



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



Soil Association

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NEWSLETTER NO: 150 – MARCH 2020

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

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

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

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

Membership is currently £8.00 per annum, £12.00 family.

Is your local school a member of SEEEOG? If not, we offer free membership on receipt of application form!

Venue, notes etc.

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 (**apart from March 2020**). On a practical note, we can always do with some good, gardening related raffle prizes, please! Please notify Carole if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or change your email address: caroleshorney@hotmail.com

Very many thanks, everyone, for your contributions – and we look forward to receiving more in future, plus items on compost making, pests, no-dig, raised beds, planting density, varieties, preserving crops, biodynamic gardening, etc. Please don't be shy or worried that what you have to say is not important. Fifty words giving a simple tip in the garden will be just as gratefully received as two pages from any latent novel writers lurking out there! For your information, a page is about 350 words. You can send your words by post or by email. Please join in; SEEEOG is a group of link-minded people!

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' for 2020 are as follows:

May	-	Thursday 23 April
July	-	Tuesday 23 June
September	-	Sunday 23 August
November	-	Saturday 24 October

Please make a note of all these dates, to avoid disappointment later on, especially our planned visits, when we are often asked to provide numbers. Please also note that the time of our March meeting WILL start at 19:00.

SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2020

Monday 16 March: Group Night, starting at 19:00

'Find out all about Orchard East's discoveries and learn about the history and biodiversity of our East Anglian orchards', presented by Howard Jones, Project Manager. Orchards East is an environmental and cultural project covering six counties in the East of England - Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Funded by the Heritage Fund and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, it is devoted to discovering and

understanding the past, present and future for orchards in the region. **Please note that the time of Howard's talk will start at 19:00.**

Sunday 19 April, 12:00 – 16:00: Spring Open Day, Daws Hall Centre for Environmental Education, Bures

Take a walk and enjoy the beautiful surroundings and floral displays in Daws Hall's woodland and private gardens and enjoy refreshments in the Education Centre's classroom. No need to book ahead – adults, £7 and children over five, £2. Sorry, no dogs. There's no time given, so we assume it's 12:00 to 16:00.

<https://www.dawshallnature.co.uk/community-open-days-1>

Saturday 25 April, 10:30: Open Day at Lauriston Farm

Open Days are held quarterly on the last Saturday of the month. They start at 10:30 and last around two hours. They occasionally hold mid-week ones too. They have Open Days on the following dates: 25 April, 27 June, 29 August and 31 October 2020.

<https://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/open-days.html>

Sunday 17 May, 0900 – 1600: Stall at Essex Young Farmers Show, Roxwell, Chelmsford

<https://essexyoungfarmers.com/show/>

Monday 18 May: Group Night

Talk/demo on the vertical salad and herb growing system presented by Patrick Curran, Local Intensive Food Enterprise (LIFE) - www.lifegrow.co.uk

- Their FOODY enables vigorous growth in a small area and uses 90% less water than conventional growing systems
- Grows up to 38 highly nutritious plants in ideal conditions
- Indoors or outdoors - grow 12 months a year
- Occupies less than 2 square feet (0.2sq meters)
- Uses all of the water & nutrient held in the system to promote better growth

Saturday 23 May, 11:00 - 17:00: Visit (car-share) to Little Baddow Open Gardens

This traditional village event, which has been running for 30 years this year, showcases a wide variety of lovely gardens open, from sweeping landscapes with views over beautiful countryside, to delightful small cottage gardens packed with flowers and vegetables. The historic 11th Century Church and 18th Century Chapel will be open as well as a range of additional facilities and attractions, including:

Refreshments such as tea/coffee and cakes; Ploughman's lunches and plant sales at the Memorial Hall; Boat trips from Paper Mill Lock; Cricket match on the sports field; Art Exhibition in St Andrew's Rooms; Classic cars on display at **Riffhams**; History Centre Exhibition; Clog-Morris dancing at the Generals Arms pub; KEGS Corps of Drums at **Riffhams**.

Tickets cost £5 in advance (£6 on the day) from Bond Residential, Danbury; 01245 222856 and, on the day, from all open gardens. **Phil Fawcett, one of our members, will be able to show us around Riffhams.** Parking is free in designated car parks with courtesy buses running all day between car parks and around gardens. Car parks are well sign-posted throughout the village. For Satnav users, the postcode of the main car park is CM3 4AX. For more information, call Peter on 01245 223624 or Malcolm on 01245 225089.

