

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



NEWSLETTER NO: 113 – JANUARY 2014

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

https://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/groups/43705483846/

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<https://twitter.com/seeorganic>



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)

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

Unless stated otherwise, our speakers start at 8.00pm, but Growing Together will be open from 7.00pm to allow members to change their books, etc.

The next committee meeting is on Thursday 16 January, 7.30pm at Graham's.

Please notify Graham Oster-Ritter at grahamoster@btinternet.com if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address.

Wishing you all a very Happy New Growing Year!

SEEEOG Group Nights/events/news

We hope you will continue to give us your support this year, especially with our coming Potato Day and visit to Forty Hall Farm. Do note all these dates down!

Pat would like to ask SEEEOG members what they think about tomatoes on sale at this time of year, mostly grown under a hydroponics system both in the UK and Spain, such as at Thanet Earth in Kent. What features do you find? To Pat, it's the very thick skin and poor flavour, and she queries the amount of 'goodness' which is supposed to be so good for us. Under this system the light comes from artificial lights and not the Sun.

If you haven't done so already, please do go and sign Carole's petition Safeguard our Soils, Mr. Pickles, because it needs to reach 2000 as soon as possible.

http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Safeguard_our_Soils_Mr_Pickles/?copy

Last year, we experimented once with trying to record one of our speakers, which unfortunately didn't work. The Norfolk Organic Group does this regularly, as many of their members live too far from Norwich to be able to attend their own meetings in comfort. The distance isn't the concern here but for the fact that some of our members just cannot make Monday. So, is there a SEEEOG member who could advise us what to use/buy and set it up for us on each Group Night? We very much hope so.

Carole has queried whether we could compile a SEEEOG calendar for 2015, using our own photographs and local expertise, as she knows there are some very talented photographers within the group! Again, would anyone like to take this on for us?

****SE Essex Seed Potato Day: Saturday 22 February****

For an event of this size, organised by SEEOG, in partnership with Trust Links, we obviously need plenty of volunteers to help with the preparation early Saturday morning and helping to 'stack and store' after the event. Please do get in touch sooner rather than later, as there is obviously going to be a lot of physical work preparing for the day.

As the East Anglia Potato Day is a fortnight earlier, and we liaise with them, we have to pick up our order from the Mid-Suffolk Showground at Stonham Barns, near Stowmarket, on Friday 7 February. Again, if you can help on this day, please contact us! <http://eapd.btck.co.uk/PotatoDay2014>

These are the varieties that we have ordered for 2014. However, we cannot guarantee that all we have ordered will be available on delivery. The price per tuber will be 15p. Please tell everyone you know that admission will be free on the day!

If there is an 'O' after the variety, it means it has been produced organically. We encourage organic suppliers. First earlies (FE) are the varieties with the shorter growing period; Second earlies (SE) need a slightly longer growing period; Early main crops (EM).

Care is taken to source from UK suppliers, not for jingoistic reasons but to reduce the spread of the pathogen, brown rot, from mainland Europe.

Anya (SE); Arran Victory (LM,0); Blue Belle (EM); Bonnie (SE); Cara (LM,0); Charlotte (SE,0); Colleen (FE,0); Desiree (EM,0); Golden Wonder (LM,0); Home Guard (FE); International Kidney (EM); Kerr's Pink (LM); Kestrel (SE); Lady Balfour (EM,0); Lady Christl (FE); Marfona (SE); Maris Piper (EM); Nicola (SE); Orla (FE); Pentland Dell (EM); Picasso (EM); Pink Fir Apple (LM); Rocket (FE); Rooster (EM); Salad Blue (SE); Sarpo Mira (LM,0); Valor (LM); Vanessa (FE); Wilja (SE); Winston (FE). Please check our website for updates in the coming weeks.

We have also ordered the following onion sets: Stuttgarter Giant, Sturon, Snowball and Red Baron.

