

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 118 – NOVEMBER 2014

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Southendfoodgrowersandproducers>

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

Twitter @seeorganic

<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!

OK... a UK Government strategy for sustainable food and farming would not solve everything. But it would be a useful start.

http://www.foe.co.uk/blog/imagine-if-the-government-had-sustainable-food-farming-strategy?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+policypoliticsblog+%28Policy+%26+Politics+blog%29

Venue

The 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.

Housekeeping notes: unless stated otherwise, our speakers start at 8.00pm, but Growing Together is open from 7.00pm to allow members to change their books, etc. The next committee meeting is on Thursday 13 November, 7.30pm at Ron's. Please notify Graham Oster-Ritter - grahamoster@btinternet.com - if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address.

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' are as follows:

January newsletter	Monday 29 December
March newsletter	Saturday 28 February
May newsletter	Thursday 30 April
July newsletter	Tuesday 30 June
September newsletter	Sunday 30 August
November newsletter	Saturday 31 October

SEEEOG Group Nights/Events

Monday 17 November 2014

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 2014

An oasis in Benfleet and the last of its kind: Mo Perkins and Hilltop "Pick Your Own" Fruit Farm. 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. As this is the last meeting of the year, do please consider bringing a few mince pies, for example, to go with our tea!

2015 dates

Monday 19 January

Sarah Green's Organics, Tillingham-grown seasonal organic vegetables
www.sarahgreensorganics.co.uk

Saturday 21 February: SE Essex Seed Potato Day

SE Essex Seed Potato Day for 2015 is approaching. It will be Saturday 21 February, opening at 10.00am at Growing Together. And we have been ordering the potato tubers for the event, which we shall sell individually at 15p per tuber, plus some onion sets, with free admission again.

We show each year's potato order on a page of our website. Already we have asked for over 30 varieties. It is rare, unfortunately, for 100% of them to get delivered but we will update the list for 2015 when Julian (East Anglia Potato Day) tells us that a variety will not be available after all.

We source as many organically grown potato seed varieties as possible. All seed is UK-grown to slow the invasion of brown rot from mainland Europe.

Please check website for updates – <http://seeog.org.uk/>

Monday 16 March

A return visit from Dr. Richard Wiltshire to talk about allotments in Japan

Monday 18 May

Monika Currie, Modern Herbalist: Early summer herbs? How to make the best use of them?

Monday 20 July

We are delighted to welcome Helen Lowther from the Copped Hall Trust, who will talk about the restoration of the garden – more on this at http://www.coppedhalltrust.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=27

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

Monday 21 September

SEEOG member Darren Lerigo presents 'What do I do with this space?' - starting a garden from scratch...

Monday 16 November

Exploring soft fruit from local experience – varieties of particular value locally. Also the backdrop of Eabrook's and Essex fruit growing generally as the context for this exploration of soft fruit growing.

Monday 21 December

Home composting: Idea that we provide a forum panel and develop discussion and perhaps lead in with ways of composting; use of compost; compost mixes for seed potting, etc. The topics covered can also include: why we compost, the benefits of composting to your pocket, the soil and the environment, do's and don'ts and composting as a living process. We can also touch on leafmould, tumblers, wormeries, bokashi and troubleshooting. There will also be time for you to ask specific questions and have some of your composting problems solved, hopefully.

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

Apple Days

Sunday 28 September: So many families visited Cherry Orchard Country Park and enjoyed the lovely sunshine. You may spot the very popular SEEOG stall in the photos, with its walnut guessing game and display of vegetables, plus SEEOG members Maike and Gerhard Windhorst busily identifying apples in the Apple Tent. Vic and Carole were the stalwarts, as usual. You can see some of the photos at: <http://seeog.org.uk/2014/10/cherry-orchard-apple-day-sunday-28-september/>

Saturday 11 October: Southend's own Apple Day was held in St. Laurence Orchard, Eastwoodbury Lane, a few weeks later. This day was organised with Trust Links Growing Together who, along with the South East Essex Conservation Volunteers, keep the orchard in reasonable fettle to enable the spaces to be open for picking, pressing, story telling and plant sales. The main space had support from Transition Town with "wormy apples" and more: BBQ, apples for sale, apple juicing, teas and cakes, raffle, Dan's bees, SEEOG stall with Andrew Tann's display of 50 apple varieties (in spite of a very poor crop and relying on his veg growing to get by) and Friends of Cherry Orchard with produce from the hedges and more.

