

# SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 121 – MAY 2015

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

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

[https://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn\\_tnmn#!groups/43705483846/](https://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!groups/43705483846/)

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**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 14 May, 7.30pm at Jane's. Please notify Graham Oster-Ritter - [grahamoster@btinternet.com](mailto: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:

July newsletter	Tuesday 30 June
September newsletter	Sunday 30 August
November newsletter	Saturday 31 October

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As we approach the General Election, here's question to ask your election candidates: Soil erosion and degradation is one of the greatest threats to food security and yet there is no comprehensive soil protection framework in the EU, unlike other areas of concern, such as water, biodiversity and air.

Putting soil centre-stage will increase the quality and yields of crops; improve farming's resilience to drought and flood; help manage water supplies and make a significant contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The new government should support widespread soil monitoring and fund much more research, including the impacts of pesticides on soil microbiology. They should set targets for improving soil organic matter and incentivise farmers to switch away from maize, or at least ensure it is under-sown to stop erosion. Which Party will take this forward - and with what urgency?

## SEEEOG Group Nights/Events

We will be at the following shows and need volunteers:

### 1. Saturday 30 May: Canvey Island Wildlife Day, RSPB West Canvey Marsh

**Address:** Canvey Road, Canvey Island, SS8 0QD

**Time:** 11am – 4pm

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, including SEEEOG.

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.

## **2. Thursday 4 June: Essex Schools Food & Farming Day, Writtle College**

The show area is divided into five zones: Livestock, Crops, Machinery, Countryside & Environment and Food. Children and teachers will be escorted around the showground by a Farmer Steward and will have 30 minutes to spend in each zone, each of which encompasses a key element of the food and farming story with a range of interactive activities and demonstrations. The aim of the day is to give children a better understanding of where their food comes from and the role agriculture plays in shaping the Essex countryside. This visit links with many areas of the curriculum. School groups will be assigned their very own "Farmer Steward" to guide them around the event and ensure that they gain maximum benefit from each exhibit. You can read more about this event at <http://www.essexag.co.uk/event/essex-schools-food-and-farming-day/>

Our theme will be, as required, 'Growing Vegetables' in their Crop Zone: Showing children examples of seasonal vegetables; how they are grown and the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. We are also considering a soil/compost area and a quick interactive quiz, which is all to be discussed in full at our next committee meeting on Thursday 14 May. Please let us know ASAP if you wish to be involved.

## **Monday 18 May**

Monika Currie, Modern Herbalist: 'Weeds as you don't know them - looking at medicinal properties of common weeds'. Just to make gardeners think about the weeds they commonly encounter and maybe even to put them to some use.

## **Saturday 20 June: Visit to Lauriston Farm, Goldhanger, CM9 8AH, 2.00pm (car share)**

Situated right on the Blackwater Estuary, Spencer Christy manages his farm's 225 acres by 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/find-us.html>

### **Directions by car:**

The farm is near the village of Goldhanger which is on the B1026 between Heybridge (near Maldon) and Tolleshunt D'Arcy. Once on the B1026, you need to look out for a small track called Joyces Chase which is only indicated on a small board telling you this is about 20 yards down the track. Lauriston Farm is one mile down this track. Keep going and when the track splits, you need to go left to Lauriston. Their yard is another 1/4 mile down the track.

### **Contact details:**

Spencer Christy  
Lauriston Farm  
Goldhanger CM9 8AH  
Tel: 01621 788348  
<http://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/find-us.html>

## **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/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

### 1) Land at Bullwood Hall

The Parish Clerk said that he has approached Rayleigh Town Council re an agenda item for Rayleigh to share the site with Hockley should an allotment site be decided on submission and approval of the planning application in due course. Apparently Rayleigh has a long waiting list.

### 2) New Hockley Hall Farm

The Parish Clerk reported no progress to date as he is still waiting to hear from the land owner.

3) Construction of the first allotment site in Liverpool for more than half a century is underway as part of a regeneration project at Park Hill, Dingle. You can read more about this story at <http://www.sustainablefoodcities.org/newsevents/news/articleid/264/first-allotment-plots-built-in-liverpool-since-wwii>

4) The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 provided a new right for residents to nominate certain local public or privately owned buildings or land for recognition as being an asset of community value. Councils are obliged to consider all nominations received and include the building or land on a list of assets of community value, if in the opinion of the council, the current use or a recent past use of the asset has furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the community and can continue to do so. Once an asset is listed, the owner cannot dispose of it other than to a community interest group, without the community having six months to put together a bid to buy the asset. However, the owner of the asset does not have to sell it to the community and can appeal against our decision to list the asset.

