

# SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 128 – JULY 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

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.

We are looking forward to seeing lots of you at the AGM and meeting on Monday 18 July and hope you will try to come along, as our May meeting was (to say the least) pretty sparse! It will be a very pleasant evening and we hope to get some feedback from members to help point the way forward. James is really looking forward to meeting us.

As usual, we are at 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 (as with our AGM) 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 14 July at Jane'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:

September Tuesday 30 August

November Sunday 30 October

## Saturday 16 July: Visit to Paternoster House, Tiptree, 10.30 for 11am (car share) – urgent request!

**Can you please let Carole know who will be coming, who is car-sharing, who needs a lift and from where, etc. as Julia Bradley needs to know so that she can bake enough cakes!**

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.'

Tea is £1.00 per cup and cakes are £2.00 per slice; entrance fee, £5.00 per head. Philip Fawcett, our soft fruit speaker back in November, will be able to come along and kindly show us around. All proceeds will go to the National Gardens Scheme:

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

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: SEEOG AGM at 7.30pm followed by 'Garden Organic's Vision for the Future' at 8pm**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of last AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Any other business

## **Monday 18 July, 8pm: 'Garden Organic's Vision for the Future'**

We have previously welcomed Jeremy Cherfas (Heritage Seeds) and Frances Rayns (Green Manures) and this year we are much looking forward to hearing James Campbell, their Chief Executive talking 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! James is much looking forward to seeing us all!

## **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:**

'Diluted', a new garden talk about the gardener and their relationship to water is presented by SEEOG member, Darren Lerigo. To find out more, please visit: <http://modernmint.co.uk/water/>

## **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.

Have you got any feedback for us? 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 [ga.adamson@gmail.com](mailto:ga.adamson@gmail.com)

## **Allotment news**

1) Hockley Parish Council did include an item in their recent Planning Committee agenda, which was 'To receive Rockford District Council's reply about the allotments for Folly Lane'. We now understand that this is a complete non-story. They called the District Council because one of the Parish Councillors had heard a rumour that something was going to happen. The District's reply was that no plans had been received and they were not expecting anything in the immediate future. On the positive side, we now have Malcolm Maddocks on the Parish Council who is showing a keen interest in establishing the allotments on the new housing estate at Pond Chase Farm, Folly Lane.

We've been waiting for the site work to start, which it did a few days ago. The allotments are one of about 39 conditions that were laid down, subject to planning being granted. We fully anticipate that the developers will be looking to 'adjust' that condition as the development progresses, so at this stage our

intention is to make the management aware that we are on the case. Councillors John Mason, Irena Cassar and Adrian Eves are looking to ask for an appointment on site as soon as they see the management portacabins go up, in order to make them aware that we are watching the site, and in particular, the allotments issue. At this stage, there isn't much more that we can do. Suffice to say, Cllr Eves is keeping a close eye on the weekly planning list to watch for any relative applications for variation re the allotments issue.

[facebook.com/hockley.allotment.society](https://www.facebook.com/hockley.allotment.society)

2) Sunday 21 August: Summer Show at Springfield Drive Allotments, Westcliff-on-Sea from 14:00.

3) Sunday 4 September, 11:00 to 15:00: Manchester Drive's Open Day, at Manchester Drive Allotments, Manchester Drive (opposite Cricketfield Grove), Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3EZ.

As usual, hoping for good weather and lovely music!

### **Crapes Fruit Farm: Andrew Tann's end of June update**

Everywhere is very soggy under foot following approximately 5.25" rainfall in the last four weeks. This is exceptional and a combination of our running drains, plenty of grass cover and some sun, we hope with some higher temperatures during the next two weeks should dry the land. Hopefully the trees have not suffered too much root death in the wettest patches. Time will tell, probably during August when the leaves may show stress.

Assuming all will be well, the apples are looking fine and a late August start with Discovery can be anticipated. Our plums are sparse.

At the farm for the beginning of July will be Tayberries, Raspberries, Beetroot, Lettuce, Cabbage etc. Please note that all produce is available ready picked Monday to Saturday 8am until dusk.

<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.

### **Essex Schools Food & Farming Day, Writtle College**

The smells, sounds, feel, taste and sights of the countryside were brought to life for more than 3,000 children when they descended on Writtle College. The youngsters, aged from eight to 11, had all five senses engaged as they learnt how their food travels from the field to their fork at the ninth annual Food and Farming Day.

