

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 120 – MARCH 2015

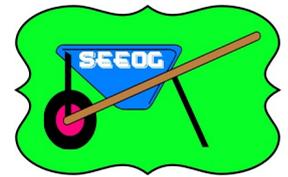
<http://seeog.org.uk/>

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

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

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 12 March, 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:

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 have not confirmed these two events yet.

Sunday 3 May: Invitation to Garden Show at Museum of Power, Langford

This year, they are expanding the range of events they offer to include a Garden Show in May and hope to offer a series of talks, demonstrations and workshops led by people from local clubs and societies with knowledge and experience in subjects relevant to gardens and horticulture. Would SEEEOG be able to lead some kind of talk or demonstration? They would be very happy to provide a free pitch at which we would be able to promote ourselves and our work with visitors on the day. It is proposed that any such speaker slot would be of approximately 40 minutes in total, with 30 minutes of presentation and 10 minutes Q&A for their visitors.

Canvey Island Wildlife Day: Saturday 30 May

Canvey Island Town Council is organising, in partnership with the local RSPB, an annual Wildlife Day, their sixth year. It is a popular community free entry event with a wildlife and conservation educational theme with guided walks hosted by BBC's The One Show's Mike Dilger around the RSPB West Canvey Marsh; pond dipping, bug hunting and other activities as well as representation from local wildlife, conservation and craft stalls.

The event tries to send a strong message of conservation education, demonstrating to the public ways you can help the environment and wildlife. The event gives visitors a chance to enjoy and learn more about the local wildlife, crafts and conservation efforts.

It is being held on Saturday 30 May, at RSPB West Canvey Marsh, Canvey Road, Canvey Island SS8 0QD, and is open to the public from 11am – 4pm.

SE Essex Seed Potato Day

What a day! Here and now! Thought of the day! Potato Day! Were they all after the "Princess of Athona", the Celtic precursor of the later Hispanic introductions? OR is this myth? Like the Duke of Dengie -a dark watery spud?

We had 40+ varieties to buy by the tuber (nine organic) collected from Julian`s team for East Anglia`s Potato Day on 14 February. Collected by Jane, Vic and Ron with Growing Together`s truck.

Friday 20 February: Prepare the polytunnel – tables, boxes, labels (from Graham O-R) and the potatoes stored in the sales hut with the gazebos from Leigh Town Council, with help from Vic and Mike. Vic later returned with Carole (from the Leigh market) to prepare the orders.

Saturday 21 February: 8.30.am - gazebo put up at the polytunnel entrance to keep the northerly wind away from Graham at the door collecting monies; Mike, Gill, Carole, Ray (onion sets, garlic, potato fertiliser), and Vic as early helpers. Growing Together`s café, raffle, tea and cakes in the Cheryl Centre set up and the potatoes in the oven, urns hot.

Then people starting to arrive - 250 for the day - some from London; two women from Kent wanting to do the same for Sevenoaks, so talk of cascading from East Anglia to South Essex to Kent next year?

Singing - Graham Burnett, local writer of Permaculture/vegan growing - entertaining with Clash, Chumba`s Marley and "Going Organic So Don`t Panic", then GT`s own Rob, Allen, Dan with Marley, their own and more. Really good atmosphere, weather kindly again -buying, chatting, networking, eating, raffling, laughing, singing.

What a good day!

So thanks to all who make such an event happen and people who come and show that it is a needed event. Many spuds there be!

We shall be selling what`s left at the next Rochford market and at Group Night.

You can view their photos at this link: <http://www.trustlinks.webs.com/> and on our own website shortly.

Ron

Monday 16 March

'Allotment Gardens in Japan' presented by Dr. Richard Wiltshire, Senior Lecturer in Geography, King's College London.

Richard Wiltshire explores the development of a new allotment gardening movement in Japan, from its early origins in the 1920s, suppression after the Second World War, and resurrection in the 1970s. The import of best practice models from Europe since the 1980s has been based on a legislative framework that offers some surprising contrasts with British experience, in everything from typical plot sizes through to contrasts between urban and rural areas in the provision of allotment sites. As a rapidly ageing society, Japan also offers food for thought about the true social value of allotment gardening.

