



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



Soil Association

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NEWSLETTER NO: 154 – NOVEMBER 2020

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

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

SEEORG 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 SEEORG? If not, we offer free membership on receipt of application form!

Venue, notes etc.

We thank you all for your donations – it's lovely to hear from you! If you don't already have the Zoom client software installed on your PC, phone or tablet, it will download automatically when you access the link shown on the invitation. It's probably a good idea to do this a few minutes before the first meeting starts as it can take a little time to familiarise with and install. Please try to make sure that your camera, microphone and speakers on your device are all working properly before joining the meeting as this can help avoid delays in getting the meeting underway.

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' for 2021 are as follows:

January	-	Sunday 20 December
March	-	Sunday 21 February
May	-	Sunday 25 April
July	-	Sunday 20 June
September	-	Sunday 22 August
November	-	Sunday 24 October

SEEORG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS

Monday 16 November 2020: 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. Interest coming in from as far away as Scotland!

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

Monday 18 January 2021: Group Night

'Responsible Sourcing of Growing Media' presented by Catherine Dawson, Melcourt Industries

Monday 15 March: Group Night

'Clippings: Topiary & Pruning Techniques' presented by Darren Lerigo

Monday 17 May: Group Night

Chris Collins, Garden Organic

Monday 19 July: Group Night

'Water conservation, how to best use and save water within allotments, water management and how to prevent water contamination' is presented by our own Ray How, Regional Representative of the National Allotment Society.

Monday 20 September: Group Night

The British Sea Buckthorn Company, presented by Ben Eagle (Director, Sales and Marketing). The 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. Ben was on Countryfile recently.
<https://www.britishseabuckthorn.com/>

Monday 15 November: Group Night

Matthew Oliver, Horticulturist, Fruit & Veg RHS Garden Hyde Hall

NEWS

Allotment news

Hockley Parish Council: Environment Committee Meeting, Monday 2 November, 19:30

There may well be an important update at this meeting. You can view the November 2020 agenda and draft minutes at <http://www.hockley-essex.gov.uk/environmental-committee/>. There will be public speaking time should any resident wish to speak on items on the agenda. To join the meeting, please contact the Clerk at: clerk@hockley-essex.gov.uk or phone 01702 207707 before 12:00 on the day of the meeting and a link and password will be sent to you.

Chairman's (and Treasurer's) notes

1. The FOOD safety strategy from the recent bill passing through Parliament avoids animal welfare and rearing standards expected and agreed for post Brexit trading. There is strong evidence that the processes for food safety are not fail-safe and could lead to ill health - remember the US has a very large food poisoning problem! So much for their food safety standards, it could be said.

2. In his "English Pastoral" James Rebanks makes the point "When we find ways to farm regeneratively, and in ways that allow nature to thrive around us, then we will have a range of foodstuffs to choose from. He says source your food from sustainable local farming systems with environmental values, ask where food comes from – a US trade deal would be worse, much worse. He speaks as a Cumbrian farmer.
The Guardian, Thursday 3 September 2020

3. "Entangled Life" by Merlin Sheldrake - how fungi make our worlds, changes our minds and shapes our futures. "Involution" captures the entangled pushing and pulling of organisms to constantly inventing new ways to live with and alongside one another. "It was their tendency to involve themselves in the lives of others that enabled plants to borrow a root system for fifty million years while they evolved their own. Today, even with their root systems, almost all plants still depend on mycorrhizal fungi to manage their underground lives. Their involutionary tendencies enabled fungi to borrow a photosynthesising alga to handle their atmospheric affairs. Mycorrhizal fungi are not built into plant seeds. Plants and fungi must form and re-form their relationships".

Faced with catastrophic environmental change, much of life depends on the ability of plants and fungi to adapt to new conditions, whether in polluted or deforested landscapes or in newly created environments such as urban green roofs. "Mycorrhizal associations born of the Anthropocene will determine much of humans' ability to adapt to the worsening climate emergency. Nowhere are the possibilities - and pitfalls - more apparent than in agriculture". Sir Albert Howard's worry in 1940 (one of the founders of the organic movement) was that industrial agricultural techniques would develop without taking account of the life of the soil - hence his book "The Living Soil". <https://www.merlinsheldrake.com/entangled-life>

Much to do, much to challenge, but deep understanding of the living earth is our strength and solution: chemical free, biodiverse, pollution free, these are three of our four founding principles for SEEEOG.