Sunday 31 May, Open Farm Sunday: Fobbing Farm, Curtis Farm, High Road, Fobbing, SS17 9JJ - a zero-tillage mixed farm

The farm walk is due to start at 2pm, so a 1:30pm arrival time is recommended.

Event cost: Free

The majority of LEAF Open Farm Sunday at Fobbing Farm will comprise a farm walk. It is open to everyone, young and old, and is a fantastic way to learn about farming and food. Take a read of George's blog: FarmingGeorge.blogspot.com for a good idea of what will be in store! Fobbing Farm is primarily an arable farm, with some cattle, run by George Young (aka @FarmingGeorge). The farm is run agro-ecologically, whereby farming and ecology go hand in hand. George is running many fascinating crop trials including heritage wheats, buckwheat, hemp, lentils, and agro-forestry! Due to a study trip to the US, George said it will be a week earlier here - Sunday 31st May. Hope you can make it!

Tuesday 9 June, 09:45 – 14:30: Stall at Essex Schools Food and Farming Day, Writtle University College (not open to the public)

Sunday 5 July, 14:00 – 19:00: Visit to Hilldrop, Stanford-le-Hope

Since building their turf roof house in 1995 they have trialled waste materials in their 4-acre garden to mimic brownfield habitat, one of the most undervalued places for wildlife. These are now their most beautiful and diverse habitats for plants and insects; several green roofs and lots of ideas to create biodiverse habitats, especially for solitary bees with views across the Thames Estuary to Kent. The address is: Hilldrop, Laindon Road (B1007), Horndon-On-The-Hill, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 8QB.

80m E of junction B1007 and Lower Dunton Road; just N of Horndon-on-the Hill

https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/34797/?fbclid=IwAR3ejMWMRfIWO-9ocv--P2geBafoLmvfeDfUSER-_HD8TVdbX_o9p7XTdyU

Monday 20 July: Group Night

'Poverty, Food Waste and the Redistribution of Surplus Food presented by FareShare'

Sunday 23 August, from 14:00: Springfield Drive Allotments, Westcliff-on-Sea

Saturday 12 September: The Beth Chatto Gardens, Elmstead Market, Clacton Rd, Elmstead, Colchester CO7 7DB, 10:00 – 17:00

<https://www.bethchatto.co.uk/gardens/planning-a-visit/planning-a-visit.htm>

Monday 21 September: Group Night

Colin Darling will present on behalf of the national charity, Practical Action, <https://practicalaction.org/>

Saturday 3 October, 11:00 – 14:00: Apple Day

Monday 16 November: Group Night

'A year in the life of a flower farmer: How to sow, grow, cut and condition flowers for market' is presented by Amanda Powell. 'Flowers from the Farm' is a multi-award-winning, not-for-profit, co-operative of British cut flower growers.

<https://www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk/members/flower-farmer>

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2020

- Saturday 21 March: Spring Ball at Holiday Inn, Southend
- Saturday 2 May, 11:00 – 14:00: May Fayre at Growing Together Westcliff
- Saturday 16 May: World Cup on Sea at Roots Hall
- Wednesday 1 July, 15:00 – 17:00: Shoeburyness Summer Fayre at Growing Together Shoeburyness
- Saturday 19 September: Walking Together
- Saturday 3 October, 11:00 – 14:00: Apple Day
- Wednesday 14 October, 14:30: Annual General Meeting
- Saturday 14 November: Barn Dance with the Famous Potatoes (evening TBC)
- Saturday 5 December, 11:00 – 14:00: Christmas Fayre at Rochford

NEWS

Allotment news

1. ManureMatters.co.uk - What is aminopyralid?

How do you know if there is herbicide residue in your manure? Why herbicides might be found in manure? What is aminopyralid? Is aminopyralid safe? How can I resolve the situation? Will all my plants be affected?