Richard Wiltshire has taught Japanese Urban and Environmental Geography at the School of Oriental and African Studies and King's College London, and has been the guest speaker at a number of allotment gardening conferences 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

Philip Fawcett, member of Garden Organic and the East Essex Smallholders, will be talking about growing fruit – more to follow in due course.

Monday 21 December

Please note that we have cancelled this date, being too close to Christmas.

Allotment news, Hockley and further afield

Hockley Parish Council has decided to investigate the land at New Hockley Hall Farm as a possible site for allotments. The initial plan is to have two acres of land which will provide enough space for twenty-five half allotments, with one or two adapted for disabled access. There is still a long way to go with this project as it will be expensive to establish and the money will have to be obtained from grants and other sources, but now the land has been identified the real work can begin. You can update yourself at: <http://www.essexinfo.net/hockley-parish-council/allotments/>

Stapleton Allotment and Smallholdings, Bristol

A food growing and wildlife paradise nestled on high-grade agricultural soil, graced with bird rich woodland, hedgerow and wildflower meadow. This land is Green Belt, Conservation Area, wildlife corridor, habitat and foraging ground. It is home to long-standing allotments and Feed Bristol, a "visionary", award winning community wildlife and food growing project. This precious and unique resource is being attacked in order to save an estimated three and a half minutes off a half-hour journey. You can keep updated by going to these two links:

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

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

Save Our Allotments: Farm Terrace, Watford

The Farm Terrace Allotment site in Watford has existed since 1896. It stands in the centre of the hugely urbanized town of Watford, an oasis in an urban jungle. However, they are in the middle of a bitter war with their council and central government who want to build housing on their site. This is becoming an epidemic, as more and more councils see selling off precious allotment sites as a way of generating cash. Since 2007, there have been 132 separate applications to close down allotments under section 8 of the 1925 Allotments Act. Out of these, 97% were approved (128 cases) and only 4 cases refused. Plot holders feel powerless to protest about these closures because the government have such power - until now. Useful links include:

Farm Terrace Allotment Fighting Fund

<http://www.gofundme.com/save-farm-terrace>

Help protect the UK's allotment sites

<https://www.change.org/p/eric-pickles-secretary-of-state-for-communities-and-local-government-help-protect-the-uk-s-allotment-sites>

Crapes Fruit Farm: Andrew Tann's February update

A long period of, apparently, no news reflects the good pruning weather here during January. For once, the land is not too soggy; the worms are visibly working away as are the moles, judging by a proliferation of molehills. The hive bees are venturing out for 'cleansing' flights during the warmer hours.

The Ribston Pippin are beginning to exhibit their bold, white, fluffy fruit buds - spot on for their usual late February appearance. Last season they were weak and at this stage at the beginning of the very mild and wet January - the precursor to a disappointing season.

The pruning has to date focussed on the older and larger trees.

Shortly, the area to veg will be expanded on from the trial begun two years ago. Two further rows of the 1959 planted Cox will be cut to ground level. This method saved spoiling the soil composition with the

use of heavy machinery to pull out stumps. Early in March, the stumps will be injected with spores of edible fungi which will accelerate the breakdown of the woody tissue and with some edible benefits as inoculation completes.

Carrot sowing in the Dutch Light Structure was delayed from our usual date by a week to allow the soil to warm first. The last week of January was quite overcast. Beetroot, our most popular vegetable, will soon be sown. More will be grown this year to meet demand.

Overwintered sown onions have survived well. Parsnip and broad beans have now been sown.

In addition to deer, we have a hare about (haven't seen one here for many years) - both enjoy eating tree bark!

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 2015

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 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

Roy and Rita Hill's recent retirement has understandably left a sad and gaping hole in both Rochford's WI Hall and the Leigh Community Centre. They have both worked long and hard, and have never missed a market.