Monday 20 January

The 'City Allotment Project' presented by Graham Burnett - in partnership with The Railway Hotel, they have created a raised bed garden using recycled wooden pallets. The idea came from discussions at the beginning of 2013 with the pub manager, Dave Dulake, who was keen to see the previously derelict pub garden used by the local community.

Monday 17 March

'The Future for Allotments' presented by Dr. Richard Wiltshire, Senior Lecturer in Geography, School of Social Science and Public Policy, King's College London. Richard Wiltshire obtained a BSc from King's College London before completing an MA at York University (Toronto) and a PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He taught at the University of Washington and Tohoku University (Japan) before joining the Geography Department at SOAS, which merged with the King's Department in 2001. A Japan specialist, working on urban and environmental issues, he is also internationally known for research and advocacy on community gardening. His research interests include labour mobility and housing within large organisations; allotments and community gardening; geographies of ageing and masculinity; Japan.

Monday 19 May

"Foraging with Jim Bishop", a well-known and popular member of the South Essex Natural History Society. Jim's experiences of local foraging, which he's been doing for approaching thirty years.

Monday 21 July

'Growing Wildflowers in Urban Gardens, Allotments and Orchards, and what River of Flowers is trying to do in creating trails or "rivers" of native wildflowers as forage and habitat for pollinators' - presented by Kathryn Lwin, Founder Director of the River of Flowers
<http://www.riverofflowers.org/city/southend-sea/about-our-river>

Monday 15 September

'Natural Beekeeping' presented by Spencer Christie, Lauriston Farm, Goldhanger. Situated right on the Blackwater Estuary, just outside Goldhanger, Lauriston Farm's 225 acres are managed using Biodynamic Organic techniques and philosophy inspired by Rudolph Steiner's agriculture lectures

from 1924. The farm is home to Rare Breed cattle and sheep, bee hives, laying hens, vegetables and woodland. Eighty-five percent of the farm is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Within this, there are also two listed ancient monuments.
<http://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/index.html>

Monday 17 November

Danielle Perkins, Chairman, East Essex Smallholders Group. Formally constituted in July 2011, they are a group of micro farmers who operate different size "smallholdings"; some of them have a few backyard chickens, maybe some grow a few fruit or vegetables, while others may have a pig, small herds/flocks of sheep or even a cow (named Tilly!)

Monday 15 December

An oasis in Benfleet and the last of its kind: Mo Perkins and Hilltop "Pick Your Own" Fruit Farm. In the audio recording below, you will hear Maureen Perkins talking about her time as owner of the last (?) remaining "Pick Your Own" fruit farm in south Essex and her earlier experiences of providing training for horses and riders in the Benfleet and Thundersley area. Her land is not easy to farm because of the steep slopes, but a visit to her hidden valley is a refreshing and rewarding experience. Here, Mo talks about her youth, when she had horses, and running the fruit farm. 14 minutes, 57 seconds. Courtesy of Benfleet Community Archive
http://www.benfleethistory.org.uk/page_id__614_path__0p32p.aspx

****Allotments****

Now that the busy time of Christmas is behind us, perhaps thoughts are turning to the New Year, Spring and the forthcoming gardening year. If you live in either Hawkwell or Hockley, and if you are interested in taking an allotment near you, the relevant Parish Council has a duty to register each request and, if there is sufficient demand, they are obliged to look further into the possibility of supplying suitable land.

Carole and Vic have already researched the possibility of suitable land within the area with positive outcomes. However, to move things forward, this will need interest from at least six local residents. If you are, therefore, keen to pursue the opportunity of an allotment to grow your vegetables and flowers, please contact either Hawkwell or Hockley Parish Councils (depending where you live) to register your name with full contact details at either of the following email addresses: clerk@hockley-essex.gov.uk or info@hawkwellparishcouncil.gov.uk

Please ask for an acknowledgement and copy Carole in at caroleshorney@hotmail.com to keep SEEOG fully up-to-date with registration numbers. Please also do this straight away, as there is a deadline for applications and we would be very pleased to be able to advise the Hockley & District Horticultural Society (with whom we are liaising) of any interest by mid-January.

