

# SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 126 – MARCH 2016

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43705483846/>



SEEEOG was formed in 1994, to promote the principles of organic gardening by:

- Composting organic waste
- Protecting wildlife
- Reducing pollution
- Encouraging species diversity



**Soil Association**

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, notes etc., breaking news!

Exciting news! Growing Together Shoeburyness is a finalist in the Big Lottery Fund and ITV's People's Projects competition. They need lots of votes! Vote at:

<https://www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk/projects/view/growing-together-shoeburyness>. Please share this!

Full story below...

The Cheryl Centre, Growing Together Westcliff: please use the entrance in Prittlewell Chase, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 9AG (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase).

We want to know if you have difficulty with transport as we can then try to coordinate a lift for you.

Unless stated otherwise, our speakers start at 8.00pm sharp, but Growing Together is open from 7.00pm to prepare the room, etc.

The next committee meeting is on Thursday 17 March at Ron's, starting at 7.30pm. **STILL WANTED:** Minutes Secretary and a Librarian! Just a few willing hands, really!

Please notify Graham Oster-Ritter if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address: [grahamoster@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamoster@btinternet.com)

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' for 2016 are as follows:

May	Saturday 30 April
July	Saturday 30 June
September	Tuesday 30 August
November	Sunday 30 October

I am sure that you, our members, will want to hear what their fellows are doing in their gardens/allotments; what they have found to work for them; what hasn't worked and what they are planning to do in the future.

Please don't be shy or worried that what you have to say is not important. Fifty words giving a simple tip in the garden will be just as gratefully received as two pages from any latent novel writers lurking out there! For your information, a page is about 350 words.

You can send your words to me by post or by email. Please join in; SEEEOG is a group of link-minded people!

Don't worry unduly about the subject matter. Tell us about your herb garden or how you look after the hedgehogs/slow worms/frogs in your garden. The odd article on other areas of organic thought would also be most welcome. The important thing is to do it!

## Monday 18 January: The Restoration of Shopland Churchyard

Here is our website link to Ron's report for those who couldn't make this very interesting evening:

This is the narrative of Steve Oakley and Faye Owen's involvement with this derelict church site, starting with a reformulated world adventure, becoming a mobile home venture to Jenny Murrell's campsite next to this site. Their involvement went from distant interest from their Canvey home to their moving to a cottage opposite to make their tending easier.

<http://seeog.org.uk/2016/01/seeogs-talk-on-monday-18-january-2016/>

<http://www.shoplandchurchyard.co.uk>

## **SE Essex Seed Potato Day**

We had 46 varieties to buy by the tuber (20 organic this year!), collected from Julian`s team for East Anglia`s Potato Day two weeks earlier and picked up by Jane, Vic and Ron with Growing Together`s truck.

What a day! We sold out of 21 varieties this year! Couldn`t get what you wanted? Come earlier next year! We're going to add the variety Mozart in 2017.

Friday 26 February, pm: Prepared the polytunnel with welcome help from Annette, Vic, Mike and Graham A – brushed tables off and jiggled about; set out cardboard/blue plastic trays; set out labels (prepared by Graham O-R) and emptied out the potatoes, which we had earlier stored in the sales hut with the gazebo from Leigh Town Council. It got really cold later on, just before we finished.

This year we welcomed Danielle Neadley from SEEDS FOR SWAP/WANTED, who came down to do a seed swap stall for people to bring their seeds and take what they fancy or buy for a small fee!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/943115019087578/>

We were also delighted to meet Jeff Barber, the Eastern Region representative for The National Allotment Society, who brought a good amount of allotment promotion material with him, despite a tricky journey down from London by train and bus.

<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/about-us/>

Saturday 27 February, 8.30.am: gazebo put up at the polytunnel entrance to protect Jeff and Danielle; Graham O-R, Mike, Gill, Carole, Vic, Ray (onion sets, potato fertiliser) and Jane as early helpers; Growing Together`s café, raffle, tea and cakes in the Cheryl Centre set up and the potatoes placed in the oven, urns hot. Then people started to arrive early...