Roy Hill's family moved to Wildfields Farm when he was just seven years old and has worked there ever since. The land was mostly arable, with some vegetables (which were sold at the farm gate and to wholesalers), as well as a few animals. When Roy and his wife Rita eventually took over the day-to-day running of the farm, which saw off the last of the pigs and chickens, Wildfields grew to about 64 acres in size, with 24 acres for growing vegetables, which Roy and Rita sold both at the gate and at various farmers markets.

The good news is that David Hammond has invited Sarah Green's Organics to fill the empty plot in the Leigh Community Centre. He said: 'To replace Wildfields Farm, like for like, is probably impossible and if you want the range, and quality, of vegetables Sarah Green is the way to go.' We hope she does well there.

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

It has been agreed to give the market a three-month reprieve due to finding a replacement for Roy and Rita, and coping with the difficulty of filling a few other empty stalls. If you know anyone who would like a stall, please ask them to contact:

Janice V. Rigby, Rochford Parish Council, Parish Council Rooms, 82 West Street, Rochford, SS4 1AS; 01702 540722; email clerk@rochfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens

It's been quite some months since we've included any update on the plight of the Gardens, but the latest Congelow Trust accounts are now available on the Charities Commission website. These show that the Trust received £275,000 in November 2013 for the freehold of the Gardens (as against a reported valuation of £27,397 in good condition?) and that the sale apparently included appropriate covenants not to develop the land and to maintain the Trust's objectives towards the Gardens. Those objectives are of course "to advance the education of the general public in the principles of organic farming, growing and gardening." It is however difficult to see how that has been achieved by a (no longer certified Organic) garden that (as far as we are aware) remains closed to the general public.

You can read further at this link:
<http://www.foyog.org/>

Garden Organic news

Can you help to spread the word about organic gardening in our community? We did it many years ago and can still do it!

This is a perfect way to celebrate and show organic gardening at its best whilst raising awareness of Garden Organic and helping to raise vital funds to support their work. Your garden can be of any size, style or content but above all will share one thing which is the organic approach, enthusiasm and a willingness to share learning.

Those opening their garden may ask for a small donation for entry, whereas others put out a collection tin for people who wish to donate. We can supply Garden Organic materials, such as information leaflets and copies of *The Organic Way* for you to share with visitors. Participants advertise their garden open day locally, and Garden Organic advertise on their own website and through their monthly e-newsletter. If you're not inclined to open your own garden then you can also give your support by visiting one of the other open gardens advertised on their website. Some may also offer refreshments, plants and produce for sale to help with the fundraising effort.

If you are interested in opening your garden, then we would love to hear from you, but please contact Anne Durant first on 024 7621 7701 or by email - fundraising@gardenorganic.org.uk – keeping SEEOG in the picture as you go.

GMWatch News: How the Great Food War will be won

The environmental and food movements need to extract themselves from the lie that we need to produce more food, writes Dr Jonathan Latham

Comment by Claire Robinson of GMWatch:

If you read only one article this year on the GMO food fight, make it this one. As Dr Jonathan Latham points out, the food crisis on which the need for GMOs and industrial agriculture is built does not exist and never has.

We already produce enough food to feed 14 billion people — far more than we will ever need to feed the projected world population of 9 billion in 2050.

Once that fact has sunk in, the entire "crisis narrative" used to convince the public that we must accept agrochemicals and GMOs falls apart. Far from needing to produce more food, we need to ensure that the vast quantities of food we produce reach the mouths of the hungry as well as the affluent. That means approaches such as wasting less, ensuring that good transport and storage infrastructure exists in vulnerable countries, and ceasing to pretend that biofuels — essentially, burning food — are a sustainable energy source.

You can read the full article at this link:

<http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2015-articles/15867>

International Compost Awareness Week: Mon 4th - Sun 9th May

With 2015 being the International Year of Soils, there is no better time to get composting at home and transform your organic waste into a valuable resource for your garden.

Composting makes the world go round. It recycles the nutrients that make plants (and animals) grow, feeds the bugs that keep the soil healthy and is a sustainable, low-cost way of dealing with 'rubbish that rots'. And it can be fun too!

