

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 136 – NOVEMBER 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 2018 are as follows:

January	-	Friday 22 December
March	-	Wednesday 21 February
May	-	Monday 23 April
July	-	Saturday 23 June
September	-	Friday 24 August
November	-	Wednesday 24 October

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS 2017

Monday 20 November

John Little, presents "Using Plants for People and Wildlife"

John (grassroofcompany.co.uk) will chat through the mix of work that he's done over the last 20 years.

- Working with residents to change social housing greenspace
- Getting plants and habitats onto and into buildings
- Designing landscapes and habitat using construction waste

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Trust Links' Christmas Fayre is on Saturday 25 November, 11:00-14:00 at Growing Together Westcliff. Perfect for Christmas gifts and meeting Father Christmas! More details to follow.

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

By popular demand, Trust Links are moving Wassailing to Sunday 28 January at 14:00 – 15:30 at St Laurence Orchard. Come and wake the trees up for the spring in historic St Laurence Orchard, located in Eastwoodbury Lane (at the junction with St. Laurence Way), Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6UY.

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

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS 2018

Keep your eyes peeled for a visit to Crapes Fruit Farm on Saturday (pm) 5 May, the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Tolleshunt Knights, early July, and a return visit to Riffhams.

Monday 15 January: Ian Tinton, Dalefoot Composts -

'Gardening with Wool Compost', peat free and natural and renewable products for all your garden needs, from Fell to Food, these products will "do!"

Saturday 24 February, 10:00 – 14:00: SE Essex Seed Potato Day

This event is organised and run entirely by volunteers from both SEEEOG and Trust Links. With the best will in the world, however, your hard-working committee cannot 'do its bit' without volunteers from SEEEOG! There are gazebos to collect and put up, potatoes and onions to be set out, etc. etc., not to mention going

to Growing Together the day before to assist with the tidying and setting out the tables in the polytunnel. Please do volunteer whatever help you can and help to publicise the event by way of our Potato Day poster, etc. We anticipate well over 30 varieties of potato (some organic) sold individually at 20p per tuber (or 1 free tuber for every 5 bought) Please check our website link for further updates and list of tubers ordered at: <http://seeog.org.uk/2017/10/se-essex-seed-potato-day-saturday-24-february-2018-1000-to-1400/>

Monday 19 March:

Roger Payne, President The Essex Field Club, presents 'Honeybees get all the good publicity and hog the headlines'. This talk will be about the host of under-appreciated insect pollinators that beaver away often unnoticed and yet are just as vital to the health of the ecosystem.
<http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/>

Monday 21 May: Hana Malouf, Wastebuster

Monday 16 July:

Kulvinder Kaur Johal, Assistant Head Teacher/Science Co-ordinator, Northbury Primary School (Barking) is going to talk about their school garden and what a difference it brings to the pupils of their large multicultural school. They have over 900 pupils, speaking over 45 languages between them. Many of them have no garden or green space to call their own. Children share a play space with each other but nothing of their own. Their school garden has been a focal point for them so much so that they have achieved an RHS level school award. All was almost lost, when the school garden suffered an arson attack earlier this year but they have now got their thriving garden back.

Monday 17 September: SEEOG member Philip Fawcett

Next year is 50 years since Philip left school and started his gardening career He will try to give some insight into how he started, what happened in the last 50 years and what comes next.

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

<https://www.seedcooperative.org.uk/>

NEWS

Allotment news

Allotments Update Sept 2017: Charles Church, the developers, have now submitted their discharge proposals to Rochford District Council for the provision of allotments and open spaces at the Folly Grove site. The Parish Council, as a statutory consultee, has responded and requested more detailed information. When the consultation has been completed and agreed with the developers and Rochford District Council, the Parish Council will be in a position to make their formal decision on the management of the site. Full plans and comments are available on the Rochford District Council website.

Cllr Adrian Eves and Dan Golding have since carried out a site visit at Folly Grove Allotments in Hockley and can report as follow:

The site is unspoilt and appears to have lain fallow for some while. It is on a hill and drainage does not appear to be a problem. Some of the trees are mature and will need work doing on them at least, as there are dead branches in places. According to the building site manager, most of the trees are TPO protected. The ground looks to be promising, obviously without doing any test digging/holes. Access will come through the estate that is currently being built. Approaching the allotments will take you through a play area that is also part of the planning conditions for the site. There is a badger set that is either on the site of the allotments or in very close proximity to the allotments.

