned for the global removal of the most hazardous pesticides from use.
- Established the Africa Stockpiles Programme to remove 50,000 tonnes of dangerous obsolete pesticides from Africa.
- Increased the use of organic cotton in UK textiles and clothing which helps to prevent deaths and ill-health from poisonous cotton pesticides in developing countries.
- Strengthened the international commitment to deal with pesticide hazards.
- Increased availability of disposal facilities for household pesticides in the UK.

- They publish independent information on pesticide use and impacts for governments and decision makers, researchers, media, concerned citizens and other interested groups.
- They undertake and target research to promote better understanding of the cause and effects of pesticide problems.
- They undertake projects to demonstrate that, growing food and textiles, and managing amenities, is possible without the use of hazardous pesticides.
- They promote effective and progressive policies to eliminate pesticide hazards, representing concerns of users, consumers and exposed communities nationally and internationally.

- They support projects with partners in developing countries to demonstrate the efficacy of organic and low input production as a means of providing farmers with economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound livelihoods.

They rely heavily on their volunteer staff and always welcome volunteers with specialist skills. If you wish to join PAN-UK, you will have access to all their publications (apart from Pesticides News), receive free newsletters to Gardening Tips, Wearorganic news and the PAN e-newsletter, plus access to the Pesticides Alternative Forum.

This year, their Rachel Carson Lecture is being given by Polly Higgins on the subject of ecocide and why there is a desperate need to have ecocide accepted by the United Nations as the 5th Crime Against Peace. The Lecture is being held on Friday 30th March at the Human Rights Action Centre, London EC2. Tickets for the Lecture are £20 waged or £12 unwaged. One or two of our members have attended these lectures in the past and they are thoroughly recommended to SEEOG!

Please do join them for what will be a thought provoking and important presentation on this key issue. More information and the booking form are available by going to <http://www.pan-uk.org/files/Final%20flyer.pdf> which includes information on Rachel Carson. Alternatively, you can email admin@pan-uk.org or call the office on 020 7065 0905 for tickets.

Open Garden for Peaceful Place: Sunday 6 May

How could we resist when Celia Riley, Fundraising Manager at the Peaceful Place, wrote: 'I hope you don't mind me dropping you a scrounging e-mail, but we're holding an Open Garden at South Shoebury Hall on Sunday, 6th of May 2012 from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm, and as well as teas, coffee and home-made cakes and a raffle, we are going to be holding a plant sale to raise additional funds. I was wondering if anyone at S.E. Essex Organic Gardeners could possibly grow something for us to sell – fruit and vegetables or plants?

Any help you could give would be very much appreciated.....'

Do please contact Celia if you can help out! fundraising@peacefulplace.co.uk

Tel: 01702 546476 www.peacefulplace.co.uk

Permaculture in Practice

Louise Cartwright, Network Co-ordinator for the LAND Project from the Permaculture Association, will be facilitating a fascinating discussion on the implementation of Permaculture Projects around the UK. Permaculture is "creating sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns... Revolution disguised as organic gardening." (Graham Burnett) <http://www.permaculture.org.uk/people-projects-places>

You will also have a chance to preview our brand new TWIG (The only Way Is Green) shop and have free refreshments.

Date: Monday 5 March Time: 7.00 pm – 8:00 pm

Venue: TWIG Shop, 49-51 Hamlet Court Road (bottom of the road, next to NatWest Bank), Westcliff

Cost: By donation

RSVP: office@trustlinks.org or show up on the day

Readers' Suggestions (or even Simon's suggestions)

'Eating for Victory' is a collection of facsimile leaflets from the Ministry of Food, showing how millions of people in Britain made do with Home Front cooking on rations during the Second World War. 'The Ministry of Food: Thrifty Wartime Ways to Feed Your Family Today' is still relevant in the face of rising food prices, increasing food miles and obesity levels.

'The Pauper's Cookbook' by Jocasta Innes, reprinted and updated by the author, is still worth tracking down for some great dishes and cheap eats that won't cost you a fortune - even at today's prices.

