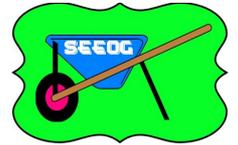


SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 119 – JANUARY 2015

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



Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year!

<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!

Venue

The Cheryl Centre, Growing Together Westcliff, 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 sharp, but Growing Together is open from 7.00pm to allow members to change their books, etc. The next committee meeting is on Thursday 15 January, 7.30pm at Jane'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:

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

We were very pleased to see Mo again last month when she described the growing conditions on her farm and the many varieties of fruit that she grows and has grown in the past. She described in detail the 'ins and outs' of what has to be done on the farm throughout the year. Mo has had a difficult time over the past year or so with her health but she looked well and we send her our best wishes for the New Year. We look forward to visiting the farm again on a date to be arranged.

We would much appreciate some gardening-related raffle prizes (please hand to Graham) and items to sell at the two farmers' markets we attend in Leigh and Rochford, especially during the 'lean' winter months – and our appreciation here goes to John for his wonderful little garden dibbers! And please note that our books are still at half-price.

Monday 19 January

'Growing Organically and Treating the Environment Sympathetically' presented by Steven Green. Steven will explain how environmental management on Sarah Green's Organics as a whole impacts on the production of organic vegetables, plus their growing techniques. He wants to know if we have any suggestions or views and very much looks forward to meeting us all.

Sarah Green's Organics is situated in Tillingham on the east Essex coast. Sarah is the third generation of her family farming in Tillingham, where they grow a wide selection of seasonal organic vegetables throughout the year. They deliver their vegetables wholesale to London and also run an organic vegetable box scheme across South East Essex. The latest area covered is Leigh-on-Sea. You can read more about the farm at this link: <http://www.sarahgreensorganics.co.uk/>

Saturday 21 February: SE Essex Seed Potato Day - 10.00am – 2.00pm **15p per tuber – free admission – plus some onion sets**

With the best will in the world, your hard-working (and depleted) committee cannot run this event on its own! There are gazebos to collect and put up, potatoes and onions to be set out, etc. etc., not to mention going to Growing Together the day before to assist with the tidying and setting out the tables in the polytunnel. Please do volunteer whatever help you can and help to publicise the event by way of our Potato Day poster, etc.

We will update our website at this link after we collect our stock from Stonham: <http://seeog.org/?s=SE+Essex+Seed+Potato+day+2015&x=0&y=0>

If there is an "O" after the variety, it means it has been produced organically.

First Earlies, the varieties with the shorter growing period: Colleen (O), Epicure, Foremost, Home Guard, Lady Christl, Orla (O), Red Duke of York (O), Rocket, Sharpe's Express (O), Vanessa and Winston

Second Earlies – slightly longer growing period: Anya, Bonnie, Blue Kestrel, Charlotte (O), Kestrel, Marfona, Nicola, Ratte, Salad Blue and Wilja

Early Main crops – rather more potatoes are Early Maincrop growing season than shorter or longer: Blue Belle, Belle De Fontenay, Desiree (O), Highland Burgundy Red, International Kidney, Kifli, Lady Balfour (O), Maris Piper, Pentland Dell, Picasso and Rooster

Late Main crops – these potatoes have really long growing seasons: Arran Victory (O), Cara (O), Golden Wonder (O), Kerr's Pink, Pink Fir Apple, Sarpo Axona, Sarpo Mira (O) and Valor

We have asked for over 30 varieties. It is rare, unfortunately, for 100% of them to get delivered but we will update the list 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 at this link: <http://seeog.org/?s=SE+Essex+Seed+Potato+day+2015&x=0&y=0>

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...

Saturday 10 October, 11am - 3pm: Apple Day, St. Laurence Orchard

Monday 16 November

A change of plan here for soft fruit – watch this space!

Monday 21 December

Home composting: the idea is 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/>

And some background information:

Sir Albert Howard & the Indore method: Not everyone felt that artificial fertilisers were the answer. Sir Albert Howard, based in India from 1905, spent almost 30 years experimenting with organic gardening and farming. He found that the best compost consisted of 3 parts plant matter to 1 part manure. These were initially layered in sandwich fashion with the layers being repeated until the heap was about 1.5 meters tall. The green layer was about 15cm thick followed by 5cm layer of manure and then one of soil, ground limestone and rock phosphate. These layers were repeated until the desired height was reached. The heap was kept moist and turned during decomposition providing aerobic conditions. The resulting compost was ready in about three months.

I.E. Rodale continued Howard's work and introduced American gardeners to the value of composting for improving soil quality. He established a farming research centre in Pennsylvania and the monthly *Organic Gardening* magazine.