Parking is a major issue. The developer is looking to place a short picket fence to define the edge of the housing estate. That would in itself prevent vehicular access to the allotments area. There are no plans currently to direct vehicles onto an area on the site. The building site plan has only 2, yes 2, car parking spaces, marked as guest parking adjacent to the play and allotments areas. This is obviously wholly inadequate. However - there is room on the site for a car park. There is a mature pond that has been built at the top of the field adjacent to the proposed allotment space.

Both Adrian and Dan were overall pleasantly surprised by what they saw. There is plenty of work to be done, but it looks like it could be a very pleasant place for the long awaited allotment space in Hockley. Adrian has written to Rochford DC's Planning Department again, asking where we're at with the discharge of the planning conditions. It would make sense that nothing can be done until we know that has been cleared. It might be worth keeping on exploring costs and grant opportunities in the meantime though, as

the builder won't be in a position to be able to complete the site without it. We will have something in place at the end of this; we're just not sure what that will be yet!

Apple Day

Apple Day, hosted by Trust Links, SEEEOG and Southend-on-Sea-in-Transition as a celebration of apples and St Laurence Traditional Orchard, took place last month at St Laurence Orchard, in Eastwoodbury Lane, which they run on behalf of Southend Council. It was a really busy day, despite the poor weather, with only one short sharp shower.

There were about 300 people who went along to enjoy the apple orchard, as well as apple tasting and pressing, a peeling competition, children's arts and crafts, music and stalls selling apple products. The SEEEOG stall was busy all morning on the apple press and selling apples, apple juice and walnuts. Other organisations that came along included the Southend Dormouse Group and the South East Essex Conservation Volunteers.

Trust Links also had a cake sale, barbecue and folk music and the children made bird feed to encourage wildlife to come to the orchard. They raised nearly £1,000.

They will be running the Wassailing event in January, to celebrate and wake up the trees for the spring. There are some pictures on the SEEEOG website and at:

<http://www.echo->

[news.co.uk/news/15586408.Visitors_braved_the_cold_for_the_Apple_Day_event/#comments-anchor](http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/15586408.Visitors_braved_the_cold_for_the_Apple_Day_event/#comments-anchor)

Children's Gardening Workshop – Seed Harvesting and Bird Feeder Making

This was the third workshop Jane and I have run at Leigh Community Centre and we have learnt a lot so far. The workshop was fully booked, with one child returning, having attended a previous session we ran in the summer. Also, a photographer from the Echo appeared to take photos and gain a better insight into what SEEEOG is about.

We started off with Jane running a food demonstration on how to make your own healthy and inexpensive snacks, including dried fruit and seed bars and cocoa-coated bananas. These were handed out for people to try, and the response was really positive, with many people inspired to make their own. The emphasis was on promoting how easy it is to produce a healthy snack for a much cheaper price than the shops plus you know what ingredients have gone into it.

The next part was more interactive for the children and carers; they were given a variety of seed heads from which to harvest the seeds, including cardoon, hollyhock, sunflower, phormium, sweetcorn and more. We also mentioned the different types of seed dispersal. Some people were amazed by the array of seeds and just how beautiful they are when you take a look inside them. The seeds they collected were gathered into bags for them to take away and consider either growing them or using them for bird food.

This was followed by a bird feeder making activity. They made two types of feeder, one was a cored-out apple or pear (all windfalls), to which a lot of people remarked it was a great use of something which may just get thrown away or composted. A string was attached to the fruit and then they decorated it with sunflower seeds. The other feeder was made by making a paste from a mixture of vegetable suet and bird seeds, which was a very messy task but the kids loved it; they then spread the paste onto a pine cone. They were given a bag to transport their bird feeders home in and recommended to hang them in their gardens to encourage the birds.

Once they had cleaned themselves up from that messy challenge, they had the opportunity to look at how compost develops and how easy it is to compost at home. There were a selection of books for them to look through and, for the slightly older children, there were activities like 'Find the parts of a pumpkin' and 'Label the edible parts of a plant'.

From the feedback we received at the end of the session people enjoyed the workshop, along with Leigh Community Centre asking us if we'd like to return for the next event in February!