'Gardener's Nightcap by Muriel Stuart was an instant bestseller when first published in 1938 and is easy to dip into just before you doze off in the armchair after a hard day's weeding.

'Mma Ramotswa's Cookbook' featuring Botswana's foremost fictional lady detective is a real treat. Beautifully packaged, Stuart Brown's book gives the reader a taste of sub-Saharan African cuisine and the comfort of heavenly food!

Finally, a DVD set: 'A wartime winter & summer' - when the Second World War broke out, Britain faced much more than a military crisis. Two-thirds of our food was imported, but these imports were immediately halted by the German blockade. Wartime food advisor and cookery writer, Marguerite

Patten, is just one of the many knowledgeable interviewees who give eyewitness accounts of those extraordinary times. Presented by Paul Heiney <http://aquabrowser.essexcc.gov.uk/ABL/Default.ashx?itemid|Library/vubissmart-marc|851554> Available from Clacton Library (free request)

Reduced price compost bins available!

Essex County Council is encouraging residents to consider buying a compost bin to get started with home composting and before prices increase in April. The link to the compost bin site is

www.essex.getcomposting.com

Lisa Cross, Waste Prevention and Recycling Officer

Essex County Council / telephone 01245 437793 (extension 51793) / email: lisa.cross2@essex.gov.uk

SEEOG talks

Wednesday 15 August, 8.00pm: The Royal Naval Association, British Legion Hall, London Hill, Rayleigh

SEEOG Trip to Capel Manor Gardens and Forty Hall Farm, Enfield: Saturday 9 June

We haven't had our own SEEOG coach outing for a couple of years until our January speaker, Kate McGeevor, suggested we visit Capel Manor Gardens and Forty Hall Farm, where she works. She's since put a load of photos on her Peckham website at <http://www.thephf.org/> We attach our booking form and anticipate the coach will fill up quickly for this popular destination. We will start at 8.15am from Kirby's depot in Rayleigh – further pick-ups and times to be confirmed in the May newsletter, such as Hockley Library, Southend Queensway, etc.

Please book early – limited availability on coach

Deadline for booking: Friday 18 May

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

S E Essex Women's Environmental Network

Thinking that dear old Mother Earth needs all the friends she can get we would like to celebrate Earth Day this year as a way of celebrating the beauty of the planet and looking at things we can all do to protect her.

We have chosen Saturday 21 April at Growing Together Community Gardens. We have decided to have as our theme this year 'Re-skilling in our modern world' which can include anything from growing our own food, knitting, all sorts of crafts, cooking ... lots of room for suggestions here!

We really need to recruit some 'partners' to help us to organise a great day when we can all have a bit of fun, move forward with our networking and plans for the future and, hopefully, learn something new.

Would you like to join us? We look forward to hearing from you!

Sharon Chan, S E Essex Women's Environmental Network

SEEOG Library – 'You must read this book, it's full of history'

Carole T has just read a great book, which she thoroughly recommends, called 'Great Tey to Rangoon' which we purchased when we visited Tey Brook Farm a few years ago. Keep on checking our Library for some great reads!

SEEOG Publications

The latest newsletter of the **Allotments Regeneration Initiative** flags up two new factsheets: *Managing Non-Cultivation: a guide to applying cultivation standards for allotment managers* and *Managing Waiting Lists: a guide to minimising the amount of time people wait for an allotment*.

The Soil Association's **Living Earth** is always a good read from start to finish – here's one for you: *The shock of the new* on page 13 – *GM is an outdated and niche technology that does nothing to feed the world and benefits only business, says our policy manager Emma Hockridge*.

And on page 26 Ben Raskin, their head of horticulture, explains *Beyond the basic heap – Compost is the cornerstone of successful organic growing, feeding the soil life, improving its structure, supplying nutrients and recycling waste*.

Garden Organic's **The Organic Way** is now out and a good (but quick!) look before going to print reveals the following articles: Top tips for tempting seedlings, Sowing new beans, Choosing and using peat-free compost, Uncertain times, a tricky situation is arising with our food supplies – Tim Lang examines the issue.