Lawrence D. Hills: Whilst researching a book called *Russian Comfrey*, Lawrence D. Hills was so intrigued by its possibilities that he devoted much of the rest of his life to popularising it. As you well know, he founded the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA) in 1954 naming the organisation after Henry Doubleday introduced comfrey to the UK in the nineteenth century.

Garden Organic, the name under which HDRA now trades operates the Master Composter scheme which encourages and trains volunteers, in cooperation with local councils, to promote composting:
www.homecomposting.org.uk

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!

Compost Awareness Week May 2015

This year they will be organising two competitions:

1. Poster competition - once again, they will be organising a competition for schools to see who can produce the best poster promoting composting.
2. Photographic competition - this year, for the first time, they will be holding a competition for the best photograph of composting bins, techniques or promoting composting. This will be open to all ages. You can read about this in full at <http://www.carryoncomposting.com/142941487>

Crapes Fruit Farm: Andrew Tann's December update

Some rhubarb crowns have sported healthy green leaves for twelve consecutive months which demonstrates how confused not only they but our other bushes and trees are also.

The stock of apples is just about exhausted. We are aware that many of you have been disappointed by the lack of our usual range of varieties not to mention the general lack of availability through the autumn. Visitors here can only expect to find the small-sized remnants of the Kidd's Orange Red. 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: Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road: from 9:00 – 12:00 on Friday 20 February, Friday 20 March, Saturday 25 April, Friday 15 May, Friday 19 June, Friday 17 July, Saturday 22 August, Friday 18 September, Friday 16 October, Friday 20 November and Saturday 19 December

Rochford: WI Hall, Market Square on (Saturday) 7 February, 7 March, 4 April, 2 May, 6 June, 4 July, 1 August and 5 September from 09:30 – 12:00

Food sovereignty now! A UK network of the global food sovereignty movement

Food Sovereignty UK is supported by a host of small scale producers, NGOs and activist groups whose work reflects the principles of the movement. They are keen to make links with more of the many organisations working with food in the UK, such as SEEEOG. If you're part of a group, business or project keen to be involved in the network, please get in touch at info@foodsovereignty.org.uk

Since their last energising national gathering in 2012, the food sovereignty movement in the UK has grown with hundreds of projects thriving across the UK. It is time to gather again, they say, in order to share the amazing progress they have made over the past few years and plan perspectives for the future. This is a call out for you to **save the date** and join them for four days of discussions, organising, skill sharing and action planning, all aimed at strengthening the movement for a democratic, sustainable and fair food system in the UK and globally. **The plans so far:**

When: October 2nd -5th 2015

Where: Central UK, exact location TBC

<http://foodsovereignty.org.uk/ukfoodsov/national-gathering-2015/>

Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library

The past few summers have been particularly challenging for seed production. Each year they distribute some 40,000 packets to members but recent years have seen a steady decline in their Seed Guardian numbers and in the amount of seed returned to them.

Their Guardians provide at least 50% of the seeds which the HSL share with their members. The HSL provide them with a small number of seeds each year, which the Guardians grow, talk sweetly to, love and cherish before returning to HSL (in many cases) in huge numbers. The HSL is now looking for new Seed Guardians to take on the extremely valuable job of providing a home for their Orphan seed, so do you think you have the qualities it takes to become one of this loyal, dedicated band? You can find full information at this link: <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/hsl> We are lucky to have the Seed List for 2015, which was kindly donated to SEEEOG by Violet.

GM Watch News

As some members already know, GMWatch is an independent organisation, based in Norwich that seeks to counter the enormous corporate political power and propaganda of the biotech industry and its supporters. They do this through their website, their email lists, their Powerbase portal, [LobbyWatch](#), social media (like Twitter and Facebook), and other outreach and campaigning activities. GMWatch was

founded in 1998 by Jonathan Matthews and its managing editors are Jonathan Matthews and Claire Robinson.

We do try wherever possible to source UK items for our newsletters, such as:

1) 'UK: GM foods slip into M&S' - Marks & Spencer in the UK has come under fire for selling six products containing GM soya or corn.

<http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15751>

2) A UK government select committee is leading an onslaught against Europe's GMO regulations. The move comes as the TTIP free trade agreement between the US and EU, which aims to "harmonise" Europe's GMO regulations in line with the lax US system, is being negotiated.

<http://gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15779>

3) Using glyphosate herbicide can wipe out local earthworm populations, a new study shows. Even under the regular dose for perennial weeds, the earthworm population showed negative growth rates, meaning there were not enough young worms to replace the old ones as they died out. This means the local worm population could rapidly go extinct.

