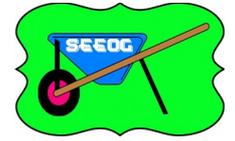


SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 135 – SEPTEMBER 2017

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

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



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, notes etc.

Please use the entrance in Prittlewell Chase, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 9AG (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase). Our speakers start at 20:00 sharp, but Growing Together is always open from 19:00 to prepare the room, etc.

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

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' for 2017 are as follows:

November - Friday 27 October
January - Friday 22 December

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS 2017

Monday 18 September: 'Turning my life around'

Tracy Mackness is an Essex bad girl turned good. She is now the owner of the successful "farm to fork" Giggly Pig Company, with its distinctive pink and black vans, and its slogan "No fat or crap in our sausages!" She will be bringing sausages and books, etc: Sausages from £3.50 to £4.10; Books, £5.

<http://www.gigglypig.co.uk/sayhello.html>

Monday 20 November

John Little, Green Roof Shelters

Green Roof Shelters Ltd brings together some of the foremost experts in green roofs planted for biodiversity, designing habitat creation and low maintenance native planting, alongside designers experienced in producing buildings, structures, and retrofit products that enhance our environment. These include John Little, Dusty Gedge, Dan Monck, Duncan Kramer.

<http://greenroofshelters.co.uk/>

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 3 September, 11:00 - 15:00: Manchester Drive Allotment Society Open Day

Manchester Drive (opposite Cricketfield Grove), Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3EZ

Free admission – there'll be plenty to see and do. As usual, hoping for good weather and lovely music by a local saxophonist!

Saturday 16 September, 09:00: Walking Together 2017 sponsored walk

Trust Links invites you to join them for their annual sponsored walk to raise funds to allow them to continue to deliver support services for people in the local area with mental health problems. The 8.5 mile walk will start and finish at their 'Growing Together Rochford' site and will take in the picturesque countryside, mudflats and wildlife alongside the River Crouch. Please email communications@trustlinks.org or call 01702 213134 to register for the walk, or for more details.

Saturday 7 October: Apple Day, 11:00 - 14:00

St Laurence Orchard, Eastwoodbury Lane (opposite St Laurence Park), Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6UY

Free family event – open to all!

Come celebrate the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness at our annual Apple Day at historic St Laurence Orchard.

Apple tasting and pressing, orchard tours, apple peeling contest, apples and plants for sale, homemade cakes and apple treats, local groups (including SEEEOG), live music, children's arts and crafts, hot dogs and refreshments, raffle.

We will be bringing over the apples and apple press. We will also have apples for sale from Crapes Fruit Farm and a larger supply of apple juice than last year; plus, hopefully (time permitting), a small display of Essex apples from David Hammond's Leigh Allotment Orchard.

Join us, dear SEEEOG members, to embrace all things apple and maybe even give us a hand!

Group visit to Audley End: Saturday 23 September 2017

We have just now booked a group visit (car share and as many in one car as possible because it will be a busy day) to Audley End, in particular the walled organic kitchen garden and their Apple Day, as suggested by one or two members.

Opening time: 10:00 to 17:00

Groups of 11 or more paying visitors (including the 15% discount):

Main season: £14.79 per adult; £13.35 per concession including those over 60 years of age £8.85 per child.

They will require a list of attendees to place at tickets ready for the arrival of your party.

In addition, we will require money upfront, payable either by cash or by cheque (payable to SE Essex Organic Gardeners), either given to Carole on Group Night or posted to 19 Folly Lane, Hockley SS5 4SE.

Please do help me by deciding quickly whether you can attend so that we have the required number and list of attendees all prepared well in advance. Six members have already booked; we need another five to make the visit viable!