5) Community leaders have announced plans to provide protective status to a century-old allotments site in east Suffolk in response to fears it could be developed as housing. Wickham Market Parish Council agreed the move at its latest meeting in response to concerns raised by people living in the village about the future of the Glebe Allotments. [http://www.coastalscene24.co.uk/news/wickham\\_market\\_seeks\\_to\\_protect\\_glebe\\_allotments\\_from\\_housing\\_1\\_4008551](http://www.coastalscene24.co.uk/news/wickham_market_seeks_to_protect_glebe_allotments_from_housing_1_4008551)

## Crapes Fruit Farm: Andrew Tann's April update

With the obviously increased number of daylight hours, more occasional very early frosts and significantly warmer hours either side of noon, it is very easy to overlook just how little meaningful rainfall has occurred in this part of Essex since an 'average' January.

Ideally, we need a total of 50mm during two or three spaced 'wet days' in time for the full bloom of the apples (Cox usually 5th May here). As usual, the weather forecasts indicate the chance of rain for this eastern side and invariably a few light showers. Any fruit tree, or bush, needs much moisture during the flowering and fruit setting period for a promising result.

An unstable atmosphere, by its nature, reduces the chance of frosts occurring which shortly will be the main concern. The bud development on all the fruit trees here is, at present, no earlier than average.

PS: Vic counted 20 plum maggot moths w/e 25 April. Andrew said that the pheromone in the trap is that of the female so we have caught males. The females lay up to 70 eggs in total - most in the first few days after they emerge - but carry on for about three weeks. I understand that the males come out some days earlier - Carole

You can read Andrew's full report at <https://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 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 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) 2 May, 6 June, 4 July, 1 August and 5 September from 09:30 – 12:00

## Garden Organic news

As with the Soil Association - in the International Year of Soils – they want to spread the word about the importance of soil health and how, by growing organically, we can safeguard the source of 95% of our food. And here in SEEOG we too can help to spread the message that garden compost and green manures, used as part of an organic growing regime, can ensure soils remain healthy and fertile. They are therefore proposing to produce a Soil Information Pack available online or in printed format for growing groups, volunteers and gardeners around the country. You can read more at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/save-our-soil>

## GMWatch News

Ten NGOs (non-governmental organisations), including GMWatch, have written to the Chinese Ambassador to the UK asking China to suspend exports and imports of glyphosate herbicides while independent testing is carried out. You can read the letter in full at this link: <http://gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2015-articles/16117-ten-ngos-ask-china-to-stop-producing-glyphosate-to-protect-world-health>

## International Compost Awareness Week: Mon 4<sup>th</sup> - Sun 10<sup>th</sup> May

This year's theme is 'Life inside your compost heap' and the following resources are now available at this link: <http://www.homecomposting.org.uk/international-compost-awareness-week-2015>

Compost Creature leaflet

Composting creatures, themed wordsearches

Composting activity sheet

Identify the creatures you find in your compost heap with a handy ID sheet

Life inside your compost heap - What you don't see; factsheet

## Introduction to Permaculture weekend with Graham Burnett: Dial House, Essex: 13-14 June

Dial House is a sixteenth century farm cottage with a one-acre garden nestling deep in the countryside fringing Epping Forest. An area of the Dial House garden is being developed as a semi-autonomous venue for gatherings. It includes indoor and outdoor classroom spaces, camping area, kitchen, fire-pit, compost toilet as well as an orchard area, pond, living willow seat and meditation spots. Planned future facilities include creating an earth oven and an outdoor bath, as well as becoming independent of the power grid by installing solar panels. You can find out more from their website at <http://spiralseed.co.uk/introduction-to-permaculture-weekend-with-graham-burnett-dial-house-essex-information/>

## 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 her 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](mailto:brookhousefarmfobbing@gmail.com)

6. Well rotted horse manure (Rochford). Danielle also has fresh horse manure to use in compost bins. Please contact Danielle Neadley; [danielleneadley@gmail.com](mailto:danielleneadley@gmail.com)

7. Church Road, Hockley, Essex, SS5 6AE, 01702 207166, 07748 490985 – this is where Vic picks up manure for his plot.

## Members' contributions

1. Chelsea Fringe update: Contemporary Green - our book project gathering together 100-word manifestos about the way people garden is nearing completion ready for its release on 16 May (the first day of the Chelsea Fringe). You will be able to read it, free of charge, from our website <http://modernmint.co.uk/events/chelsea-fringe-2015/> It has been included in Gardens Illustrated magazine this month as a highlight of the festival - so please do share the book with as many people as you can upon its release!