4. Group talk via Zoon on 21 September with Colin Darling

Practical Action was founded by E.F. Schumacher of 'Small Is Beautiful' fame. The organisation believes in working with local communities to find solutions which work from the grass roots up. Colin highlighted the main problems facing farmers and communities in the third world. Firstly there is water shortage, which is being continually exacerbated by climate change. Practical Action can help by bringing people together to work out what they can do to alleviate this problem. Digging wells, building dams, creating irrigation systems and stopping run-off have all worked in the past; but now, with up-to-date technology, there are also solar powered pumps which can bring up water from much deeper levels so that growing food can continue.

Some areas of the world face the opposite problem: flooding and soil erosion. How does Practical Action help here? Working with the community they've created a cost effective sustainable solution of 'biodykes', a wall of plants and trees that help to bind the soil in the river bank. There are also ways of growing food on floating platforms which will escape flood waters, and through training and carefully chosen seeds hundreds of farmers are now growing pumpkins on the sand banks. Modern technology can be used to warn people of approaching bad weather.

As well as being active in rural areas Practical Action has a presence in urban and slum areas where it is involved with water, sanitation, health and energy issues.

From the perspective of organic gardeners the organisation feels, like us, that the world needs a new global food system; one that's more resilient, protects natural resources, provides food security and gives small scale farmers the chance to earn a decent living so that they can continue in their homelands. Practical Action promotes the use of more resilient seeds, especially helping women to move from subsistence to more sustainable farming and agricultural methods.

Ron and I have supported Practical Action for many years and it's good to know that 94% of funds raised go directly to benefit projects. SEEEOG has made a donation of £40.00.

5. 'Potato Day' will be different next year.....

Trust Links sadly cannot accommodate our event, obviously, due to Covid restrictions and to protect their reputation.

To recap, we said we wanted to be as helpful and supportive of our regular potato customers' needs as we usually are; if not more so at this horrid time. We've built up an excellent clientele and inspired many beginners to 'have a go'; we think it will be good to continue supporting them as best we can.

Julian Turner (the coordinator of the East Anglia Potato Day, through whom we order our own supplies) has cancelled their Potato Day at Stonham, near Ipswich. This leaves a void for organic growers who want to have organic potato seed. To fill this gap, we have compiled a short list of organic varieties, which we circulated earlier, together with a separate order form for conventional varieties, onion sets, etc.

Ron says that arrangements are progressing well, the prices look good and there will be excess supply with some of all varieties ordered. Keep an eye open for updates. Do please get in touch if you have not yet expressed an interest in buying from our lists previously circulated.

Crapes Fruit Farm news

The blow of a low apple crop has been softened by a surge in demand for our vegetables. We now grow on approximately 1/4 acre, supplying between 20 and 30 individuals and two restaurants a week. Last year, we managed to have produce to sell every single week and

we've worked to build on that for this coming season. Leeks, celeriac, Brussel sprouts, swede, purple sprouting broccoli, cabbages, overwintered onions and late beds of beetroot and carrots all remain in the ground awaiting their timely harvests to maximise the availability and spread of produce over the colder months. We've already started harvesting our Kales - black, red and curly - which will see us into early spring. Our veg boxes are brightened this month with Radicchio and Florence fennel, planted to come just before the frosts.

Winter jobs will consist of mulching beds (that don't have a crop or a green manure on them!) with black plastic and/or green waste compost - to be complemented in the spring with horse manure and our own farm made compost. The planting is not quite over as broad beans and garlic are still to go in.

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

Garden Organic news:

1. We were delighted to see the Family Action ESCAPE Project and Growing Communities, Swaffham, featured on The One Show (BBC1) 'One Big Thank you' (Friday 16 October).