There was a really good atmosphere again, weather kindly, but cold: lots of buying, chatting, networking, eating, raffling, laughing and singing by Growing Together`s own Rob and Alan What a good day, but didn't that cold wind blow as we started to clear up?!

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 next year!

We shall be selling what`s left at the next Rochford and Leigh markets and at Group Night; otherwise at Growing Together, both at Westcliff and Shoeburyness.

Now, we hope that all these dates are now safely entered in your diaries!

## **Monday 21 March: Henry Webber, Mistletoe Trees...**

Just us for Henry Webber`s intriguing mix of mistletoe, mapping soil variation, his PhD, soil science & precision agriculture!

Mistletoe Trees is a small business and hobby, selling crab apple trees with mistletoe already growing on them. Mistletoe is such a fascinating plant and there is still much to learn about it! Don't miss out! Jane introduced us to Henry. Can you introduce us to any other speakers?

## **\*\*Monday 16 May: Pesticide Action Network UK\*\***

Dr Keith Tyrell from PAN UK will be talking about the pesticide-free towns and cities movement across the world and how communities are working to help pollinators in the face of government inaction.

[www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free](http://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free)

## **Saturday 21 May: 'Three Acres And A Cow, A History Of Land Rights And Protest In Folk Song And Story'**

We are delighted to announce that we are co-promoting the above show, with Squeezebox Folk, at The Fishermen's Chapel-Methodist Church, New Road, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2EA.

Students in History, Geography, Economics, Sociology and Politics may find this beneficial.

The show starts with a 6.00pm potluck supper for a 7.00pm start - please bring a dish!

'Three Acres And A Cow' connects the Norman Conquest and Peasants' Revolt with current issues like fracking, the housing crisis and transition town and food sovereignty movements via the Enclosures, English Civil War, Irish Land League and Industrial Revolution, drawing a compelling narrative through the radical people's history of Britain in folk song, stories and poems.

Part TED talk, part history lecture, part folk club sing-a-long, part poetry slam, part storytelling session... Come and share in these tales as they have been shared for generations.

Featuring Rachel Rose Reid and Robin Grey; see <http://threeacresandacow.co.uk/> for more information.

<http://www.etickets.to/buy/?e=13611> or <http://threeacresandacow.co.uk/leigh>

£10 (£8 concessions) + £1 online booking fee

Tickets can be bought locally from Adam without the £1 booking fee via [squeezebox.folk@gmail.com](mailto:squeezebox.folk@gmail.com)

A limited number of pay-what-you-can tickets for low income people are available - please contact [cow23@threeacresandacow.co.uk](mailto:cow23@threeacresandacow.co.uk)

We need to make sure we have some willing hands to sell tea/cakes and put the kitchen back to a tidy state after. Taking photos for reference beforehand and having some willing stewards to coordinate this has worked well in the past. Can we find a few volunteer stewards who get free admission in exchange for their service?

### **Wednesday 8 June: Essex Schools Food & Farming Day, Writtle College**

As with last year, 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 reasonable 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-2016/>

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 repeating our soil/compost area, which was so popular last year, and possibly highlighting FoE's Bee Count 2016, which runs from 19 May – 30 June.

PS: On a practical level, Jane is looking for a rotary sieve to borrow, as her one just wasn't enough, it was so popular. We are also looking for some seasonal plants, grown in troughs or pots/tubs, for our display, pretty please!

### **Saturday 16 July: Visit to Paternoster House, Tiptree, 10am – 4pm (car share) – actual arrival time to be coordinated later**

Paternoster House is described on the NGS website as a 'Peaceful 5 acre garden rescued from a derelict state some 15 yrs ago. It has an enclosed flower garden, two meadows, orchards of apples, pears, stone fruit, mulberry trees and peaches. It has an ornamental kitchen garden with raised beds and extensive lawns with large shrubberies. There are some rare and unusual shrubs (large collection of viburnums) and plants, young and mature trees and three beautiful ponds.'

<http://www.ngs.org.uk/gardens/find-a-garden/garden.aspx?id=31899>

£5 a head, refreshments are extra, and Philip Fawcett (our soft fruit speaker) will be able to come along.

