



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 165 – SEPTEMBER 2022

<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, College Gardens , Rocheway, Rochford SS4 1DQ. Do please let us know whether you need a lift and we will try our very best to assist.

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadline' for November 2022 is Sunday 23 October. If you're quoting newspaper items, etc. we'd be extremely grateful if you could include a link to each item, if possible, for fact-checking purposes, names, etc.

We're sure that you, our members, will want to hear what their fellows are doing in their gardens/allotments; what they have found to work for them; what hasn't worked and what they are planning to do in the future. Please don't be shy or worried that what you have to say is not important. Fifty words giving a simple tip in the garden will be just as gratefully received as two pages from any latent novel writers lurking out there! For your information, a page is about 350 words.

You can send your words to Carole by post or by email. Please join in; SEEOG is a group of link-minded people! Don't worry unduly about the subject matter. Tell us about your herb garden or how you look after the hedgehogs/slow worms/frogs in your garden. Plus any news on which of our talks so far you have found the most interesting. Plus photos!!

And lastly, how do you – our members (all paid-up now, hopefully (but see below) - feel about attending meetings?

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS

Group Night dates for 2022 : FOR YOUR DIARIES!

How to get to TrustLinks Rochford (update):

- The site is relatively close to Rochford Square and from Rochford Railway Station.
- There is parking for bicycles and vehicles on site.
- Buses can be taken to Rochford Square on the 7 or 8 bus or bus to Doggetts Close on the No 60 bus from Southend.
- Walk down East Street from Rochford Square and into Rocheway.
- REACH is a modern eco-building tucked behind some housing; it's blocked out in green in the Google picture on our website.

NB: Access Updated 21/03/22:

- Access is through the new housing complex, which was the old Community College.
- There will be ongoing building on the site.
- They have created a new driveway (green arrow), which is the second turning on the right; this driveway is for car use only. Pedestrian access is down the private driveway/road (yellow arrow) and through the back gate.
- PLEASE don't park in this road or drop off. If you are being dropped off, you will need to come right into our car park. There's also a map on the link below:
<https://seeog.org.uk/2022/04/how-to-get-to-trustlinks-rochford-update/>

Sunday 4 September, 10:00: MDAS Open Day

Manchester Drive (opposite Cricketfield Grove), Leigh-on-Sea SS9 3EZ

Free admission, plenty to see and to do! As usual, hoping for good weather and lovely music! Come and see us as we have a stall there.

Monday 19 September, 20:00: "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.

If you come a little earlier, say 19:30, we can all have a cup of tea and a chat and then have the talk.

Here's something we picked up along the way: Talking Heads - a Gardening Podcast Bonus Episode #17 - Lucy and Saul are joined in conversation by Head Gardener Louise Ellis, Kitchen Garden Supervisor Gemma Sturges and Senior Kitchen Gardener Kelly Fowler from Audley End House and Garden in Essex.

<https://www.talkingheadspodcast.co.uk/763457/11212087-bonus-episode-17-lucy-and-saul-are-joined-in-conversation-by-head-gardener-louise-ellis-kitchen-garden-supervisor-gemma-sturges-and-senior-kitchen-gardener-kelly-fowler-from-audley-end-house-and-garden-in-essex>

Sunday 25 September , 10:30 for two hours

Following our July meeting with Ian Warder and ELMS, we have arranged a visit to the smallholding.

Address: Peach and Pippin, 83 Hungerdown Lane, Lawford CO11 2LY

If you use the whole name and address in Google maps, it will show you exactly where they are.

Any queries, please ask away!

Monday 10 October, 18:00 - 19:30 via Zoom: SAVE THE DATE!!

"What on earth is the use of gardening today?" High-profile speaker!

We have a special guest, Tim Lang, on Monday 10 October, via Zoom:

Professor Emeritus of Food Policy
Centre for Food Policy
City, University of London
President, national charity Garden Organic

18:00-19:30, via Zoom

For those not able to access Zoom for this talk there is the opportunity to meet at Trustlinks, The Cheryl Centre, Growing Together, 47 Fairfax Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9AG. Please use the entrance in Prittlewell Chase. Can you please let Ane Bates know as soon as possible if you are interested by phone or text: 07793 963294.