Very kindly supplied by Sharon – what great copy!

Crapes Fruit Farm: Rain required!!

A second consecutive dry autumn is almost behind us. The damaging rains of the early weeks of August have been long forgotten by many already. The dry land which featured until late May hopefully won't be repeated for a few years. We are romping through the apple varieties as, from before picking, ripening has accelerated much faster than we have ever known (and that is a few years!)

The hot dry summer of 1976 was characterised by the complete lack of rainfall until late September. 2017 has been an example of how abundant rainfall associated with hot days during June and July, in particular, aided the rapid initial cell division within the fruitlet and later caused any cell to expand rapidly. Unfortunately this does not benefit the long term quality of the fruit. While the apples were growing, so were the trees. Some cautious pruning will be required this winter to retain a balanced tree.

Why does this man need rain now? For optimum results at flowering time, when we hope the bees oblige, an abundant availability of moisture for the tree's root system is essential - an essentiality which was lacking during April and May 2017. The land is like a savings account - it needs a regular top up!

Don't forget Medlars - some are nicely bletted already! Plenty of hard ones left for sending out still.

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 13:00, apart from December (08:30)

Friday on 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 4 November and 2 December. Huge thanks go to Ray for taking on the October market.

<https://www.facebook.com/rochfordfarmersmarket>

Garden Organic news:

Garden Organic is currently putting the final touches to the 2018 Heritage Seed Library (HSL) seed list. With 158 varieties available in total, including a record 19 new, this year is looking set to be one of the best yet!

From Dobbie's Purple Beetroot to the Beryl Broad Bean and St. George Cauliflower, there really is something for everyone. And what makes these seeds unique is that they are exclusive to the Heritage Seed Library and their members.

So whether you're a seasoned gardener or a complete beginner, you can enjoy the benefits of growing vegetable varieties from their seed library. By growing HSL seed, you will be:

- Supporting the conservation of unusual vegetable varieties for future generations
- Increasing biodiversity in your garden;
- Able to save your own seeds from one generation to the next; their open-pollinated varieties, unlike F1 hybrids, will come true-to-type year after year;
- Helping to maintain genetic diversity within vegetable crops, which may be useful to the plant breeders of the future.

Worried that you don't have time to join? Don't - there's still time to become a member of the Heritage Seed Library before this year's list is published. You'll receive your HSL list in December, to pick your six varieties and a seventh lucky dip choice.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/theres-still-time-join-heritage-seed-library>

GM news

The Séralini affair – or the secret history of a torpedo

The release of the “Monsanto papers” – the internal documents of the agrochemical multinational made public in the context of a class action lawsuit against it in the US – shows that employees of the firm manoeuvred behind the scenes over several weeks to obtain the retraction of a study on GM maize and Roundup herbicide by the French biologist Gilles-Eric Séralini. An investigation by the French newspaper Le Monde tells the story.

<http://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/17908>

Lauriston Farm Limited – Charitable Community Benefit Society

Lauriston Farm is offering a seven day introductory course in biodynamic principles and practice starting on seven Saturdays from November 11 2017 to April 14 2018. Over the years, this course has enabled participants to start practising biodynamics in the back garden, allotment, smallholding and farm. You are taken on a gentle but thorough journey into this holistic form of agriculture with the training linking into the season and the activities on the 210 acre Demeter certified biodynamic farm.

The course is run by the farm's staff - Spencer Christy (farmer and BDA Trustee), Andre Kleinjans (farmer and horticulturist) and Monique Kleinjans-Penning (horticulturist) - who have a combined experience of over eighty years working in biodynamics. There are also guest lecturers and involvement from the Seed Co-Operative.

Each day has theory in the morning and the practical application of it in the afternoon. No prior gardening or farming experience is necessary. Days run from 10am to 5pm with a bring-and-share lunch (refreshments are supplied by the farm) and the whole seven day course costs £350 with individual days costing £55 each.

Further details are available on their website and inquiries can be made by email - socialfarming@lauristonfarm.co.uk - or telephone - 01621 788348. It is also possible to visit the farm and see what they do before you decide to join the course.

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

PLUS

Vote for Lauriston Farm in Tesco's Bags of Life in Maldon, Danbury and Burnham stores - ask for a green coin whenever you make a purchase!

