



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



Soil Association

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 160 – NOVEMBER 2021

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

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

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

Unless otherwise stated, all our 2022 meetings will be at Trust Links Rochford, 34 Rocheway, Rochford SS4 1DQ. At the moment, access is through the building site next door where the old community college used to be. Do please let us know whether you need a lift and we will try our very best to assist.

<https://www.trustlinks.org/about-us/>

<https://www.trustlinks.org/growing-together/rochford/>

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadline' for January 2022 is Friday 17 December 2021.

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS

Monday 15 November 2021: Group Night (ZOOM)

'Unusual Veg in an Unusual Garden; the Global Growth Vegetable Garden at RHS Hyde Hall'

An online 'Zoom' presentation by Matthew Oliver, Horticulturist, Fruit & Veg RHS Garden Hyde Hall – 19:30 FOR 20:00. Your link is in the accompanying email.

Group Night dates for 2022

Monday 17 January: "The Peoples' Landscape" presented by Shaun Badham (Trust Links Rochford)

Since we chatted a while ago, Shaun has started a new project called *The Peoples' Landscape*, which explores the social, cultural and historical connections between current day society-run allotments in the Borough of Southend and historical alternative uses of land such as the Plotlanders (Plotlands refer to small pieces of land laid out in regular plots on which a number of self-built settlements were established in the south-east of England from the late 1800s and up to the Second World War). The Plotlanders could be described as both a community, a movement and a way of life which - although no longer exists in the same way - could be seen to live on through today's allotment societies; particularly through a DIY sensibility, growing your own and community care via working the land.

This new body of work includes a series of map drawings of five society-run allotments developed through an ongoing collaborative process with the community who work the land. Through these conversations a series of oral histories will be captured and made available as a digital podcast, exploring the thematic links between the communities and time periods. Once complete, each drawing will be re-printed and gifted back to the allotment societies as a record.

You can see some images of Shaun's work here: <https://shauncbadham.com/The-People-s-Landscape>

Saturday 12 February 2022! SE Essex Seed Potato Day!

Keep the date free! Details to follow in due course.

Monday 21 March: "Medicinal Herbs and Self-Sufficiency" presented by Monika Curry, Herbalist from Chelmsford

Monday 11 April (via Zoom): Gene editing (via Zoom)

Fingers crossed, we shall be welcoming Lawrence Woodward OBE on Monday 11 April 2022. Lawrence is a director of Beyond GM and Whole Health Agriculture and works with the IFOAM EU Group, the Gaia Foundation and The Organic Research Centre – Elm Farm (ORC).

<http://www.wholeorganicplus.com/about/>

Sunday 15 May : Stall at Essex Young Farmers' Country Show

Monday 16 May: Chris Collins (content to be confirmed)

A return visit by former BBC Blue Peter Gardener and Head Gardener at Westminster Abbey, Chris joined Garden Organic as Head of Organic Horticulture in 2016. He took over a completely overgrown space three years ago and he's got it up and running using only organic principles.

Monday 18 July: "Growing the Goods" presented by Ian Warder from Peach and Pippin, near Manningtree – all about the new Environmental Land Management Scheme trials (ELMS) post-Brexit. It could be interesting for an organic growers group (domestic gardeners rather than professional growers) to hear about how ELMS is being developed and hear about the experience of participating in an ELMS trial. Our members may not be professional growers, but they are still tax payers with an interest in organic farming, so likely to be interested in the process of developing ELMS.

Monday 19 September: "An overview of the Audley End Landscape and history with a focus on the Kitchen Garden and how you manage it organically today" presented by Kelly Fowler and Gemma Sturges.

Monday 21 November: Composting with Ray How (content to be confirmed)

Chairperson's notes: I don't have an allotment, I have a 'working garden'

1. This means it's always a mess because I have so many different projects on the go at once. I am a dedicated and passionate compost maker, so 3 'dalek' compost bins, 2 large pallet bins and a number of very large buckets for making comfrey, nettle and weed based plant feeds dominate the end of the garden. I grow some veg and salad, potatoes in tubs, willow for charcoal and crafts, some ornamentals and some fruit. We planted dwarf apple trees a few years ago, to see if they were worthwhile. Last year the James Grieve produced 62 delicious apples that can be eaten raw or cooked; I think they're better than Bramleys for stewing and baking - just 5 apples this year. Elstar was good last year, 33 apples, none this year, not sure why. Bramleys have been superb from 2 dwarf trees, under 3' tall, with spreads of up to 4', over 15 apples from each one, and my pride and joy was a huge 1lb 3oz beauty! Early raspberries not so good as my late ones, still harvesting a dozen or so a day from 4 stems that I thought had died off! Rhubarb, gooseberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants all quite good, still have some in the freezer.

