

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 140 – JULY 2018

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

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



garden.
organic



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 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:

September	-	Friday	24 August
November	-	Wednesday	24 October

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2018

Please make a note of all these dates, to avoid disappointment later on.

Saturday 14 July, 14:00 – 17:00: Visit to the Monastery (including garden) of Saint John the Baptist, The Old Rectory road, Tolleshunt Knights, by Maldon, CM 9 8EZ

This is a visit using car share. If you wish to give or receive a lift, please contact Carole.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjmlvQIn4lg>

Monday 16 July: AGM (19:30) and Group Night (20:00)

Our AGM starts at 19:30 sharp and we look forward to seeing as many members as possible at Growing Together. The month of July is also the time when we must think about our (very) important subscription renewals (and even introducing a friend, relative or neighbour, perhaps?)

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

Kulvinder Kaur Johal, Assistant Head Teacher/Science Co-ordinator, Northbury Primary School (Barking) is then going to talk about her 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 last year, but they now have their thriving garden back.

Monday 17 September: Group Night with SEEOG member Philip Fawcett

This 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: Group Night with Seed Co-operative, the UK's community owned Seed Company

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

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 4 July, 15:15-18:30, free entry: Summer Fayre, Growing Together Shoeburyness, with plenty of activities for all the family including live music, bouncy castle, BBQ, plant sales and much more.

Sunday 19 August, 14:00: Summer Show at Springfield Drive Allotments, Westcliff-on-Sea - barbecue, plants and produce, stalls, teas, bric-a-brac, raffle and live music - free admission. We have very kindly been asked to attend here and at Manchester Drive.

Saturday 25 August, 11:00 to 15:00: Manchester Drive (opposite Cricketfield Grove), Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3EZ - free admission, plenty to see and to do. As usual, hoping for good weather and lovely music!

Saturday 15 September: Walking Together with Trust Links.

Saturday 6 October, 11:00 – 14:00: Apple Day at St Laurence Orchard, Eastwood

Wednesday 17 October, 14:30: AGM at Trust Links

NEWS

Allotment news: Folly Grove Allotments, Hockley

The developers have submitted revised plans to Rochford District Council but to date these have yet to be received by the Parish Council's Planning Committee for comment despite our enquiries. It was agreed to form a Working Group comprising Cllr Gleadall and Cllr Meacham. It was noted that other non-council members with allotment expertise would be required.

It was resolved that the council would contact the local Allotment Society to ask for outside members prepared to volunteer for the Working Group, which was agreed unanimously. It was further agreed that the office will update the Allotments Waiting List. They also noted correspondence received from Blind Veterans UK and that plot allocation when available will be considered by the Working Group.

Date of next Meeting: 19.30 on Monday 6 August.

Crapes Fruit Farm: How many apples?

At the moment, the answer would seem – 'enough'. May saw a rapid recovery in temperatures both during the day and, unusually, during most nights too. The chilly and wet end to April will have delayed the pollinating insect population from establishing, not that we rely on them, but look on the pollinating period as a time when insects of all types, including bees, can be seen and heard during the day, foraging and transporting.

Trees blossoming on the 30th April are showing very few apples indeed as the wind chill was detrimental to insects and devastating to pollen tube growth. Some trees sheltered immediately inside a northern hedge have set well while a few trees further down the row are empty where the shelter from cold was less. Corners bounded by hedges or human habitation have set well – my theory is that our resident Bumble bee population have been working close to their nests.

The June drop has begun early this year and will be particularly useful with Discovery, Worcester Pearmain, Spartan and Tydeman's Late Orange.

Orleans Reinette and Kidd's Orange Red look good. A hopeful eye is being kept on our Ribston Pippin and D'arcy Spice. Cox are grown here on four different rootstocks on a wide range of aged tree. They are visible and very scattered – but they are there!

Cooking apples generally are looking light. No Suntan or Blenheim Orange in quantity to be expected.

Farmers' Markets 2018

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's Farmers' Market at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, 3rd Friday of the month from 09:00 to 13:00, apart from December (08:30)

Friday 20 July; Friday 17 August; Friday 21 September; Friday 19 October; Friday 16 November; December market – date TBC

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1818935024986153/>

Rochford at the WI Hall, West Street, 1st Saturday of the month from 09:30 to 12:00

Saturday 7 July; Saturday 4 August; Saturday 1 September; Saturday 6 October; Saturday 3 November; Saturday 1 December

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

Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens

The gardens and land have now been registered as an Asset of Community Value with Rugby Borough Council. This designation, if it is not contested, will give the community the right to bid to buy, with six months to raise the money needed. The Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens has been set up to protect the gardens for the future and aims to work with whoever owns them. Please follow this link to the Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens (FROG) Facebook group (FROG Group) if you would like to work to protect the gardens for the future.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/617697861918951/>

Garden Organic news - MYharvest returns!

Whether you grow in an allotment, a small back garden or a balcony, why not join in this exciting research project. Hosted by the University of Sheffield, MYHarvest would like to hear from you. How many potatoes will you dig up? How many bowls of strawberries or beans will you pick? It's easy to sign up and, as the summer passes, it's fun to record your own individual harvest, down to the last apple.