The Lauriston Social Farming Initiative is bidding to bag a massive cash boost from the Tesco Bags of Help initiative. Tesco teamed up with Groundwork to launch its community funding scheme, which sees grants of £4,000, £2,000 and £1,000 – raised from carrier bag sales in Tesco stores - being awarded to local community projects. Three groups in every Tesco region have been shortlisted to receive the cash award and shoppers are being invited to head along to Tesco stores to vote for who they think should take away the top grant.

Lauriston Social Farming Initiative is one of the groups on the shortlist. The project will fund free social farming taster days for adults with a learning disability at Lauriston Farm in Goldhanger.

Voting is open in the Maldon, Burnham and Danbury Tesco stores throughout November and December. Customers will cast their vote using a token given to them at the check-out in store each time they shop. The 'voting' began on 1 November and ends on 31 December and you can 'vote' as many times as you like!

Members' contributions

1) Organic bulbs are starting to be seen in the mainstream media!

<https://modernmint.co.uk/alys-fowler-bee-friendly-bulbs/>

Though Alys Fowler forgot to mention Modern Mint sell them too!

2) Funded by the HLF and based at UEA, Orchards East is dedicated to discovering and understanding the past, present and the future of orchards.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/orchardseast/about/?ref=page_internal

3) New Study Shows Organic Farming Traps Carbon in Soil to Combat Climate Change: Organic farms were found to have 26 percent more long-term carbon storage potential than conventional farms.

<http://civileats.com/2017/09/11/new-study-shows-organic-farming-traps-carbon-in-soil-to-combat-climate-change/>

4) Terrific blog: Mo' Mulberry - The Essential Guide to all you need to know about Mulberry. Not many plants offer so much to the grower while demanding so little in return. A tree that requires so little attention and care, that even if there were an RSPP - Royal Society for the Protection of Plants (which there should be judging by the amount of tortured house and garden plants I come across) - no-one would ever get prosecuted for *Morus neglect*.

<http://balkanecologyproject.blogspot.com/2017/08/mo-mulberry-essential-guide-to-all-you.html>

5) Go Native: Why We Need 'Wildlife Allotments' To Bring Species Back To The 'burbs

<https://www.1millionwomen.com.au/blog/go-native-why-we-need-wildlife-allotments-bring-species-back-burbs/>

6) This looks like a good bit of kit worthy of a place on the roof of Public Service Vehicles to reduce diesel consumption during travel or parking!

<http://www.solarshop.co.uk/solar-ventilation#!/SolarVenti/c/21262006/offset=0&sort=normal>

7) We've sold a fair few Yarrow plants this year, thanks to Jane. Yarrow is a perennial, native in meadows and pasture, banks, hedgerows and waysides, very common in Britain. It is recorded up to 3,980 ft. Yarrow is a persistent weed of grassy banks and roadsides but not waterlogged areas. It is found on soils between pH 4.7 and 8.0. Yarrow has roots that penetrate to 20 cm deep. It can withstand drought and thrives even on a poor dry soil. Yarrow is considered to be an indicator of loam. It prefers an open habitat and is a natural component of chalk grassland but is absent from woodland.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/weeds/yarrow>

8) Interesting use for conkers...

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/making_history/makhist10_prog3d.shtml

9) Finding Food in London: Making parks and waste places fruitful...

<http://blog.maryevans.com/2016/06/finding-food-in-london-making-parks-and-waste-places-fruitful.html>

10) Friends of the Earth Malta invited us to host a pallet workshop at Villa Chelsea, for the employees and its residents. <https://www.facebook.com/pallet42/>

hc_ref=ARTASYXLEsGN7Yti7kBASTzg5zDchx0o7F3838fhBaDnFExLZ6ABUhhhu8_ga-Xy9FUU

11) The UK premiere of a new documentary called In Our Hands by the Land Workers Alliance takes place in Bristol on 17 November. Filmed throughout 2016, this documentary tells the story of the revolution that's taking place in farming in the UK. These are real life stories of real life farmers who are taking back control of their lives and their livelihoods. In 67 minutes the film takes you on a journey of hope and inspiration through the stories of these farmers, who refuse to be ground down by the machinery of agri-business. The film captures the daunting and exciting Brexit moment, as the UK leaves the European Union and begins to re-define its farming politics for the first time since the Second World War. In Our Hands shows how we can 'bring back life to the soil, a fair wage to the farmer and a flavour to the tomato'. The future really is 'In Our Hands'. Any comments?