However, 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.

<https://seeog.org.uk/2022/04/using-zoom-software/>

Monday 21 November: Composting with Ray How

Ray will be explaining what can be composted, the different type of bins and how to use it.

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2023 (so far!)

Saturday 4 February, 10:00 – 14:00: Potato Day at TrustLinks Rochford

Please put in your diary now!

NEWS

Composting news! Get started with home composting in Essex!

Composting is a natural process that turns your food and garden waste into soil improver for your garden. By composting at home, you can reduce the amount of waste needed to be processed elsewhere. In Essex, food and garden waste makes up 25% of the general waste we throw away. To help Essex residents get started with home composting, you can purchase a subsidised compost bin for your garden.

https://www.loveessex.org/news-and-ideas/try-composting-at-home/?utm_medium=composting&utm_campaign=short-url&utm_source=short-url-referral&utm_content=&utm_term=

Eco Fair, Hadleigh, Sunday 25 September , 11:00 – 16:00

As climate change is increasingly becoming of concern to more and more people, Castle Point Climate Action Group members have been thinking about what changes we can each make in our day-to-day lives to help bring about the changes we urgently need. Big changes or small, we can all make a difference! If you are interested to know more about climate change, and what we can all do to help then come along to Hadleigh Old Fire Station, 20 High Street, Hadleigh, SS7 2PB.

<https://www.castlepointclimateactiongroup.org/blog>

Garden Organic news: August podcast - allotment special with Rekha Mistry

Chris updates Fiona on how his Mediterranean veg are growing down on his allotment – turns out his gamble on hot weather has paid off! The runner beans are not doing so well unfortunately. Are yours? Chris also shares his experience as an allotment holder, balancing the demands of his London allotment with his busy work life. And, of course, no discussion on his allotment would be the same without mention of his nemesis – horsetail!

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/august-podcast-allotment-special-rekha-mistry>

Leigh-on-Sea Farmers' Market 2022

No real update yet, unfortunately, apart from Sharon joining the WhatsApp discussion group set up by the current regular stallholders and the Council to discuss the best way forward. It is still very much hoped to be able to relaunch the market in the autumn.

Members' contributions, including schools

1. Rise in mega-farms. There are 1099 mega-farms in UK (Cafo = Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation). Philip Lymbery's book "Sixty Harvests Left: How to Reach a Nature-Friendly Future": for cheap meat and dairy, Britain slaughters 1 billion chickens, 10 million pigs and 2.6 million cattle per year - the majority kept in intensive units. Concerns are that climate change, water and air pollution and biodiversity loss are negatively affecting local communities, including introducing potential health

risks associated with ammonia pollution. These are consequences of intensive livestock farming that have been said to increase disease risk, as well as excessive nitrogen.

2. It was stated that the fossil fuel lobby has delayed the progress for climate crisis mitigation with deliberately manufactured disputes of results. Many lobbyists posing as think tanks giving a veneer of independence and used by media for balance! The trolling of scientists still goes on, as Rachel Carson suffered in the 1960's magnified via social media today. Science and scientists are having a lot of media doubt and decrying of their work around the environment that has fuelled this delay in fossil fuel and agriculture's role in the climate crisis and moves to mitigate these effects.

3. James Wong (Observer 21 August): "There is much received wisdom in horticulture that essentially takes a standard idea from agriculture and scales it down to the level of a domestic garden plot. While this might initially seem sensible, it turns out that pretty much every aspect of a garden is totally different to a farmer's field, so, in reality, this approach rarely works. ". Agriculture's continual growing and harvesting essentially acts like a pump, depleting minerals from the soil, the plants are taken off site and not returned to it. Over time, farmland is lower in natural fertility than average domestic plots. Farming and fertiliser cycles (fossil based) go on and pushed as appropriate for the home plots. This is a very costly mistake leading to too much nitrogen with weak and sappy growth, prone to less resistance to environmental stresses.

4. Back in 1885 M.M. Vilmorin-Andrieux 's"The Vegetable Garden", with regard to tomatoes, warned of over manuring and watering. Back to mulch, humus and water-reducing ways.