This year's theme is 'Life inside your compost heap'

A compost heap isn't just a heap of dead stuff; it is a hotbed of biological activity. One gram of compost can be home to literally millions of microscopic creatures. The compost heap is a bit like a mini-beast nature reserve.

A resource pack should be available soon, which will include a range of activities and guides relating to the creatures working away inside your compost bin.

<http://www.homecomposting.org.uk/international-compost-awareness-week-2015>

Introduction to Forest Gardening one day course: Saturday 11 April, 10:00 – 16:00, at Friends Meeting House, 18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh on Sea

This is a special low cost course with Graham Burnett, author of 'Permaculture a Beginners Guide' and 'The Vegan Book of Permaculture'. Forest gardening is a low-maintenance sustainable plant-based food production and agroforestry system based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables which have yields directly useful to humans. The design principles can be replicated in even the smallest urban gardens - find out how!

<http://spiralseed.co.uk/products-page/product-category/1433-2/>

This one day workshop will cover:

What is forest gardening?

The principles of forest gardening

Designing a forest garden

Visit a forest garden

Practical hands on activities

SPECIAL LOW PRICE: £40 waged; £25 unwaged/low income

£10 deposit secures your place

Manure/Compost

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. Julie Davis 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. Her number is 0774 210 7855.

4. 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 (Ashingdon).

5. Brook House Farm is a recycling centre just off the Five Bells roundabout on the A13 at Basildon. It recycles wood mostly from local tree fellers into logs, biofuels, bark chippings, mulch and compost and has a huge pile of excellent compost selling at £1 a bag or it can arrange truckloads for those needing larger amounts - very happy to offer our members a 10% discount. Many of their customers bring a sieve to make sure they get the very best and finest into their bag. Please contact Bea Byford:
brookhousefarmfobbing@gmail.com

Members' contributions

1. Pat has suggested that it would be terrific to have a commitment from members to provide plants for each market. She is trying to grow some Christmas cactus cuttings at the moment. What about some bunches of Holly? Does anyone have Mistletoe? And Skimmia? The coloured Capsicums? Does anyone have a go at cuttings of Poinsettia, kept in dark, etc? During the year, surely some could set an extra box of seeds, lettuce, leeks, snapdragons, etc. Would members kindly invest a couple of quid in seeds on SEEOG's behalf?

2. Tyre Rubber from Dandelions? We Didn't See That Coming. Who knew that the humble dandelion might provide a source of rubber for future tires and other products?

<http://www.greenbuildermedia.com/news/blog/news/green-transportation-dandelion-rubber> - Jane

3. Kew on a Plate - Kew Magazine Spring 2015 pp 32-37 with Raymond Blanc involved.

'With the help of Kew scientist, Monique Simmonds, the team even proved that tomatoes grown in the Kitchen Garden were sweeter and had more complex flavours than their shop-bought equivalents, which are bred for uniformity and shelf life, but as a result can often taste quite bland.' And, of course,

says Raymond, 'this project is a hymn to the often unsung craft and wisdom of the gardener and the amazing teamwork between Anna Greenland, who looks after our vegetable gardens at Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons and Alice Lamb and Joe Archer at Kew, who share a wonderful gentleness and inquisitiveness. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude and I love them all to bits'.

Kate Humble joins forces with Michelin-starred chef Raymond Blanc and the experts at Kew Gardens to rediscover the rich heritage of our vegetables. A vegetable garden has been created at Kew to showcase the wide and wonderful varieties of vegetables which used to play an intrinsic role in our kitchens and on our plates, but now have largely been forgotten. Joe and Alice, the gardeners at Kew, share their knowledge of how to grow vegetables, with an emphasis on seasonality, variety and natural ways of controlling pests and diseases. Kate uncovers some fascinating historical stories and recipes and discovers how science plays a part in what we eat while getting some wonderful behind-the-scenes insights into the workings of Kew. Raymond takes the raw ingredients from the Kew vegetable garden and transforms them into a range of dishes that remind us just how special are our heritage vegetables.