From A12 J24 (Kelvedon), take the B1023 to Tiptree - through Tiptree on B1023 at bottom of Factory Hill turn L to Tolleshunt Knights on Brook Road S bend onto Barnhall Road. Continue to 30mph sign, house on R.

### **\*\*Monday 18 July: 'Garden Organic's Vision for the Future'\*\***

The Chief Executive, James Campbell, an organic grower for 30 years, and with many years' experience in sustainability, will talk about the role of Garden Organic in the 21st century"

Garden Organic represents organic growers and gardeners - especially ordinary gardeners and allotment holders, community groups and not-for-profit growers - to protect and preserve the rights of organic horticulture, and to resist attempts to restrict and contain organic growing.

They work with a wide variety of like-minded organisations to promote the benefits of organic growing for plants, people and communities, to share best practice and to engage hard-to-reach and disadvantaged communities in organic growing practice, backed by scientific research supporting a range of beneficial outcomes. Not to be missed!!

### **Monday 19 September**

Ben Lambert, Crapes Fruit Farm: Ben has been carrying out projects for his permaculture at the 94 year old orchard, Crapes Fruit Farm, near Colchester. There they grow both fruit and vegetables, so expect a mix of no-dig farming, bio-intensive, soil re-mineralisation, forest gardening and holistic orchard management.

### **Saturday 8 October: Apple Day at St. Laurence Orchard, 11:00 to 15:00**

### **Monday 21 November:**

SEEOG panel 'Carry on Composting – The cornerstone of organic gardening'

### **Allotment Bird Survey 2016**

This year is just a "pilot" and we have just "kicked-off", so now it is up to anyone who wants to play to work out what best suits their allotment site. If some allotment sites are unsure, we suggest they try out the casual observation approach to get a feel for it.

The aim is to use the results to help measure the contribution that allotment sites make in supporting wildlife in the urban environment. Graham A used BirdTrack at the end of January - only 6 Brent Geese and 7 Turnstones whilst walking the sea front into Southend: he said he could have recorded many more if he had braved the cold and stayed longer!

Have you got any feedback for us yet? Has your Allotment Association registered with Birdtrack yet?

More at <http://seeog.org.uk/2016/01/seeog-allotment-birdtrack-2016/>

For more information, please email both [ga.adamson@gmail.com](mailto:ga.adamson@gmail.com) and [caroleshorney@hotmail.com](mailto:caroleshorney@hotmail.com)

### **Allotment news**

1. Do try to look at the article in the current issue of the Allotment & Leisure Gardener (Issue 2 2016): An example of why Allotment Societies need to monitor and contribute to Local Plans - see

<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/news-events-campaigns/protect-your-plots/>

A copy should be on our sales table.

### **Crapes Fruit Farm: Andrew Tann's February update**

Another month of 'winter' behind us and still grass is actively growing, just. We have dandelions and daisies quite apart from some lush stinging nettles all warning of a likely very early Spring 2016. Apart from a few frosty mornings there is plenty of evidence of earthworm activity – barely ceased since the end of picking.

Our pruning efforts are mainly with the older, less vigorous, trees as we have a hunch that they will weather the vagaries of the climate best during the next few months. The apple fruit buds seem more developed than the plums, at the moment! Once we see a crop on the younger trees, some selective secateur work will be ongoing. A few extra leaves around the blossom during a chilly spell won't hurt but varieties vulnerable to apple scab will need attention to encourage some air flow, immediately afterwards. Over-enthusiastic pruning just now may be to the detriment of fruit set, frost or not.

The land is neither dry nor waterlogged; an advantage, though last February saw the beginning of a long dry spell which hopefully is not about to be repeated.