You can watch again here from 20:00hrs. Scroll along to 32.33.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000nh74/the-one-show-15102020?fbclid=IwAR3JwH8ZeWVMkpdf7Qu2dIF_aNA8HGvX987ofWt_IjV5sQo7VCZ4Sd37ki8

2. Next Steps to Seed Saving online webinar: Wednesday, 11 November, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

This half-day online webinar is ideal if you already have some experience of saving seed from vegetables and is the perfect follow on from our introductory course, 'Introduction to Seed Saving'.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/events/course-advanced-seed-saving>

3. Principles of Organic Gardening online webinar: Tuesday, 24 November, 10:00am to 1:00pm

Looking for inspiration to grow the natural way? This half-day online webinar provides you with an overview of what it means to grow organically and gives you the chance to consider how you can integrate our principles into everyday practice within your own growing space.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/events/course-principles-organic-gardening-1>

4. Celebrate the work of the Heritage Seed Library with their beautiful 2021 calendar!

Featuring 12 vegetable varieties that are all either currently in the HSL collection or are now available widely thanks to the work of the HSL. Every calendar sold supports the work of Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library.

www.organiccatalogue.com/2021-calendar

GM Freeze

We've been invited to their AGM on Thursday 19 November, 10:00 – 12:00. Find out more and register to attend at www.gmfreeze.org/AGM.

Members' contributions

1. Rotofarm by Bace proposes "rotary hydroponics" as sustainable source of fresh vegetables. Apartment dwellers can enjoy nearly 1.5 metres of veggie patch using the Rotofarm by Bace, a countertop "rotary hydroponic" garden where plants grow more quickly.

<https://bace.co/rotofarm>

2. Which Potato Should I choose?

Choose by maturity, name, cooking type, family or colour. We have customer reviews to help and, if you still can't decide, have a look at our A-Z chart.

<https://potatohouse.co.uk/which-potato-should-i-choose/>

3. Nine months into the Big Compost Experiment we continue to receive fantastic enthusiasm and support from participants all over the UK! Now, with over 8000 survey responses and 1500 home compost experiments underway or finished, we have some interesting results to share from over the summer. Catch up on the latest news from the Big Compost Experiment with Mark Miodownik on BBC Inside Science (6 August 2020 @ 10'30").

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000lf9z>

4. Dealing with a changing climate in the garden

On 4 July this year, 101.8mm of rain (that's over 4 inches in old money) fell on Aberllefenni in mid-Wales. That was not only more rain than I had down here in Sussex in the whole of July – it was more than I had in the whole five months from mid-March to mid-August combined. Yes, until the last week we've been gasping down here, and there have been some plant casualties in my garden as a result.

<https://community.rspb.org.uk/wildlife>

5. Why do the weeds in our pavements deserve our attention? Helen Mark presents a pavement safari in search of our urban flora. French botanist, Sophie Leguil decided to start chalking the names of plants next to them to draw people's attention to the downtrodden. Others, like Jane Perrone began to do the same thing, and gradually the urban flora is gaining a new respect. But this isn't the first time these plants have attracted interest, botanist Phil Gates tells the story of weeds, walking and worship as he reveals how some 90 years ago a young Edward Salisbury, (who was later to become Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew) discovered how seeds could be picked up and transferred vast distances on the soles of our shoes. So has the time come to show the downtrodden a little more respect? Trevor Dines of Plantlife certainly thinks so, and argues that we should be protecting our grass verges, reducing the frequency with which they are mowed and allowing the wildflowers that line our roads to grow which would enrich our environment and our well-being.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000lf9v>

6. We are happy to launch our Green Library, full of interesting and informative books on environmental subjects, the European Green Deal, gardening, bees, and much more... Members and volunteers can make use of this library at our place in Floriana and eventually borrow them, but due to the current situation opening hours will be limited.