12) An organic eatery in Leigh Road - Food by John Lawson - locally sourced organic plant based cuisine of four courses: one locally sustainable fish, another organic meat. There is a vegan option; it is a set menu with no dairy or eggs. It is about taste, presentation, sourcing locally, and organics. It could possibly be considered pricey at £45 per head but indulgent service and recipes explained fully. Organic wine available and Wednesday /Thursday cava free flow! An experience, yes, and it was my birthday. You're only xx once ok!

13) Contrast Conscious Kitchen, 508 Sutton Road, Southend-on-Sea (opposite Victory Park), open Tuesday – Saturday, daytime only. They also use Sarah Green's Organics and offer vegan food - salad bowls at £5.00, specials, soup and smoothies all at very reasonable prices. Emphasis is upon healthy plant based nutrition, gut flora etc, and are interested in acquiring any excess organic produce.

14) Trust Links' AGM at Rocheway on 18 October had Professor Jules Pretty OBE FRSB FRSA, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Environment & Society at the University of Essex, as keynote speaker. He has been involved with research about "nature and health": a dose of nature on a green prescription pad is an effective preventative treatment for general health and wellbeing, especially mental health, and that is of growing concern for all. However, it requires unlearning habits.

The key for real mental health benefit is being immersed in the flow - immersive attention - in nature, with people (social), something craft related (making) or an activity such as gardening. We humans have a highly developed frontal cortex with no off button (hypofrontality) - constant mental chatter. When immersed in activity, that's the off button. To engage people for life in outdoor activity children need to be enjoying nature between 6 -11 years of age and before; later it gets harder to do so.

Communities in Japan that have general longevity have these habits - interesting tasty food, being in nature every day, engaging socially and in thinking activities - cognition. What is needed is real access to green spaces, green views to aid patient's recovery in hospital and overcoming institutional inertia e.g start prescribing 30 minute walks a day.

Compare average walking in London, 290 miles, to that in rural areas of 120 miles - is that a month or a year? it's the difference that's important but a shame about the air pollution!

So access green spaces - allotments, community gardens, be active outdoors and teach our /your children well. This fits in with Tim Lang and Pamela Mason`s Sustainable Diet with multi-dimensional considerations.

15) Hugel bed now home to potatoes, spinach, kale, garlic, beetroot, broad beans and radish, with some rocket just added into the mix. Lasagne bed now cropping early curly kale, cabbage and lettuce - all snug under anti-pest "tent" netting - weighed down at the edges with pruned (dead) olive wood and a frame made from Arundo Donax (reed). Tomatoes survived three days of Force 7 Northerly winds and the olla pot system on the straw bales is proving an effective low effort watering method. Globe Artichokes bed dug ready for planting and the "curved" bean bed now in place. Robins and Redstarts are now regular visitors to the plot, along with honey bees from my neighbour`s hives looking for water. Simon`s photos are on our website, <http://seeog.org.uk/2017/10/hugel-culture/>.

16) Britain is enjoying a remarkable apple boom, as hundreds of new community orchards revive lost varieties and contribute to a thriving heritage market. According to Steve Oram, who is the apple diversity officer at the wildlife charity People`s Trust for Endangered Species: "We are adding new orchards to the register all the time. Some are in allotments, others in schools and even housing developments. "After the post-war years of neglect and destruction, when 90% of the UK`s orchards were lost and supermarkets sold only a few varieties and imported 70 to 80% of their apples, it is very exciting."