Darren

2. I am sourcing seaweed products for the garden, to use on lawns/fruit/vegetables/flowers; cleaning products based on seaweed for around the house and also 100% natural fertilisers made from comfrey and nettle, as it would be great to have something more local - Darren

3. Locally sourced organic seed is available from The Green Chronicle Shop <http://www.greenchronicle.co.uk/> and Seekay Horticultural Supplies <http://www.seekay.co.uk/>

4. How to raise awareness thanks to Pat!  
<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network>

5. It was Sissinghurst owner Vita Sackville-West who lived by the tenet 'cram cram cram' in the garden - get as many flowers in your borders as possible and don't let the soil see the sun. I would think she had to, with the amount of garden she had to tend!

But why cram? The first reason is aesthetic. You want to make your garden look as colourful and beautiful as possible (and if you get your planting right, you can provide nectar for the bees too.) The second reason is a practical one - more flowers means less space for weeds to germinate and take hold. So cram cram cram your flower beds to reduce your work and make your garden fantastic! Darren

## 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 UK and North America

In December 2013, the EU temporary ban on some uses of three bee-toxic neonicotinoid pesticides entered into force. PAN UK Policy Officer, Nick Mole, takes a look at developments over the past fifteen months, including evidence that, in fact, oilseed rape yields appeared to have increased. You can read more at:

[http://www.pan-uk.org/files/PN\\_99\\_neonicotinoids.pdf?utm\\_source=Pesticides+News+-+PAN+UK+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=d8e66c4c2f-PN\\_February\\_2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_dae0fc567-d8e66c4c2f-196181805](http://www.pan-uk.org/files/PN_99_neonicotinoids.pdf?utm_source=Pesticides+News+-+PAN+UK+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d8e66c4c2f-PN_February_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_dae0fc567-d8e66c4c2f-196181805)

## Publications

HDRA's former directors Alan and Jackie Gear are sharing their many years of horticultural experience through a new e-book, 'Grow Your Own Fruit and Vegetables: How to Produce and Preserve Food from your Garden or Allotment'. It is available from Amazon Kindle for £4.79.

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

## SEEOG talks

Galleywood Horticultural Society on Thursday 24 September 2015. They meet at Keene Hall (Watchouse Road, Galleywood, Chelmsford CM2 8PT) at 8.00pm once a month and usually have between 50-60 members per meeting.

## Soil Association news

1. As with Garden Organic, the Soil Association is campaigning to improve the health of our soil and reduce soil-damaging practices across the UK to by:

Improving public understanding of how essential healthy soils are for our survival;  
Ensuring more land is farmed in a way that helps protect, preserve and nourish the soil for the long-term benefit of people, plants and the planet;  
Working at improving organic techniques, already known to benefit soils, and sharing our learning with all farmers

You can learn more by visiting their website at <http://www.soilassociation.org/soils/oursoilscampaign>

2. The Soil Association's **Future Growers** scheme provides comprehensive training in organic horticulture, with participants working alongside organic experts who are passionate about training the next generation and passing on their skills and knowledge. Farm-based work is combined with a series of structured seminars to build upon the practical knowledge gained out in the field. The Soil Association's organic apprenticeship is widely recognised as the gold standard in providing comprehensive two-year training in organic horticulture, allowing apprentices to follow two whole growing seasons.

They are now offering a shorter, six month traineeship where trainees can learn the basics of organic growing and decide whether they wish to take it further. All apprentices and trainees are paid a standard minimum wage and work within a rich learning environment with dedicated mentoring time.