<https://foemalta.libib.com/>

7. Are you between 17 and 28 and want to be become an environmental champion? Our Young Working Group is definitely for you! We are organising interesting and inclusive discussions about the future and fun activities ... To be part of this Working Group, you can register here at <https://foemalta.org/get-involved/vacancies/voluntary-work/>

8. Our pollinators need you. If you want to help bees and support a resilient food system, sign the Save Bees and Farmers Petition (an ID card number is required since this is an official EU process). We will choose three lucky winners from those who sign the petition. Winners will receive one of our BeeCause tote-bags as a thank you gift from the bees...

https://foemalta.org/our-campaigns/food-agriculture-biodiversity/beecause/petition/?fbclid=IwAR0byKJg-1znkf8jFrJm6N75-4Gel9A_HoPFaHOwEzKWY6EFO6RanSXLhY4

9. Nature Guide Series – Wild Flowers of the Maltese Islands by Edwin Lanfranco (Author) and Guido Bonett (Photographer) 2015, Book Distributors Limited, Malta. The early rains this year have started to paint the landscape with a dash of vivid green in contrast to the dried-out soils of the past months. The first autumn flowers have sprouted hastily after the long wait and so starts another floral season which yields so many diverse botanical gems despite the small size of our islands.

<https://foemalta.org/blog/wild-flowers-of-the-maltese-islands/>

10. Malta's location is providing a high potential on renewable energy sources, which gives the country an advantage to meet the environmental and energetic targets set by the EU. But the country is still relying mainly on imports to provide electricity to its residents and deciding to focus only on one renewable energy source.

<https://foemalta.org/blog/renewable-energies-maltas-location-a-little-used-energy-advantage/>

11. Friends of the Earth Malta are calling for LESS AND BETTER MEAT to stop the expansion of intensive animal production, and support a sustainable food system that is better for people

and the planet. We can all make a start by cutting out meat and eating delicious plant-based food for one day each week- joining the growing global Meatless Monday movement!

<https://foemalta.org/meatless-monday/>

12. What's in Season: October – Olives. Olive trees are evergreen trees found in most Mediterranean countries. A very long time ago the olive trees grew all over Malta; they can be grown in all types of soil, as long as the soil is at least three meters deep. These trees need plenty of sunshine to produce olives. The olive tree is very tenacious and can live for up to 500 years. The olive fruit is usually ripe by October. An olive tree usually bears fruit when it is at least four years old.

<https://foemalta.org/fab/food/veggies/olives/>

13. The “Malta Farm Map” aims to support local farmers sell their local fruits and vegetables by connecting farmers and customers directly in this time of crisis. Farmers put a lot of work and passion into growing food, and we want citizens to get a glimpse of that. Right now people want to support local farmers but are finding it hard to purchase from them. Customers can now locate their nearest friendly farmer and buy their fresh local produce directly. In that way they will be promoting the local farming community which had already been struggling even before the current crisis.

<https://foemalta.org/press-releases/malta-farm-map/>

14. The next Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) Bitesize is called Farmers in Competition (1 November).

From January 2021, and with no trade deals concluded (apart from with Japan), UK farmers face global competition in all sectors – meat, dairy, fresh produce, poultry, ornamentals, arable – in home and export markets. Join us live as the former Prime Minister of Australia and appointed adviser to UK Board of Trade, Tony Abbott and NFU President, Minette Batters, discuss what this means for the future.

In 1990, when Farmers in Competition was last the theme of the OFC, the discussion was about price and producer support. These will be lost post Brexit and proposed new farm support schemes are focused on ‘public goods’, which may exclude food production.

The future deals to be brokered may eliminate trade barriers, arguably allowing the UK and other countries to play to their comparative advantages, specialising in what they produce, so boosting productivity and benefitting consumers. In agricultural supply chains, such comparative advantages could be climatic, soils, skills, water, cheaper labour or sheer scale. But the effect of unfettered free trade on UK farming, food, rural communities and the British countryside could be significant and possibly irreversible.

<https://www.ofc.org.uk/bitesize/2020>

15. Remember this item at the end of June -Herbicide Contamination in Compost? Karen completed her bioassay test in due course, which showed very abnormal growth in the beans from the suspect bed, and sent pictures off to Corteva. They said, after careful consideration, that they had identified the problem as stress caused by being planted in insufficiently rotted medium. She disagreed, as stress does not manifest in bizarre growth habit. They recommended she did the test again next year before planting anything and said any veg grown in the bed is safe to eat. In future, she says she'll be green-manuring that particular bed, along with any other bare soil.