<https://www.corteva.co.uk/manure-matters.html>

2. In 2020 The National Allotment Society is celebrating its 90th Anniversary, can you help us?

Do any members have photographs from the last 90 years that they could share with us and be used on publicity materials? Have you researched your site, is it 90 years old, or older? Do you have old photos and newspaper cuttings from your site's early days? I found copies of the initial meeting to set up the committee on my site from 1954, but I am certain that there must be older sites out there with original materials. Some centenary sites have already featured in the magazine- such as the Odibourne Allotments, in Kenilworth. If you can help, please email good quality scans and supporting stories to diane@nsalg.org.uk

<https://www.iodadas.com>

3. Watch your Back! The National Allotment Society's sun protection campaign for gardeners will be back on the 2nd May. Click on the logo for tips and advice. There's lots of advice on sun protection today; some of it common sense, some of it conflicting and some downright confusing. The campaign's aim is to provide gardeners with clear and concise information that can be easily implemented into daily lives. Why not download the posters from the website in May and display in your communal spaces to encourage your gardeners to watch their backs! <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/watch-your-back-campaign-launches/>

4. National Allotments Week 2020 – 10 August till 16 August

Their theme this year is a celebration of the many health and well-being benefits allotment gardening offers. Can they reach their target of 90 sites holding open days and events that welcome in their neighbours and share their passion for growing food for health and well-being? Email diane@nsalg.org.uk for publicity materials and to register on their list.

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news-events/campaigns/national-allotments-week/>

Castle Point Climate Action Group

Castle Point Climate Action Group will be holding a launch event at the Hadleigh Old Fire Station from 2.30 – 5 on Saturday April 18th. The event will be a showcase of what residents of Castle Point are doing to combat climate change on a personal level and together.

Spreading the word among schoolchildren; planting trees; cutting down on waste, car journeys and flying; the campaign to 'keep our front gardens 'green'; Benfleet RiverCare; Eco Essex and lots of other initiatives will be on show and we'll be hoping to encourage others to join in.

A 'swishing' party (swapping unwanted clothes), a repair cafe and a community allotment are all ideas in the pipeline and we are also working towards getting Castle Point Council to declare a climate and environmental emergency. Wouldn't it be great if a SEEOG member could help us to get a community allotment in Castle Point? Now, there's a challenge!

Lots already happening ... lots to be done ... your help is needed ... you'll be very welcome.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/498427457722007/>

Chairman's notes

1. Group talk on 20 February - Darren Lerigo's "A Very British Garden"

Perhaps it's a far cry from the idyll of the cottage garden: climbing roses or lawn; 1 foot border; patios; decking; generally empty is his perception from his gardening work. If we move to front gardens, they're removed to various forms of concrete car parking, a generation that does not garden. An industry that still will not give up peat! That's the garden centres, the plants decided and not necessarily open pollinators, lots of habitat tat that can be replicated naturally with a little untidiness, compost heaps, wood piles, varied planting – tree, shrub,

bush, flowers of varied height with aromas, attractants for invertebrates. Leave tidying till Spring, let the garden 'garden' on its own in some places.

A bit of Henk Gerritsen - no chemicals, don't whinge and garden like a cow, let plants grow, take out those that offend and not like an elephant that crashes and smashes down everything. Darren gave us plants that have character – Baptisia - false indigo; Verbena bonariensis; a white Rosebay willowherb, good for nectar; Jasmine; Korean forsythia; Osmanthus; Magnolia wilsonii for fragrance; Campentaria californica; Stewartia pseudocamellia; and Trillium for shaded areas. This should give you something to track down as garden centres are a monoculture - all the same and supermarket clones. So break out and diversify further your gardens. Check out Darren's info on the website. Remember Levington ain't good for peat so be careful with your choice, so grow your own, compost, let fungi proliferate, get tastier food as we well know.

Here is the link to the grove of trees to which Darren is donating with Trees for Life - any help for more trees to be planted in the grove are welcome.

<https://treesforlife.org.uk/groves/modern-mint/>

2. Potato Day

Huge thanks go out to the Mayor and Mayoress of Southend and Hyde Hall Horticulturalist, Matthew Oliver, who opened our event, and of course our wonderful volunteers, members, stall holders and guests. We had a wonderful time at our 10th Annual Seed Potato Day in partnership with Growing Together Westcliff. The event opened at 10:00 and there was already a queue of eager potato lovers. Once they had stocked up on Earlies and Maincrops, they could wander round and look at the garden and other stalls; there was tea and hot cross buns on offer, too.