2. I use the Biodynamic calendar for helping me 'organise' my garden chores. I say 'organise' in a very loose way, but anyway, the calendar helps. Instead of standing in the mud wondering which task to do in the hour I have, I can check the calendar to see which 'day' it is. There are 4 days - flower, fruit, root and leaf. According to the aspects of the sun, moon and all the planets, the calendar is plotted to find the most favourable times for each aspect. Each 'day' indicates which crop type to tend to in order to

maximise that plant's health and vitality. So, plants I grow for the flower, for example broccoli, borage and buddleia, will be best planted, hoed around, fed and harvested on a flower day. Plants I grow for the leaf, for example rhubarb, rocket and ornamental grasses, are best planted, hoed around, fed and harvested on leaf days....etc. etc.

3. Ron, Ane and I took the SEEOG stall to the inaugural Global Community Saturday, organised by volunteers at the Leigh Baptist Church. Apparently, this church has achieved Bronze award for their eco-credentials and are working towards gold. They are a dedicated, hard-working team who genuinely feel they have responsibility to find more ways to protect our planet, locally and globally. They have an eco house-cleaning product refill station, which has been a success, and should increase as more people find out about it. They are planning to have solar power from panels on a south-facing roof, as well as many other initiatives large and small. We had an interesting day, and were very pleased to support this new project.

4. Rochford 'Good to Grow' event: Carole, Vic, Ron, Ane, Sharon and I attended with our SEEOG stall and compost display. It was a free family event to celebrate Harvest. There were stalls and talks about the benefits of growing your own food, permaculture, sustainability and regenerative agriculture. Ron did an audience-participation, question & answer talk, themed on the main myths about compost making. Ron based it on a list written by Charles Dowding. Graham Burnett followed with a talk about Permaculture. It was a well attended event despite the incessant rain in the afternoon.

SEEOG membership

Please check with our Treasurer, Ane Bates, if you're unsure of your membership status at the moment (details at the end of this newsletter). As well as paying by cheque, or PayPal, you can also pay by bank transfer. The details are as follows:

Bank Account: 65198805; The Co-operative Bank; Sort code: 08 92 99.

NEWS

Allotment news

1. Folly Grove Allotment Site, Hockley

The next committee meeting will be held at The Old Fire Station, 58 Southend Road, Hockley, on Monday 1 November at 19:30. Item 11: Folly Grove Allotment Site (a) To consider the update on the transfer of land; (b) To consider the findings from the ecologist survey relating to badgers carried out on Tuesday 26th of October 2021.

2. Has anyone got a contact at the following allotments? Bridgewater Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea; Delaware Crescent, Shoeburyness; Edwards Hall, Eastwood; Herbert Road, Southend; Lifstan Way, Southend; Sandringham Road, Southend; St. Andrews Road, Southend; Vincent Crescent, Shoeburyness?

3. Making Community Connections Through Green Spaces, by Julia Davis

'A Better Space' champions the idea of building community connections by connecting communities, in the Southend area, to their local green spaces. In 2019 we became a constituted group and small charity.

'A Better Space' began by improving Westcliff's Milton Gardens environment, working in conjunction with Southend Borough Council and Make Southend Sparkle. This project is ongoing, and you can see our efforts on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

This year we have expanded our reach and were successful in securing some funding from St Edmunds Community Hall. The fund has given us the opportunity to establish relationships with the St Luke's Ward community through holding workshops.

These 'A Better Space' workshops are informal and use creative ways to inspire interest in the environment and growing. Our activities for younger children have included potato printing the potato lifecycle and storytelling by way of the book Supertato -and yes, one of us did dress up as a potato!

Next, we fused nature and science with a potato battery demonstration aimed at older children. For this workshop, we liaised with community tech outreach programme Raspberry Jam, and we hope to work with them going forward to film what we grow on the allotment.

Of course, grown-ups are invited too! We're soon to run a workshop open to all ages and will continue to run one Sunday workshop per month for the next year. Attendees receive 'A Better Space' bag containing relevant info and gardening gloves in adult and child sizes to help inspire interest in the project.

