



## SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



Soil Association

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NEWSLETTER NO: 151- MAY 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.

For the foreseeable future we shall be using Zoom. Jane has very kindly produced the attached guidelines for using Zoom and Zoom etiquette, which we very much hope make sense. There is probably more we can do to make it easier for first-time users, so please keep in touch!

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

|           |   |                     |
|-----------|---|---------------------|
| July      | - | Tuesday 23 June     |
| September | - | Sunday 23 August    |
| November  | - | Saturday 24 October |

#### SEEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2020 (under review)

Our planned visit to Hilldrop in Stanford-le-Hope has been cancelled. They may do something if it's possible by July but very scaled down.

#### Monday 18 May: Group Night using Zoom

##### Discussion on creating your own container garden from recycled materials

This year, Simon and Mary are using three planters - which used to stack on top of each other - with their own compost and plants to grow herbs and salad crops/leaves in their front courtyard garden. Convenient and easier for them to keep an eye on for watering and organic plant feeding! The single units are also a more convenient size to cover with fleece and keep cabbage white butterflies off nasturtiums etc. Planters can be made out of many other (cheaper) sustainable and recycled materials. They've successfully grown lots of salad crops: Tomatoes, kale, beetroot (leaves) Chinese red mustard, lettuce and flat leaved parsley.

#### Monday 20 July: Group Night (Zoom)

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

Bradley Quirk will tell us how FareShare has found conditions under lockdown restrictions with some statistics, which are very interesting, including some content on the initial plan regarding Gleaning.

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

This is beginning to look like no show. We will keep you posted, though, as lots of things can change.

### **Sunday 20 September, Open Farm Sunday: Fobbing Farm, Curtis Farm, High Road, Fobbing, SS17 9JJ - a zero-tillage mixed farm (provisional)**

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](http://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!

### **Monday 21 September: Group Night (by Zoom)**

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

### **Saturday 3 October, 11:00 – 14:00: Apple Day (under review)**

### **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>

## **NEWS**

### **Allotment news**

Growing our own food is not just important for physical exercise but it can be an important source of fresh fruit and vegetables at a time of uncertainty for the food supply chain. Here Sofia Parente explains why community growing spaces and allotments should be supported by councils and landowners to grow safely during the lockdown and for the duration of this crisis.

Despite the spike in the interest in growing our own food shown by growth in sales of seeds and compost and reports from national charities such as Garden Organic and the RHS, this is a time of uncertainty for many allotment holders and community food growing spaces. In a recent survey undertaken by Sustain to growing spaces of the Capital Growth and Good to Grow networks, 70 per cent were hoping to keep growing but almost 20 per cent said that they will grow less than usual this year and almost 10 per cent said they were unsure whether they are growing anything at all this year. All this is happening against a backdrop of huge uncertainty about who will pick our crops and the UK's ongoing reliance on imported fruit and vegetables.

[https://www.sustainweb.org/blogs/apr20\\_growing\\_coronavirus/](https://www.sustainweb.org/blogs/apr20_growing_coronavirus/)

### **Chairman's notes**

At Leigh allotments, people are using gloves to open and close the gates, keeping the physical distances, and are producing food for the future when we have ferries having concerns for the economic viability to keep the fresh produce from the EU that we as a nation have become dependent via the market; let alone the pleas from NFU for pickers to be brought in to plant, harvest and package; and beyond that the global economy is in chaos and decline. Time to rethink our national, let alone global resilience and to contemplate exiting the EU with the civil

service somewhat preoccupied with a pandemic. Keep on sowing, planting, cropping and time to contemplate a different way to be on this planet together. Do not close the allotments.

### **Crapes Fruit Farm: The season of the Cuckoo!**

The early morning of 20th April was heralded by the first hearing of a Cuckoo here for the Spring, some five days earlier than usual; also, and not so inspiring, the sight of two Roe Deer furtively mooching around. These are more damaging than the Muntjac as they browse the trees much higher up and hop over rabbit-proof fencing around the vegetable area, leaving hoof indentations in the insect-proof mesh covering carrots and salad.