There will be four one hour programmes (one for each season of the year), which will be broadcast on BBC2.

Is this a new book? Raymond Blanc and Sheila Keeting, *Kew on a Plate with Raymond Blanc: recipes, horticulture and heritage*. Publisher: Headline 2015, RRP £25, hardback or ask at your local library – Pat

4. Last year, Vic and Carole visited the newly completed "Centre for Disability Studies", a pioneering eco-sustainable building which will form the charity's operational headquarters and professionally accredited training centre. They chose to design and construct the building with sustainability in mind - both to minimise their impact on the environment and maximise longevity for the thousands of people who will use it. If SEEEOG members want to do some outdoor project work there, such as a gardening/weeding event, please contact their Site Manager, Mark Rook, at Centre for Disability Studies, 34 Rocheway, SS4 1DQ
mark.rook@disabilityessex.org
<http://www.disabilityessex.org/>

Mrs. Pet Thornton (their CEO) has also written to say that she would be delighted to host our group members any Monday between 10am and 3pm, as long as we make a prior appointment, so that she can ensure the appropriate staff members are present to assist, otherwise we can wait until the National Eco Week in September.

5. Design Philosophies 3: Compost for the Vegetable Garden Only - Organic gardener Henk Gerritsen told us not to use compost on the garden if we want to reduce maintenance. A richer soil means more plant growth, more competition for space and light, more changes in the border – basically, the toughest plants win. Keep your soil fertility lean and the environment stable and plants with the same vigour will adapt and co-exist together, happily. Which means don't add lovely, opulent compost to the borders. But your edible plants do need it, and the soil is always being cultivated - so put your compost on the vegetable garden.

For more on organic gardener Henk Gerritsen, see 'Dream Plants For The Natural Garden'
<http://amzn.to/1wwXnJP>

6. Darren is now registered to begin on the Chelsea Fringe website - and they will put the book together at the beginning of March, then start looking for advertisers so they can earn the Rare Breeds Survival Trust some money. He's very happy with it - and thanks us all for our help with submissions, SEEEOG members did an excellent job!
<http://www.chelseafringe.com/events/category/online/>

With very many thanks to everyone! Keep them coming in, with photos, next time!

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.

Pesticide Action Network North America

Pesticide Action Network North America (PAN North America, or PANNA) works to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives. As one of five PAN Regional Centres worldwide, they link local and international consumer, labour, health, environment and agriculture groups into an international citizens' action network. This network challenges the global proliferation of pesticides, defends basic rights to health and environmental quality, and works to ensure the transition to a just and viable society.

Will Hawai'i lawmakers stand up to Monsanto & Co?
Shaking up the White House hive
Welcome to the "Year of Soils!"
EPA approves another bee-harming pesticide
The "Big 6" drifting to a farm near you

You can read more about their Hot Topics by visiting their website at <http://www.panna.org/>

Publications

"Transition Pathways Towards Sustainability in Agriculture" - increasingly unpredictable global weather, changing consumer perceptions and an ageing workforce make sustainability a core concern for the agricultural industry. A new book co-edited by a James Hutton Institute social scientist aims to improve the understanding of transition processes towards sustainability in European agriculture. You can read on at this link: http://www.hutton.ac.uk/news/pathways-towards-agricultural-sustainability-analysed-new-book?utm_source=The+James+Hutton+Institute&utm_campaign=442bdeaf8f-James_Hutton_Institute_Newsletter_January_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_99533a8086-442bdeaf8f-314426457

Green Books have been busy in January and February publishing three new books, which are available either from their website or from your local library.
<http://www.greenbooks.co.uk/home>

Learning with Nature is the perfect book for anyone who wants ideas and activities to get children outdoors and engaged with nature; *One Magic Square - Grow your own food on one square metre* by Lolo Houbein; and *How to create a New Vegetable Garden Producing a beautiful and fruitful garden from scratch* by Charles Dowding.

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 – 'Do Grow/Start with 10 simple vegetables' by Alice Holden.