SEEOG Website

John's done us proud again with fresh material, such as the report published on 17 February when the US Environmental Protection Agency finally released their major report on the non-cancer health effects of dioxin, which for the past twenty-seven years has been delayed due to interference from the chemical industry. Environmental and health groups across the country celebrated this important milestone. <http://chej.org/2012/02/big-news-epa-health-report-on-dioxin-released-after-twenty-seven-years-of-delays/>

You can either download posters from <http://seeog.org.uk/resources-information/downloads/> or <http://seeog.org.uk/2011/10/nature-reserve/>

Unfortunately, Vic became Vic Foyle (!) for a few days but, nevertheless, some good coverage of the Potato Day on the 'Echo' website. The Echo has subsequently reverted Vic to his proper name <http://seeog.org.uk/2012/03/potato-day-press-coverage/>

Soil Association

Becoming a member of the Soil Association is the best way to support the work they do. But did you know that membership entitles you to discounts from like-minded businesses?

<http://www.soilassociation.org/supportus>

Would you also like to help them develop their organic standards? There's currently a vacancy for a lay member on their Food Processing Standards & Trade committee. By joining the committee you would have a unique opportunity to take part in developing their food standards and trade activities. For full details, please see

<http://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic/organicstandards/standardscommittees/vacancies>

Check out their new guide to organic labelling

Did you know that their team in Soil Association Certification check all the ingredients of products and claims on organic food labels prior to launch? Well, now you do - but wait, there's more, as they've produced an interactive diagram to explain what's behind the label on your organic food products and what all those symbols and codes really mean. See

<http://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic/organicfood/foodlabelling>

Can pupils hold their own farmers market?

Visiting a farmers' market is a great learning experience for young children. Now pupils from ten primary schools across London are running their own farmers' markets, with the help of the Soil Association's Farm Academy Programme.

Junior London (1 Feb, p.129)

Find out more about the Soil Association's Farm Academy Programme at

<http://www.soilassociation.org/schoolfarmersmarkets>

Tips and hints

Thanks to a huge response in autumn 2011, seed-sowing tips from Master Gardeners will soon feature in the spring edition of Garden Organic's The Organic Way

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/organicway/index.php>.

Look out for a 'growing blogs' coming soon also...

Writing about Broccoli, Maïke says 'Early sprouting broccoli is different. You harvest them from after Christmas and usually the pests will have disappeared in the winter (the occasional exception being whitefly). I have successfully grown it for years. However, in the last few winters I have had some problems (as did commercial growers as well).

I have figured two main remedies to deal with these problems: 1) Growing technique and 2) Seed selection. To overcome all the problems thrown at the Early Sprouting due to climate change, they have to have very deep and strong roots. To achieve this, we can a) choose the right time for sowing, b) plant very deep, c) earth up or d) sow directly.

a) is the tricky bit because, if you sow too early, you get the elongated winding growth that the gardeners call etiolation.

2. The traditional Early Sprouting seed is very close to the wild plant. This makes it quite hardy.

However, in the past the seed has undergone some breeding and varieties like Improved Early Rudolph, Claret, and even Bordeaux have been created. I have tried them all because they produce big, fat, good-looking little florets almost like cauliflowers which are easier to pick etc. I suspect thus we have lost the sturdiness. This year, I am going for Marshall's Early Sprouting Mix because it is the best bet to spread my chances.'

Breeding for amateurs is costly and they buy the seeds anyway. The biodynamic gardeners and HDRA are an exception to this. The former have a network of small adapted seed production and the latter also have a network of dedicated gardeners for their Heritage Seed Library.'

If you've been watching Sarah Raven's 'Bees, Butterflies and Blooms' on BBC2 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b013pw23>, we suggest growing Asters, Candytuft, Calendula, Californian poppies Clarkia, Clary, Convolvulus, Coriander, Echium, Fennel, Marigolds, Mignonette, Nasturtiums, Poached-Egg Plants, Statice and Tagetes, not to mention Evening Primrose, Foxgloves, Sunflowers and Borage. The Organic Gardening Catalogue www.OrganicCatalogue.com lists all these.