The enormously over-subscribed event, which takes months to plan, saw pupils from 60 Essex primary schools (including Westerings (Hawkehill) and Richmond Avenue (Shoeburyness) able to try numerous hands-on activities such as making cereal bracelets, handling turkey eggs, stroking alpacas and sniffing fresh herbs.

Watching enormous state-of-the-art combine harvesters cut corn in a field, sampling freshly cooked burgers and learning the importance of sheep in modern British agriculture were just some of the fun and informative sessions on offer at the show staged by Essex Agricultural Society in conjunction with Writtle College.

3000 children? Well, that's what we were told to expect, but we (Ron and Ane, Sharon and Jane, Vic and Carole) simply couldn't imagine it was possible. How could that many people filter through five marquees in four hours and get anything out of the event? But four hours later, and no idea how many people actually attended, we were exhausted and this year very wet at the end! After a good start, we were constantly on our feet talking to children, teachers and some helpers/parents.

This year we were in the Food Zone and had brought quite a few plants in pots and tubs, including potatoes, broad beans, lettuce and a tomato plant, including some herbs.

We also took a compost display showing three basic stages of compost making. We had a tub of ingredients - banana skin, vegetable peelings, toilet roll tubes, shredded paper, cat fur from cat's brush, wooden lolly sticks, teabags, coffee grounds, eggshells, just to show that anything that has lived and hadn't been cooked can go into making compost.

We had a manual sieve and two large rotary sieves (courtesy of Jane and Ray) to make the compost fine for seed sowing and potting on, both of which the children really enjoyed using. Most of them were

fascinated by the process of making compost, so this part of our display and information was a great success....but.....WORMS! Worms were the most successful part of our display; so many of the children wanted to hold them and learn about how they help to make compost and improve the soil.

Well worth attending – there are a few photos on our website, so do have a look.

## **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 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 2 July, 6 August, 3 September, 1 October, 5 November and 3 December.

[facebook.com/rochfordfarmersmarket](https://www.facebook.com/rochfordfarmersmarket)

## **Farming Today This Week: What Should a Post-Brexit British Agricultural Policy Look Like?**

What should a post-Brexit British Agricultural Policy look like? Charlotte Smith discusses this with agricultural economist Professor Allan Buckwell, conservationist Matt Shardlow of Buglife, young farmer Ed Ford and food marketing consultant Ed Gillespie of Futerra.

They each argue strongly and convincingly for their points of view, against a backdrop of political turmoil, shedding more light than heat, after an extraordinary week in Westminster, and around the UK.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07h2vs0>

## **Garden Organic news**

The EU Commission has announced a temporary 18-month extension for the licence to use glyphosate. This allows them to consider further analysis from their chemical testing agency (ECHA), due by the end of 2017.

The Commission has tried to relicence glyphosate no less than 3 times this year. But continued opposition from some member states, and lobbying from numerous organisations, including Garden Organic, the EU have been forced to reassess. This temporary extension is a victory in the ongoing battle to ban toxic chemicals.

Commissioners have proposed certain restrictions, which may or may not be taken up by member states (they are not obligatory). These include:

- a) A ban on the co-formulant POE-tallowamine from glyphosate-based products. This is excellent news, as there is every indication that these co-formulants are more toxic than glyphosate itself
- b) To reinforce scrutiny of pre-harvest uses of glyphosate. If enforced, this would mean considerably reduced glyphosate in the harvested crop as well as in the soil.
- c) To “minimise” use in specific areas (public parks and playgrounds). Unfortunately, this doesn’t mean “eliminate” or “ban” and can be interpreted as allowing continued use.

Of course, we do not know yet know the consequences as Britain leaves the EU.

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/eu-extends-glyphosate-licence-just-18-months>

## **Gardeners' Question Time: Sunday 3 July**

Eric Robson and the panel pay a visit to Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens in Essex. Matthew Wilson, Christine Walkden and Pippa Greenwood answer the horticultural queries this week. It has an excellent intro, all about Lawrence Hills, the 'old' HDRA, Bocking 14 comfrey, Garden Organic and Ryton, etc. etc.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07hj8bb>

## **GMWatch news**

The vote for Britain to leave the EU is devastating for British environmentalists, who have EU regulations to thank for making Britain’s air, water, and beaches cleaner and its wildlife safer. The EU has saved Britain from its former reputation as the dirty man of Europe. Now Britain seems set on a regressive path.