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/oct/21/british-apple-boom-forgotten-varieties-apple-day?CMP=share_btn_fb

17) The Dengie Cider Company, cidermakers from the Dengie Peninsula in Essex
Products: Dengie Dry Cider 6%, Dengie Medium Dry Cider 5.5%, Cherry Bomb Cherry Cider 4%, Spiced Cider 4%

https://www.facebook.com/pg/dengiecidercompany/about/?ref=page_internal

18) As organic gardeners we thought you might be interested to know where you can buy organic, bee friendly bulbs here in the UK: Modern Mint - <https://modernmint.co.uk/organic-bulbs-help-honeybee/>
Organic Catalogue has a good selection - <http://www.organiccatalogue.com/plants-bulbs/organic-ecobulbs/autumn-planting-bulbs/>

Crocus have a few here - http://www.crocus.co.uk/plants/_/bulbs/organic-bulbs/plcid.325/plcid.1279/

And here is further reading about why it is preferable to plant organic bulbs - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/how-to-grow/dont-plant-poisoned-bulbs/>

19) Bulbs: You may be thinking of planting some bulbs so you can look forward to a show of colour in the spring. However, most bulbs are produced using pesticides and fungicides. They are actually a poison for pollinators and, because the bulbs are drenched in neonicotinoids, they contaminate the soil and all living things within it. So what is the solution? Check out the Garden Organic catalogue where there is a good range of bulbs for sale. Alys Fowler commented in her recent article: 'Choose organic, and plant hope for spring.'

20) Who is the most organic of them all? The answer is the Danes; they are apparently the world`s biggest consumers of organic food and drink. Half the population buys organic products every week and eating organic is considered 'folkeligt', something people feel proud of and a part of. In Denmark 10% of all sales are organic; in Britain it is under 2% but growing. In fact, there has been a move on the part of the supermarkets to make organic food more easily obtainable and affordable (an EU initiative). Have you noticed? We also have the Greens (organic growers) at Tillingham. They come to the Farmers' Market at Leigh and also make deliveries to Greens wholefoods in Rectory Road, Leigh. So let's help keep things moving in the right direction.

21) This Tiny Country Feeds the World: The Netherlands has become an agricultural giant by showing what the future of farming could look like. The great indoors provides optimal growing conditions for lettuce and other leafy greens at Siberia B.V. Each acre in the greenhouse yields as much lettuce as 10 outdoor acres and cuts the need for chemicals by 97 percent.

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/09/holland-agriculture-sustainable-farming/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_content=link_fbp20171031ngm-hollandagCargill-sponsored&utm_campaign=Content

22) Would you like some established oak trees, between 2ft and 7ft? They are free – but you may need to do a little hard graft.....

SEEOG member Tim Cummings purchased 2 acres of organic land in Cray`s Hill, near Basildon. Tim has cleared about an acre but there`s another acre still to clear. However, there`s a little problem: the land is covered with around a hundred oak saplings ranging in height from about 2ft to 7ft, probably courtesy of the jays. Tim is happy for anyone to have the little oak trees, especially if they are going to be planted, but

you would need to dig them out yourselves. A nice little project for a winter day, maybe? For more information, contact Tim initially via email: timothycummins@msn.com ...

23) For Her, For Him, for....Christmas already? For those who like to dig a little deeper..... For those who like to prune... For those who like something a little bit different... There are lots more to browse by going to <https://modernmint.co.uk/>

24) Pesticides in fresh produce linked to lower reproductive rates in women: A new study has found a potentially harmful link between eating fruits and vegetables high in pesticides and having lower reproductive rates. In the report, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, scientists studied 325 women who were using assisted reproductive technologies to get pregnant. They were part of the Environment and Reproductive Health (EARTH) study, which was designed to measure factors that can affect reproductive success. The women in the study filled out detailed questionnaires about their diet, along with other factors that can affect In vitro fertilisation (IVF) outcomes, like their age, weight and history of pregnancy and live births.

Senior investigator Dr. Jorge Chavarro, an associate professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, and his colleagues then matched the dietary responses with a U.S. government database of average pesticide residues on fresh fruit and vegetables to calculate a measure of the amount of pesticides the women were exposed to from their diet. Certain fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, spinach and peppers, tend to consistently rank high on pesticide residues, while others, like peas and avocados, rank lower.

Women with high exposure were eating more than two servings of high-pesticide fruits or vegetables a day, compared to women in the lowest exposure group, who ate one serving of high pesticide fruits and vegetables daily on average. Women who had the highest pesticide exposure were 18% less likely to get pregnant than women with the lowest exposure, and 26% less likely to have a live birth.

Source: Alice Park <http://time.com/author/alice-park/>

With huge thanks to our contributors.....Darren, Jon Fuller, Simon, Graham A, Jane, Ron, Ane, Nick, Tim and Andrew Tann

Pesticide Action Network UK

Following today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCOPE) it appears that we are no nearer to an answer on the future of glyphosate in the European Union.