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS 2018

Monday 15 January: Ian Tinton, Dalefoot Composts

SE Essex Seed Potato Day: Saturday 24 February

Monday 19 March: Roger Payne, non-honeybee pollination

Monday 21 May: Hana Malouf, Wastebuster

Monday 16 July: Northbury Primary School, Barking

Monday 17 September: Philip Fawcett, splitting and propagating soft fruit

Monday 19 November: Seed Co-operative, the UK's community owned seed company

NEWS

Allotment Bird Survey 2017

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

For more information, please email ga.adamson@gmail.com

Allotment news

1) Ray How (aka Gaynes Park Manners Way Allotments & Garden Association) has invited us to their quiz on Saturday 30 September in the WI Hall, Rochford for a 19:00 to 19:30 start. Tickets are £8.00 each, including a fish and chip supper, or sausage and chips, including a vegetarian option – maximum eight to a table. He must have the money by Saturday 23 September, either to 5 Dalys Road, Rochford SS4 1RA or when you see him at Group Night.

Due to the fire on the site, and total loss of their trading hut, they are trying to raise funds to fit out, restock and get better security. They are limited in the hall to about 80 places so booking appreciated.

<http://gpmwallotments.co.uk/>

2) Cllr Adrian Eves has now managed to download the information that has been presented to RDC Planning Dept (re proposed allotment space in Hockley) and the suggested area for the allotments is defined. It's not a public document, but we think it would be a good idea to get together so that we can see what's been suggested. It's an odd shape, but better odd than nothing.

Adrian has raised a couple of questions with Planning - where is access to be from and are there any TPO's on trees in the proposed area and any large trees that are adjacent that might affect the viability of the plot. We don't expect any answers to come back quickly as the response from the Council doesn't have to be lodged too soon.

Crapes Fruit Farm: the test is in the eating!

After the ups and downs since the beginning of spring, it is good to start planning into mid-Autumn. It now looks likely that our Ribston Pippin will be picked before 14th September. After our Bank holiday, both Laxton's Fortune and Worcester Pearmain will be available, quickly joined by St Edmund's Russet. Our Arthur Turner began earlier this month and will be available into October. Further ahead, both the Blenheim Orange and the Orleans Reinette have another few weeks to develop colour and flavour. The very few Quince here are all reserved!

Everything was slowing down until the heat of today (Sunday 28 August). Everything is so green and lush, so we won't see accelerated ripening through drought conditions, for once!

If the Medlars behave as all other fruit, then an early bletting can be expected in November. Very ripe Medlars will not travel. Please make contact with us in good time if you are searching for them. Available in 6, 14, or 20lb packs, as for the apples, to be couriered further afield. Alternatively, smaller quantities are available at the farm. (Monday to Saturday inclusive 8am to 5pm)

I have met the new people who purchased the Apricot Centre, Rebecca and Ian. They have renamed the business Peach and Pippin, with a new website: <http://www.peachandpippin.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 2017

These are the two markets where we have a stall and always appreciate help, produce and plants where available! We would like to put a request in now for seasonal produce/products/gifts to sell at the December markets – even bird boxes, planters, etc?

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's Farmers' Market at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, 09:00 to 12:00, apart from December (08:30)

Friday on 15 September, 20 October, 17 November and Saturday 23 December
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1818935024986153/>

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

Saturdays on 2 September, 7 October, 4 November and 2 December
<https://www.facebook.com/rochfordfarmersmarket>

Garden Organic news: "A Food Brexit" briefing document published

A Food Brexit: time to get real, an 88-page report published by the SPRU (Science Policy Research Unit), is a briefing document for Brexit negotiators and government ministers. It claims that the UK is unprepared for the most complex ever change to its food system on leaving the EU. The authors claim that this is because there is no Government vision for UK food or agriculture, yet prices, quality, supply and the environment will all be adversely affected. They argue that British consumers have not been informed about the "enormous" implications for their food, a third of which comes from within the European Union and has all the benefits of EU safety standards.

You can read the report in full at http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/food-brexit-briefing-document-published?dm_i=4UO,52HWK,JCIKA,JEBRR,1

GM news: Twenty-eight states make it illegal for counties and cities to pass seed laws

With little notice, more than two dozen state legislatures have passed "seed pre-emption laws" designed to block counties and cities from adopting their own rules on the use of seeds, including bans on GMOs. Opponents say that there's nothing more fundamental than a seed, and that now, in many parts of the country, decisions about what can be grown have been taken out of local control and put solely in the hands of the state.