<https://crapes.wordpress.com/>

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 2016

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

**Leigh-on-Sea (buy fresh, keep it local!) at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, 09:00 to 12:00, apart from December, 08:30:**

Fridays on 18 March, 15 April, 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November; Saturday 17 December, 08:30 start

**Rochford at the WI Hall, West Street, 09:30 to 12:00:**

Saturdays on 5 March, 2 April, 7 May and 4 June – further dates to follow for the rest of the year

## Garden Organic news

Garden Organic has produced a new soil information pack for gardeners, using organic methods as best practice. The pack includes a wealth of information gathered from more than 50 years of the charity's research and development. From factsheets on surveying the soil on a new growing site, and the function of plant nutrients, to a full booklet on composting – this pack has everything necessary to get your soil in top condition, whether you're a new or experienced grower.

You can download a copy of the pack from this link:

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/soil-information-pack>

Alternatively, to request a printed copy please call them on 024 7630 3517. Copies will be sent free of charge to Garden Organic members. They do ask non-members to make a small donation to cover postage costs.

## GMWatch news

UK: The 'secret conspiracy to force us all to eat GM food'

Most of the meat that people eat comes from animals reared on GM feed – it's a case of a rejected technology sneaking in through the back door.

You can keep up with the latest news and comment on genetically modified foods by going to their website at <http://www.gmwatch.org/news/latest-news>

## Manure/Compost

This information is now on our website, apart from updates, of course, which we trust won't inconvenience too many people.

## Members' contributions

1. Vincent's Eco-Farm: <https://www.facebook.com/vincentsecofarm/>

2. Climate change trends in Malta and related beliefs, concerns and attitudes toward adaptation among Gozitan farmers, are undertaken in this latest study by the University of Malta.

<http://gozonews.com/59791/perception-attitude-of-gozitan-farmers-towards-climate-change-study/>

3. I recently bought a coriander plant growing in a pot from Morrisons. Sorry about that! It looked very green and very healthy. Following the growing instructions, I put it on my window sill and it immediately drooped and was dead within 10 days. It occurs to me that lots of plants being sold in supermarkets might well be forced in heated greenhouses and that the temperate zone which is my kitchen will be such a shock that they will quickly die. A friend tells me she has loads of coriander growing outdoors in her garden (in January!) and I'm reminded of a visit I once made to a community allotment in Tower Hamlets where many of the allotments seemed to be almost overwhelmed by coriander growing in every conceivable space.

So, has anyone else had the experience of obviously-heated-greenhouse-forced plants sold in supermarkets dying within a few days and has anyone had great success of growing coriander which goes on growing all winter? Eileen

4. Our Experiences of Fruit Production

As children, we both grew up with soft fruit. Many a Sunday in the summer was spent standing in a field of 'pick your own' soft fruit. We then enjoyed the tasty pies and crumbles our Mums would make.

When we married, our gardens did not provide sufficient space to grow our own soft fruit, so still we had to resort to 'pick your own'. Sadly over the years the opportunity to pick fruit locally began to dwindle and so

it was with great delight when we took on our allotment some 11-12 years ago, we could realise our dream to have the space to finally grow our own.

We have gooseberry bushes, blackcurrant bushes and raspberry canes all propagated by Gill's father, who grew soft fruit in his garden. These bushes and canes have yielded pounds of fruit over the past few years and fed not only ourselves but other family members, friends and neighbours.

We have added strawberries and redcurrants to our repertoire on the plot, and decided this year to expand our selection of fruit by replacing a few of our blackcurrant bushes with ballerina apple trees.

In addition, we grow eating and cooking apples, figs, pears, plums and greengages in the garden. Whilst we have had some successes, we have our fair share of failures, having planted a kiwi over 10 years ago which is yet to yield any fruit and blueberries in pots that only produced a handful of berries.

We count ourselves lucky to be enjoying the fruits of our labour and reviving memories of our childhood spent picking and eating soft fruit.

### Growing Potatoes

These are my experiences of growing potatoes but I find I am learning all the time as far as gardening is concerned. I have read that potatoes are hungry feeders. I have found that it is not necessary to dig a trench for them, and this makes it a lot easier on my back. A hole dug the size of a spade width square and a spade deep is adequate. I put some garden compost / grass cuttings/potato fertiliser around them. This also helps to stop them getting scab to some extent and helps them grow well. I water the hole and fill in the rest of hole. I water them in dryer weather.