Appeals for funds for UK-based environmental groups have already started to flood into email in-boxes. The gist of the mails is that many EU protections for the environment and public health will no longer apply in the UK and the groups will have to start almost from scratch to try to put them in place here – but this time without the support and leadership of the more environmentally responsible governments of the EU member states. They will need many times their current funding and capacity to even begin this job.  
<http://gmwatch.org/news/latest-news/17055-brexite-vote-devastating-for-british-environmental-groups>

### ***Letsrecycle.com***

Headline news: UK 'without policy' on EU's Circular Economy plans

Defra is expected to continue to participate in ongoing discussions on the European Union's Circular Economy Package, despite the UK's impending withdrawal from the EU.

But, *letsrecycle.com* has learnt from high-level sources that the UK government is still to come up with a clear stance on the EU's Circular Economy Package and this is not expected to change until after a new Prime Minister is appointed on 9 September.

<http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/uk-without-policy-on-eus-circular-economy-plans/>

### **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) 'Grass cutting suspended to aid growth of Marsh, Bee and Spotted orchids. Your patience is appreciated'.

<https://www.facebook.com/brigit.strawbridge/posts/1335363503146702>

2) "We have asked this same question many times, and each time we are surprised by the amount of people who say 'it's not the job of the school, but the parents'"

Free Range Child, Raising Children Connected To The Earth & Their Food

<http://www.overgrowthesystem.com/freerangechild/#new-page-1>

3) At Vincent's Eco-Farm, mint leaves are especially good in warm weather when they can give a burst of cool flavour to a summery salad or beverage

<https://www.facebook.com/vincentsecofarm/photos/a.538617596322403.1073741844.221415194709313/538619092988920/?type=3>

4) Vera Tring [v.tring@talktalk.net](mailto:v.tring@talktalk.net) has a large quantity of quaking grass seed to give away.

5) Recycle your plant pots! Plastic plant pots can't be recycled. It is estimated there are some five million sat in sheds and gardens around the country - that is an awful lot of plastic that will one day be crunched up and thrown into landfill. But there may yet be a use for these pots - as clocks, house signs, bird feeders and plant labels! To find out where to recycle your old plastic pots, so that they can become something useful in your garden, visit <http://modernmint.co.uk/recycle-your-plant-pots/>

Modern Mint (Darren) is hoping to start collecting the pots at some point, as nowhere else in Essex does it yet. Hopefully SEEOG can help lobby a few garden centres too - all the information is in the blog post!

6) This Dutch town will grow its own food, live off-grid, and handle its own waste

Meet the "Tesla of eco-villages".

[http://www.sciencealert.com/this-dutch-town-will-grow-its-own-food-live-off-grid-and-handle-its-own-waste?](http://www.sciencealert.com/this-dutch-town-will-grow-its-own-food-live-off-grid-and-handle-its-own-waste?utm_content=bufferc079f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

[utm\\_content=bufferc079f&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.sciencealert.com/this-dutch-town-will-grow-its-own-food-live-off-grid-and-handle-its-own-waste?utm_content=bufferc079f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

7) What we work on is not only enjoyable but it can make people's lives better

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/may/17/doctors-should-prescribe-gardening-for-patients-more-often-says-report>

8) Malta was to abstain in vote on use of glyphosate for use in pesticides but has now decided to vote against

[http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/lifestyle/environment/65617/malta\\_has\\_a\\_change\\_of\\_heart\\_and\\_opposes\\_probable\\_carcinogenic\\_pesticide?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/lifestyle/environment/65617/malta_has_a_change_of_heart_and_opposes_probable_carcinogenic_pesticide?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)

9) When in drought: the California farmers who don't water their crops  
[http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/05/dry-farming-california-drought-wine-crops?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/05/dry-farming-california-drought-wine-crops?CMP=share_btn_link)

10) Launching the new look Spiralseed website during the same week as the Chelsea Flower Show, so what better time to share this article on 'Lifestyle Gardening' that originally appeared in The Idler magazine...  
<http://spiralseed.co.uk/lifestyle-gardening/>