**Find out more:** <http://www.soilassociation.org/futuregrowers>

## South East Essex Conservation Volunteers

If you already know Annette Payne at Growing Together you'll soon realise that she is probably the driving force behind the South East Essex Conservation Volunteers. Formed in 1987, before SEEOG, they carry out practical conservation projects every other Sunday at various locations throughout south east Essex. Typical projects include scrub and path clearance, hedge-laying, coppicing, fencing, litter removal and pond maintenance. Have a look at their website at: <http://www.seecv.org.uk/>

## South Essex Natural History Society

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

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](mailto:pjwortley@btinternet.com)

## The Peckham Experiment: Friday 5 June, Liverpool

We have been invited to a seminar - *'Reading and Wellbeing - A Peckham Vision'*, 'An opportunity to explore ideas of health, demonstrated at the famous Peckham Experiment (1935 – 1950) and how they are being developed in present day Merseyside.' The cost is £20-00 for seminar and supper. For more information, and to register, please contact Anton Clarke [antonclarke@thereader.org.uk](mailto:antonclarke@thereader.org.uk)

In 1926, two Doctors in south London set up the Pioneer Health Centre, a unique health centre which placed good nutrition, organic food, social interaction and self-direction at its heart. Recognising that good health rested on much more than simply an absence of disease, the Peckham Experiment – as the Centre soon became known – remains a highly relevant and compelling example of the benefits of linking food, farming and health care provision. Kate McGeevor, Trustee and Secretary of the Pioneer Health Foundation, visited us in March 2012. Kate is based at Forty Hall Farm in Enfield. [www.thephf.org](http://www.thephf.org)

## Tips and Hints

1. Slug cocktail: 2 cups warm water; 2 tablespoons flour; 1 teaspoon sugar; half teaspoon yeast. Pour into a shallow plastic container. Leave on a raised surface. Enjoy!

2. Learn how to build a bird feeder from a bottle, grow strawberries on your windowsill, or grow mint both indoors or outside. These crafty garden ideas are both simple and fun, and ideal to help to entertain children during the holidays.

<http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/library/default/resources/crafty-garden-ideas.pdf>

## Trust Links: Dig It Youth at Growing Together Shoeburyness

Youngsters aged ten upwards are invited on Mondays 4pm - 6pm (off Elm Road, just past The Woodlands: Monday 13 April to Monday 26 October 2015. Call Brenda on 07789 943430 or 01702 213124 if you would like to design a mural, build a fire pit, cook, plant and grow, drama/poetry and arts and crafts.

## Websites & information

1. The Wild Food and Chilli Fair takes place between 27/28 June, 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. Combining elements of natural beekeeping, citizen science, open source hardware, and networked smart devices, these DIY beehives could be a powerful tool in the fight against Colony Collapse Disorder.

<http://www.treehugger.com/lawn-garden/DIY-beekeeping-download-printable-smart-beehive.html>

3. Gardeners at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, are working with scientists to create a troop of trained bees to help them grow strawberries. The unusual project is designed to ensure the plants, which are difficult to pollinate naturally, flourish.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/11472497/Army-of-bees-to-be-trained-to-pollinate-strawberries.html>

4. Garbage to garden Maltese composting scheme: The Importance of Compost

<http://occupylondon.org.uk/the-importance-of-compost/>

5. A very interesting (only draft as yet) report by the Prince of Wales International Sustainability Unit on the importance of city-region food systems is here at <http://www.cityregionfoodsystems.org/> It's called City Region Food Systems - <http://www.cityregionfoodsystems.org/>

This is a brand new website.

6. Beekeepers in Australia invent 'revolutionary' hive: Father and son from Australia spent a decade inventing a plastic hive with a tap for collecting honey – then sold over £1 million worth in 24 hours.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/11429609/Beekeepers-in-Australia-invent-revolutionary-hive.html>

7. The UK needs to formulate long-term plans to protect both water and food supplies here and across international supply chains, as water usage and availability change in coming years.

<http://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/news-events/news/2015/150323-planning-to-protect-uk-food-and-water.html>

8. 'Ploughing On Regardless' by George Monbiot: Almost all other issues are superficial by comparison to soil loss. So why don't we talk about it?

<http://www.monbiot.com/2015/03/25/3703/>

9. 'Backyard inventors create a buzz with the beehive that gives you honey on tap':

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/11429609/Beekeepers-in-Australia-invent-revolutionary-hive.html>

10. Petition to ban the building of all new incinerators and gasifiers: Why is this important?

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/ban-incineration>

## **Wildflower Course at Belfairs: Tuesday 12 May, 10.00am – 3.00pm**

Jo Loman, their Education & Community Officer, has told us about this event:

Join local botanist Tim Pyner for a one-day course on wildflower identification in Belfairs Wood. The course is run in conjunction with the Southend Borough Council Parks Team and all of the results will be submitted to Plantlife UK. Please bring a packed lunch!

Booking is essential by calling the centre at 01702 477467 - £20 donation per person.

### **SEEOG Committee**

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