"This bill should be viewed for what it is — a gag order on public debate," says Kristina Hubbard, director of advocacy and communications at the Organic Seed Alliance, a national advocacy group, and a resident

of Montana, which along with Texas passed a seed pre-emption bill this year. "This thinly disguised attack on local democracy can be easily traced to out-of-state, corporate interests that want to quash local autonomy."

You can read this item in full at <http://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/17803>

Herts & Essex Community Farm

Herts & Essex Community Farm will be holding their annual AGM on Sunday 8th October from 2pm - 4pm. It will be held at the farm which is located in Fold Croft, Harlow, CM20 1SE. Parking is available on street and outside the Judo club. All are welcome to attend. They will be going through their annual report, electing their trustee board and sharing their plans and ideas for the year ahead. If you're a member of Facebook, please let them know if you're attending by following the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/839399852890440>

Lauriston Farm Limited – Charitable Community Benefit Society

Members News from the Marshes 04/08/17

Business News

The Society began trading on July 1st with our first cheque being paid out for all the staff, board and volunteers' DBS checks. We are all registered with HMRC for tax, employment and VAT and are awaiting charitable recognition from them. Our accountant, Lizzy Conder, has set up a wonderful spreadsheet for all our financial reporting which has enabled me to finish a working business plan which is updated with all the post share offer updates. She has also qualified herself as a cricket umpire!

For the Just Growth Program, Co-Operative and Community Finance have issued us with our £20,000 loan offer and we are now ready to draw down the £20,000 Esmee Fairbairn grant. Today, the final 'i' has been dotted and 't' crossed on our LEADER application covering the new kitchen, meeting room, workers' mess and educational room for which a decision is due on September 14th. We are applying for 80% funding for this development.

We are fully insured now with NFU Mutual and have taken out a three year contract with their health and safety division to look after all aspects of our health and safety requirements. They have visited and undertaken a full farm survey and have made recommendations and will produce much of our required paperwork. It is great to have this support and advice available at the end of the phone. As mentioned above, our DBS checks are being processed with Society Secretary, Jane Corbey, winning the race by receiving her certificate two days ago. We also are booking in for the Red Cross first aid course - three of us will do the one day emergency course and two the full three day course.

Emily continues to help with promotional material and communications and Charles Williams, another member, has offered support with the administration associated with the day to day activities of the Executive.

You can keep yourself updated by going to their website at <http://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/>

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) **Modern Mint (Darren)** recently spent a week at Suryalila, in the south of Spain. It is a yoga retreat centre that owns a piece of the Andalusian countryside, where they are trying to create a garden that can provide 70% of the food they will use in the centre's kitchen. A difficult task when they are battling the difficulties of rocky soil, steep slopes, winter downpours and 44 degree celsius heat during the summer months. Oh, and there is no protection from the wind, either.

In six years they already have thriving fig trees, they make their own olive oil, the garden produces basil (the most amazing pesto comes out of the kitchen) and tomatoes, grapes, raisins, amaranth crop up in places nothing else grows – just like a weed – and enough squashes to make delicious soups and vegetarian paellas. (Yep, that's right, a vegetarian paella. Paella, after all, is just a dish that grew out of needing to 'make delicious' what the landscape provided. So it may be far from a traditional paella in one sense, but it grows from the conditions of the landscape, making it exactly what a paella should be....
... but we can't imagine a single Spaniard would agree!)

What they are doing at Suryalila is not rocket science – like the origins of paella, they are really just using what they have got to provide themselves with the means to live. The farmers around the site have EU

subsidies but we know they may end at some point, as may the water from the aquifer, or the rights to the water from the aquifer, so by thinking about what your land has and contouring it and working on it in a way that it will cope, you are building resilience; resilience and a better soil that will provide better food.