Our allotment is far from established, instead we see it as an opportunity to empower the local community to be part of its development and creation. That's where you come in! We are keen to connect with people who feel they could contribute to 'A Better Space', either as a trustee, and/or as a volunteer who would like to share their knowledge and know-how. Our AGM is coming up at the end of November (date TBC) and we hope some of you will join us! Our supporters:- Make Southend Sparkle; Anglian Water; Marine Conservation; Southend Raspberry Jam; St Luke's Community Hub; St Edmunds Community Hall; Courtney Elizabeth Seeds; Trustees and volunteers
<https://www.facebook.com/A-Better-Space-536779960191791/>

4. Castle Point Community Allotment

An exciting project to create a community plot where Castle Point residents can come occasionally or regularly to learn new growing skills, interact with each other and nature, save some money by taking some organic produce home. Lockdown and the pandemic have been tough for everyone; statistics show that being outdoors with nature and the environment improves your mental health and well-being.

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

Crapes Fruit Farm news: A season haunted by Spring frosts

Usually we are picking Medlars at the end of October – many Medlars. Not so this year, more a case of hunting for thimbles with some rather pathetic, small, split and some only half a fruit. 'Sorry', to the many Medlar fans who I have had to disappoint. The fruits displayed are, of course, apples. The scarring evidenced is proof that we experienced damaging frost here during mid May. Medlar blossom follows on from the end of the apple flowering period. These fruits were damaged, probably just after the petals had fallen – at very early fruitlet stage. It is little wonder that the Medlars must have been caught whilst in full flower. So another early finish to our apple season with just a few low grade cooking apples remaining for our locals to pick up for their apple crumbles, charlottes, dumplings or even simply just baked whole with a sweet concoction replacing the core! Our mailing list for 2022 is open to join for those of you who are sensibly looking ahead positively to the chance of apples next season.

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

Garden Organic news: The UK - Potentially Food Self Sufficient?

1. A recent academic study explores which countries are best located to withstand social and environmental shocks ahead. Tim Lang, Professor Emeritus of Food Policy at City, University of London, and President of Garden Organic, shares his thoughts on the UK being potentially self-sufficient.

I almost burst out laughing when I read a recent academic study exploring which countries are best located to withstand social and environmental shocks ahead. I was amused that the UK was favourably judged, alongside New Zealand (top), Iceland, and Ireland. The criteria were sound, using measures such as food growing potential, vulnerability, carrying capacity, climate melt-down exposure, indigenous energy supply, and national level of discussion.

I wasn't surprised four island nations were highly rated. Few people think of Iceland as potentially food self-sufficient but its volcanic geysers offer unlimited hot water to heat greenhouse production. New Zealand has a relatively benign climate and with a small population, it could feed itself well. The UK has vast and rising renewable energy, and under-utilised land. Ireland too.

So why did I initially laugh at reading the study singling out the UK? (Mirth doesn't happen much over data in my work, I assure you. Conviviality among colleagues and students, yes, but about the state of agri-food policy, hmm. Quite rare)

And you can read the rest of this article at <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/uk-potentially-food-self-sufficient>

2. Peat-free growing - free online webinar: Wednesday 24 November 2021, 18:00 – 19:00

The huge environmental impact of extracting peat has been brought to everybody's attention more recently, and most gardeners are aware of the need to stop using it in their gardens. Garden Organic has campaigned against the use of peat for a long time, and we would like to present you with some of the alternatives and how to use them. This webinar will provide practical advice to all those wanting to grow without peat, whether you are just starting or want to refine your growing practices.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/events/peat-free-growing-online-webinar-0>

3. John's Tips for Successful Organic Growing

The Heart of England Organic Group's first life President and well-known former guide at Ryton Organic Gardens, John Sargent, possessed an endless fund of gardening knowledge, collected by Diana Sandercock; 68 fact-packed pages; £5 plus £2 post and packing. Lovely gift?

<https://rps.gn.apc.org/organic/index.htm>

4. COP26 – what can we do to play our part?

Regardless of how much space or experience you have, here are some simple steps that everyone can take to support the natural habitat on our doorstep: Get composting; Think about refuse/reduce/reuse/recycle in your garden; Create biodiversity in your space; Ditch the pesticides; Go peat-free; Water wisely.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/cop26-%E2%80%93-what-can-we-do-play-our-part>

GM Freeze: AGM on Wednesday 3 November, 10:00 – 12:00

To attend, please contact Liz O'Neill, Director GM Freeze: liz@gmfreeze.org; 0845 217 8991;

www.gmfreeze.org

Leigh-on-Sea Farmers' Market 2021, 09:00 – 13:00

Leigh Community Centre (71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1SP) on the first Saturday of the month and third Friday of the month.