Finally, to update, Hockley Parish Council's finance committee has agreed to put £500 in the budget for next year to fund a feasibility study, on which the Parish Clerk expects to start work in the New Year.

And to recap, the NSALG recommends that you find five like-minded people who would like an allotment and are registered council tax payers. Then individually and collectively, submit a formal letter to the local council. Send one (you can put all six letters in one envelope) by recorded delivery and one hand delivered, with at least two witnesses present. All local authorities have a mandatory obligation to provide allotment provision under Section 23 of the 1908 Small Holdings and Allotments Act. (But be warned, there is no time-scale attached to this process and unfortunately this process cannot be used in London, as the rule only applies outside of the capital thanks to the London Government Act 1963.)

If you have no luck with the local authority and established private landlords, then your next step might have to be a sideways one... look around your neighbourhood and see if you can spot any vacant land which would make a good allotment. Find out who owns the land and ask away, it might just be possible that you can use it for growing on. <http://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/>

Turning to Leigh now, the Manchester Drive Allotment Society is trying to find out about the history of its home in Leigh-on-Sea. MDAS, formed in the Fifties, was farmland owned by Hugh Bentall. In 1908, he sold part of the plot to Southend Council; then, in 1914, sold the rest to it. Leigh Town

Council took over the site in 2003. Anyone who can help with more facts should call Gwyn Buckley on 01702 477237.

BBC documentary

Jessica Howe is a researcher at Landmark Films, a documentary company based in Oxford who makes films for BBC, ITV1, Channel 4 and Sky1. The company is known for making access-led, intelligent, well-crafted, warm and funny documentaries about human stories, different places and institutions. Its latest documentary series was Brain Doctors for BBC2, a three part series on the neurology department at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

In the New Year, researcher Jessica Howe is due to start making a film about cats for the BBC. She would like to look at the UK's opinion on cats and to make a balanced documentary which looks at people who like cats and those who don't. She aims to speak to those who rescue and re-home cats, those who breed cats, those who show, etc. But Jessica also hopes to speak to people who are having issues with cats. There are an increased amount of feral and stray cats in the UK, probably down to our lack of responsibility. However, this is causing big issues for many people in terms of colonies causing a nuisance in an area, cats killing increasing number of birds and also ruining gardens.

All correspondence will be dealt with in complete confidence and, by contacting Jessica, you are not making a commitment to take part in the final programme - at this stage, it's just research. Jessica Howe, Researcher, Landmark Films, jessica@landmarkfilms.com
01865297220/ 07530724477

Crapes Fruit Farm

We've had (another) wet end to the year, which we could have done well without. We have got some hedges to lower in order to increase the air turbulence within the orchard to help reduce frost damage and also, later, to avoid the fruit picking up a slimy mould which makes them look messy - which they are. After such a heavy crop, we can expect the trees to react by having fewer fruits this coming season. Biennial types like Blenheim, and to some extent Bramley, may have virtually no fruit. Light pruning will be the order of the day to discourage the trees making too much growth if there aren't the apples to take up some of the vigour. Of course, carefully prune branches which have split or cracked with the weight of the 2013 crop. Plums in particular suffer from this but remember not to cut anything on them until early June! Would you like to visit us here during blossom time? First or second Saturday in May should be around the best time.

Wishing you all a Happy 2014!

Andrew

More to read at <http://crapes.wordpress.com/author/crapes/>

This is Ben's Diploma site <http://dreadbensdiploma.weebly.com/index.html> - just hover over Projects at the top of the screen to view each of his projects.

Farmers' Markets 2014

These are the two markets where we have a stall and always appreciate help, produce and plants where available! For instance, sales of locally sourced walnuts and apples have been particularly good and have added to our funds, which is what it's all about!