11) Healthy Waste-free Picnic  
[http://ecogozo.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=526%3Ahealthy-waste-free-picnic&catid=1%3Anews&lang=en](http://ecogozo.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=526%3Ahealthy-waste-free-picnic&catid=1%3Anews&lang=en)

12) Rob found this article in today's Guardian - though you may have already seen it.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/17/unwho-panel-in-conflict-of-interest-row-over-glyphosates-cancer-risk>

13) No more glyphosate in Sliema - Local Council instructs ELC  
<http://sliemanews.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/no-more-glyphosate-in-sliema-local.html?sref=tw>

14) A 'Full' Smith Period occurs when the following criteria are met on two consecutive days:-  
Minimum air temperatures are at least 10°C  
Relative Humidity is 90% or above for at least 11 hours  
Please visit the website for full details of all affected areas.  
<http://www.blightwatch.co.uk/>

15) Spiralseed have been busy over the last few weeks building and maintaining a self-watering indoor container garden as part of an installation at Southend-on-Sea's Focal Point Gallery. It's an exciting project exploring the edges between art and permaculture, but also something you can replicate in your own home or maybe even office - find out how in this issue.  
<http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=d83c704bab4b6ea121024a1e4&id=2b0e68d6f2&e=ba769497ae>

16) UK's out vote is a 'red alert' for the environment  
From the 'red-tape' slashing desires of the Brexiters to the judgment of green professionals, all indications are for weaker environmental protections. Despite being an issue that knows no borders, affects all and is of vital interest to future generations, the environment was low on the agenda ahead of the UK's historic vote to leave the European Union.

The short answer to what happens next with pollution, wildlife, farming, green energy, climate change and more is we don't know – we are in uncharted territory. But all the indications – from the “red-tape” slashing desires of the Brexiters to the judgment of environmental professionals - are that the protections for our environment will get weaker.  
[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2016/jun/24/uks-out-vote-is-a-red-alert-for-the-environment?CMP=share\\_btn\\_fb#\\_=\\_](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2016/jun/24/uks-out-vote-is-a-red-alert-for-the-environment?CMP=share_btn_fb#_=_)

17) Papaya, Moringa, Avocado and Loquat, are all grown from seed.  
We eat and we plant anything that grows.  
<https://www.facebook.com/thevegboxmalta/posts/2030773053815134>

18) Spiralseed are pleased to take delivery of the latest print run of their best selling 'Permaculture, a Beginner's Guide'. It's evolved a bit over the years and there are now over 10,000 English language copies in print, as well as a number of translations including French, Croatian and Spanish editions. So, if you are wondering 'So What IS Permaculture Anyway' why not buy a copy today at their special online price of £7.99, or check out their introductory article at <http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=d83c704bab4b6ea121024a1e4&id=a1b015f5fd&e=ba769497ae>

With grateful thanks to Simon, Darren, Sharon and Rob and Graham Burnett

## New members

When you join SEEOG, not a lot will happen in the beginning. If you join on Group Night, you can collect a current newsletter from Carole, our Secretary. Alternatively, you can download a newsletter from SEEOG's website at <http://seeog.org.uk/resources-information/newsletters/> - our website will also give you lots of useful information. In future, you will receive a newsletter bi-monthly either by email or post. We do not issue receipts or membership cards at present in order to keep down costs.

## Open Garden in aid of Send a Cow

Cicely told us that she had a great day and that she raised £600 for Send a Cow despite having had no electricity for two days before Saturday and a huge hole outside her house for repairs. She is an amazing lady. It is a really lovely garden to visit whilst having a cuppa, buying plants etc. One visitor remarked that she enjoyed the African keyhole garden and vowed to make one in her own vegetable plot. Cecily said it was pretty fraught! They had only just finished repairing the hole when the last gang of the reinstatement gangs came to take a picture of where it had been!! However, all went well on the day and she was really pleased with the resulting total.

## Pesticide Action Network UK (May meeting)

We must discuss ways of taking forward the suggestions in PAN's website following the presentation by Nick Mole, PAN's Policy Officer, who described 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)

There were a number of themes highlighted where PAN UK is involved with their team of five:

Glyphosate is the most widely used pesticide, cotton the biggest user; so move to organic, pay more and ecologically save more!