It was a good day, both for sales and reasonable weather, although we took a little less this year, compared with last year. We had a little over 47 varieties to buy by the tuber (including 15 organic this year), collected from Julian's team for East Anglia's Potato Day on Friday and picked up by Jane, Mike, Ron and Vic with Growing Together's minibus. This year, we had to prepare the polytunnel on the Thursday afternoon - with welcome help from Growing Together, Mike, Ron and Vic - brushing and wiping the tables and jiggling them about; setting out our cardboard and blue plastic trays and placing the labels – all ready for Team SEEEOG when they returned from Stonham on Friday afternoon. Again, we had Kamil's popular and very welcome SeedShare, which shared a space with the folks from "Once Upon a Tree"

<https://www.facebook.com/onceuponatreesouthend-107900993902266/>

We were also pleased to welcome Wyn Marshall and Jeff Barber from the National Allotment Society and Tara Smith, who helped with the children's activities. Temptation was right next door to the SeedShare stall with fudge from "The Fudge People". Fiona said her bar was so yummy it didn't make it home!

<https://www.thefudgepeople.com/>

By lunchtime, we had built up an appetite - time for delicious potato curry cooked by Mrs Nirmal Gupta, MBE and her ladies from the Essex Asian Women's Association. Everyone was talking about how good it was; it got the Mayoral seal of approval! Musical accompaniment was provided by the Tuesday Music Group; some of us joined in the sing song. We hope you enjoyed the day! Until next year...

3. An article about the demise of fireflies, which are beetles, worldwide

There is only one in UK - females glow green in June/July evenings to attract males. They live for two years, hatch from eggs in late summer, grow by eating tiny snails then hibernate through winter; then a year growing and hibernation, pupating in spring, emerging as adults around June. They are under pressure from habitat loss - they do not move very far, light pollution, diffuse skyglow and chemicals. People do not think of life cycle needs of invertebrates; when we put up MDAS for Nature, the food plants and habitats for the life cycle were included to show that varied and various habitats come into play for many species.

So preserve known habitats, understand the food needs through life cycles, get back to a bit of "untidiness"/habitats in gardens and plots.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/22/why-lights-going-out-fireflies-conservation-pollution>

Crapes Fruit Farm: Early signs

The last days of February 2019 are now a very distant memory as we approach March 2020 beneath clouds and a decided chill, which is bound to slow the breaking buds on many species. Quince were about two weeks ahead and some apple varieties were showing a little green as the bud scales began to part early last week, also on the early side. Rainfall totals this month have not been excessive but each additional 10mm has topped up an already saturated soil so it is possible that some root loss will occur in instances where trees searched deeper for moisture during the Spring drought of last year. Compared with the unfortunate flooding further west we have nothing but some minor delaying inconvenience to trouble us.

I recently entertained our local Women's Institute with an account of life here in Aldham, at Crapes, since February 1922. No longer would forty people from the village be available with their wooden stools to pick blackcurrants as in the 1930s. There is a misconception that those working in agricultural and horticulture are 'low skilled'. We may look muddy and dishevelled but the years of wisdom of the land and growing learnt, and in turn passed on to the next generation, don't come for 'nothing'. As a nation we have made a good job of shooting off one foot since the beginning of the year; now the toes on the other seem destined for a slow amputation before the beginning of the next. Attitudes need to change - fast. The weather is the least of our problems - FOR ONCE!

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

Farmers' Markets 2020

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:

Friday 20 March, Friday 17 April, Friday 15 May, Friday 19 June, Friday 17 July, Friday 21 August, Friday 18 September, Friday 16 October, Friday 20 November, Friday 19 December

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

Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens

FROG representatives Ross and Judy had a very positive meeting (this week) with representatives from Coventry University's Vice Chancellor's Office and the Centre for Agro-ecology, Water and Resilience [CAWR], the University's research facility which is based on the site. The University representatives emphasised there is a commitment to retaining the organic status of the site, and said that the University had bought the site with the aim of protecting it for the existing research centre. CAWR also hopes to use the site to strengthen the university's research into sustainable development. There has been a strong indication that the individual gardens will be retained and maintained as far as possible, although they are not sure how that will be managed. FROG has been invited by CAWR to join the stakeholder group which will have input into the future plans for Ryton Organic Gardens.