Many people have donated to make this project happen quicker and improve the landscape and food security of one of the driest places in Europe. If you would like to help, check out their crowdfunder here – Suryalila Food Forest.

<http://modernmint.co.uk/suryalila-near-seville-spain/>

2) Organic bulbs are reduced In price until end of September

They include Crocus so the bees get early season pollen, and daffodils.... because daffodils are great.

<http://modernmint.co.uk/product-category/ecobulbs/>

3) Has anyone used Strulch Garden Mulch, asks Simon...

The company sells garden mulch to professional and amateur gardeners and has many high profile gardens that use Strulch including The Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Wisley and Harlow Carr, The Alnwick Garden, Kew, Sissinghurst and The Eden Project, which gave Strulch an endorsement on their bags. It is possible to buy Strulch in bulk via the company website www.strulch.co.uk or in smaller quantities from online stockists, garden centres, allotment societies and landscape gardeners and designers listed on the website.

4) **Darren** says, yes, I have used it. It is light, which makes it easier to carry into the back garden if you have lots of mulching to do. It stinks though! It lasts quite a while before needing a top up and it seems quite a good product. If within budget and other mulch not available, it is worth getting.

5) **And from Karen:** Yes: I tried it last year with reasonable results (didn't use enough) and had much better ones this year. Have always suffered from potatoes rising to the surface on my heavy ground (despite getting on for 10 years manuring and composting) but this year I put on a thick layer and they are sitting in it nicely covered and hardly any have risen and greened. I also managed to raise a row of lettuce with a considerable delay in the usual slug destruction - though they did get monstered eventually! The strawberry patch was very productive this year and I didn't notice a lot of damage there either.

In addition to the mulch, have also put down two lots of nematodes (but weather was unhelpful and they may not have taken) and a lot of emergency non-metaldehyde slug pellets. There is a nursery near Chelmsford that supplies it (it's where I got the first couple of "test" bags last year) but it was easier to have a larger order delivered this time - will definitely buy again.

6) **I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Riffhams last month, reported Jane** - a wonderful organic project; such warm and welcoming, hospitable hosts. I was so pleased that they spent some time with us, sharing their views on organic food, especially with regard to schools.

How wonderful are their two daughters! They were such enchanting, engaging children, with so much knowledge and enthusiasm for their organic food garden. Wasn't it wonderful how delighted they were to bring us their crops to eat? Seeing them skipping about the garden barefooted, picking raspberries, tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, strawberries, runner beans, narrows, cucumbers And the unexpected treat of coffee, tea, biscuits and homemade seed cake on the terrace, with that fabulous view!

As well as growing edibles, Beatrice hopes to have a bed for cut-flowers. Phil will develop the new area for them next year.

I forgot to get a look at the compost heaps! My favourite thing! Phil said they have big heaps for the estate and a smaller one for kitchen waste. Eventually they'll 'close the circle' and rely on their own estate-made compost. But, to begin with, Phil will bring in compost and manure to feed the soil and re-establish the worms, as well as all the other lovely bugs and microbes needed for an organic soil.

It was good to see bee-hives in a sea of red clover, under the apples trees. Most of the fruit trees were very old, and some of the espaliers on the walls had young replacements growing next to them.

I was really impressed by the solar water-heating system for the swimming pool. Vic took a photo of it. Then rounding it all off with lunch at Paper Mill Lock, one of my favourite places to eat. A pretty much perfect way to spend a day!

7) Gozo Growing #6 : New Boots and Pallets

July might not be the best month to take on a new field here on Gozo. It's always pretty hot and dry during the summer months, but the Maltese Islands are also currently in the grip of a sustained heat wave, named appropriately, Lucifer! This has seen day time (real feel) temperatures soar as high as the mid 40 degrees centigrade. That's one hot rock!

By starting and finishing early - i.e. getting up at 5.30am and stopping work by 8.30am, this has allowed me to make a good start on the plot - and the thought of jumping in the swimming pool afterwards is an additional work incentive.