Rob gave a solo music session with some of his own compositions - a first for him - very good, too. We started in rain, but had sun till the end with a little rain to finish off. Thanks to all who helped through

the day. People reckoned 100-150+ came; a lot of new faces - some travelled from Billericay. Visitors showed general real interest in the orchard, apples, fruit and 'no chemicals'. The Mayor and his wife arrived well before the start - there's a good general photo on our website taken just before the event started: <http://seeog.org.uk/2014/10/apple-day-2014-2/>

Matt at Growing Together is putting in a Heritage Lottery bid around the orchard so there could be developments in future to benefit the orchard and bring other orchards into an orbit; coordinate events; and mutually support apples and fruit growing along with the incredible wildlife that orchards bring. With this in mind, we have been receiving regular site visits from South Essex Natural History Society members who provide species listings - it's acknowledged as an "oasis" next to/in an industrial zone.

Saturday 25 October: There was a third Apple Day at Manchester Drive Allotments at the end of October supported by Leigh Allotments and their Greenhouse cafe (their first), which highlighted the all-Essex Orchard overseen by David Hammond - this is fully productive and grafting has been taken from some trees to develop this side of it to provide opportunities to learn and 'grow on' Essex varieties. Tea and cakes, apple display, orchard visit, apple juicing, chutneys and pickles - a good deal of interest, a flow of people and they felt pleased with their day.

Ron

Chelsea Fringe 2015 – for authors

Darren is setting up a new project for the Chelsea Fringe 2015 - he needs authors to write a '100-word manifesto' about gardening, which will be compiled into a pdf book and released at the festival. The project is called 'Contemporary Green: How Do We Cultivate Our Garden?' It is free to download, free to share, free to print book co-authored by garden writers like you.

What do you need to do? You need to write a 100-word 'manifesto' answering the question 'How Do We Cultivate Our Garden?' The question can be answered however you see fit – literally, philosophically, with an environmental bent, from a cynical worldview – the choice is yours, of course, but hopefully will give you enough inspiration to share your own unique perspective of what gardening is or could be.

When you have perfected your 100 words you must send them to info@modernmint.co.uk by **midnight on February 14th 2015**. Any later and your submission will not be considered. Sorry! This should give you enough time, however, to work out how to express yourself and your ideas in 100 words! You will also need to send Darren a 1-2 sentence blurb about yourself. Please do include a link to your book, blog, website or Twitter feed if you have one.

Darren cites three reasons to take part: 1) Publicity for yourself – as well as your spot in the book, you will also have your name on the content page; 2) To be a part of the Chelsea Fringe and support this anarchic counterpoint to the Chelsea Flower Show; 3) To help create a document that captures the way a wide spectrum of the gardening world thinks and expresses itself in the here and now of 2014-15 – hence the title, Contemporary Green. He hopes it will be a wonderful document to look back on in ten, twenty, fifty years' time and see how much has changed in the way we think about our relationship to the environment.

Darren will place each contribution into a downloadable PDF 'Contemporary Green' and then release it onto his website (www.modernmint.co.uk) at the start of the Chelsea Fringe. It is then free to download, share, tweet, photocopy and spread so that as many people as possible can have access to your ideas. He has the tools available to make it happen and he loves the idea of curating the work of a large number of smart and interesting people into something this solid. Do please share Darren's enthusiasm enough to contribute!

Crapes Fruit Farm – Andrew Tann's October update

Most of our apples have now been picked, just a few late oddments remaining. It has been a quiet autumn here as no extra pickers have been needed. Birds with long beaks and late caterpillar activity have been most annoying on some varieties.