5. On the plot, there has been consideration and thought about the need for shade in summer and the idea and practice of creating micro climates by growing shade barriers using perennials, rows of tall growing crops or flowers or grains or - open to your creation. They can mitigate the wind as well.

6. 5 Acre Farm, a community supported growing project of 11 years on the Ryton site (previously Garden Organic, sold on to Coventry University), suffered a fire destroying their tool shed, slightly damaging poly tunnels. Luckily, the University security quickly saw it and it was brought under control before it could spread to the field crops beyond their hedge that was also damaged. The next door plot also had the Heritage seed library poly tunnel and growing area. SEEORG has sent £50.00 to help them.

7. Rebecca Solnit's "Wanderlust" - "Labourers had developed - or retained from their peasant parents - a passion for the land, and a whole culture of working- class botanists and naturalists emerged, as did a legion of walkers."

8. Plum Pruning course at St. Laurence Orchard, 30th July, with Dr. Anna Baldwin

This had a fee guarantee agreed by SEEORG to ensure it was viable. We had 10 on the course, the maximum for effective learning and practical work with two phoning Friday night wanting a place. The course covered time to prune stone fruit – after fruit and before September, taking only 20% of leaf cover and cuts to pruned branches slightly angled for rain run off. There was some veteran tree recovery work and cutting back the root stock growth which ends up cherry plum groves if left. From the people on the course, it was an excellently delivered course that also covered many questions that attendees had. We wish to provide an apple and pear pruning course with Anna (who is with Orchards East and Essex Orchards) in January so wait for further details and check with SEEORG and Trust Links.

9. Thinking about prunings, Ron was looking back at the late Dave Darlington's book "Growing Sustainability" published by Vegan Organic Network. He talked about chipped branch wood (twig and branch up to 7cm diameter) to be used as a soil supplement only if placed shallowly on the soil to enable particular micro organisms to decompose it and encourage fungal development with all the benefits, especially the effect of gluing the fine soil particles together, thus providing stable and friable structure for a good soil. This is very specific in how it is done because it is NOT a mulch.

10. Wood chips used as a mulch has been a topic at the plot as it receives piles from a tree surgeon. Tim Lang in the summer Organic Way, tells of his steaming mulch put on his earlies in February (4th year of doing so) - "it retains moisture beautifully, suppresses weeds and acts as a heat blanket." He adds that he grows NOT in old style ridges but in trenches and then covered with masses of mulch "so flat rather than ridged". Ron raises this in connection with the nitrogen lock-up issue in common

use when wood chip is mentioned for growing. But here are two ways of using. Tim then talks of food waste; more perhaps in his talk on 10th October.

11. On Farming Today's weekly round-up, it was stated that £60m of potentially harvestable crops were unpicked; at times like these, which are more precarious for the future with global chains faltering, and climate crisis scenarios globally. It is also predicted that harvests for potatoes, onions, carrots, and more besides are 50% down. Water use and companies turned into assets to be tasked to make money defaulting on public benefit from a natural monopoly for pay outs for executives and shareholders.

12. Wise ways of coping with the drought have been highlighted – ensuring crop residues remain in the soil to build organic matter - as we know it matters. Jake Freestone, a “regenerative farmer” from the Cotswolds, found a 10C temperature difference between soil that had cover crops and organic matter and that which did not - “a massive sponge holding water and needing less irrigation”. (He has a long-term olive growing project coming along, planting trees on slopes for soil erosion and biodiversity, providing shade).

“While traditional grasses have suffered in the heat - short and thin soil - farmers who have diversified their landscapes and have not overgrazed have done okay, naturally fertilised. (Guardian Saturday 13)

13. Ron said he's found it interesting to clear up what is what? He found this in Dave Darlington`s book “Confounding of Terms”:

Green manure - solely or mainly to improve soil fertility or structure - mostly leguminous to add nitrogen but some are purely to increase organic matter content of the soil or structure by aeration and drainage, like rye.