Want to know what happened next? You'll have to go to <http://seeog.org.uk/>

8) The Women's Environmental Network group have had a couple of sessions making Mors bags.

<http://www.morsbags.com/>

9) The **Natural Beekeeping Trust** is delighted to announce their publication, in partnership with Temple Lodge Press, of Iwer Thor Lorenzen's exquisite writings on bees, introduced by Gareth John, with an epilogue by Michael Joshin Thiele, and an artwork of Arif Turan on the cover.

The book is now available for order: <http://www.naturalbeekeepingtrust.org/.../the-spiritual-found...>

10) **Bee Friendly Bulbs - Plant Organic!** Modern Mint has been 'hiving' a good summer, getting to know the bees a little better and keeping a keen eye out for the plants they really love. Their bee friendly, organic bulbs are now available. You can order now and they will be sent out to you in the autumn. Learn why organic bulbs don't poison your foraging bees. Their topiary work has been going well this summer. They used the Japanese shears for this boxwood hedge. Back In Stock! These colourful recycled rugs and cushions are back in stock. You can read Darren's notes in full at <http://modernmint.co.uk/>

11) Ta znied microgreen farm

Microgreens don't only add colour to your dishes as a garnish, but they're also great in juices, smoothies, and salads.

https://www.facebook.com/Gozogreens/?hc_ref=ARQYFCe6Jlae7UOVIMSN5S2tl-MCtUPX_riAdgsVYUGNbx5Eus8Xso7zmAkVNVZlrE

12) **The Seed Co-operative** has come into being as an initiative of the Biodynamic Association, supported by Garden Organic and the Organic Research Centre, working with Open Pollinated Seeds and experienced seedsman Hans Steenbergen.

Although it was initiated by the Biodynamic Association, to be successful a wide collaboration of people will need to be involved. Farmers, growers, home gardeners, chefs, professionals and amateurs, everyone involved in building a resilient food system will be able to benefit through access to seeds, advice and training from the Seed Co-operative. The future of farming, by default, lies in the hands of younger generations. After many years that have seen the average age of a UK farmer increasing towards retirement age, new blood is coming into farming. Many young people entering farming have not inherited their farms and are starting small, often in social enterprises or Community Supported Agriculture. Although the economics need to be proven, it is hoped that seed growing might provide another enterprise for small farms.

<http://www.seedcooperative.org.uk/about/#ouplace>

They're visiting us in November 2018, which should be good timing for bringing along a new seed catalogue for 2019.

13) **Jill Poet** wrote recently: 'I'm so angry this morning! I live next door to a Bowling Green which is quite pleasant. My kitchen window actually overlooks the green and there's only a wooden fence between us and them. There's another house on the other side of the Bowling Green and at the rear several gardens back directly on to it, again with only a wooden fence in between. Across the road directly opposite the Bowling Green is a children's nursery. And it's a pretty windy day today.'

Okay, now the scene is set; you can therefore imagine I was a little disconcerted when I saw the groundsman dressed head to toe in protective clothing treating the lawns with some substance. The concern turned to fury when I went across to the bowling green and, as I opened the gate, was immediately faced with a warning sign that told their members to stay away from the area until midday, and in the afternoon 'not to lick fingers and wash hands before eating,' as a pesticide called 'Ringer' was being used.

So members needed to be warned but not neighbours? I vented my fury at the groundsman: I don't like pesticides at the best of times, but using them on a windy day in a highly residential area is pure irresponsibility. He did say he would stop but obviously hadn't given much thought to the potential consequences when he started this morning.

I then checked the product: it is no longer on sale and use is banned from 31st August 2017. The product contains carbendazim, which apparently can have all sorts of harmful side effects.

It's nice to live near a green space, but not when they use pesticides. So if there are any green spaces near you, particularly if they are used in a similar way e.g. tennis courts etc. you might like to ask them about the products they use so you can ensure your family's health is not being put at risk.....'