You will note that details of our apple ordering have been removed. This is simply to avoid disappointing all you hopeful people. We appreciate your support but apples cannot be halved and quartered to share out between you all this season. A few of you already have been disappointed. Our wetter than usual August, combined with a summer like September and trees carrying a light crop, is not conducive to fruit keeping as it usually does.

Tomatoes are almost at an end, as are beans and courgettes. Squash – Autumn Crown and Sweet Dumpling - are now ripening ready for roasting. Autumn carrots have responded to the wet and warmth since July and are disappearing fast, as are the last beetroot. Parsnips will follow at the end of the month.

You can read more at <http://crapes.wordpress.com/author/crapes/>

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

Farmers' Markets 2014

These are the two markets where we have a stall and always appreciate help, produce and plants where available!

Leigh-on-Sea in Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: Friday 14 November and Saturday 20 December from 9:00 – 12:00

Rochford in the WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 1 November and 6 December from 09:30 – 12:00

Garden Organic news

Throughout the UK, a range of local organic gardening groups are connected to Garden Organic. They vary in size and constitution, like SEEORG, but all aspire to similar aims to GO's and offer local encouragement and support to gardeners.

Garden Organic have recently undertaken consultation with local groups to explore how we can all work better together, through a series of three meetings held across the country. These meetings were incredibly productive, and they are confident that we will be able to move forward with improvements that will both support the local groups in promoting organic growing at a local level, and encourage more members to get involved with organisations and activities within their local area.

Peter Robinson (Chairman of the Norfolk Organic Group), went to the Ryton Wood regional meeting, along with representatives from seven other Groups. He said it was 'all a bit woolly' but that GO would be reporting back on the discussions. They now have Gabbie Joyce, the local Master Gardeners co-ordinator, on their committee who is 'a big help'.

If you would like to input into this consultation, your views are still very welcome. Please let Garden Organic know your feedback by emailing membership@gardenorganic.org.uk.

GM Watch News:

World's largest ever study on GMO and pesticide safety: London public launch

You are officially invited to attend the "Factor GMO" press conference at The Farmers Club in London on November 11th 2014 at 2.30pm. The \$25 million "Factor GMO" study will investigate the health effects of a genetically modified (GMO) crop that has been in our food and animal feed supplies for many years. It will answer the question: Is this GMO food, and associated pesticide, safe for human health?

Farmers, retailers, governments, scientists, and consumers have been involved in a heated international debate since GM foods were introduced in 1994. However, there has never been a scientific study that is comprehensive enough to give them a clear answer regarding the safety for human health of any one GM food – until now. The international "Factor GMO" study will be the largest and most comprehensive long-term experiment ever conducted on a GM food and its associated pesticide.

The scientists involved in "Factor GMO" come from a "neutral" background. They have no connection to the biotech industry or the anti-GMO movement, a factor that will add credibility to the results. The scientists on the study review board are internationally respected experts in their fields from the U.S, Italy, and Russia.

"Factor GMO" will also add valuable data of unprecedented power to enable regulators, governments and the general public of every country to answer the question: Is the GM food, and associated pesticide, tested safe at real-world levels of consumption and exposure? "Factor GMO" is the first long-term combined GMO/pesticide safety study that has involved full multi-generational, toxicology, and carcinogenicity arms.

What: Press Conference for public launch of the "Factor GMO" study
Who: The Factor GMO international scientific review board from the U.S., Italy, and Russia will present the details of the study. The initiator of Factor GMO, the Russian NGO, the National Association for Genetic Safety (NAGS), will present details on the organization, funding and security of the study.