Unusually, the weather forecast for the first week of May is for increasing night time temperatures. April has been very dry, rainfall-wise, accentuated by chilly easterly winds and dawn to dusk sunshine; light has been most beneficial for all plants in leaf. An ideal balance rarely occurs!

Most apple varieties are showing some open flower. Here, the blossom period extends for several weeks which means, as the different cultivars overlap, there is a good chance of some fertilised flowers. The weather is fair; the flying insect population is very good just now and it seems that, unlike exceptions in recent springs, the usual sequence of flowering through the orchard is close to the norm.

It has been very noticeable that Bumblebees are more numerous this spring, having emerged quite early. They were noticeable by their absence at this time last year.

Our Colchester Friday delivery round is being maintained. It will be good to introduce some of you leaf eaters to some apples and plums in a few months' time!

A reminder that we:

- a) Do not buy produce in from other producers for re-sale, and
- b) Our produce is not available through other delivery schemes or through other farm shops.

All eyes are on the North Atlantic for some unsettled weather to accompany the expected favourable temperatures. An occasional wet day would not be amiss!

### **Farmers' Markets 2020 (cancelled until further notice)**

**Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's Farmers' Market** at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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/>

### **Garden Organic news**

The majority of their work is continuing from their front rooms and gardens; they are incredibly lucky that much of what they do can carry on and they have the technology in place to work effectively. Unfortunately work has halted on the development of the garden at Ryton, and the growing for seed within the Heritage Seed Library has been scaled right back, but they are continually working on ways to address challenges and minimise the impact on the garden build and seed stock for future years, including growing plants at home in readiness for their return.

Their membership team are available to help with any queries. They are picking up emails and voicemails as normal, and are receiving a weekly delivery of post, so do get in touch if you have any questions. They've had lots of people join them over the last few weeks. Their organic growing advice team are busier than ever and have enlisted the help of other colleagues from across the organisation.

Their partners at The Organic Gardening Catalogue are still continuing to take orders. They have been completely inundated as more people turn to growing their own organic food, but

they are getting through the orders as quickly as they can. They are experiencing a backlog in responding to emails so if you've messaged them, but haven't heard back, please be patient.

Their project teams continue to support people in their communities, coming up with new and imaginative ways to connect with people online. Homemade activity videos, social media groups and video chats are all coming into their own.

Their communications team are sharing more organic growing advice than ever. Their podcasts, email newsletter, website, Organic Way magazine and social media pages are all continuing as usual and are full of organic growing advice and inspiration. They have recently added pages to the website on subjects such as sprouting items from your store cupboard and what to prioritise if your situation means you have less time or help in your garden than normal.

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

## **GM news**

1. Another expert on biotechnology has attacked the evidence being used to quash suggestions that SARS-CoV-2, the virus strain that causes COVID-19, might have been genetically engineered. Professor Stuart Newman, professor of cell biology and anatomy at New York Medical College, says that a key argument used to deny that it could be a genetically engineered strain that escaped from a laboratory actually points to the exact opposite. In other words, it indicates that SARS-CoV-2 could well be genetically engineered and that it could have escaped from a lab.

<https://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/19387-another-expert-challenges-assertions-sars-cov-2-was-not-genetically-engineered>

2. Funding cuts meant that the UK's umbrella campaign challenging the use of GM in food and farming faced permanent closure this summer. GM Freeze has helped keep GM out of UK farmers' fields since 1999 but the UK Government's approach to Brexit and international trade deals could undo everything that GM Freeze and others have achieved in the past 21 years. GM Freeze has had a wonderful response to the appeal to the extent that they are now back to discussing "if" they need to close rather than when.

<https://www.gmfreeze.org/>

## **Lauriston Farm news**

On Friday 20th March 2020 our Trustees took the decision to suspend their volunteering programme, co-worker day placements and the Friday Farm Shop initially until Friday April 17th. Access to Lauriston Farm is therefore restricted to the residents and one key worker only. They ask us to respect this as they have residents in one of the vulnerable groups living there.