Saturday 6 November; Friday 19 November; Saturday 18 December, Christmas Market (includes craft stalls, too). As you might expect, there have been a number of changes whilst we have been away. Sadly, some of their usual stallholders have retired, and won't be returning, but they will also be inviting some new stalls, too! We will be there on the Fridays only. If you know anyone who would be interested in a stall, particularly a butcher, please ask them to email council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Members' contributions, including schools

1. On October the 9th Jane, Ron and Ane attended the new initiative by the Leigh Road Baptist Church green group namely Global Community Saturdays. It was held at the Phabulous Cafe (191 Leigh Road, Leigh on Sea SS91JE) and will be followed up every month with a similar event but different stalls. On this particular Saturday there was a fair trade stall with tea, coffee, chocolate, crafts and other items; a refill counter for various cleaning products and anti-bacterial gel; alternative products for oral hygiene; a stall for home sown items such as shopping bags, lavender bags and draught excluders; children's activities; and finally SEEORG with lots of plants and books. The event will be repeated on the following (Saturday) dates: 6 November and 4 December 2021; 8 January, 5 February and 5 March 2022.

2. There will also be a sustainable Xmas Fayre at Growing Together Westcliff on Saturday 4 December 11am – 2pm. Get in the Christmas spirit by joining us for an afternoon of fun activities for the whole family, live music, delicious festive treats, stalls from local businesses and much much more. You'll even get the chance to visit Santa in his grotto!

<https://www.trustlinks.org/christmas-fayre/>

3. Wassailing is back! Join us for our annual Wassailing event at St Laurence Orchard on Sunday 23rd January 2 – 3pm. Celebrate nature and community, sing songs and awaken the trees ready for spring at our historic St Laurence Orchard.

<https://www.trustlinks.org/wassailing/>

4. Southend in Transition Community Allotment visit: it was very good to arrive early and sit with a couple of other new-to-site visitors to talk over tea and Fiona's delicious brownie. Catching up with them and how they were over the past 20 months. Harvesting apples and pears; also the produce of this season's growing and what is still to plant and harvest. Missed our other members and visitors, having to leave early. Great to return.

5. Conference at the Essex Record Office - the Apples and Orchards of Essex

Coinciding with the publication of "The Orchards of Eastern England - History, Ecology and Place". This ranged from archival results from records especially maps that enable locations and numbers; the trends through time – attached to every farm, commercial, institutional and garden. Tall trees with grass underneath multi-use environments in shelter belts - nuts, cherries, plums, pears and crabs. All wood was valued for fuel in orchards and much depleted woodland recovering from the Neolithic devastation, Britain being a low altitude geology as opposed to Europe (we were down to 1% cover according to R4 "more or less").

16th century moated orchards, orchards with currants for understories, grazing etc. The orchard century was 1850's - 1950's with concentrations around Thundersley, Hadleigh, Southend, prompted by nearby railways. There was a renewed growth in this half of Essex peaking in the 1960's - supermarkets, globalisation and Europe. Old orchards seen now as banks for invertebrate diversity, varieties and the growth of community orcharding, apple days, wassailing, food provenance, localism, fragile food chains, locations near to people such as we have with St Laurence orchard. Then we moved on to DNA ID development, looking at the zip of the double helix sequencing unique to each variety, how the 17 layers of the apple skin causes the striped colourations, and the measuring of plum stones to ID these varieties.

Fascinating day, the use of deep science and archived records.

6. The Atom Bomb Rose at Southend Library

Ron and I attended this very interesting event. First of all there was a talk by Gabriella Hirst giving some details about the development of the atom bomb and the cavalier way in which the authorities went about testing, taking the aborigine land at Maralinga and some other locations, which are still contaminated to this day. In Germany the rose breeder Reimer Kordes decided to mark the occasion with a new scent free, bright red rose and he named it Rosa Floribunda Atom Bomb. This rose caused the authorities in Southend a problem when it became part of the Estuary Festival in June. Certain members of the council took offence at the installation of the roses with some explanatory placards revealing a local connection. The AWRE weapons development centre at Shoebury off Foulness Island was involved with the testing of our nuclear weapons; the roses were therefore removed. It seems the public are not to reflect on this. After the talk we were given the opportunity to t-bud our own Atom Rose and the results are all lined up outside Southend library. Let's hope that there will be some beautiful blooms next year and that the rose, which was more or less extinct, will now survive in greater numbers.