<http://seeoq.org.uk/2020/06/herbicide-contamination-in-compost/>

16. Forest of 32,000 native trees to be planted in Dagenham as tribute to key workers of Covid-19 pandemic.

Preliminary work has begun at Parsloes Park in Dagenham, where the Forest of Thanks will be planted. The Forest of Thanks at Parsloes Park will be built using the Miyawaki method, which grows trees about 10 times faster than conventional techniques and establishes plantations up to 30 times denser. It will be a chemical and fertiliser free forest that sustains itself once established, greatly boosts biodiversity and absorbs up to 30 times as much carbon dioxide as other tree-planting schemes. The council has partnered with The Conservation Volunteers and

SUGi Projects to create what will be the largest Miyawaki Forest in the UK, in recognition of everyone who has worked or helped others in the pandemic. A garden or meadow of remembrance will be added later to commemorate those who lost their lives to Covid-19.
<https://www.barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk/news/environment>

17. Malta's first food forest will be planted in honour of burns victim

Karl Pace died after suffering extensive burns in fire at Gozo Marina. The family and friends of 34-year-old Karl Pace, who died after suffering extensive burns during a fire at the Gozo marina, are planning to set up Malta's first large-scale food forest in honour of the man who loved life and nature. The food forest, to be located on a private plot of currently unused land in Ballut, Wardija, will be a self-sustainable forest eco-system incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables, explained Karl's partner Alex Cachia who is leading the project.

<https://timesofmalta.com/>

18. Introducing the National Institute of Medicinal Herbalists. At Jekka's we are proud to partner with a number of leading institutes, horticulturists, gardeners, chefs and herb experts. We have long believed in the medicinal properties of herbs and have formed a friendship with the National Institute of Medical Herbalists.

<https://www.jekkas.com/collections/jekkapedia>

19. How the regenerative farming movement transformed Charles Massy's sheep station

On a still autumn morning in 2016, Charles Massy walked up a hill above his farm to sit beside a favourite old snow gum. High up on the Monaro plateau that runs off the flank of Mount Kosciuszko he could see his homestead and the native brown grasses on his farm dusted with frost. There were swamp wallabies, frogs, previously unrecorded woodland birds. "As a kid there we had no swamp wallabies or wallaroos," he said. It was a sign that the land was slowly returning to health after he had stopped using chemicals in 2000.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/>

20. FoE Malta

Cane has been farming for just over a year and has recently taken big steps to dedicate himself to farming full-time, despite the discouraging comments. Together with Cassandra, they have been on a journey to explore new possibilities in the world of agriculture in Malta. They founded Biome Munch that looks at food and farming more holistically. One of their main aims is to make healthy food more accessible to citizens and they are now offering subscription boxes delivered to people all over the island. They would like to see more community supported agriculture in Malta as well as passionate young people taking up farming and regenerating the land. This video is part of a series of interviews with local farmers.

<https://biome-munch.com/>

21. Maltese MEPs asked to vote for healthy and sustainable diets

The European Parliament (next week) will be deciding how European citizens can call vegan food products like veggie burgers, veggie sausages, steak and others. Plant based products would need to be called disks, patties or tubes. The excuse being put forward by MEPs is that people are not mature and intelligent enough to know the difference between a veggie burger and a meat burger and can be misled. If these amendments pass, it will show that powerful lobbies like the meat industry can control free speech in Europe through money and financial influence.

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

22. 'Fight against climate change in your schools and communities

We're giving away hundreds of thousands of trees so you can get even more trees in the ground. Choose your pack(s) from the list below and fill out our application form.

We have two delivery periods per year, one in March and the other in November. We are currently taking applications for trees to be delivered in **MARCH 2021**.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/protecting-trees-and-woods/campaign-with-us/big-climate-fightback/plant-trees/>

23. Does your local school use a glyphosate based herbicide?

Here's what you can do to stop it by emailing your school as follows:

'I have a question relating to your school's protocol on weed control.

Following Colchester Borough Council's announcement to phase out glyphosate (weedkiller), due to their health and environmental impacts, I was wondering about the procedures of your school? I look forward to hearing from you, etc.'

PS: One school in Colchester has now agreed to use a mixture of rock salt and hot water.