- **Leigh-on-Sea** at Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: Friday 14 February, Friday 14 March, Friday 25 April, Friday 16 May, Friday 20 June, Friday 18 July, Friday 15 August, Friday 19 September, Friday 17 October, Friday 14 November and Saturday 20 December from 9:00 – 12:00
- **Rochford** in the WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 1 February, 1 March, 5 April, 3 May, 7 June, 5 July, 2 August, 6 September, 4 October, 1 November and 6 December from 09:30 – 12:30

Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens

For the benefit of our new members, Yalding Organic Gardens started with the generous gift of 10 acres of land, and a sum of money in trust, from Donald and Pixie Cooper, who owned an organic farm at Yalding; with the intention of setting up a display garden for the Henry Doubleday Research Association – now Garden Organic. You can read more of Yalding's background history at <http://www.foyog.org/>

Back in November, FOYOG heard from a most reliable source that contracts for the sale of Yalding Gardens had been exchanged - with completion being set for 6 November - but they have not at any stage been contacted by the new purchaser.

Please do try to publicise the Gardens' plight by forwarding this link to anyone you think may be interested and, of course, feel free to post any comments or observations; either on the website, or on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FoYOG>
<http://www.foyog.org/>

****Garden Organic news – urgent!!!****

Just after Christmas, we received a letter headed up: **URGENT Action Needed: New developments mean the EU is effectively about to ban small seed producers – Please read all of this letter:**

You may remember earlier in the year we wrote to you telling you about the EU plans to license seed production. It would have effectively banned small seed producers and potentially even criminalised the gardener who produces his own seed! The impact on plant diversity would have been devastating. We joined forces with several other campaigning groups across Europe and **won concessions** which excluded the smaller producers. However, **the situation is now looking worse....**

The New Developments One influential Italian MEP, Sergio Silvestris, has been working hard to amend the legislation. And it is now proposed that the new legislation is amended to cover all plant materials which are made available for sale. Even worse, Mr. Silvestris has removed the exemptions to the rules for voluntary and community living seed banks like the Heritage Seed Library. This is extremely bad news. This means not just food crops but also ornamentals, vegetables, fruit trees and even wildflowers will now be subject to EU regulation! Can you believe that, **even wildflower seed subject to EU regulation!**

The Implications In its proposed form, the legislation would require all seed producers, of whatever size, to become licensed operators and **all plants sold to be described and listed and to meet set standards with plants having to conform to tightly defined descriptions.** And seed producers will have to bear the costs (which will get passed on to consumers). If you want to produce seed, you would need to register, even if you are just producing seed to share with friends. Now, this legislation works very well for the big producers who churn out large volumes of limited varieties. But what about all the **small seed banks, specialist nurseries, seed exchange networks, even amateur breeders** –how will they bear the cost of regulation? The Heritage Seed Library would almost certainly become unviable.

And there is no reason for it. It is not as if there are massive problems with the way seeds are produced at the moment. **This legislation is simply a way for the large corporations to get a stranglehold on the market.** And there's the principle of the thing. **The EU is proposing to license and regulate nature** – it is perverse. We are, right now, joining forces with our NGO colleagues across Europe to **fight this.** We all need to play our part. The key points we are arguing for are:

- a) Living seed banks, seed exchange networks and Statutory Seed Banks to be exempt from regulations;
- b) Reduce ornamental (including wildflowers) testing requirements in the Regulations;
- c) Introducing exemptions to the ruling if the quantity of seed sold to the customer is below a certain level (packet size). Many niche varieties are sold in smaller quantities and not sold on a large commercial scale;
- d) Recognition of the value of open-pollinated varieties, heterogeneous materials that cannot conform to the standards. And allowing exemptions to varieties developed in the future as well as existing varieties;
- e) Regulation of marketing of Plant Reproductive Material (PRM) not to be applied to small farmers and amateur growers.