7. Water Thoughts

"England's rivers are facing a crisis from climate change, agricultural pollution and lack of effective planning controls". Report: "21st Century Rivers -10 actions for change"

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/03/heatwaves-sewage-pesticides-why-englands-rivers-need-a-new-deal-to-avert-crisis>

In spite of £billions spent on improving water quality over the past 30 years only 14% of England's rivers are rated as good; that remains unchanged since 2009! Water use up by 70% (household water use). This affects water abstraction rates that are drying out rivers and streams. Global heating is triggering more and more heatwaves. Add in pesticide, nutrient and waste run-offs from farms that

cause algae blooms, and spread down river, while sewage discharges cause further problems. Rather than water industry focussing on public health it needs to be the environment. An act to protect waterways by setting minimum standards to limit water use by domestic machines; tougher regulations over use of chemicals, often chosen without regard for marine life; halting bodies like highway agencies discharging untreated wastes into rivers; makers of wet wipes etc to pay for blockages.

The report points out 41% of UK wildlife is in decline, 15% with extinction. Water environment is central to much biodiversity. To bring it local - trawling through local plans we find that rivers Thames, Crouch and Roach all have poor nutrient management from agriculture, sewage discharges, landfill leakages, contaminated land, land drainage and urbanisation. The beach/bathing restriction warning of contamination for days after storm Aurore led to local flooding and discharges? With workers walking the beaches at sunset picking up ? along Southchurch and Thorpe Bay beaches.

Other aspects were the air quality. We need to engage with these planning developments to rectify these serious health and environmental consequences of how we live and we need to seek changes. Good news with sea grasses and the blue carbon absorbing capacity in plants and sediment; this is our incredible coastal tidal ecosystem in Eastern England.

8. David Eagle -Sea Buckthorn

This became the solution for the future of Devereux Farm in light of rising sea levels with half their land being in flood areas where this species of fruiting bush/tree will cope with extremes of climate within its global range. The other half of their land is high value cultivation. Sea Buckthorn is a new crop and gives added value. It started in 2006 via John French, leading to 2009 conference in Siberia - the food and drink benefits are anti-microbial, anti-viral, veterinary use to distressed horses with 190 nutrients - plant sterols - but FSA regulation and health claims can only lead to bio-chemistry pathways.

Since 1933 the Lisavenko Research Institute in Siberia has 50,000 growing - 40 varieties and 50 to come online. He took us through the trials and tribulations of developing suitable varieties for their Walton site. It is a nitrogen fixer, five years of composting, mowing and mulching three times a year finally getting Soil Association Demeter status. It is a plant that can grow in temperature from -40/50 to +40. Chemistry is in the berries, serotonin in the bark and the leaves with tannins (Russians and Germans use for antivirals)

Harvesting is difficult – cut it all, put in a cold store then shaken to release the berries; high cost outlays for mechanisation but at £20 per kilo! Using 22 varieties they can harvest June to mid-September (they sold one ton). They are in development time (Peter Fez took 20 years for quinoa). There are native plants driven to the coastal areas of Britain: sweet juice on the East coast of Scotland but sour on the West coast.

They envisage small cooperatives of growers to enable affordable equipment which is the model they have seen for olive oil production in Tuscany. There could be a niche market for products. He felt that farms and farmers had become disconnected from people and we need to return to smallholdings and small mixed farms. Their exposure on Countryfile twice had given them a boost immediately for their products. It's a perennial, an Ice Age pioneer, adaptive, requires one male for every 100 square metres. Ready for climate challenges ? 16th century Spain saw it being used by naval surgeons.

9. Get started with home composting in Essex: it's definitely worth putting in your postcode to see if you are eligible for the discounts. For more information on the scheme, please visit the 'Love Essex' website here >> <https://www.loveessex.org/news-and-ideas/how-do-i-compost-at-home/>

10. Compostable Plastics Research Update : Catch up with our latest research on the UK's system for compostable plastics in this webinar (broadcast 16/09/21). Hear from the UCL Plastic Waste Innovation Hub team about the latest results from the Big Compost Experiment and compostable teabag trials, life cycle assessment (LCA), labelling and behaviour, sorting technologies, microbial degradation work and public policy developments.