In addition, all the markets they attend have been suspended as well as the Open Day on April 30th. This time of year they have very little plant produce available anyway as they enter the hungry gap. Their meat supplies are also low as they empty the freezers for the arrival of mutton in mid-April and beef at the end of April.

Their weekly vegetable box scheme restarts in June and they will keep posting updates on their website and via Facebook on the current availability of produce and their general farm activity.

<https://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/>

## **Members' contributions**

### **1. February drought piles more pressure on Maltese farmers**

Lack of precipitation will lead to a decrease in the quantity and quality for fodder crops, with the biggest headache for farmers being that of having to rely more on importing the animal feed.

<https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/>

**2. Food swap Malta** is a network that aims to utilize food by sharing excess with others that produce food or have access to food they will not consume which will reduce waste and provide better accountability and variety for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/67513446665749/>

**3. Urban farming: Growing fruit and vegetables on grass verges** could provide thousands of people with their 'five a day' - Academics have investigated the potential for making use of urban green spaces.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/>

**4. Friends of the Earth Malta (FoEM)** have launched its “Malta Farm Map”, an initiative aiming to promote and support local farmers selling their local fruits and vegetables.

<https://foemalta.org/press-releases/>

**5. Why Germany's little gardens are a way of life**

Once key for survival, Schrebergarten now provide a different type of health and wellness.

<https://www.mnn.com/your-home/>

**6. Got seeds?** Seed sellers across North America have been overwhelmed by skyrocketing demand in recent weeks as home gardeners are preparing to grow their own vegetables in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting around March 16, online seed stores saw a huge spike in orders for vegetable seeds, as fears emerged that the pandemic could threaten food security.

<https://modernfarmer.com/category/farm/>

**7. We created INHABIT in 2015** to help envision what a more resilient world could look like. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a global shutdown of our fragile economy and it is a critical moment to reflect on the broken systems that run our world. The goal of this film is to inspire and empower people and we hope by offering the film for free it will have a greater effect. If you are able to give a donation all funds go towards current film now in Post-Production called INHABITANTS: An Indigenous Perspective.

<http://inhabitfilm.com/>

**8. Farmers and land managers can apply for a scheme to create new woodlands** in a bid to tackle climate change. The Forestry Commission announced £10m will be available in the second auction of the Woodland Carbon Guarantee. Launched in November 2019, the Woodland Carbon Guarantee is a £50m scheme that aims to accelerate the rate of woodland planting and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/>

**9. It's a vibrant tapestry of colours in The Hepworth Wakefield Garden** at the moment as the extraordinarily warm and dry weather has encouraged all the spring flowers to open together. While you stay at home, our Cultural Gardener, Katy, is helping us bring the garden to you...

<https://www.facebook.com/TheHepworthWakefield/posts/10157464513019296>

**10. Study finds huge potential for urban gardens to feed city dwellers**

- Researchers with the Institute for Sustainable Food at the University of Sheffield in the UK used their home town as a case study to examine the potential for expanding food production in cities.
- The researchers mapped the “green infrastructure” — parks, gardens, roadside verges, and woodland areas — and “grey infrastructure” such as buildings across the city of Sheffield and determined that, if gardens covered just 10 percent of the city's green spaces, those gardens could provide 15 percent of the local population with their “five a day,” the recommended five daily portions of fruits and vegetables.
- Altogether, the researchers calculated that there are about 98 square meters per Sheffield resident that could be opened up to soil-based horticulture: 71 square meters in domestic gardens and allotments and 27 square meters in other green infrastructure. If all of this green space was used to grow food, it could supply

approximately 709,000 people — or 122% of the population of Sheffield — with their “five a day.”

Urban horticulture has vast untapped potential, a new study has found.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/03/study-finds-huge-potential-for-urban-gardens-to-feed-city-dwellers/>

**11. They Can't Ration These by Vicomte de Maudit, Persephone Books.** A timely re-print of the 1940 title, this cookery book looks at “food for free” during a time of rationing/austerity. Included are recipes for nettles, samphire and squirrels. More titles at <http://www.persephonebooks.co.uk/>

**12. How does Britain get its food? Why is our current system at breaking point? How can we fix it before it is too late?**

British food has changed remarkably in the last half century. As we have become wealthier and more discerning, our food has Europeanized (pizza is children's favourite food) and internationalized (we eat the world's cuisines), yet our food culture remains fragmented, a mix of mass 'ultra-processed' substances alongside food as varied and good as anywhere else on the planet.