Take action....

1. **Please would you donate?** We need £32,000 to fight this case and lobby every MEP in the UK.
2. **Please would you write to your MEP** to raise awareness of this issue? I have drafted a letter which you can use for this. However, with this kind of campaigning work, it is generally best if you are able to write your own because MEPs tend to disregard letters that look mass-produced. You can download the letter at www.gardenorganic.org.uk/support_us/saveourseeds.php
http://www.europarl.org.uk/en/your_MEPs/List-MEPs-by-region/Eastern.html

I know this may not be the best time in the year to be asking but **we desperately need to get moving as fast as possible.** We are up against powerful businesses with deep pockets.

Thank you very much indeed for taking the time to read this letter. I do hope you can help us. Neil Munro, Heritage Seed Library Manager

On a lighter note, if you're planning on treating yourself to a Garden Organic membership, Heritage Seed Library membership or plan to Adopt a Veg, you should go straight to their website at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/index.php>

GM Watch news

£750K of taxpayers' money has been spent to develop a GM blight-resistant potato - even though non-GM naturally blight-resistant potatoes are already available to growers. Continue reading at <http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news>

Herbal Group, Chelmsford

Members £2; £5 non-members per meeting

Saturday 25 January (2014): Coughs and Sneezes: common herbs and for winter colds; teas, syrups, cordials, kitchen spices and herbs useful in colds. Tasting: please bring and share all those lovely cordials and syrups you have made earlier!

Saturday 1 March: Mardi Gras - 'Feast and Fast' meeting. We share some delicious foods, followed by herbs for Lent, Spring cleansers for health and well-being. Weather permitting, we will collect some important Spring herbs to detox and augment our health, ravaged by Winter and excesses of Christmas season. Good to kick-start to a detox or shedding the winter pounds....

info@modernherbalist.co.uk 07808 593 293

Herts & Essex Community Farm

Herts & Essex Community Farm is a non-for-profit project in High Wych, Sawbridgeworth, which is on the Hertfordshire and Essex border, near Harlow Town. They have found suitable land to start the farm and are looking at different ways of funding the project so that they can secure the lease for the land. The Community Farm will be open to everyone and will offer people in the area with cheap sustainable food and a source of education. They are looking for people who are interested in the project and want to be involved from the start; anyone with any amount of spare time can get involved.

If you are interested in the project, and want to know more, please email

hcommunityfarm@gmail.com

What they aim to do:

- Develop and maintain the orchard, vegetables and fruits grown using organic techniques.
- Develop wildlife habitats to support organic gardening and conservation.
- Conserve local fruit tree varieties planted in the orchard.
- Grow heritage and other fruit & vegetable varieties and save seed for future use.
- Show participants how to grow food in a sustainable way.
- Give access to fresh food to the local community.
- Provide an opportunity for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems to learn practical and personal skills.
- Provide an opportunity to local residents to learn gardening/farming techniques for fruit and vegetable growing and also animal care.
- Encourage children to engage in gardening and conservation through school activities and family focused events.
- To be community-led and non-for-profit.

You can keep up-to-date with the project here:

www.facebook.com/HECommunityFarm, otherwise Elliot Wollen's email address is hcommunityfarm@gmail.com

Manure

1. Pam Mitchell, The Grange, Murrells Lane, Hockley (Tel. 01702 207491) - ring her first, giving a couple of days' notice and she will arrange for a load to be brought to the gate to ease bagging up.
2. Free manure, chemical free, in Barling, near Wakering.
Tel. 01702 219835

3. Julie Davis, in Great Wakering - Tel: 07742107855
4. Hummerstone Farm, a family run farm near Billericay. Contact them on 07850789000 or on Facebook through their farm page <http://www.facebook.com/groups/Hummerstone.farm/>
5. Hockley Equestrian Centre, Church Road, Hockley, SS5 6AE - Tel: 01702 207166 or 07748 490 985.
<http://www.hockleyequestriancentre.co.uk/index.html>

New members

When you join SEEEOG, not a lot will happen in the beginning. If you join on Group Night, you can collect a current newsletter from Carole, our Secretary. Alternatively, you can download a newsletter from SEEEOG's website at <http://seeog.org.uk/resources-information/newsletters/> - our website will also give you lots of useful information. In future, you will receive a newsletter bi-monthly either by email or post. We do not issue receipts or membership cards at present in order to keep down costs.