Mike & Gill Humphreys

### 5. Diluted: How We Use Water In The Garden

We need to **tell ourselves a new story about water** – not that we are British, and rain and water is something we get everyday ..... but that we are a member of this planet, that water is a scarce resource for some, while being a tremendous monster for others, and we must recognise that how we use it over the next few years will have as big an impact on our lives as climate change or peak oil.

From a new talk by Modern Mint - Diluted: How We Use Water in the Garden

To find out more visit <http://modernmint.co.uk/water/>

### 6) Borage – Why Is It So Good For Bees?

If we have to be honest, if bees disappear this will lead to the disappearing of lots of fruits and vegetables, such as almonds, soy beans, apricots, melons, cherries, cucumbers, etc. The list is quite long and actually affects about a third of the fruits and vegetables on the planet. Simon

<http://kiwimana.co.nz/borage-good-for-bees/>

## 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.

## Norfolk Organic Group

The Norfolk Organic Group is, like SEEORG, a local group for both Garden Organic and the Soil Association, which started long before us. It is, in the words of their Chairman Peter Robinson, a successful group: 30-50 people at meetings (down on the 70-100 of a few years ago), but that was when they put out some advertising and they don't have anyone to do that now). They have an embarrassment of cash in the bank. They just lack people prepared to take some responsibility for a couple of areas of administration.

Peter says he's been trying to 'twist arms' for two years. They are now down to three on the organising committee with a constitution which requires four for a quorum at committee meetings.

The Internet, he says, has many uses but it has led to a situation where young people think that there's no need for anything else by way of interaction with like minded people. That and the busy lives which successive governments have led us to adopt will lead to the practical death of many a 'good body', with society, ultimately, being the loser.

## **Pesticide Action Network UK: Pesticide Action Week 20-30 March**

Are you concerned about the use of pesticides in your local area; in parks, playgrounds and schools? Would you like to do something about it? If so, PAN UK would like to invite you to take part in this year's Pesticide Action Week, the global event held every year in the first ten days of spring to raise awareness about the health and environmental impacts of pesticides, promote sustainable alternatives and to build a global, grassroots movement for a pesticide-free world.

It is up to you to decide how you want to participate: how heavily you get involved, and what you do, will depend on your interests and means. It may not be necessary to do something striking and it is quite possible simply to steer one of your existing activities onto the subject of pesticides.

And you don't have to do it alone. Campaigning together is more effective and more FUN. You can contact other interested people or groups using their Facebook page and find lots of information about pesticides and their alternatives on PAN-UK's website.

There is, however, one thing that they are asking everybody to do: sign their petition to the UK government calling on them to make our towns and cities pesticide free. You can read more at <http://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free> and <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/109257>

## **Pesticide Action Network North America**

Three important items on their website are flagged up:

Millions of barrels of pesticides are traded in the global marketplace, re-circulating as residue on food and fibre. Tackling this "circle of poison" has galvanized PAN activists around the globe since the network's early days. Yet the global trade in pesticides is just one example of how so-called "free trade" undermines a just and healthy food system.

Since the mass introduction of pesticides into food and agriculture following WWII, control over the knowledge needed to grow food has been shifting from farmers to the laboratories financed by multinational corporations. As a result, scientific research that serves corporate interests, rather than the public good, has become the norm.

The importance of science for the public good is difficult to overstate — especially when it comes to feeding our world.

Sign up to receive their action alerts plus the latest news. (Monsanto & Co. wish you wouldn't), all at <http://www.panna.org/>

## **SEEOG library**

Please contact us 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. We would very much like to hear from anyone who could take out a few of the books from the cupboard and set them out on Group Night – there are some good titles in that cupboard, including a few that Pat kindly gave us on Potato Day.

## **SEEOG talks**

From time to time, we are asked to provide speakers to other groups and societies, which Ron now very kindly undertakes, his next one being on Monday 7 March at the Barling WI.