Adam Aldridge (Principal Open Spaces Officer, Environmental Services, Rochford DC) has written as follows:

'Carbendazim (Ringer 9) is an insecticide used to control many casting species associated with fine turf and also to suppress worm casts on high amenity areas. It is perfectly normal to see greenkeepers using this type of insecticide on fine turf during wet/warm periods, when the casting species are most active.

However, as far as I am aware, the product has now been discontinued and can no longer be purchased. Normal practice when any herbicide/fungicide is discontinued (mainly due to change in legislation), is that applicators can still use the product up to a certain date. It is my understanding with Ringer, that 31st August 2017 is the cut-off period for legal use of this discontinued product.

Rochford District Council does not use this product nor undertakes any control over turf pests.'

14) **RHS Garden Wisley**, one of the UK's most loved and horticulturally important gardens, is under threat from potential Highways England plans to widen the A3 in what could be the ultimate garden grab. One of Highways England's proposed plans for the A3 threatens to take 10,000 sq. metres of land from the garden, destroying 500 trees and their wildlife.

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/en-gb/takeaction/372/679/924/>

15) **Sustainable diets: the true cost of our food**, a book by Pamela Mason and Tim Lang - how ecological nutrition can transform consumption and the food system. This depends on understanding how to feed huge populations equitably, healthily and in ways that maintain ecosystems on which humanity depends. The present focus on nutritional content of food is at the expense of how it gets to the consumer's plate.

Two billion (30%) of world - overweight or obese; 795 million (11%) undernourished. 30% greenhouse gases from livestock and rice - methane and NO2 fertilised soil and energy in production; 92% of global water devoted to agriculture and agriculture causes loss of biodiversity and degradation of land. 20% of UK food emissions arise outside UK; 60-90% water footprints of UK, Italy and Germany is external. 30% of global water footprint for animal products and production (33% beef, 20% dairy, largest for growing feed).

For every \$1 spent by WHO on prevention - \$500 spent by food industry on promoting unhealthy diets. Remember 53% of seed and fertilisers controlled by three companies, and 75% grain and soya are controlled by four companies.

A lot of background stats for a global picture.

We need true cost accounting, look to ecosystems as natural capital, people fed per hectare as criteria, require multiple values for money - values for money NOT value for money. The present free market does not address this crisis which includes varied increasing extreme weather events.

Mason and Lang posit guidelines - need to eat differently - our food needs to

- Provide diversity
- Balance energy intake and needs
- Minimally process tubers, whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables: field grown and robust
- Moderate meat intake - move from everyday feasting on meat
- Dairy in moderation
- Unsalted seeds and nuts increase
- A little fish from certified fisheries
- Limit food high in fat sugar and salt
- Oils and fats with beneficial omega 3:6 ratios
- Tap water not soft drinks

These changes are necessary for ensuring sustainable diets that are good for human and ecosystem health. But it depends how the political process handles the material (environment), physiological (biological), social (human interaction), and cognitive and cultural (life world). Our arena for activity, lobbying and consuming!

Tim Lang long associated with Garden Organic. Thought for food growing and away from animal production.....a seminal piece of work

16) Natural Histories: Radio 4, Tuesday 25 July

Aristotle called them "the intestines of the earth", there have been 3-4000 identified but could be up to 10,000 species globally. They are of three types - those of organic matter (compost makers); those below the soil - horizontal temporary burrows; and the deep burrowers - down to one metre. The last two lock chemicals to soil for plant life to take up on demand - fertility, as I understand it. Charles Darwin's study of the worm's production of vegetable mould still stands - the earth/soil makers and a lot more besides. There are 29 species in the British Isles; 2/3 is of the compost type.

With huge thanks to our contributors.....Darren, Simon, Jill, Jane, Karen and Ron

Pesticide Action Network UK

A sneak peek at their latest edition of Pesticide News...

Organic Uprising: How a town in Italy said "Yes!" to a pesticide-free future

Philip Ackerman-Leist, author and Professor of Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems at Green Mountain College, brings us the remarkable story of an Italian town and the dynamic community that used people-power, drive and initiative to go pesticide-free.