They work in East and West Africa. Africa has had old illegal pesticides dumped so there's an area of work overseeing clear up.

Pesticide residues are presently found in 70% of fruit and 40% of vegetables. Waitrose has a no-glyphosate policy, the removal of which the no-glyphosate in bread campaign highlights.

Coffee growers now use integrated pest management. By contrast, we see that the former Soviet Bloc now has no regulation, no oversight and consequently no protection. As Nick pointed out, upon an exit from Europe this scenario will be one we will need all our collaborative energies to overcome, given that when in the EU the UK government consistently opposed controls.

Glyphosate Free Towns is an initiative that tackles amenity glyphosate use: Brighton, the first, followed by Hackney, Bristol, Portsmouth, Havant, Kensington and Chelsea, Wadebridge, Camden and Islington, South Shropshire, South Gloucestershire and growing. Southend, Rochford, etc. locally?

2018, in France, there will be no glyphosate spraying apart from agriculture. Ghent has been free of it for 20yrs, Paris 10yrs + 400 other cities too in France. Belgium bans in 2017. The use of pesticides is 95% in fields and greenhouses, used in parks everywhere - known since 1985 as a probable carcinogen, endocrine disrupter, combining with our highly polluted urban air.

They work with the National Pollinators Forum - considering pesticides were developed to kill living organisms refined from the military - remember Agent Orange! Vested interests here - NFU, DEFRA - and public apathy are a concoction to overcome. The Bristol trial was bad science and constructed to fail; do not be misled.

There was no increase in neonic use with rape but yields were up. Is there a need?

In the USA, it was National Happy Pollinator week, an equivalent move to here but fighting the big six, maybe five, who control 80% + of the seed production, systemic pesticides for modified seed that requires ever-increasing use to combat resistance with all the damage to health in farming communities, and it's happening in our streets and parks.

It's our raison d'être, no less.

## **Pesticide Action Network UK**

PAN UK is disappointed that the commission has decided to act unilaterally and go against the advice of the parliament and in the face of strong opposition from some member states to extend the licence – even if it is only for 18 months. The WHO IARC's comprehensive review of the science was clear – glyphosate probably causes cancer in humans, and this classification means that the EC should not re-licence it.

## **Pesticide Action Network North America**

Last month, PAN joined partners and friends in delivering more than four million comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their message was to protect bees and other pollinators from pesticides. Along with beekeepers, farmers and scientists, they're working for effective, bee-protective policies. And while there have been powerful shifts at local and state levels, their federal decision makers are (finally!) starting to get in gear.

This is an uphill battle. Pesticide makers like Bayer and Syngenta are investing heavily to keep their bee-harming products on the market. And EPA is only just now taking a closer look at the impacts of neonicotinoids on pollinators — even though these chemicals have been widely used for more than a decade.

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

## **SEEOG library**

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 and John Walker's 'Digging Deep in the garden', Book 1, which is excellent and just up SEEOG's street!

## **Soil Association news**

### 1) EU referendum statement

'The Soil Association is very disappointed that the UK will be leaving the European Union. One of the Soil Association's key charitable objectives is to preserve, conserve and protect the environment and our view is that these objectives were far more likely to be achieved as part of the EU.

UK wildlife, the environment and the organic farming sector have been major beneficiaries of EU membership, where the precautionary principle prevails in policy making. Thanks to EU policy, the UK has cleaned up its act as 'the dirty man of Europe' and now has cleaner beaches, rivers and better protection for wildlife, including our vital pollinators as a direct result of EU membership. It is vital that these gains are secured.'

You can read the full statement at <https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2016/june/24/eu-referendum-statement/>

2) In a ground-breaking report, the all-party Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) suggested (on 2 June) that government departments should work together to 'place soil protection at the heart of environmental policy'. They've campaigned for many years and finally the government has recognised the importance of healthy soil.

We understand from the Soil Association that they have not worked on planning issues as part of this campaign, not do they think the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee looked at this in detail, although what is described by soil scientists as 'sealing soil' by development is, of course, a very serious and frequently discussed problem. They wanted to raise issues less in the public eye, like the impact of maize grown for AD, the loss of carbon from lowland peat soils and the need for a soil carbon target.