## **Soil Association news**

1. Ground-breaking new research out confirms what they've thought all along - organic has more of the good stuff and less of the bad. Organic meat and dairy has over 50% more Omega 3s and fewer saturated fats linked to heart disease. A new study published in the British Journal of Nutrition shows that organic milk and meat contain around 50% more beneficial omega-3 fatty acids than non-organic. In addition to organic milk and meat, the nutritional differences also apply to organic dairy like butter, cream, cheese and yoghurt. The study is the largest systematic review of its kind and led by Newcastle University and an international team of experts. You can read the article in full at <http://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic/organicfood/organicnutrition>

## **2) Farming conference confirms the majority of meat is raised on GM feed**

The topic of genetically modified animal feed was raised at an NFU conference recently. The emphasis was that it is hard to find meat that has not been fed at least some GM feed. David Hughes, a professor of food marketing, admitted that while this information is not new, it is something sellers prefer not to acknowledge. Many major supermarkets dropped their ban on GM-fed meat in 2013 due to the rapid

expansion of GM corn and soya, and restaurants such as McDonald's have followed suit. Peter Melchett, policy director at the Soil Association, criticised the widespread importing of cattle feed. Statements on supermarkets' websites all indicate that for their customers wishing to avoid GM-fed meat, organic is the only option.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3461226/Most-supermarket-meat-tainted-GM-UK-animals-routinely-given-modified-feed-shoppers-told.html>

### 3) Green Party announces new 'agricultural spokesman'

Oliver Dowding has been named as the new agricultural spokesman for the Green Party, a new position for the party. The Somerset based farmer has been farming for 40 years and has been organic for the past 26. Oliver is also a Soil Association trustee. The Green Party says it is well aware that agriculture is the last primary industry left in the UK and is keen to forge closer ties with farmers, and develop flexible agricultural policies to cope with the changing demands placed on the industry.

[http://www.farminguk.com/news/Green-Party-appoints-first-agricultural-spokesman-in-newly-defined-post\\_38753.html](http://www.farminguk.com/news/Green-Party-appoints-first-agricultural-spokesman-in-newly-defined-post_38753.html)

You can sign up to receive Organic News, and read the news in full, from:

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

### South Essex Natural History Society's meetings

Their next indoor meeting is on Thursday 21 April. 2-4pm: Glowing, Glowing, Gone (a talk on Glow-worms), presented by Dr Tim Gardiner. Meetings are usually held in The Beecroft Centre (Old Library) Victoria Avenue, Southend-in-Sea, SS2 6EX.

<http://www.essexinfo.net/senhswildlife/2014-indoor-meetings/>

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

[pjwortley@btinternet.com](mailto:pjwortley@btinternet.com)

### Southend in Transition Community Plot update

Kamil reports that they've had their first plot visit this year and hatched a cunning plan for making it an even better place to meet new people, enjoy nature and grow fresh, mood and immune boosting food.

Their Taster dates, open to new people, are on their website. Just go into the plot for a cup of tea and piece of cake to see the plot and decide then if it is something with which you wish to become involved. Take a friend or the family. They have a core group of growers so, if you want to pop in now and again, that's just right.

<https://sitcommunityallotment.wordpress.com/>

### The Gardens Yalding

As with the other parties that have taken over the Gardens since Garden Organic's bale-out, the Friends of Yalding Organic Gardens really do wish the owners every success with their venture. There has obviously been significant expenditure in restoring the Gardens and extending the 'barn' and as a wedding venue; the site will surely be magnificent.

They do hope, though, that the owners will not forget the obligation that attaches to the stewardship of the site – morally, if not legally, to promote and educate the public about organic farming and growing. That was the reason for the original bequest of the site by Donald Cooper and it is only through that and the considerable support of organic gardening enthusiasts (practically, spiritually and financially) that the Gardens even existed, for them to exist now and be used in this way today.

The Friends note that, although the new website does at least mention organics (in the history section), there seems to be no suggestion that the Gardens are now, or will again be organic. Similarly, there does not seem to be any mention of public access to the Gardens; which is clearly a great disappointment to all those who have visited, or been involved in the Gardens in the past.

<http://www.foyog.org/>

<http://www.thegardensyalding.co.uk/index.html>

## Tips

Q: I have some (mistletoe) growing on a crab apple tree but it never has berries. Would your speaker be able to advise me how to get berries?