FROG now need to increase their support so, if you know of anyone who you think would like to be part of the email group, please get in touch. As you already know, this group doesn't fill your inbox! They think they will soon need to call on their supporters for help and they'll keep you informed. Their mailing address is: rytonfriends@gmail.com

Garden Organic news: For Peat's Sake campaign update

Garden Organic's campaign to take peat out of horticulture is proving hugely successful. From government advisors to individual GO members, the voice is strong and united – there is NO place for peat in our gardens or garden centres. In February, the Committee for Climate Change advised DEFRA that sales of peat should be banned from 2023. The CCC is the government's expert advisor on tackling the climate emergency and reducing the UK's greenhouse gases. They say "The extraction of peat for all uses in the UK should cease by 2023.....Despite the availability of peat-free alternatives for compost and bedding, the

horticultural industry has not produced the desired decline in sales of peat based composts.... therefore there should be a ban on the sales of peat for horticultural use. This would include imports of peat," (over two thirds of peat used in horticulture is imported, either from Ireland or from Eastern Europe).

It's not just at Westminster that peat-free growing is getting a voice. In January, two GO members have stood up in front of local audiences to talk about the importance of peat bogs, and why we don't need to destroy them to grow successfully at home. We salute their commitment. The media have taken an interest in our campaign, with articles in BBC Gardeners World magazine, Garden News, Which Gardening mag and many local newspapers. <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/peats-sake-campaign-update>

GM news: Scientist warns scrapping the EU's strict GMO rules threatens health

A scientist has warned that gene-edited foods could prove toxic or allergenic and that if the UK scraps or weakens EU rules after Brexit, public health could be put at risk. Dr Michael Antoniou voiced his concerns at the Oxford Real Farming Conference in January. Now they have been featured in an article in The Sunday Times by its science editor Jonathan Leake, titled, GM food: Keep EU rules or risk health, says gene expert. According to the article, "Michael Antoniou, head of King's gene expression and therapy group, said that after Brexit ministers should retain the tough EU rules that have blocked most genetically modified crops and livestock from commercial use."

<https://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/19295-scientist-warns-scrapping-the-eu-s-strict-gmo-rules-threatens-health>

Lauriston Farm news: Come and find out what we do at our Farm Open Days!

We start with an introductory talk, followed by a walk around the farm looking at how they plan to expand with the help of their community share offer. On the walk, you'll meet their animals and get a chance to feed the sheep, too. There's lots of time to ask questions. Join them in the barn for a cup of tea afterwards. Open Days are held quarterly on the last Saturday of the month. They start at 10:30 and last around 2 hours. They occasionally hold mid-week ones too. They have Open Days on the following (Saturday) dates: 25th April, 27 June, 29 August, 31 October. It is essential that you book in advance as spaces are limited. Please use the form at <https://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/open-days.html>

Members' contributions

1. This man's collection of lost apple varieties. He has a website that you can buy saplings from!! This is a great way to fight back against corporate farming and the destruction of heirloom foods (which while usually 'ugly', are heartier, and more nutritious than store bought varieties, and more delicious).

<https://applesearch.org/buy.html>

2. The 'GROW 10 TREES' Project: This should be of interest to environmentally conscious local gardeners, especially since many of the species listed are either native or otherwise would do well in our climate without being invasive. (Research was carried out by students at the University of Rome).

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/736640463184922/about/>

3. Ecological Consciousness - This is called 'Foodscaping'. Neighbours share and trade the fruits and vegetables that they grow in their gardens. Imagine if people did this everywhere?

<https://www.facebook.com/Ecological-Consciousness-567337650286414/>

4. The Tropical Roof Garden – The Tropical Roof Garden is a family run business selling fresh quality seeds, most of them harvested in our tropical roof garden located in Malta E.U.

www.tropicalroofgarden.com

5. Cuba found to be the most sustainably developed country in the world

Cuba is the most sustainably developed country in the world, according to a new report launched on November 29. The socialist island outperforms advanced capitalist countries,

including Britain and the United States, which has subjected Cuba to a punitive six-decades-long economic blockade.