<http://gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15775>

4) 'Ban poisonous pesticides in our parks' says fashion designer Katharine Hamnett, who is waging a campaign to have glyphosate banned in British parks after seeing it sprayed in her local park.

<http://landscapejuicenetwork.com/forum/topics/ban-poisonous-pesticides-in-our-parks-says-katharine-hamnett>

5) British think tank tells Africans to grow and eat GMOs – A report from the British foreign policy think tank Chatham House on agricultural biotechnology in Africa claims that GM "offers advantages over conventional plant-breeding approaches".

<http://gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15591>

Growing Together Westcliff

'Meet The Street' at Growing Together: It was lights, camera and action recently when presenters James Martin and Dom Littlewood visited the site. The pair was there to record an episode of a brand new show for BBC One, called Operation Meet The Street. Southend-born Dom Littlewood (Cowboy Builders & Don't Get Done Get Dom) returned to his home town with James to see the ways in which local charities and groups can help reduce loneliness and isolation. A celebratory Afternoon Tea was held by Trust Links, bringing together all the people that Dom and James met through the programme.

The programme can be viewed on the BBC website (available for 28 days) at this link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04vwcs1/operation-meet-the-street-episode-3>

International Year of Soils

The International Year of Soils 2015 officially kicked off on World Soil Day, 5 December 2014, with celebrations taking place in New York, Santiago and Bangkok. The Rome event, entitled "Soils, a foundation for family farming" was officially opened in FAO Headquarters by Mr. José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General. In his opening remarks, the FAO Director-General highlighted the significant contribution of healthy soils "to achieve our food security and nutrition goals, to fight climate change and to ensure overall sustainable development". Mr. da Silva also pointed out that soils, though vital, are often forgotten, "The multiple roles of soils often go unnoticed. Soils don't have a voice, and few people speak out for them. They are our silent ally in food production." You can read more at this link:

<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/news/news-detail/en/c/271795/>

Members' contributions

1) The Garden Museum was set up in 1977 in order to rescue from demolition the abandoned ancient church of St Mary's, which is the burial place of John Tradescant (c1570 – 1638), the first great gardener and plant-hunter in British history. His magnificent and enigmatic tomb is the centrepiece of a knot garden planted with the flowers which grew in his London garden four centuries ago.

The Museum organises three main temporary exhibitions in the gallery space each year.

Entrance to all exhibitions is included in the Museum admission charge. You can find out more at this link: <http://www.gardenmuseum.org.uk/page/exhibitions-3> - Simon

2) Maïke is starting a monthly Village Market in Ramsden Heath starting on Saturday 7 February 2015. We have already circulated her press notice and flyer. She is desperately looking for someone to

organise a stall for the February market that reflects Seedy Sunday and operates like a seed exchange. A fee could be 50p for each swap to meet the costs of hiring the stall (£5). She thinks that she and other stallholders would be willing to contribute to the original selection of seeds. For more information, call Maike on 01268 733163 or email maike@mountholly.co.uk.

3) A sharp-eyed neighbour passed this newspaper article to me: 'A tomato that won't blight gardeners'. The sight of the black spot never fails to strike fear into the amateur gardener's heart. Within days blight can destroy a whole crop of tomatoes, ruining weeks of careful nurturing. Described by Suttons Seeds: 'As well as its ability to shrug off even the worst blight, Crimson Crush will provide great yields of exceptionally fine tasting, large, round tomatoes (each weighing up to 200g). Bred for outdoor growing, it's the tomato that everyone should be planting this year.' Needless to say, I've ordered three! Carole
Courtesy of The Times -
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4298408.ece>

4) Design Philosophies Two: The Lovely Lawn

A lawn, in scale with the house, can be a wonderful, calm carpet to gaze across to your flowers. But for an organic gardener, can a lawn be beautiful without the use of chemicals? In our design practice at Modern Mint we have been exploring alternatives to chemical use in lawn care programmes - with mixed results!

But help is at hand - we have just found a new book, 'Modern Lawn Care' by David Hedges-Gower - <http://amzn.to/1rvq3Xn> - which suggests that the right programme of work, performed at the right time, can give you a tough, green, good looking lawn perfect for domestic use. This book has been a revelation for us.

Though a meadow still wins hands down for the encouragement of bio-diversity!

Darren

PS: We wonder how the book compares with The Organic Lawn (one of HDRA's old Step-by-Step series), originally selling at £1 a copy and now down to 50p? We still have a few left!

New members

When you join SEEOG, 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 SEEOG'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.