This book takes stock of the UK food system: where it comes from, what we eat, its impact, fragilities and strengths. It is a book on the politics of food. It argues that the Brexit vote will force us to review our food system. Such an opportunity is sorely needed. After a brief frenzy of concern following the financial shock of 2008, the UK government has slumped once more into a vague hope that the food system will keep going on as before. Food, they said, just required a burst of agri-technology and more exports to pay for our massive imports.

Feeding Britain argues that this and other approaches are short-sighted, against the public interest, and possibly even strategic folly. Setting a new course for UK food is no easy task but it is a process, this book urges, that needs to begin now.

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/308/308380/feeding-britain/9780241442227.html>

**13. Boxwood Caterpillar is here again!**

For ideas on the easiest way to deal with it, read on below... and please do share with your keen gardening friends and horticultural societies, so that everyone can keep an eye out for these pesky leaf munchers!

<https://modernmint.co.uk/combat-boxwood-caterpillar/>

**14. Best Plants for Topiary?** Darren Lerigo of Modern Mint guides you through the various plants that can be clipped into topiary. Plants for topiary are wide and varied, from the traditional Boxwood (Buxus – obviously the favourite for the European Boxwood and Topiary Society) through to something more obscure like Phillyrea.

<https://www.ebts.org/2020/04/best-plants-for-topiary/>

**15. Supporting a biodiverse and ecologically sustainable seed system across Britain & Ireland;** because a food revolution starts with seed. If you're a home gardener or an allotment grower and you're interested in growing a wide range of varieties from your own saved seed, we can support you. There are many resources and references available to introduce you to the basics of seed saving or to support UK seed companies by buying local. On the Near Me page you can find suppliers of agro-ecological or organic seed in your area, whilst the News page lists seed saving training events or seed swaps.

<https://www.seedsovereignty.info/>

**16. To stay in pruning shape, Darren has spent lockdown shaping the houseplants**

If you want to improve the shrubs and hedges in your garden, invite me over for a (socially distanced) chat. Or you can learn how to prune by joining a topiary workshop run by Darren and Charlotte in Kent this autumn.

Saturday September 26th - 3 spaces left

Sunday September 27th - 6 spaces left

<https://modernmint.co.uk/shop/pruning-garden-tools/topiary-workshop-27-september/>

**17. The work of the committee scrutinising the environment bill has been temporarily suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak.**

A further announcement on the environment bill committee will be made once a new timetable has been set.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2020/february/have-your-say-on-the-environment-bill/>

**18. The coronavirus crisis has revealed the weakness of the UK's food system**

A crunch point for food policy and planning is surely approaching – the government must take responsibility for a rationing policy based on health, equity and decency, writes Tim Lang, also President of Garden Organic.

[https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long\\_reads/health-and-wellbeing/food-system-crisis-rationing-britain-coronavirus-a9421351.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/health-and-wellbeing/food-system-crisis-rationing-britain-coronavirus-a9421351.html)

**19. Ian Tinton (Dalesfoot Composts) says they are now operating and delivering full time. If any members want to order, please specify you are SEEEOG members.**

sales@wvqm.co.uk

07870 534306

<https://www.wvqm.co.uk/>

**20. If you want to get rid of your garden nettles – eat them!** They are a great source of iron and vitamin C – but remember to wear gloves when picking as the stinging feeling can last for hours.

[https://ngs.org.uk/nettle-soup/?utm\\_source=Adestra&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=Nettle%20soup%20button&utm\\_campaign=April%202nd](https://ngs.org.uk/nettle-soup/?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_term=&utm_content=Nettle%20soup%20button&utm_campaign=April%202nd)

**21. Food security is no laughing matter at the best of times,** but I gasped when I first read the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) annual food civil contingencies infrastructure report in 2018. It is barely a page long (in public at least) and assures us everything is OK and that the food system is resilient and able to withstand shocks. As the coronavirus rocks the nation and panic buying continues, this complacency is about to be tested.