Cover crop - grown usually in autumn and winter to cover soil that would otherwise be bare to protect from heavy rain, take up available nutrients to prevent them leaching out – brassicas-mustard; also rye.

Catch crops - grown for human consumption between main crops (not part of rotation) to take advantage of land temporarily unused before sowing or planting or after a main crop – lettuce and spinach.

Mixed cropping – the practice of growing several crops together on a small scale reproducing to a small degree the biodiversity found in nature and counteract disadvantages of mono-cropping - pest and diseases and depletion of particular nutrients.

Intercropping - growing of a secondary crop in the space between rows of the main crop.

14. Eileen thought our members might be interested in this though it is quite pricey - just goes to show what a great bargain the SEEEOG talks are!

https://membership.theguardian.com/event/learn-to-grow-sustainably-a-workshop-with-jack-wallington-316639205387?utm_source=eml&utm_medium=emaq&utm_campaign=MK_MC_Solus110722&utm_term=Email_MCU_S&utm_content=variantA

With thanks to Ron, Ane and Eileen for switching on their laptops and delving into their notes in this hot weather!

Membership fees

These are usually due in July unless you joined at the beginning of the year, in which case you don't have to re-join until the July of the following year. Twelve members join automatically by Standing Order in July but, apart from them, only one other member has so far paid their subs! You can pay by PayPal, bank transfer, cheque or cash by post (60 Sandleigh Road Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1JU) or in person at one of our meetings.

Bank details: Account No: 65198805; Sort Code 08 92 99

Thank you from the Membership Secretary

Pesticide Free Essex: Community-led Eco Festival returns to Colchester

Colchester will host its second large-scale Eco Festival which promises to inspire all to learn, network and discover how we can create positive social-environmental change by consuming products and services differently. The Eco Festival is taking place on 3rd September in Colchester, Lower Castle Park from 11 am – 6 pm. It is a free community event, organised and run entirely by local volunteers who want to help and inspire sustainable ways of living. The organisers are looking for Sponsors, Caterers, Volunteers, stallholders and workshop facilitators. To get involved, please visit to register your interest at <https://www.eco-festival.org/>

Pesticide-Free Towns (PFT) Campaigner Catch-up

Here's the link to the recording of Dr Kate Petty's 'Understanding Pavement Plants' talk:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfaADfqOp2M&ab_channel=PESTICIDEACTIONNETWORKUK

Soil Association

1. We've just heard Monty Don on the Radio 4 Appeal! Horticulturist and broadcaster Monty Don makes the Radio 4 Appeal on behalf of Soil Association.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001blk5>

2. If you're on Facebook, something that Soil Association members often mention to them is the desire to be able to meet and talk with other like-minded people. Their brand new Soil Hub is the space for organic enthusiasts, budding gardeners and SA members and supporters to come together to swap ideas and help grow the organic movement towards a healthier, safer planet.

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

Trust Links news

1. Greening Basildon: Transforming outdoors spaces in Basildon

Greening Basildon is a new project for the areas of Five Links, Lee Chapel and Felmores to enable local residents to improve the green spaces in their neighbourhoods. Local residents can help turn empty or wasted spaces into green, blossoming areas for the community to enjoy, tend to and benefit from.

The plan is to employ a small team of community horticulturalists to work with residents to improve the green spaces in their neighbourhoods from September 2022.

<https://www.trustlinks.org/greening-basildon/>

2. Walking Together returns on Saturday 10 September

Walking Together is a brilliant way to make new connections, chat and enjoy the beautiful scenery, and enjoy a relaxing stop off at the historic St. Laurence Orchard. Can you take on the entire 11km and raise funds for their vital mental health projects? This event is open to all ages and walking abilities; walk it your way and at your own pace. They will finish at their open garden event at Trust Links Rochford to celebrate as a community!

<https://www.trustlinks.org/walking-together-2022/>

3. Call out for green-fingered volunteers!

They're looking for more garden volunteers for their Westcliff and Basildon sites! Enjoy their therapeutic gardens and benefit from the outdoors while you connect with others and help keep their gardens in order. They'd love to hear from you if you're interested or, if you would like more information, do please visit their website to get in touch.

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

SEEOG committee

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