A resident in Tendring contacted the SEEORG Facebook page to say they live opposite a primary school in Frinton. The school is using a glyphosate based herbicide. The resident was given the school's printed fact sheet for the herbicide. It is 'Barclay Gallup Biograde Amenity Glyphosate', a systemic industrial weed killer. She is trying to get it banned in Tendring, at least. Please sign and share www.change.org/tendringagainstglyphosate - it is a start.

24. Looking for Christmas presents? Carole has just bought 'The Children's Forest' from Hawthorn Press for the girls, as recommended by Charlotte Hollins, Fordhall Organic Farm. Now she can't put it down!

<https://www.hawthornpress.com/books/family/seasonal-celebrations/the-childrens-forest/>

25. As they start to plump up, the squashes in gardens and allotments across the city are crying out to be eaten. Luckily our Urban Kitchen Gardener Tom Moggach is back with his culinary genius to teach and inspire us with Squash 5 ways! Dazzling in their variety, squashes bring us some much needed colour as autumn sets in. Peeling them can be fiddly, but use a vegetable peeler if the recipe demands it.

<https://www.sustainweb.org/jelliedeel/articles/oct20-urban-kitchen-gardener-squash/>

26. The Wild Food UK Foraging Pocket Guide has 352 pages covering over 120 different species of tree, plant and mushroom that grow wild in the UK. We have used over 500 photos, simple descriptions and easy techniques to help you identify these tasty wild edibles for yourselves, and learn how to avoid some important poisonous lookalikes.

<https://www.wildfooduk.com/shop/the-wild-food-uk-foraging-pocket-guide/>

27. 'Tasting' a territory is undoubtedly one of the best ways to get to know it. And this is also true for wine, which tells stories about the traditions, culture, and history of a community. For us at Merrill, autumn is synonymous with red wine, and you may want to have a sip of the Maltese territory during a wine tour at Mar Casar. There's a lot to discover, such as the Georgian winemaking style which is employed and which entered the UNESCO's World Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013, or the natural wine that is produced without adding or removing anything from the pressed grapes.

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

28. Rip Off Britain contains an item, just over halfway, on buying seeds online by Valerie Cockerell, Chief Officer, Official Seed Testing Station, Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000nrk3/rip-off-britain-2020-live-episode-9>

29. Eileen came across this recently ... interesting. Be good to circulate so that anyone who contacted an MP could see how their enquiry was dealt with!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1prZ5YQlwJKRelUJ3ZQt5zXJrWSwCsEWozWQVvSFQcEA/edit>

30. "The Key to Combating Climate Change"– Forbes - "Inspires a Rare Feeling of Hope"

This film is all about giving hope in what can seem at times a hopeless time. By exploring the positive influence of regenerative agriculture on climate change, this film looks to inspire everyone to think more about the soil beneath our feet.

<https://kissthegroundmovie.com/>

31. New understanding of 'sociable' slug behaviour calls for better pesticide targeting

Experts from the University of Leicester have been hot on the slime trail of the grey field slug population thanks to innovative technology that can tag and track the behaviour of the invertebrates.

https://le.ac.uk/news/2020/october/slugs?fbclid=IwAR1OEDXOXiGHxjfKYZhV5RfPHwLRFTpYcJIE0FT5quRqpM3bTX_pA4Fr-I

32. Highlight of last month was the Peter Melchett Memorial Lecture, given by Bee Wilson, Food Writer and School Food Campaigner. Bee was joined by Helen Browning, Chief Executive Officer of the Soil Association, and Jo Lewis, Director of Policy at the Soil Association. The annual Peter Melchett Memorial lectures aim to challenge orthodoxy and create debate to stimulate fresh thinking on the causes Peter cared about so passionately. Lord Peter Melchett was Soil Association Policy Director for 18 years. He had been a tireless champion for the environment over decades, including as Director of Greenpeace.

33. Behind China's 'pork miracle': how technology is transforming rural hog farming

The appearance of new human diseases such as Covid-19 – so called “zoonotic” diseases that cross from animal to human – coincide with our modern era of optimisation, industrialised agriculture and subsequent wildlife habitat loss. One 2014 paper on zoonotic diseases states that 60% of all emerging diseases are now zoonotic, with animal origins, and 80% of new pathogens come from the top pork producing countries.