Representatives of Member States failed to reach agreement on whether or not the controversial weed killer should have its approval renewed. The European Commission's proposal to renew it for periods of either ten, seven or five years all failed to gain sufficient support. The Commission will now take into account the views of Member States and return in November for further discussions.

However, in what can be seen to be very encouraging news, there was more opposition to approving glyphosate than had been expected. Belgium, Greece, Croatia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Slovenia and Sweden were all opposed to renewal.

Sadly the UK was in favour of continued use of glyphosate thus following its long ignoble tradition of siding with the pesticide industry rather than voting for greater protection for the health and environment of the people of the UK.

Update – 30th October – Vote by Member States on whether to re-authorise glyphosate now due to be held on Thursday 9th November. PAN UK will continue to work with our colleagues to put pressure on relevant decision makers to ban glyphosate in the EU once and for all.

<http://www.pan-uk.org/ban-glyphosate/>

Pesticide Action Network North America

Monsanto executives will not be happy about Carey Gillam's new book.

Released last month, 'Whitewash' documents the corporation's aggressive efforts to establish, promote and protect their RoundUp Ready seed and pesticide empire. Through investigative reporting, Gillam unveils Monsanto's dubious playbook, from bankrolling supportive scientists to blackballing critics and strong-arming regulators. It's not a pretty picture. Here is the link: <http://www.panna.org/blog/monsantos-playbook-revealed>

PlantGrow, Norfolk

Daniel Suggitt, from PlantGrow, in Norfolk, has written to tell us about their new type of natural fertiliser from the plant tissue of selected crops, fruit and vegetables - no chemicals, no animal waste. He has been in conversation with Garden Organic's operations director Steve Thompson, who was keen on trying their product at Garden Organic Ryton in Coventry. They have now supplied a large amount for trialling which he's sure will be a success. Further information can be found on their website, www.plantgrow.co.uk

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!

SEEOG visits

1) Saturday 21 October: It was a pleasant drive to Cressing Temple. From inside the car, the view of rustling autumnal trees, a blue sky with white clouds flitting in the breeze was very deceptive. The wind nearly blew my car door off when we arrived; luckily I wasn't parked too near another vehicle.

We hastily found a cabin where hot drinks and sweet treats were being served, and where we met our fellow SEEOG members, and the other visitors, all of one mind, 'refreshments, camaraderie and warmth'.

There was a brief tour of the new Community Garden at Cressing Temple. It has been developed over the past year, from an overgrown 'dumping area for weeds'. A local group of volunteers has formed a successful working group. They sell most of the produce and hope eventually to make enough money to support the project without grants. Volunteers also take produce home and transform it into soups and cakes that are shared at the garden.

Along with all the usual veg suspects, was a thing called Oca, or New Zealand yam. It's from the oxalis family, *Oxalis tuberosa*, and has tubers that look a bit like 'Pink Fir Apple' potatoes, but are multi-coloured, pink, yellow and burgundy. Apparently, they can be eaten raw or cooked like potatoes. The plant is about 10 inches tall, with clover-like, or classic oxalis-shaped leaves, and not a jot of rust on them, unlike my pink flowering oxalis at home.

The purpose of the event was to vote for one of three local community gardening projects. In The Men's Shed, a spokesperson from each project discussed their plans and answered questions. We then went to have soup and crusty bread, (leek and potato, or spicy autumn veg, both of which were delicious, I had the spicy one).

We cast our vote by putting our used soup spoon into one of three watering cans, labelled with the project number.

Project 1. Earls Colne Library Garden: At the back of this library, there is a south facing, overgrown, walled garden, approx. 90 feet long. The council has agreed that it can be used as a community garden. Local volunteers will clear it and develop a sensory garden (which the local primary school is very excited about), a salad garden, wildlife garden and a story corner. They also want to have a Men's Shed, a project to help men who might not want to join other community groups, but would feel comfortable working with other men on workshop based projects.

Project 2. Cressing Community Garden: They would like to make apple juice from their orchard of 40 East Anglian heritage apple trees. They pick and store the apples carefully, but are dismayed by how quickly many of the apples 'go off' and can't be used. They want to juice them before they deteriorate and sell the juice. Currently they borrow an apple press, but it isn't big enough. They also need a pasteuriser and bottling kit.