A: The reason why you don't have berries will likely be because you need both male and female mistletoe plants to get cross-pollination. Then only the female plants will produce berries. So I am presuming you have a single plant that is male on your crab apple tree.

The way to change this is to introduce more mistletoe plants. Unfortunately it is not possible to tell the difference between male and female mistletoe until about 4 or 5 years' of growth from the seedling so it's often best to introduce a number of berries, the likelihood being that you will get some female plants in there. So - either collect some berries yourself and seed them in a month's time or you can buy packs of berries from here - <http://mistletoe.org.uk/homewp/index.php/grow-your-own/> - with advice on how to seed them. Or you can buy another tree that has berries already seeded onto it from me.

Henry Webber

## Vote for Trust Links! Trust Links Needs You!

Exciting news! Growing Together Shoeburyness is a finalist in the Big Lottery Fund and ITV's People's Projects competition. They need lots of votes! Vote at:

<https://www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk/projects/view/growing-together-shoeburyness>. Please share this!

Growing Together Shoeburyness has entered the competition in order to win funding to improve the site and add reminiscence features, new safe paths and a children's play area.

**Growing Together Shoeburyness will feature on ITV Anglia News at 6pm on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March. Please watch and see what a great site they have!**

Growing Together Shoeburyness is a therapeutic community garden, which transforms people's lives. Members gain skills, confidence and hope through training and therapeutic gardening. Through the project, Keith has been able to manage his mental health problems, achieve qualifications and move into work. Please help them to help more people like Keith by voting for them! Visit [www.trustlinks.org](http://www.trustlinks.org) to see how their members are being helped.

Can you help us spread the word and get as many votes as possible? Please tell all your friends, family, staff and colleagues and encourage them to vote for Trust Links so that they can improve and develop their project, which makes a difference to so many people's lives. Vote at:

<https://www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk/projects/view/growing-together-shoeburyness> Or you can vote by post.

To vote by post, blank postcards need to be addressed to 'FREEPOST The People's Projects' and include the voter's name, address and telephone number as well as clearly stating that you are voting for 'Growing Together Shoeburyness project'. Trust Links can supply you with a stock of blank postcards if you prefer this method for multiple votes for your organisation! (Please note: you are only allowed to vote once online or by post. Under-18s are allowed one vote each, too). Voting is open until 13 March, so don't delay, vote today!

Vote at: <https://www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk/projects/view/growing-together-shoeburyness>

Click on 'Select This Project', enter your details and verify the link once sent through to your email address.

Over the next fortnight, they will be very active on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/trustLinksltd> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/TrustLinksLtd> so please follow them and share! Thank you for your support!  
<http://www.trustlinks.org/>

## Websites & information

1. Alan Wilson's new website is fairly self-explanatory but we know you will love it as it is designed to get the nation eating more potatoes, preferably by growing them. If you like it, could you pass it on to your friends and worldwide contacts?

<http://thepeoplespotatoes.businesscatalyst.com/index.html>

2. The debate is raging from Toronto, Canada to Basel, Switzerland – should we plant fruit trees and community orchards in public parks? Enthusiastic residents and fans of urban agriculture say "yes!" but city authorities don't always agree.

<http://orchardpeople.com/should-we-plant-community-orchards-in-public-parks/?>

[utm\\_content=buffer11b13&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://orchardpeople.com/should-we-plant-community-orchards-in-public-parks/?utm_content=buffer11b13&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

3. The log hive has been used for many years and is considered a more natural style hive.

<http://www.permaculture.co.uk/videos/how-make-log-hive>

4. 'It won't stop raining – so I am weatherproofing my garden.' Protecting the plot from extreme weather is one of the main challenges gardeners face today. Kim Stoddart makes a start:

[http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog/2016/jan/15/it-wont-stop-raining-so-i-am-weatherproofing-my-garden#\\_=\\_](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog/2016/jan/15/it-wont-stop-raining-so-i-am-weatherproofing-my-garden#_=_)

5. Vincent's Eco-Farm: <https://www.facebook.com/vincentsecofarm/>

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