TWIG Shop

We now have our TWIG Shop – bottom of Hamlet Court Road (next to NatWest). The team are busy painting it so that we are ready to open next week. Our first event at the shop is on Monday 5th March 7 pm – 8 pm – a talk about Permaculture in Practice from Louise from the Permaculture Association and a chance to preview the shop. Refreshments (local apple juice) will be available. The concept of the shop is that it is a mock up home, so that visitors can get tips on how to make their own home more energy efficient. You can deliver items at the shop from Thursday 1st March onwards between 9 and 5.30pm (Monday- Saturday). Please call Lee Obeney, the team leader on 07958718345, to confirm that we still need the item and for all other enquiries.

Matt King, Chief Executive, Trust Links, 01702 213134, chiefexec@trustlinks.org

Treasurer still required!

We are still looking for a Treasurer as Brian is vacating his position this year. 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 contact SEEOG secretary, Carole Shorney, if you're interested. She will be glad to hear from you!

Useful Websites

1. Looking After Your Environment - Klaus Armstrong-Braun has an interest in environmental and planning law and has instigated or taken many legal cases against various governments to the European Court.

<http://envirowatch.eu/>

2. South East Essex Conservation Volunteers celebrate their 25th anniversary this year and you can read about their latest project programme by going to www.seecv.org.uk

3. There will be events up and down the country to celebrate the RHS National Gardening Week and to encourage everyone to get involved in gardening. <http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/National-gardening-week>

4. [Support in raising awareness of health conditions in Essex](#) - the link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/see-pct-og>
Data collection ceases by Tuesday 6th March.

Waste Busters

Join the Waste Busters team and be a waste reduction hero in your community in 2012!

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers from the Essex community to act as advocates for waste reduction by advising other residents about food waste and home composting.

We will provide:

- Full training, resources and travel expenses
- Skills and experience in food waste reduction and home composting
- A chance to meet like minded people
- Opportunities to engage your local community or support to develop your own ideas
- A free annual subscription with *Garden Organic*

To find out more, please contact Waste Busters Volunteer Coordinator Louise Phillips at waste.busters@essex.gov.uk or on 07717 867166

Tomato Tips

Brush over the tops of your tomato plants with your hand several times about three times a day (if you have time). This fools the seedlings into thinking it is windy and they will grow thicker stems as a result. When you pot them into bigger pots bury the seedlings as deep as the seed leaves, and if you pot up a second time, plant them as deep as you can in the pots. This will give a bigger root system. Courtesy of kitchengardens@yahoo.com

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Lady Eve Balfour

It's not going too far to say that the modern organic movement originated in East Anglia; in a Suffolk village near Stowmarket.

It was at Haughley Green that two women became pioneers of field research into organic growing and nutrition, culminating in one of them writing an organic classic, 'The Living Earth'. The author, Lady Eve Balfour, subsequently added to the book the results of the research and called it "The Living Earth and the Haughley Experiment".

The other pioneer, Miss Alice Debenham, had made the work possible by forming the Haughley Research Trust and setting aside her land with that of Lady Eve for the work to begin. The second world war intervened and a year later Miss Debenham died, although she had seen the start of the Haughley Experiment in 1940.

Subsequently, her home, Walnut Tree Manor, became the headquarters of the Soil Association, from 1969 until 1985. Finances had been an ever-present problem from the very beginning.

The manor house remains at Haughley Green, now used as an activities centre for young people. Lady Eve's former farm, New Bell's Farm, also exists. Yet nowhere is there evidence of the organic work that went on in those early days.

Now moves are afoot for at least some commemoration of the important work that went on there. It is planned for a plaque to be erected at the manor house, although not necessarily a blue plaque; rather a green plaque is thought to be more fitting.

Norfolk Organic Group member Peter Anderson has been in touch with various parties and so far Haughley Parish Council, the Suffolk Organic Gardening Group, and the Soil Association, have shown interest in playing a part. The present owner has now been located and his response to the proposal was awaited.

As the Soil Association comments on its website: "Can anyone deny that, here in Haughley, in rural Suffolk, a movement was born that will not end, ever?"

Peter Anderson