Project 3. Diggin' Dunmow: They want to find people with gardens that are too big for their needs, who would allow Diggin' Dunmow to grow food in their gardens, much like a Land Share project that a SEEOG speaker talked about a number of years ago. They already have one such garden. There are staff and volunteers, who help disadvantaged people to learn gardening skills and grow vegetables. Eventually, they hope to run horticulture qualifications for their learners. They are in talks with local doctors about opportunities to facilitate 'Green Prescription' sessions. They support food democracy, to ensure that good quality nutritious food is affordable and available to all. They are active in supporting the local 'cycle of waste' by using waste plastic and cardboard from local businesses as weed suppressants and base layers for open composting beds.

Do I need to tell you who won? Or who came 1st, 2nd, 3rd? I bet you can guess! I didn't vote for Project 1, because I'm sure they'll get plenty of volunteers and donations. It's an appealing, very do-able project that will attract people of all ages and backgrounds in the local community. It's in an accessible place, on the High Street, and will easily become a wonderful new focal point in the community.

I didn't vote for Project 2, because they are already making money from the community garden, and will undoubtedly continue, and eventually become self-sufficient and re-invest profits in new projects, such as the apple juicing. Being part of the Cressing Temple estate will provide a steady flow of visitors who will enjoy the Community Garden, probably inspiring new volunteers and definitely increase sales of produce.

So I voted for Project 3, the most unlikely, but the bravest. It is the least attractive, but addresses serious needs. I think the garden sharing scheme is unlikely to flourish, most people, me included, would worry about our property security, and even our personal security, with this kind of proposal. But I think the project will evolve and could possibly become very much like Growing Together, where we have our SEEOG meetings. Anyway, you were probably right; the winner was Project 1, then Project 2, then Project 3.

I had gone off to visit the barns and outbuildings by the time the vote was announced. Vic and Carole stayed to see the money handed out to the three projects, i.e. 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. It would be very nice if they supported each other's endeavours. Very kindly submitted by Jane - such great copy!

2) We left Cressing at lunch time and headed for Crapes Fruit Farm, in Aldham, after a bit of map searching! It was lovely to meet Andrew and we couldn't wait to get into his shed to pore over and admire his lovely display of apples. Did you know that he grows over 150 varieties? But we did one better; in fact, we did more than view, we bought a good selection! We shall be visiting again on Saturday (pm) 5 May, all arranged there and then with a swirl of his new calendar!

Soil Association news

Last month the Government published its long-awaited Clean Growth Strategy, setting out its plans and priorities for moving the UK to a low-carbon economy over the coming years. Unfortunately, the UK Government is still failing to reach its emissions reductions targets, in breach of the Climate Change Act. As ClientEarth have pointed out, "We need a firm commitment to say how the UK will decarbonise. Good intentions are no longer good enough". However, the Strategy does make a number of promising statements and commitments on the future of farming and land use, many of which reflect core priorities for the Soil Association.

Chief among these is the Government's stated intention to design a new farming system "with a strong focus on delivering better environmental outcomes, including tackling climate change". In the UK, farming accounts for 10% of our total greenhouse gas emissions, making it the third highest emitting sector after transport and energy. Globally, the food system accounts for around a third of all greenhouse gas emissions. It is abundantly clear that we stand no hope of successfully tackling climate change without a revolutionary change to the way we farm. You can read this item in full at <https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2017/october/the-clean-growth-strategy/>

Stop supermarkets from selling raw fruit and veg in plastic packaging

The world is drowning in plastic, it is totally unnecessary to have fruit and veg in plastic packaging. https://www.change.org/p/uk-parliament-stop-supermarkets-from-selling-raw-fruit-and-veg-in-plastic-packaging/nftexp/ex16/v1/29455012?recruiter=29455012&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=autopublish&utm_term=psf_combo_share_initial.combo_new_control_progress_1024fake1&utm_content=ex16%3Av1

Trust Links' news

Help us look after our guinea pigs, chickens & wildlife @ Growing Together Westcliff and Shoeburyness. Comic Relief will match fund every £1. This project is using Flexible funding and will receive all pledges made by 12:30 on 23 November 2017. <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/community-pet-growing-together/>

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