<https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-rationing-based-on-health-equity-and-decency-now-needed-food-system-expert-133805>

**22. For National Gardening Week** we asked our Cultural Gardener, Katy Merrington, what gardening books she has been reading in 2020. Here is the first of her recommendations... 'Alice's Vincent's Rootbound captures with honesty the hopscotch of urban, millennial living. In gardening the balcony at her apartment, she demonstrates that you can find comfort and connection in plants right where you are, in whatever small space you have and that you can find beauty in the small moments of green life all around the city.'

[hepworthwakefield.org/news/cultural-gardener-recommends/](http://hepworthwakefield.org/news/cultural-gardener-recommends/)

**23. "I had the whole farm to look after.** I had seven jersey cows; about four hundred hens; and a goat; and ducks and it was only me!"

<https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=658d50dc0a76d8fea656177bd&id=7be4b4578c&e=9406b0fc6a>

**24. The social isolation response to the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes.**

Perhaps not since the economic depression of the 1930s and World War II has the human family found itself so singularly engaged with shared global issues. In any case, for fellow shut-in environmentalists facing weeks of relative isolation, I have compiled an ecology reading list. There are over a million ecology books in print, and sorting through them might be a challenge. I've included some of the essential classics in the field. In my estimation, every

ecologist and/or environmentalist would benefit by being aware of the information in these books.

<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/29757/ecology-reading-list-self-isolating-environmentalists-coronavirus/>

**25. How is our food supply chain coping with COVID-19?** When the DEFRA Secretary, George Eustice, led the Covid19 press conference (over the weekend), he said the supply chain is working well. But not everyone agrees. For many smaller food producers, who normally sell their goods into restaurants and catering, the lockdown has been extremely difficult. We hear from a crab processor who's lost business and had to furlough staff. And Anna Hill speaks to Professor Tim Lang, who says the Government has got it wrong by focusing the supply chain through a small number of major retailers. 'Government must govern!'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000hmhy>

**26. The farmers bringing their fields indoors**

Food is often transported hundreds or thousands of miles before it reaches our kitchens. Some companies are trying to change that, so they're growing fruit and veg in cities, in indoor vertical farms. Crops are grown on shelves, stacked on top of each other. A video for People Fixing the World by Tom Garmeson and Dina Newman

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08b6n7s>

**27. Malta joins EU countries backing a green post-COVID-19 recovery**

Aaron Farrugia joins 16 environment ministers from across EU. Malta is one of 17 EU member states that are backing calls to put the European Green Deal at the heart of a post-coronavirus recovery.

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/malta-joins-eu-countries-backing-a-green-post-covid19-recovery.786833?fbclid=IwAR0d5VHOG9uCFVWVnv42s04bVEkmUgIcOLK9BTBvBHvw55zHy12CZ4n-8l0>

**28. In back yards, vacant lots, balconies and windowsills everywhere people are returning to the soil and growing food.** For some it's the first time they'll see the magic moment when a seed peeks up from the soil. For others, it's a return to what they used to love doing before life got too busy. For others who have been growing all along, their established systems mean they can share wisdom and excess produce to help those in need.

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

**29. Herb and Vegetable wall panels** - Grow your own, even in the smallest balconies.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/vivacityMalta/>

**30. Reflections on the modern pioneers of the environmental movement. Today - Rachel Carson** Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring* was probably the most important environmental book of the 20th Century. It catalogued, in grim detail, the effect that pesticides were having on the countryside and the wildlife within it. The book was fiercely attacked by the chemicals companies, whose businesses had grown rapidly in the years after the Second World War as a result of the widespread adoption of pesticides like DDT (dubbed the "insect bomb").