[https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2016/june/the-future-of-the-environment-depends-on-soil/?\\_cldee=Y2Fyb2xic2hvcm5leUBob3RtYWIsLmNvbQ%3d%3d&utm\\_source=ClickDimensions&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=E-news%3A%20June&urlid=6](https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2016/june/the-future-of-the-environment-depends-on-soil/?_cldee=Y2Fyb2xic2hvcm5leUBob3RtYWIsLmNvbQ%3d%3d&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=E-news%3A%20June&urlid=6)

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

The Belton Hills are in the news just now. A big grant has been obtained to refurbish the steps up from Leigh-on-Sea station, which will be appreciated especially by commuters and those taking exercise on them.

Members of SENHS have been busy planting Deptford Pinks near the steps. This iconic, dainty, pretty, little flower is rare nationally. The Belton Hills is one of its remaining habitats. Look out for it this month.

Such a Local Nature Reserve of national importance for its plants and invertebrates really needs decent, interesting signs by the steps and along its perimeter. The old ones were in a dreadful state and have been removed. We look forward to attractive, colourful replacements, able to withstand weather and graffiti.

A new internal management plan has been put together recently by Louise El-Zaher, Environmental Officer at Southend Borough council – the Belton Hills Management Plan 2016-2021 – which covers the plans for action during this period. Some of the proposals have already been implemented, such as removing some trees and hedges.

Leigh Society Open Day: Saturday 16 July 2016, is a free event from 10am to 4pm at the Leigh Community Centre; exhibitions, with stalls and talks about Leigh,, including one on the Belton Hills.  
<http://www.essexinfo.net/senhswildlife/>

## Southend in Transition Community Plot update

Work in progress – The first community allotment by Southend in Transition – full information and photos at <https://sitcommunityallotment.wordpress.com/> and <http://seeog.org.uk/>

## 'Three Acres And A Cow, A History of Land Rights and Protest In Folk Song & Story': the production at The Fishermen's Chapel

The title is a song line and an idyll of self-sufficiency from an era that was experiencing rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, mechanisation and the cultural consequences of being denied closeness to the countryside.

Factory time - "a wage slave all week but I'm a free man on Sunday" - another song line whose sentiments gave rise to mass trespass to repossess the ability of industrial workers to ramble free.

The themes and events highlighted (largely untaught in schools): eras of sheep clearances, enclosures driven by market forces, machines replacing handlooms - origins of floristry, plant breeding, exhibiting, cottage gardening - all came from the ability to work and tend a home garden. Home gardens - the plot around the living abode - can be traced back to Iron Age settlements. The breaking of these cultural ties - foraging, growing, harvesting, the seasons, cooperative field systems, not owing a full week to the lord - gave free time.

Resistance was always there from the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, shown locally in Sorrell's mural of the burning of Southchurch Hall - with forced moves to town and city the disconnection, which continues today, was manifested in movements: the Diggers, Ranters, Levellers of the Republican era (Civil War); reform movements from the late 18th century for votes end corruption in Parliament; workers' rights; land reform (dissolution of the monasteries was a land grab). Dispossessed by clearances and more enclosures - 200+ food riots in 19th century - consoled by National Parks, conservation areas, environmental and ecological awareness and regulation (from Europe!), climate change, threats to our limited agricultural land and allotments, open spaces, play and sports grounds etc.

We gain only with our actions and resistances; this is a history of relevance now as ever was thru' song, poetry and dialogue from a travelling show harnessing local singers sponsored by Squeezebox and SEEOG. Perhaps we need more of the like and more support - many who said they would come did not!

It did break even + an illuminating show giving food for reflection and do something?

'Just a line to say how much I enjoyed last evening; I thought the whole thing was lovely. Meal was a treat and the two performers were really super along with the support team. Thank you for arranging it and now we are all a bit more clever and ready for our history O-level.' (Cecily Morris, Send a Cow)

The poster drawing features in (the book) 'Four Hedges' by Claire Leighton - check it out it's a terrific read: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Four-Hedges-Nature-Classics-Library/dp/0956254535>

## Trust Links

Saturday 17 September: Walking Together Sponsored Walk from Growing Together Shoeburyness to Growing Together Thundersley, culminating in an event at Carers Choices in Thundersley.

Saturday 8 October: Apple Day at St Laurence Orchard

Saturday 26 November: Christmas Fayre at Growing Together Westcliff

<http://www.trustlinks.org/events>

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