SEEOG website

New posts include:
Wassailing at St. Laurence Orchard; Eastwood: Sunday 8 February
Winter Digging on Hullbridge Allotment: January
Leigh Farmers' Market
Save Our Allotments: Farm Terrace, Watford
<http://seeog.org.uk/>

Sign up now to Graham Burnett's special low cost Forest Gardening Course
Ramsden Heath Village Market
Update on the provision of allotments in Hockley parish
<http://seeog.org.uk/page/2/>

Soil Association news

2015 is International Year of the Soils- celebrate and Join them by wearing your wellies to work, school or even to the shops and help raise crucial funds to help them save our soils. **'All life depends on soil'** - ever heard the Roman Empire fell because they didn't look after soils? It's one of four things we can't live without, along with water, air and sunlight. 2050 will see around 9 billion people on earth, all depending on soils for food. Yet we're destroying them 10 times faster than nature can restore them (see our item on Stapleton Allotments in Bristol). Research proves organic farming restores soil.

If you sign up now, or at any other time in March, they'll send you a welcome pack with ideas and resources to help you with your fundraising. Why not get your colleagues, local school, or social club to join you? Feel free to drop them an email, too, as they'd be delighted to have a chat about your plans and how it's all going: memb@soilassociation.org

You can read more at this link: <http://action.soilassociation.org/page/s/wearyourwelliesweek>

South Essex Natural History Society

All talks are held at the Beecroft Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea.

Saturday 14 March: The Magic of Mushrooms, 2-4pm

Thursday 26 March: 'Orchids of Essex, Britain & Europe', 7-9pm

Thursday 30 April: Wildlife Conservation in the 21st Century, 7-9pm

Thursday 28 May: Paradise on Earth, Beautiful Wildflowers of Kashmir, 7-9pm

Saturday 19 September: Bumble Bees of Essex – Shril Carder Bee, an update, 2-4pm

Thursday 19 November: AGM and DVD, 7-9pm

Saturday 12 December: The Thames Through Time, 2-4pm

For further details, please contact their Chairman, Pat Wortley – 01702 588115.

pjwortley@btinternet.com

Websites and information

1. 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>

2. Visual Evaluation of Soil Structure Score Chart – Scotland's rural College website: http://www.sruc.ac.uk/downloads/file/1121/visual_evaluation_of_soil_structure_score_chart

3. To help you get to know your soil better, the Permaculture Association research team have developed a handbook and guide, available at <http://s.coop/permaculturesoil>

4. You can download the South East Essex Conservation Volunteers' Spring 2015 Project Programme at this link. If you would like any further details about their work, please contact Annette Payne: ap@abpayne.plus.com <http://www.seecv.org.uk/programme/>

Trust Links

Trust Links is running a Working Party Day at St Laurence Orchard on the following dates at 10 am to 3 pm and is inviting members of the public to come along and join in. Working Party Days will be held monthly, leading up to Apple Day in October. Working Party Days are open to anybody interested in helping to maintain the orchard, use their existing skills, learn new skills and meet like-minded people. Hot drinks, tools and instruction will be provided. Participants will need to bring their own lunch and appropriate clothing!

Working Party Days are being held 10 am to 3 pm on the following dates: Monday 2 March; Monday 13 April; Monday 11 May; Monday 1 June; Monday 6 July; Monday 3 August, Big Bug Day. families welcome; Monday 7 September and Monday 5 October.

For more information please call 01702 213134.

Charity Walk

Helen Connerton is walking from John O' Groats to Lands End, starting in May and finishing in August. She has asked if we can circulate her funding page to anyone who would sponsor her.

Helen hopes to walk Hostel to Hostel to keep costs down as she is trying to raise funds for Mental Health Association and Age Concern.

Her web page is <http://longwaydown.weebly.com> which tells you why she is undertaking such a HUGE task.

Carole's Frogs

True to form (at least for the second year running) frogs have appeared in our pond, all nicely cleaned for them!

SEEOG Committee

Ron Bates	Chair	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
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