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000czl8>

**31. BBC Sounds** has been a great comfort (to me) during lockdown and I was especially pleased when I came across Lisa Jardine's 'Seven Ages of Science' which describes how science has developed over the past five centuries. Especially interesting to me - and I guess it will be to SEEOG members - is the second episode called 'The Age of Exploration' which starts off in the Chelsea Physic Garden and goes on to describe how botanists from the time of Hans Sloane (of Sloane Square and Sloane Street fame!) travelled the world in search of and to catalogue exotic plants. One snippet I learned was that Cook's journey to the South Seas was in major part financed by a wealthy botanist who paid a huge sum to travel on the Endeavour and bring back lots of plants previously unknown. Makes fascinating listening describing the work they did in cataloguing plants but unfortunately - as often happens! - what starts off as a rather cosy story of men with a passion for plants going off in search of new specimens, ends

up as the dark story of imperial exploitation and a rush to make money. But, hey ho, I still enjoyed the listening.

<https://bbc.in/2Sgsm8K>

With grateful thanks to Ron, Pat, Darren, Eileen and Simon.

### **Pesticide Action Network UK**

Here is a great new resource they think children will enjoy. Pesticides are not just used to grow our food; they're also sprayed on our pavements, verges, parks and other urban green spaces, **including schools**. They can wreak havoc on our already struggling wildlife and are also linked to many health issues. A new page on their website is dedicated to children, to educate them on some of the issues associated with pesticides (without alarming them) and giving them some fun and practical challenges to tackle.

<https://mailchi.mp/pan-uk/at-home-fancy-a-challenge?e=7d7c185643>

### **Pesticide Action Network North America: Iowa Updates - April 2020**

They're excited to welcome Rob Faux to PAN as their Iowa-based Communications Associate. Rob owns and operates the Genuine Faux Farm, a diversified produce and poultry operation near Tripoli, Iowa. Rob and his partner Tammy have been committed to organic and sustainable practices while producing food for local consumption since 2004. An improperly targeted aerial pesticide application in 2012 placed Rob in a position where he could effectively use his farm story to advocate for positive changes in policy and practice with respect to pesticides... Read more at <http://www.panna.org/blog/iowa-updates-april-2020>

### **SEEOG website, work in progress**

SEEOG, as you know, is a Local Group of Garden Organic and a supporter of both the Soil Association and Pesticide Action Network UK, hence their logos on our website.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/local>

<https://www.soilassociation.org/>  
[www.pan-uk.org/](http://www.pan-uk.org/)

As we said earlier, there's been a spike in the interest in growing our own food shown by growth in sales of seeds and compost and reports from national charities such as Garden Organic and the RHS, which could and should be reflected soon by an interest in our own website - <http://seeog.org.uk>

Just recently, John Tate, our webmaster, has had to upgrade our website. Have a look! We know you're very busy – and it's a stressful time for us all – but we really would like you to send us photos of your garden and/or allotment, with a little text, or a story/news item you've picked up somewhere, with the relevant link. You don't need to give us any personal information – it can be quite anonymous – we have to imagine more variety of content. Please do bear in mind that to get it to 'work' it really will need lots of pics - preferably at least one per post. So are you up for the challenge? They can be items on compost making, pests, no-dig, raised beds, planting density, varieties, preserving crops, biodynamic gardening, etc, etc. Send them in!!

### **Sustain news: Coronavirus Food Alert**

The main way that Sustain fulfils its aims is through running a multitude of different projects and campaigns to improve food and farming, with the help of their members and other supporters. These pages communicate how the Sustain alliance is striving to secure a resilient food system during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. They are organising themselves around three headline issues, which you can read at this link:

<https://www.sustainweb.org/coronavirus/>

### **Trust Links news**

All four Growing Together sites are currently closed to the public as part of the nationwide lockdown. Check Trust Links Live for daily wellbeing advice and support or read more about how each of their projects are adapting to the Covid-19 disruption. You can also join the

Growing Together Facebook Group to connect with Growing Together members, staff and volunteers.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/TrustLinksOnline/events/>

If you're interested in attending their events, please go to this link to check they're still running: <https://www.trustlinks.org/category/events/>

- 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

### **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    |
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