MYHarvest (Measure Your Harvest) is a research project investigating the quantities of home grown fruit and vegetables across the UK. Gardeners across the country are encouraged to sign up and record their individual harvests. There is no doubt that growing your own produce contributes to a healthy diet and general well-being. But there is no official record of how much own-grown food gardeners and growers are able to produce. Can it contribute to this country's food security?

Sign up now, before you start picking, at www.myharvest.org.uk
Research is led by the University of Sheffield.

GM news

"Ignoring the significant scientific data regarding the off-target movement of Dicamba will be the biggest environmental disaster agriculture has ever seen"

In a powerful open letter, weed scientist Ford L. Baldwin, PhD, challenges the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) to turn its back on "lobbyist and other monetary influences" and face up to the catastrophic damage caused to non-target crops and plants by Dicamba herbicide drift from fields of GM Dicamba-tolerant soybeans.

Dr Baldwin, who is a long-time Fellow of the WSSA, accuses the society of deserting its responsibility to science, the environment, farmers, and the public – and of "vigorously supporting the Dicamba-tolerant technology and even lobbying for the technology". He also points out that, for a number of reasons, formal complaints only reflect a fraction of the damage being seen on the ground.

<https://gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/18324-weed-science-society-slammed-by-member-for-inaction-over-dicamba-damage>

As a technical note, Dicamba is a member of the auxin family of herbicides.

Lauriston Farm news

Two new workshops at Lauriston Farm in July:

- 1) Magic Wool Workshop: Saturday 7 July, 10:30 – 16:30
- 2) Basket Weaving Workshop: Sunday 8 July: 10:00 – 16:30

For more information, please contact the farm: enquiries@lauristonfarm.co.uk;
01621 788348

<http://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/contact-us.html>

Members' contributions

1) Compost Mania with Tom Willis: SEEOG talk May 21st

Tom started 40 years ago with HDRA, just composting various materials. Why? 40% methane in UK is from landfill and it is tapped off, ie at Pitsea, which runs six generators. So prevention by composting - and Tom took us through types of compost containers - but Charles Dowding would point out that a heap decomposes. Hot composting stops life cycles of the slow heap/cold composting and weed seeds can be dealt with by invertebrates like beetles. Then to the ratio of green /brown; placement in sun or shade is inconsequential, which Tom dealt with and took us through it.

As Charles Dowding stated in his "Gardening Myths and Misconceptions" – the chapter on making and using compost - you can compost ingredients recommended to be left out and can make good compost without heat (I do both - 40 years). UNTRUE that rhubarb leaves and citrus peel, potato and tomato plants with blight CANNOT be added. You do NOT need to add worms - they colonise naturally. The need to inoculate heaps is partly true.

Plants are not damaged by an excess of nutrients; "the process of composting involves the creation of soft hummus which holds nutrients in a stable water soluble form ready for use by plants when fungal interactions send the right messages". These biological mechanisms look after plant feeding and growth without US - especially in soil where compost provides food for the hordes of bacteria and fungi.

Seedling roots are NOT burnt when sown or planted into compost spread on soil.

Compost tea as a nutrient feed is not the black leakage from the heap, which is anaerobic and mostly carbon - the compost tea of recent development is a brew of micro-organisms not nutrients and is multiplied by stirring.

That proprietary seed composts are best for seeds is NOT TRUE - sieve your compost and add 25% sharp sand. DIY COMPOST MAKING makes compost sanity.

Thanks to Charles Dowding, his book and all plagiarisms are plagiarisms via his work are worth a serious read beyond the chapter on compost - Charles is a successful grower for decades.

2) What is National Insect Week? National Insect Week encourages people of all ages to learn more about insects. Every two years, the Royal Entomological Society organises the week, supported by a large number of partner organisations with interests in the science, natural history and conservation of insects.
<http://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/>

3) Veg On The Edge - Community food growing in Saltaire and Shipley, Yorkshire
On 17 May 2018 we were delighted to be visited by The Big Walk, led by Eden Project Communities. As part of this ambitious project, four teams of walkers are currently making epic journeys across the UK over 18 days to shine a light on projects and events that bring people and communities together.
<https://vegontheedge.org/2018/05/30/the-big-walk-visits-saltaire/>

4) David A. Church, WasteBusters Volunteer Co-ordinator, Waste and Environment, Essex County Council, has asked us to let our members know of the compost bin subsidy that they provide to residents of Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock residents).
<http://recycleforsex.com/news-and-ideas/try-composting-at-home/>

5) Children love growing plants, love being the garden but they're often impatient, wanting to see instant results. National Children's Gardening Week aims to capture children's enthusiasm at a time when results are immediate. National Children's Gardening Week takes place annually in the 'warm' week at the end of May.
<https://www.childrensgardeningweek.co.uk/about-us/>

6) New organic farming rules adopted in the EU
On 22 May, the Council of the EU adopted new rules on organic production and the labelling of organic products. After years of discussion and clarification, the new rules aim to improve consumer confidence in organic products, as well as prevent fraud and unfair practices. The former rules covering organic production were uneven across the EU, as they included a wide range of different practices and exceptions.