<https://www.bigcompostexperiment.org.uk/blog/compostable-plastics-research-update>

11. The National Garden Scheme's Autumn Online Talks include 'In at the deep end: a Chelsea garden like no other' – Tuesday 23rd November, 7.00pm. Sarah Mead from Yeo Valley Organic Garden and Tom Massey designer par excellence talk you through their two-and-a-half year journey towards the one and only September Chelsea 2021 and the first Gold Medal – and People's Choice – win for an organic garden. Join them as they go through planning, re-planning and planning again with behind the scenes titbits and insights into what makes a Chelsea garden flourish and how the renowned organic garden at Yeo Valley in Somerset was the constant point of reference and source of inspiration.

<https://ngs.org.uk/shop/online-events/online-talks/in-at-the-deep-end-a-chelsea-garden-like-no-other-tuesday-23rd-november-7-00pm/>

12. Register for your 'I Dig Trees'

I Dig Trees with Ovo Energy is now in its seventh year. 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 real difference:

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

13. Free the seeds! Save the future of our food - Petition

We demand that the European Patent Office (EPO) takes urgent action to protect the common good by stopping patent monopolies on seeds. As a result, they must close all loopholes in current patent law that allow companies to create monopolies on the use of our fruits, vegetables and seeds. Until they do this, there has to be a moratorium on patent applications for conventionally bred plants and animals!

<https://act.wemove.eu/campaigns/free-the-seeds>

14. RHS Community Gardening

Is there an area in your community that needs some gardening magic to bring it to life? Check out our tips for transforming disused spaces, from container planting to growing green walls! Find out more at <http://ow.ly/b9Ea50Gm9zN>

15. 'Revolutionary in a quiet way': the rise of community gardens in the UK

"The first melon of the season always tastes amazing," says Lucy Mitchell. "I don't think anyone has ever taken one home – every year, we just cut them into as many slices as there are people in the garden and make sure everyone gets a melon moment."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/21/revolutionary-in-a-quiet-way-golden-hills-community-garden-in-bristol>

16. We've searched all of England and Wales and found over 49,000 miles of paths that could be lost forever, unless we come together to save them. Our paths are one of our most precious assets, hidden in plain sight, and often taken for granted, they allow everyone to enjoy the countryside, both on our doorstep and across Britain's iconic landscapes.

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026.aspx>

17. Update on the allotment, from Mike and Gill

Butternut squashes have not done that well and are rather small this year. Pumpkins on the other hand, a variety named *Jack Be Little* which only grow to about 10cm, produced well. Winter Squashes also a poor crop. Climbing French Beans were very poor growing in the garden but I had more success at the allotment in a more open aspect.

I have grown kale in the garden and on the allotment. Those grown in the garden have not suffered white fly but at the allotment they have been badly affected. Both crops are netted to keep out cabbage white butterfly. I had put netting over my taller brassicas to keep out cabbage white butterfly. The downfall of this is that it becomes a breeding ground for whitefly and clouds of them take to the air when disturbed. Even though the cabbage white butterfly are still about now (October), it seems that they are not laying their eggs. Since removing full cover netting and replacing it with netting around the outside only, the number of white fly has reduced considerably.

Celeriac are bigger this year which I am putting down to a consistent watering and feeding regime.

A good apple crop on the allotment this year but many apples have been attacked by pests even though I put grease bands around the trees. Again we had a much better crop on the allotment as those in the garden kept falling off the trees before ripening. Potatoes dug up early seem to be storing well in spite of being attacked by blight.

Recently we have been manuring the allotment to build up the fertility in the soil. It needs a good thick layer.

18. New non-GMO blight-resistant potato has global importance

..... What this "GM-will-feed-the-world" UK media coverage almost never acknowledges is that blight resistant potato cultivars already exist, including Athlete, Alouette, Carolus, and most notably the various Sarpo cultivars, including Sarpo Mira, which is claimed to have "probably the highest resistance to late blight known".