Pesticide Action Network UK

From now on, PAN UK will be publishing Pesticides News ten times a year as an electronic journal delivered directly to subscribers by email. This change will allow them to provide more timely information and analysis to keep you up-to-date with the most important developments. There is no longer a cost to subscribing, **but to receive each edition, you will need to register your email address.** You can do this by visiting their website at:
<http://www.pan-uk.org/news/pesticides-news-subscribe-to-our-monthly-eneewsletter>

Publications

How we eat is such a fundamental part of what we are; yet in our present time-poor culture of pre-packed fast foods, food can become an expensive symptom of alienation and disempowerment. It doesn't have to be this way! -

In Graham Burnett's 'The Vegan Book of Permaculture' – interspersed with an abundance of delicious, healthy and wholesome exploitation-free recipes - Graham provides eco-friendly living, home and garden design, veganic food growing, re-forestation strategies, forest gardening, reconnection with wild nature and community regeneration. This is vegan living at its best. You can read more at:
<http://spiralseed.co.uk/products-page/publications/the-vegan-book-of-permaculture-by-graham-burnett/#sthash.0jR6l2v4.dpuf>

Recipes: Mo Perkins' Apple Souffle

Ingredients:

One medium-sized Bramley per person, peeled, cored and sliced. Cook until soft (either saucepan or microwave) in minimum of water for approximately three minutes per apple. Pulp down and leave to cool.

One or two eggs – separate yolk from whites, add yolk to cooled apple and mix with fork.

One tin Condensed Milk, original or caramel – use half for two apples or more to taste. Mix in with the apple mixture.

Whisk the whites until stiff – a little bit of caster sugar helps it to bind. Add to the apples into Pyrex bowl slowly and put in oven 150 or low gas for 15 – 20 minutes until lightly browned. You can use other fruits: raspberries, strawberries and mango.

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. Ever wanted to grow your own but don't have the time, the space, or even know where to start? Well, we have a new book available in the New Year – 'Do Grow/Start with 10 simple vegetables' by Alice Holden.

Soil Association news

'Today's News' is their daily media digest keeping you 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 weekday, please complete the form at this link:

<http://action.soilassociation.org/page/s/todaysnews>

South Essex Natural History Society

SENHS' 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.

Websites and information

1) First Great British Bee Count reveals allotments make the best bee habitats

Allotments produced more bee sightings than parks, gardens and the countryside over the 12-week summer count.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/28/first-great-british-bee-count-reveals-allotments-make-best-bee-habitats>

2) The Government's 'National Pollinator Strategy' has a fatal flaw, writes Georgina Downs - it contains no meaningful measures to address farmers' spraying of highly toxic pesticides, often in mixtures that can further increase the harm they cause. And with 80% of the UK's pesticides used in agriculture, that's setting the 'strategy' up to fail.

http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/commentators/2623579/agricultural_pesticides_the_gaping_hole_in_the_uk_pollinator_strategy.html

3) "The evidence is really clear cut - pretty much every paper that's been published agrees that [neonicotinoids] are harmful. To add to that, there's been an accumulating body of evidence that it's not just bees we should be concerned about. Something is going wrong with our countryside [...] everything is disappearing."

- Professor Dave Goulson on neonicotinoids: BBC Radio 4 (11 November 2014)

<http://www.soilassociation.org/aboutus/newsandmedia/readtodaysnews/todaysnews/articleid/7502/www.soilassociation.org/www.soilassociation.org/keepbritainbuzzing>

4) Digging for victory in Dagenham - derelict farm in east London is leading the way in organic local food
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardenstovisit/11210714/Digging-for-victory-in-Dagenham.html?dm_t=0,0,0,0&dm_i=4UO,2YSXT,JCIKA,APGD4,1

5) Wild Food Cafe is a raw-centric food restaurant located in Neal's Yard in Covent Garden, London. They are focusing on wild, fresh, colourful gourmet ingredients & plant-based (vegan and vegetarian) cuisine.

<http://wildfoodcafe.com/about-2/>

Wild Food & Chilli Fair

The Wild Food and Chilli Fair is happening on 27/28 June 2015, an event that may just get you thinking differently next time you go for a walk in the woods! They will be celebrating nature's own larder and its abundance of offerings and edible treats, safely and in a sustainable way. You can take a look around their website at <http://www.wildfoodandchillifair.com/#!aboutus/c2414> - shall we make this a SEEEOG trip on the Saturday?

SEEEOG Committee

Ron Bates	Chair	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Ray How	Vice-Chair	01702 544632	ray.how@btopenworld.com
Ane Bates	Treasurer	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership	01702 558871	grahamoster@btinternet.com
Carole Shorney	Secretary	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Vic Shorney	Committee	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Jane Ponton	Committee	01268 565776	JaneAPonton@hotmail.com