Scientists have warned that invading and disrupting ecosystems will inevitably shake viruses loose from their natural hosts; the way most meat is produced can be considered a global threat to health. The question of antibiotic resistant superbugs, too! And the majority of antibiotics globally are used in animal agriculture.

The Guardian, 8 October, 2020

34. "Somehow, in the middle of lockdown / new 'normal', when there's not supposed to be a lot happening, we've managed to run out of our Guerilla Gardening and Taking Back Our Land leaflets. We would like to think that this is down to people getting 'creative' in securing a patch of land to grow their own food".

<https://alternativeestuary.home.blog/>

35. I Dig Trees is back & bigger than ever! We are delighted to be running I Dig Trees for the sixth year during the 2020/2021 planting season with OVO Energy. This fantastic partnership programme goes from strength to strength and is a great opportunity for any community group or volunteer to join in, feel good and make a difference.

<https://www.tcv.org.uk/communities/i-dig-trees/>

With grateful thanks to Jane, Simon, Karen, Pat, Eileen, Ane and Ron

Pesticide Action Network North America

1. Ten years later, has agriculture transformed? PANNA posed the question last month – has agriculture transformed since the UN's landmark 2009 International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) tasked with investigating how agriculture can most effectively reduce hunger and poverty, improve rural livelihoods and protect human health? We now have the likes of Practical Action, that harness agro-ecological farming technology and innovation which are knowledge intensive, low cost, ecologically sound and practical.

<http://www.panna.org/blog/ten-years-later-has-agriculture-transformed>

<https://practicalaction.org/our-aims/farming-that-works/>

2. Switzerland to stop exporting banned pesticides

The Swiss government will no longer allow exports of five pesticides (banned at home) due to known health and environmental harms (it is home to Syngenta!)

<http://www.panna.org/blog/switzerland-stop-exporting-banned-pesticides>

3. Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers: From the Frontlines of GM Agriculture

On Tuesday November 17, PAN and their partners at Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) will launch the video Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers: From the Frontlines of GM Agriculture. This video illuminates how fragile and unjust so many of our interconnected global systems are - GMO seeds and the story of global impacts.

<http://www.panna.org/blog/seed-keepers-and-truth-tellers-frontlines-gm-agriculture>

SEEOG membership

You can also pay by bank transfer. The details are as follows:

Bank Account: 65198805

The Co-operative Bank

Sort code: 08 92 99

SEEOG mentors

Our mentors, so far, include Ron Bates (Leigh-on-Sea) 01702 477681; Carole and Vic Shorney (Hockley), 01702 20914; and Ray How (Rochford), 01702 544632. We could put a package together of Top of The Crops and Square Foot Gardening, if applicable. Maybe survey their plot and make seasonal suggestions for really easy crops to grow, to avoid disappointment? Our members might like to be involved with suggestions?

SEEOG website update

We very much hope we've made it quicker and easier for you to send your membership renewals/meeting donations to us via our Paypal button, on the RHS of our website at

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

https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=ALVA2MKFR67WS

Soil Association: Priorities for the National Food Strategy

Part one of the National Food Strategy, released in July this year, contained urgent recommendations to support the UK through the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for its exit from the EU on 31 December 2020. The first half of the strategy focused on making sure the next generation, including our most disadvantaged children, do not get left behind in the next green revolution. The UK Government spends over £2 billion every year on the food and drinks served in schools, hospitals, nurseries, care homes, and prisons. Imagine if this spend could be harnessed to support people to eat a healthy and sustainable diet, and to shift UK farming onto a more nature-friendly footing. Unfortunately, too often this money is misspent. The National Food Strategy provides a rare opportunity to ensure procurement policy is fit for the challenges of the decade ahead. You can read this article in full at <https://www.soilassociation.org/blogs/2020/october/13/healthy-sustainable-diets-through-public-procurement/>

Trust Links

For those who were not able to attend the event, or had to leave early, here is the video that they showed at their AGM.

<https://youtu.be/8Cx6TMD3KQc>

SEEOG committee

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