Neonicotinoids: Exciting new developments

Results of a large new study, released on Friday and carried out by researchers at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, have clearly shown that these pesticides are harmful to bees. We are very hopeful that a full ban is imminent.

In addition: We launch our latest Bee Declines & Pesticides Factsheet, an in-depth look at the effects of neonicotinoids on natural enemies of pests.

You can access the full issue here: http://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/pesticide_news_108_-_june_2017?e=28041656/50790676

Pesticide Action Network North America

Pesticide drift is a severely under-reported problem in rural, agricultural communities. And now we're in the middle of an epic summer of drift thanks to Monsanto's new dicamba-resistant seed line, Xtend. As a result, farmers in Southern and Midwestern states are reporting extensive and debilitating crop damage from dicamba travelling from where it's applied to nearby fields.

Donald Trump nominated a right-wing talk show host, Sam Clovis, to be the top scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If the Senate confirms Clovis, he will become the Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics. Clovis is a Trump campaign advisor with no background in science or agriculture. He calls climate science "junk science" and believes raising the minimum wage is "nonsensical." The Senate will be considering his nomination when they re-convene in early September.... <http://www.panna.org/take-action/senate-clovis-unqualified-be-top-usda-scientist>

Ah, back to school. It's a transitional time for parents and kids alike. But for those living in California's agricultural communities, this season also brings renewed worry and frustration that the state still hasn't taken steps to curtail use of brain-harming and cancer-causing pesticides near schools.

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. Our Library needs to be used more!

Sheffield University Allotment Project

We have been asked to spread the word about MYHarvest (Measure Your Harvest), which is an opportunity to participate in an exciting research project that will estimate the contribution people who grow their own fruit and vegetable crops are making to UK national food production. Perhaps you could include information in your newsletters to plot-holders or put a link on your allotment page www.myharvest.org.uk

At present, there is a recognition that own-growing in the UK makes a really important contribution to food security, healthy diets and general well-being, but we currently have a poor understanding of how much own-grown food people are able to produce. This will be key to providing the vital evidence base to support the use of land for growing spaces within our cities and towns, at a time when people are becoming increasingly interested in growing their own fruit and vegetables.

The National Allotment Society is supporting the research team at the University of Sheffield who are working with members of the public growing food in allotments, gardens and other own-growing spaces across the UK to understand the yield of typical UK fruit and vegetable crops.

By providing the team with the area of land they use to grow a crop and the weight of the crop they harvest participants would be:

1. Contributing to a first national estimate of own-grown food production in the 21st century.
2. Helping us to understand how much allotment and garden space we need in the future to ensure sufficient access for the growing number of people in our cities and towns.

You need to go to <https://myharvest.org.uk/> for full details.

Facebook: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/MYHarvestUK>

<http://seeog.org.uk/2017/04/myharvest/>

Take Part This Organic September: Soil Association news

Organic September is a month-long campaign designed to raise the profile of organic in the UK and shine a light on the amazing organic farmers, producers and brands who work hard to produce food as it should be. Taking part is easy and doesn't have to break the bank. Organic food is available in over 8,000 supermarkets, independent retailers, online, in cafes and restaurants.

Unfortunately we couldn't find any really 'local' events apart from those listed below - something to think about for 2018 perhaps?

DagenJAM festival at Dagenham Farm, 8 Tyssen Road, London N16 7NA

This is a free event, featuring homemade cream teas with strawberry DagenJAM, grown and made at the farm by trainees. Tour our thriving organic farm, drop in to a workshop and buy freshly picked farm produce and preserves; also a chance to win a gift box of farm goodies. Sunday 10 Sept, 1-5pm.

Growing Communities' market garden, Clissold Park, N16 9HJ

Enjoy a taste of what it's like to grow organic food in the city – and what that food tastes like! Tour the GC's market garden, growing award-winning Hackney Salad for 20 years. Expert gardening tips. Free tastings of dishes made with food from GC's bag scheme and farmers' market.

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