When: Tuesday, November 11th at 14:30 -16:00 (2:30 – 4:00 PM)
Light Refreshments: 16:00 – 17:00
Where: The Farmers Club - 3, Whitehall Court, London, UK. SW1A 2EL
Directions: <http://www.thefarmersclub.com/about-the-club/contact-us>

For more information please contact:
Ivan Lambert ivanlambert@factorgmo.com
Nadya Novoselova novoselova@factorgmo.com
Public launch event: The Farmers Club - 3, Whitehall Court, London, UK. SW1A 2EL

Manure, Ashingdon

Mandy Chaplin's free rotten manure is a mixture of horse, donkey, goat and pig. Her animals are fed an organic diet. You can help yourself to as much or as little as you want. Please ring Debbie on 07449 314 914.

Members' contributions

1. Design Philosophies, Part One

Our first design philosophy is encapsulated in this quote below.

The traveller will ask his friend with the hoe what has happened in the garden during his absence. He, in his turn, will say, 'tell me, tell me, what have you seen on your travels?'

Both question each other with the wonderful innocence of men who have tried to put something beautiful back into the infinite treasure of life.

These are the words of designer Fernando Caruncho. You can read more about him at the Modern Mint blog <http://modernmint.co.uk/fernando-caruncho/>

I like this quote, because it suggests that, whatever you do, whether you are working in the garden or travelling further afield, you have the opportunity to make the world a better place if you want to.

Darren Lerigo
Director, Modern Mint Ltd
<http://modernmint.co.uk/>

2. Bees are a marvellous resource to the countryside as a whole. We were very taken with Spencer's talk; the information he gave was great and, as it happens, very timely for me. We have an allotment association which we started on our small set of council allotments here at Rayleigh. At our recent AGM, tea/coffee/cake, on the allotment we all there agreed we wanted bees. It seems the council have historically rejected any request for hives on any of their allotment sites in the past. Not all of the allotment holders belong to our association so, before we approach the council ourselves, we are trying to gauge the overall desire for hives on a plot from all the plot holders. We have a helpful letter provided by The National Allotment Society and perhaps we can elicit some help from Spencer who seems to represent Natural Beekeeping.

Lesley and I are also members of The Rayleigh Horticultural Society, RHS, who have monthly meetings with a speaker. The RHS are interested in asking Spencer to come along as well in the future from the glowing report we have given to them.

Alan

3. When Rosemary attended one of the Essex Energy Fortnight events some weeks ago she picked up a load of Home Energy Advice sheets published by the Centre for Sustainable Energy. We have now put these in some kind of order and the file will be on the Library table.

New members

When you join SEEORG, 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 SEEORG'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.

Recipes: Pumpkin Soup

I shall be using some of these recipes for our selection of pumpkins, starting with 'Potage au Potiron' from Mrs. Beeton's famous book, improved upon! According to the author of 'Pumpkins, squashes and things ... and how to cook them' by CR Upton, this recipe makes the most delightful of all pumpkin dishes:

1 lb ripe pumpkin	2 oz butter
1 medium onion	A couple of tablespoonfuls of sugar
Salt and pepper	

Peel and finely slice the onion and simmer in the melted butter to soften but not brown. Cut pumpkin into rather small pieces. Barely cover with water (slightly salted), boil for 6-7 minutes only (until soft). Drain and sieve or emulsify to a puree. (Best to squeeze with a potato masher) Stir the mashed pumpkin into the melted butter and onion and allow to stand for ten minutes. Then add one pint boiling milk, the sugar, salt and pepper and let simmer gently for a few minutes. Serve with slices of French bread on top, or chopped parsley, if desired.

Carole

SEEOG 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.

SEEOG website

For ages now, John Tate (who looks after our website so beautifully) has been trying to recall a gardening book that he had back in the late seventies – and long since disappeared! The only thing he can recall about it was that it was a largish-format yellow paperback; had a lot about planting in blocks rather than rows; had many line-drawings and charts and put a lot of emphasis on companion planting with tagetes minuta. Can anyone help?

As you've probably already noticed, John has very kindly put up the following posts for us – and you're most welcome to send us yours, too!