"Organic farmland has more than doubled in the last decade and is still growing," comments Rumen Porodzanov, President of the Council. "Thanks to the rules we have adopted today, the organic sector will continue to thrive and consumers can trust that the organic products they buy are of the highest quality."
<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/new-organic-farming-rules-adopted-eu>

7) Essex Community Tree Nursery

The Conservation Volunteers are working in partnership with Essex County Council to establish and maintain a Community Tree Nursery. The nursery will grow native trees from seeds collected from veteran and notable trees in Essex, ready to be planted back in to our county's green spaces. The Tree Nursery is located at Weald Country Park, near to the car park off Lincoln's Lane. If you would like more information about the tree nursery, or would like to join them on an activity day, contact Nicola Downs on 01206 764 470 or n.downs@tcv.org.uk
<https://www.tcv.org.uk/eastern/tcv-essex/essex-community-tree-nursery>

8) Actors in Perthshire have been touring village halls with a new take on Brexit. Their play, called "A six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact it rains", features the views of farmers, shepherds, landowners and migrant workers - all voiced by actors.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b5qnbq#play>

9) So have visited 8 of these 10 gardens - pity they didn't include the native/endemic plant gardens in Nadur (Ta Kenuna) or the rather fab Villa Rundle in Victoria - both free and both on Gozo.
<https://www.guidememalta.com/en/these-10-beautiful-gardens-in-malta-will-enthrall-you>

10) Many of us yearn for a plot of land but for most, it's a dream more than a reality (although thanks to initiatives such as the Ecological Land Cooperative it's becoming more affordable and easier). It makes sense to concentrate our efforts where we are now, both geographically and in terms of our knowledge base. No need to wait around for that 'perfect moment' to start - the time is now!

This year's National Convergence in Manchester this September will bring people together in an urban environment to see what is already being achieved and discover together how we can do so much more.

<https://www.permaculture.org.uk/convergence-2018>

11) Every month we feature a fruit or vegetable that is in season, along with a fun fact or recipe idea. Finally, figs are back! After a few years of very minimal harvests, due to the devastating impact of the fig bark beetle, or *Hypocrypahlus scabricollis*, this year the harvest of the early figs, known as bajtar ta' San Ġwann, looks promising. After the first round of fruit matures in early June, a second round of fruit develops on the same trees about six weeks later, which are known as tin or farkizzan. Make hay while the sun shines, and enjoy the sweet, plump and tender fruit on their own, or as the main eye catcher in a salad, as in the recipe at this link below.

<https://foemalta.org/fab/figs/>

With grateful thanks to Ron and Simon

Pesticide Action Network UK: A review of pesticide use in global cotton production – New edition 26th June 2018

As the Better Cotton Initiative General Assembly opens, PAN UK publishes a revised version of its report on global pesticide use in cotton. The revised report includes new data on the United States Cotton sector's pesticide use provided by Cotton Incorporated, and includes a reanalysis of official US government data. The new figures show that, while insecticide and fungicide use on US cotton has fallen significantly in the last 20 years (by 78% and 95%, respectively), herbicide use has increased by 54%. As a result, total pesticide use – in terms of lb per acre – in US cotton production is broadly similar to that of two decades ago.

You can read this worrying report in full at

http://www.pan-uk.org/cottons_chemical_addiction_updated/

Pesticide Action Network North America: Decades of deceit on glyphosate

It's been clear for years that the pesticide industry has too much influence on public officials and the policies they set. Veteran journalist Carey Gillam's new book *Whitewash: The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer and the Corruption of Science* digs into one egregious example of this: Monsanto's (now Bayer) aggressive efforts to 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.

Earlier this month (June), PAN hosted an event in Minneapolis with Carey Gillam — an evening of conversation about *Whitewash* and the years of reporting she has done on agricultural corporations and the modern-day food system. Carey's analysis of what we're up against is too important to miss. If you weren't able to join them in Minneapolis (!) you can join the discussion by viewing her presentation at this link:

<http://www.panna.org/blog/decades-deceit-glyphosate>

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!

Soil Association news: Organic Standards Review

The Soil Association has recently completed a review of their organic standards to ensure they are as straightforward, transparent and clear as possible for their licensees to use and for the public to understand. And, most importantly, that what they ask their licensees to do makes a big difference to our natural world, the quality of life for farm animals and the organic food we eat.

As a result of the review, they are launching updates to their standards. This will happen in two phases, which you can read in full at <https://www.soilassociation.org/organic-standards/organic-standards-review/>

SEEOG Committee

Ron Bates	Chair	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Ray How	Vice-Chair	01702 544632	ray.how@btopenworld.com
Ane Bates	Treasurer	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Graham Oster-Ritter	Membership	01702 558871	grahamoster@btinternet.com
Carole Shorney	Secretary	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Vic Shorney	Committee	01702 201914	caroleshorney@hotmail.com
Jane Ponton	Committee	01268 565776	JaneAPonton@hotmail.com