<https://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/19918-new-non-gmo-blight-resistant-potato-has-global-importance>

19. Gene Editing webinar - Blurring the Lines Between Nature and Technology

In addition to their wonderful speakers, they had a very diverse and engaged audience comprising conventional, organic (North London and SEEORG) and biotech breeders, policymakers, farmers and growers, professors, students, businesspeople, members of civil society and members of the public. So it really was a big conversation! There were lots of great questions and many of us asked for a link to the video, as well as to the chat and Q&A so that we could share and/or watch again. The video link is:

<https://youtu.be/BKWzHhTZXVk>

They have also combined the chat and Q&A into a single document:

https://abiggerconversation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ABC_Blurring-The-lines-Webinar_Chat_QandA.pdf

Further reading sheet: <https://abiggerconversation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Blurring-the-lines-Further-Reading.pdf>

From Simon, in Gozo.....

1. Dan Saladino, with his unparalleled ability to tell stories, has recently published a book called "Eating to Extinction" inspired by Slow Food's Ark of Taste. The Ark of Taste travels the world, since 1996, cataloguing an extraordinary heritage of fruits, vegetables, animal breeds, cheeses, breads, sweets and cured meats from the world's vast diversity of cultures and traditions, drawing attention to the fact that they might disappear within a few generations. More info here: tinyurl.com/discover-ark-of-taste

2. And guess who?

CWGF Calendar photo winners revealed [#CWGC](https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/news/cwgf-calendar-photo-winners-revealed/?fbclid=IwAR1w4l8gXzjQXrUn3oCKNkHnmE46IIVDWy3li6OYRR3Ug1clmNtZjbf0s_c)

With very many thanks for all your contributions, including very grateful thanks to Julia Davis from 'A Better Space' for her article. This will appear in due course on our website with photos.

Pesticide Free Essex

Their last meeting was with 'Pesticide Free Balerno', Edinburgh. Essentially the key points Grace made were as follows:

Balerno is a small town within Edinburgh, equivalent to somewhere like Frinton within Essex. Instead of tackling the whole of Edinburgh, which they felt was an enormous challenge, they focussed their attention to Balerno, in order to use it as a template for other towns in Edinburgh. They've made great progress as their energy was concentrated in one place / community. They kept their message very simple: 'remove weeds safely'. They aimed the campaign at the majority of people who want the weeds to be gone and so didn't try to convince them to accept weeds. They used every opportunity to speak to their community: neighbours, food markets etc. They collected signatures in a petition and gave it to their council; they had the support of local councillors. They emphasised the impact on children and the elderly. They organised a free demonstration with a 'foam stream' company and facilitated the council to operate a trial, which they will be reporting back on. They organised teams of

volunteers to pull weeds by hand and continue to support the council and the community by showing their 'can do' attitude, which has also been a big influence in public support of banning pesticides. Knowledge is important but don't make it too scientific / complicated. They concentrated on the council and haven't tried to lobby other polluters such as farmers, private landowners etc. Contact Grace Darke: ecocolchester@en-form.org.uk

Pesticide Action Network UK: Scientists push for access to pesticide spray records

..... A group of scientists, including myself, from around the world and across a range of disciplines, are proposing that the UK and EU adopt new rules on how pesticide use is reported. We are advocating for the creation of a database recording every single instance of pesticide application. Farmers would have to report yearly to the government on what they sprayed, when and how much. The government would then publish this data online each year. This idea isn't revolutionary, California has actually done it since the 1970's with great success.

<https://www.pan-uk.org/scientists-push-for-access-to-pesticide-spray-records/>

Pesticide Action Network North America:

We've featured this before – but no harm showing it again Video: Seed Keepers and Truth Tellers!
<https://www.panna.org/resources/video-seed-keepers-and-truth-tellers>

SEEOG website

We all need to have some 'insurance' in place should any of us be in able to continue - for whatever reason. We know from experience that - if we say we want a volunteer to shadow a particular job - nothing will happen. And our website is no exception! So instead, John would like to spend some time explaining to us how the practical side of the website works to as many members as we can. What do you reckon? Could we manage say 4 to 6 (+) people for two or three one-hour zoom sessions - or is it the case that just everyone is up to their eyes in what they are doing anyway? Please do think about it and let us know. And, of course, look at our brilliant website.

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

Soil Association news: What are we calling for at COP26?

They say that people must be at the heart of all climate policy, with a 'Just Rural Transition' underpinning action across the food and land-use sectors. The biodiversity and climate agendas must become integrated with one another, and Nature-based Solutions (NbS), including agroecology, must be rapidly scaled up globally. Richer nations must commit to ensuring that negative emissions technologies (including NbS) are not a substitute for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels. The mobilisation of people across the globe to demand immediate action.

<https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2021/october/20/what-are-we-calling-for-at-cop26/>

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