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/cuba-found-be-most-sustainably-developed-country-world>

6. Local farmer starts library focused on regenerative agriculture

Michael Pilarski has been collecting books on agriculture and earth repair for 40 years. Now, with a library of information at his fingertips, he wants to share it with Jefferson County's citizens. "Most of my spare income over the years has gone to accumulate these books", he said, sitting in his new public reference library that is covered wall-to-wall with books.

<https://friendsofthetrees.net/>

7. Degraded land begins to bloom thanks to European composting project

Agriculture is an important part of the economic and social fabric of Spain and Portugal. But decades of mining and large-scale farming have left parts of the countryside in poor condition. Now a European project is helping to bring new life to the degraded landscape, working to transform and reinvigorate the soil with organic compost and man-made "technosols". It's part of a joint project called Res2ValHUM involving three Portuguese cities - Braga, Guimarães and Porto - and four in Galicia: Santiago de Compostela, Ourense, Touro and A Coruña. The project has seven partners in total: two university laboratories and five companies, which specialise in technosols or organic compost production.

<https://www.euronews.com/amp/2020/01/20/degraded-land-begins-to-bloom-thanks-to-european-composting-project>

8. Welcome to the Ecosystem Restoration Camp

A global regenerative farming community is teaching people how to reverse the effects of climate change. It can seem difficult to remain upbeat about the state of the planet at a time when governments continue to deprioritise the climate crisis. However, non-profit organisation Ecosystem Restoration Camps (ERC) is providing actionable solutions by building a grassroots movement to educate people about restoring degraded land. ERC is growing quickly. The non-profit organisation opened a camp on every continent in 2019, to build a global regenerative farming community, where knowledge, tools and experience can be exchanged to help repair ecological damage and preserve landscapes for future. ERC is changing attitudes and ensuring that food is produced sustainably.

<https://theecologist.org/2020/jan/29/welcome-ecosystem-restoration-camp?fbclid=IwAR2X3sLDQuDbVz16IZbM9fXmSpILtwVgDn0BBIOxfCygUsJDwt7m37HPHqM>

9. Will CAP kill the Green Deal?

Intensive agriculture is destroying life on Earth – and the EU's €60 billion-strong Common Agricultural Policy is complicit.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2618051631797422>

10. The European Green Deal. What are the Implications for Malta? True to her promise, EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, presented the European Green Deal to the EU Parliament just 11 days after taking office on 11th December 2019. 2020 is the first year of implementation of measures called for in this European Green Deal. So what exactly does it say and why is it relevant to Malta?

https://www.viva-city.com/blog/2020/2/6/the-european-green-deal-the-implications-for-malta?fbclid=IwAR014x6aTIWd11lf41vPk0DaHlpUL_n_y8Y505e2UMIORV7FC5cwGyblGE

11. Spread your love to bees today!

Save Bees and Farmers! European Citizens' Initiative for bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment!

<https://foemalta.org/our-campaigns/food-agriculture-biodiversity/beecause/petition/>

12. This is from the Biological Conservation journal quoted in the Guardian 22/2/20

"The fates of humans and insects are intertwined, scientists have said, with huge declines reported in some places only the 'tip of the iceberg'. The warning has been issued by 25 experts, who acknowledge that little is known about most of the estimated 5.5 million insect

species. However, they say waiting for better data would risk irreversible damage. The researchers said available solutions must be implemented immediately, ranging from individual action such as not mowing the lawn and leaving dead wood in gardens to a crackdown on harmful pesticides. They also said invertebrates must no longer be neglected by conservation efforts, which tend to focus on mammals and birds. The alert was published as two articles in the above."

13. Memories of Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry

Does anyone have any specific memories of Ryton Organic Gardens, particularly individual gardens that they would like to share with Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens (FROG)? Please send to rytonfriends@gmail.com

14. New book coming soon

'The Medicinal Forest Garden Handbook' is out in April. It explains how to grow, harvest and use medicinal trees and shrubs. "Not only can individual plants contribute to health but also the diverse range of plant species helps to promote health. The existence of forests has been shown to contribute to child health overall, through beneficial effects on children's diets." It is available to pre-order, with a special discount of 20% off the RRP. Use code: MEDICINAL at the checkout: <https://shop.permaculture.co.uk/the-medicinal-forest-garden-handbook.html>