River of Flowers, Southend-on-Sea

Or the Leigh-on-Sea Allotments Orchard (aka The Essex Varieties Orchard), because situated within the bounds of the Leigh Allotments is a gem of a conservation project, dedicated to preserving Essex top fruit (apple and pear) varieties.

Currently, roughly a quarter acre (four allotment plots) in extent, the orchard is surrounded by a native species hedge. As well as the tree plantings, the orchard contains a wildlife pond and a large compost heap.

The position of the orchard within the context of Leigh Allotments and the contiguous Manchester Drive Allotment site encourages a wild variety of wildlife as well as providing the setting for the specialised Essex top fruit varieties collection.

The project commenced in 2003 and continues to be managed, maintained and funded by an informal group of plot-holder volunteers known as the Leigh Allotments Orchard Group. The Group forms working parties for the larger maintenance tasks such as the annual grass-cut of the meadow surrounding the fruit trees in autumn. This latter approach ensures that the seeds of wild flowers and the many grasses mature to provide the following year's show.

Important local initiatives such as these are conceived of and driven forwards by inspiring people without whom our lives would all be the poorer; In this case, David Hammond and his late wife Janet, Ron Bates and others. Their great concern for the drastic loss of English orchards, and the fruit varieties from which they were formed since World War II, led them to approach Leigh-on-Sea Town Council for permission to start a small orchard. Two plots, largely compromised for normal allotment use by two willow trees, were designated and later two adjoining plots were rented.

You can read more at <http://www.riverofflowers.org/city/southend-sea/partners/leigh-allotments-orchard-aka-essex-varieties-orchard>

SEEEOG library

Please contact Sue if you wish to change your books. Any book may be borrowed by members at a cost of 20p per book for each 2-month period. There are also back copies of Garden Organic's The Organic Way, the PAN journals, the Soil Association's Living Earth and the Norfolk Organic Group's newsletters. We have two new books in stock: 'The Polytunnel Handbook' and 'How to grow food in your polytunnel'.

SEEEOG talks

Friday 14 March: Hatfield Peverel Horticultural Society, Hatfield Peverel Village Hall, Maldon Road starting at 8pm

Friday 14 April: Runwell Horticultural Society, Runwell Village Hall, Church End Lane, Wickford, starting at 8pm

SEEEOG trips – urgent!!!

Last year's trip to Writtle, unfortunately planned by them on Father's Day, proved a struggle to fill the coach, although in the end we managed to break even, which is always our ultimate aim, because no-one wants to see our hard-worked-for profits depleted in any way. However, for some reason that we've never been able to fathom, we had to cancel our visit to Organiclea, which even had a mention on GGQ!! So this year, taking advantage of Kirbys' reduced Winter fees, we have booked two trips, one by coach and the other by sharing our car space:

1. Saturday 22 March: Coach to the Lambing Weekend at Forty Hall Farm, between 11am - 4pm. Forty Hall Farm is an organic farm nestled in the Forty Hall Estate. The farm is run by Capel Manor College (where we visited two years ago), the only Further Education college in London that specialises in learning about the environment. Forty Hall is a mixed farm with a variety of animals, including many rare breeds. The farm is also home to London's only vineyard, the Forty Hall Community Vineyard, and the new Forty Hall Farm Orchard. There's also now the great opportunity to visit Forty Hall (and Estate Shop and Courtyard Cafe), which re-opened to the public on 30th June 2012, following a major restoration project. Entrance to the Hall is free to all during opening hours, Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon – 4pm.