Southend Apple Day at St. Laurence Orchard:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/10/apple-day-2014-2/>

Cherry Orchard Apple Day:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/10/cherry-orchard-apple-day-sunday-28-september/>

Professor Reed's Peat-Free Pledge:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/10/prof-reeds-peat-free-pledge%E2%80%8F/>

Grow your own 'bamboo' – yes, even in Westcliff-on-Sea:

<http://seeog.org.uk/page/2/>

"The war on slugs starts at home" – Brew your own nematodes:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/09/the-war-on-slugs-starts-at-home/>

A lot of tea and a bit of work:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/09/a-lot-of-tea-and-a-bit-of-work/>

Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning:

<http://seeog.org.uk/2014/09/lambourne-end-centre-for-outdoor-learning/>

Soil Association news

Chaired by Farming Today's Charlotte Smith, their two day conference debated some of the biggest issues of the day facing our food and farming systems and included:

- Growing evidence of chilling impacts of neonicotinoids, Professor Dave Coulson
- Nutritional value of organic crops, Professor Carol Leifert
- Fixing our farming and food systems
- Celebrating the best of organic – Organic Awards
- Innovation Awards

You can read more at this link: <http://www.soilassociation.org/conferences/2014conference>

One of the most hotly anticipated speakers was Professor Carlo Leifert, lead author of the 2014 Newcastle University study showing that organic crops contains up to 69% more antioxidants than

conventional crops. Leifert's topic for the Conference was that prickly question: Can Organic Food Feed the World?

The Food for Life Partnership has a new website: <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/what-is-food-for-life> - you can search for Essex schools using the 'find a school' function, select 'Eastern' for region and 'Essex' for LA, then click on 'list of schools'.

South Essex Natural History Society

The next AGM of the Society is to be held at 7.00pm on Thursday 6 November at the Central Museum, Southend-on-Sea. If you are a SENHS member, please try to attend as this is your chance to have your say about what they do and how they do it. Their first indoor meeting in 2015 will be on Saturday 24 January, 2-4pm: 'Gardening for Butterflies and Moths' by Don Down at The New Beecroft (Old Central Library), Southend-on-Sea, next door to the Central Museum.

Tips and Hints

'All in the bag together' by John Walker: Peat-free compost – bought and home-made – is the way forward, so discouraging us from making full use of our own compost is hardly the way to boost sales. It was impeccable, if ironic, timing. After a few joyous hours of serious riddling, during which I'd rediscovered long-forgotten muscles, followed by some blending and mixing, up flashed the headline. My sweaty head was already clutched in my hands before I realised; garden compost, if you've never savoured it, has an earthy, somewhat gritty flavour.'

You can read on at this link:

<http://www.hartley-botanic.co.uk/growing-tips/all-in-the-bag-together>

Websites and information

1. A letter to MPs in waiting - on food

As we all know, there is a pitifully low level of attention given by politicians to crucial food and farming issues, despite huge interest from the public. Do you think that new Parliamentary candidates need some help as they prepare for May 2015? Do feel free to use the letter at the link below, when either you talk to or write to your MP or candidates.

[http://www.foe.co.uk//blog/letter-mps-waiting-food?](http://www.foe.co.uk//blog/letter-mps-waiting-food?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+policypoliticsblog+%28Policy+%26+Politics+blog%29)

[utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+policypoliticsblog+%28Policy+%26+Politics+blog%29](http://www.foe.co.uk//blog/letter-mps-waiting-food?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+policypoliticsblog+%28Policy+%26+Politics+blog%29)

2. Green Books have been busy beavering away on several new books for 2014 and 2015. From cookbooks to ecobuilding, gardening to education... they've got lots of great books lined up:

http://www.greenbooks.co.uk/?mc_cid=09f4ac7299&mc_eid=a9718ad00c

3. **BREAKING: Glyphosate (Roundup) Carcinogenic In the PARTS PER TRILLION Range Hot**

As far as we know, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council use only Glyphosate – if you know otherwise, please do let us know!

<http://eatlocalgrown.com/article/12480-breaking-glyphosate-roundup-carcinoge>

SEEOG Committee

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