15. As part of the Essex Home Compost Initiative, Essex and Southend residents can purchase a quality compost bin, as well as other products, at a reduced price.

www.essex.getcomposting.com

<https://www.loveessex.org/news-and-ideas/try-composting-at-home/>

16. Free trees for schools and communities

The Woodland Trust wants to make sure everybody in the UK has the chance to plant a tree. So they're giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities. Interested? They're able to supply these trees for free due to generous funding from their lead partners. Find out more about their free tree packs and how to apply at: <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

17. A different model of farming could revive rural areas and give us all healthier food

This post is by George L Young of Curtis Farm, Fobbing, Essex, a zero-tillage mixed farm. It is a shorter version of a post on his blog. "There are many issues with the current farming and food system. Long, convoluted supply chains dilute nutrition, and farmers can be an undervalued and underpaid part of the chain. I propose a new system of micro supply chains, where every part is fairly valued and nutrition is preserved, but where there are also happy by-products in education, community and culture. Underlying this is a 'jigsaw' enterprise model". <https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2020/01/23/a-different-model-of-farming-could-revive-rural-areas-and-give-us-all-healthier-food/>

18. The British Sea Buckthorn Company - as featured on BBC Countryfile

The British Sea Buckthorn Company grows sea buckthorn berries on the Essex coast and works with partners from across the world to bring you products that will help you to stay healthy for longer.

<https://www.britishseabuckthorn.com/>

19. Will expect lots of comment on this story!

Treasury adviser: farming and fisheries are not important

Tim Leunig, who advises Rishi Sunak, has suggested ministers could look to be like Singapore.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/01/treasury-adviser-farming-and-fisheries-are-not-important>

20. Is the new farm scheme the break from CAP we've been promised?

Sustainable farming campaign coordinator Vicki Hird examines government proposals for new farm policy, ELMS and the Agriculture Bill. A new farm scheme discussion document outlines (some of the detail) of the proposed Environmental Land Management Scheme for England. At

the same time, Defra published a wider farm policy paper. And the new Agriculture Bill is getting MP-scrutinised. We take a look at it all.

https://www.sustainweb.org/blogs/feb20_farm_policy__papers_latest/

Pesticide Action Network UK: Pesticide-Free Towns Campaign

"Pesticides are poisons and there should be no place for them on supermarkets shelves. We should not be using these chemicals in our gardens and allotments, where our children and pets play, and where our wildlife should be thriving. In any case there is no need for them – it is easy to garden without pesticides." Professor Dave Goulson, University of Sussex

In November 2019, many of us joined PAN in calling on UK supermarkets to take action on pesticides. Now, as spring approaches and gardeners prepare for the year ahead, it's time to ask UK supermarkets to take pesticide products off their shelves.

<https://www.pan-uk.org/take-pesticide-products-off-supermarket-shelves/>

Pesticide Action Network North America:

PANNA from the US - Bayer and BASF have paid out \$250m to Bill Bader, peach farmer of Campbell (Missouri) for damage from dicamba drift destroying 30,000 trees. Monsanto (now Bayer) developed dicamba resistant seeds and internal documents uncovered show they released a highly destructive and intentionally untested product onto the market and used its influence to cheat the regulatory system it shows legal accountability. This comes after Bayer's Glyphosate pay-out of \$2.5billion damages. Soy beans, cotton, broccoli and peaches suffered increased drift in Indiana, Arkansas, Iowa and Illinois. Cortona are stopping production of Chlorpyrifos after a lengthy saga of corporate influence and ignored science. So much for self-regulation! We must be aware.

<http://www.panna.org/blog/farmer-vs-bayer-farmer-prevails>

Soil Association news: Powerful calls to action for children's food from FFL conference

Food for Life, a Soil Association Programme, hosted its national conference last month to address children's food for health and sustainability in 2020. The conference brought together leaders in food and health, to focus on children's food through the combined lenses of health and sustainability. Headline speakers Henry Dimbleby MBE and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall drew attention to the nation's ongoing crises in childhood health and food systems, and presented the inaugural 'Peter Melchett Award' to an exemplary Food for Life school, which has made an outstanding contribution through food to nurture the health and wellbeing of its pupils.

<https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2020/february/18/powerful-calls-to-action-for-children-s-food-from-ffl-conference/>

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