You can read more at these links:

<http://www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk/events/lambing-weekend-at-forty-hall-farm.html>

http://www.fortyhallestate.co.uk/about_forty_hall_estate/forty_hall

http://www.fortyhallestate.co.uk/plan-a-visit/tickets_prices

We attach our booking form, with pick-up points, but **please note that this must be completed and returned to Carole asap!! We will confirm the timings in our March newsletter if not before!! Please indicate your preferred pick-up point on the booking form, as per list below:**

Kirbys' Depot, Opposite Hockley Library, Sapwood's, Southend/Queensway/Sainsbury, The Cricketers, The Plough, Chalkwell Schools, The Elms, Westleigh Schools, Hadleigh Church, Vic House Corner and Bread and Cheese (Kenneth Road)

Please note that the prices on the booking form do not include the admission fees, which are as follows:

SPECIAL ADMISSION PRICE:

Adults and Concessions £3.00

Children £2.00

Children (3 years and under) free of charge

There is a shuttle bus from Capel Manor Gardens from 11am– 4pm to Forty Hall Farm, which is managed by Capel Manor but we are checking with them in case we can go straight to Forty Hall instead.

2. Saturday 10 May: Crapes Fruit Farm, Aldham (near Colchester), by car-share, eta 11am.

SEEOG website (new posts) - <http://seeog.org.uk/>

River of Flowers: Southend-on-Sea

<http://seeog.org.uk/2013/12/river-of-flowers-southend-on-sea/>

Soil Association news

The Soil Association Membership Team is delighted to be able to report such positive change in the world as they carry on their work transforming our food and farming systems and culture. 89 million people were reached by their GM media coverage in 2013, and their GM appeal raised over £30,000. They certified and supported over 3,400 organic businesses, farmers and growers in 2013. The Soil Association certifies around 75% of organic products on the shelf in the UK!

'Today's News' is their daily media digest keeping us all up-to-date with the latest news and issues related to organic food and farming. They use a range of sources, including national daily newspapers, key websites and farming publications. If you would like to sign-up to receive this free service straight to your inbox every week day please register with the form at <https://www.soilassociation.org/aboutus/newsandmedia/signuptotodaysnews>

Websites and information

1. Apply for an allotment

Rent an allotment through your council to grow your own fruit and vegetables - you can be allocated a plot or added to a waiting list.

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=allotments&tab=government-results>

2. The future of allotments

The Department for Communities and Local Government responds to suggestions that the review of

local government's statutory duties could threaten the future of allotments.
<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=allotments&tab=government-results>

3. Potential funding for community green spaces

This document sets out the potential funding available to community and voluntary organisations to start either a food growing or community ...

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=allotments&tab=government-results>

4. Updated link for 'Selling allotment produce, is it legal, is it right?'

<http://www.organiclea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/sellingallotmentproduce.pdf>

5. Blight Warning! Blightwatch.co.uk has been working together with ADAS to develop this management tool which is available to all users free of charge. You can sign on for alerts at www.blightwatch.co.uk

6. The A Team Foundation, Funding Enlightened Agriculture (FEA) and Buzzbnk have come together to create a funding solution which will enable food and farming projects to get the funds and support they need to move forward. The project aims to increase the reach of funding but also to increase the sustainability and success of enlightened agricultural ventures.

<http://ateamchallenge.buzzbnk.org/about/4580261938>

7. Forked! The Food Revolution starts here...

Peak soil: unless we act now the very ground beneath us will die

<http://forkedmagazine.org/2013/11/08/peak-soil-unless-we-act-now-the-very-ground-beneath-us-will-wither-and-die/comment-page-1/#comment-64>

8. New local website: www.builder2builder.co.uk

SEEOG Committee

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Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership	01702 558871	grahamoster@btinternet.com
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