



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 168 – MARCH 2023

<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

We are a local group of Garden Organic; supporting and working with the Soil Association and Pesticide Action Network UK.

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!

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadline' for May 2023 is Sunday 23 April. 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. Saves a lot of time!

SEEORG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2023

Unless otherwise stated, all our 2023 meetings will be at Trust Links House, College Gardens, Rochford, SS4 1YL. Do please let us know whether you need a lift and we will try our very best to assist.

The site is relatively close to Rochford Square and from Rochford railway station. 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. There is parking for bicycles and vehicles on site. Parking on the Rocheway Road is Permit parking ONLY. Access is now through the new housing complex, which was the old Community College. They have created a new road "College Gardens". This is the 1st turning on the right.

Pedestrian access is still down the private driveway/road and through the back gate. **PLEASE don't park** in this private road or drop off. If you are being dropped off, you will need to go into their car park.

Here's the link:

<https://seeog.org.uk/2022/04/how-to-get-to-trustlinks-rochford-update/>

Saturday 18 March, 11 - 1: Visit to Lauriston Farm, Goldhanger

Meet Monique and Andre, their horticulturists and biodynamic experts, find out more about how the farm works as a community and soak up the peace and quiet of their beautiful location on the salt marshes. You'll see the new season seedlings in the polytunnel and fields and find out what might be appearing in their veg bags when they restart. Why not allow extra time at the end to walk down the track to the river and seawall? We need to respond individually by Friday 10 March to

enquiries@lauristonfarm.co.uk and <https://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/>

Monday 20 March: "Gardening overseas, travelling to Cameroon" presented by Chris Collins. Is a talk that will put everybody in the mood. It's quite a personal talk. At the end of his course in Edinburgh, he travelled to Cameroon to:

- Renovate Africa's oldest botanic garden
- Landscape new garden features
- Collect Orchids, other plants, and symbiotic mushrooms for the garden's collections and herbarium
- Survey local rainforest

Literally four weeks after getting back, he landed a job in Tokyo. Three gardeners went, the first British gardeners to get visas to work in Japan:

- Working in retail in Mitsukoshi (like a Japanese Harrods)
- Importing British horticultural goods and plants
- Designing roof and balcony gardens
- Teaching British gardening techniques

Monday 15 May: "All about Foraging" presented by Tilly Hogrebe

Sunday 18 June: Lauriston Farm's Annual AGM and Members' Lunch. To allow them to celebrate their work at Midsummer, and to bring their AGM closer to the end of their financial year, they have decided to move it to June. Please save the date Sunday 18th June 2023 in your diaries. More information will be available closer to the time but as usual there will be a meeting in the morning, followed by lunch and an activity in the afternoon.
<https://mailchi.mp/386d348a0f7d/lauriston-farm-veg-bag-latest-10346470?e=d94db39672>

Monday 17 July: "Experiments with growing and using plants in a different, and artistic way" presented by Gwen Simpson

Monday 18 September: Ben Lambert presents "Crapes Forest Market Garden: Farming with nature to grow fruit and vegetables"

Monday 20 November: Home composting with Ray How!

SEEOG trips out (proposed)

Crapes Fruit Farm (June), Aldham; Peach and Pippin, Manningtree; Ulting Wick Garden, near Maldon; Lauriston Farm, Goldhanger; Audley End, Saffron Walden – any more?

Ulting Wick (Crouchmans Farm Road, Ulting, Maldon, CM9 6QX) is described as 'Listed black barns provide backdrop for vibrant and exuberant planting in 8 acres. Thousands of snowdrops, tulips, flowing innovative spring planting, herbaceous borders, pond, mature weeping willows, kitchen garden, dramatic late summer beds with zingy, tender, exotic plant combinations. Drought tolerant perennial and mini annual wildflower meadows. Woodland. Many plants propagated in-house. Unusual plants for sale.' Matthew Oliver is now Head Gardener. Dates, times and charges are at <http://www.ultingwickgarden.co.uk/>

NEWS

Allotment news

1. Water shortage? What water shortage? As the London NAS Representative writes, we all remember the long hot days of the summer with the parched ground, empty water butts, the cracks in the soil and the confused plants. Terry Dickinson says if it's up to him, any plot with a shed, greenhouse, polytunnel or canopy or a combination would be mandated to install water collection containers. What are your thoughts?

2. Herbicide contamination on allotments

Two years ago the Chinley Allotments Association in the Peak District site suffered from serious herbicide contamination, almost certainly introduced via contaminated horse manure. Tests were carried out and the herbicide was identified as Clopyralid (a close relative of Aminopyralid), manufactured by Corteva, a subsidiary of Dow Chemicals. Chinley we're told by Corteva that such cases are rare, and the incidence is decreasing. Chinley want to test this assertion, as anecdotal evidence suggests a different story. If you, or your allotment site, has suffered from herbicide contamination in the last three years (confirmed or otherwise), please contact the Chair, Steve Minter, and he will send you a short questionnaire to complete. Any data collected will be anonymised and the results shared with the NAS.

Contact: steve@minter.me.uk

Mobile: 07961 002874

3. Does your allotment society allow bonfires "at any time of the year?" In his Eastern Region Report (Allotment & Leisure Gardener), Ray How asks them to consider changing their rules and for plot holders to try to be sensible and to think of others and the environment. Ray concluded by asking for more support from Eastern Region members and that he is still looking for someone to take over as Secretary of Eastern Region.

4. Fruit and Vegetable Shortages: We all know that home grown edibles are the best in terms of flavour and their impact on the planet. However, this month the world's media has turned the spotlight firmly on to allotmenters in the UK due to supply issues in supermarkets. This week we posted a blog on how and when to plant crops now to reap the benefits in the summer should shortages continue. <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/uk-fruit-and-vegetable-shortages/>

5. National Allotments Week 2023 will run from 7th-13th August 2023. The theme for 2023 is Soil Health!

6. Why Women Grow: Stories of Soil, Sisterhood and Survival (Hardback), by Alice Vincent (author) via your local bookshop or library?

GM Freeze news

The Westminster Government has pushed through a Genetic Technology Bill that will impose untested – and unlabelled – GMOs on the entire UK food chain. The bill only applies directly to England but that won't stop it having an impact in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. <https://www.gmfreeze.org/>

Leigh-on-Sea Farmers' Market 2023

No real update yet, unfortunately; head over to Bradfields Farm Dairy instead! <https://seeog.org.uk/2023/02/bradfields-farm-dairy/>

Members' contributions

1. Essex Green Weekend 2023, Othona Bradwell: 28 April - 1 May

A talk or a workshop? The Essex Green Weekend engages communities, faith groups and anyone interested in climate change action. Tickets and further details at:

<https://www.othonaessex.org.uk/civicrm/event/info?id=2060>

2. Visit www.forpeatssake.org.uk for detailed advice including a free online course.

3. Museum collections indicate bees increasingly stressed by changes in climate. For full details, visit www.num.ac.uk

4. Hunt for Early White Sprouting broccoli - we don't want to lose any of these precious vegetable varieties. If you have anything the Heritage Seed Library might be interested in, please let them know by emailing hsl@gardenorganic.org.uk or calling them on 024 7630 8210.

5. Get involved! Garden Organic have invited participants representing a range of backgrounds to take part in their Citizen Science Action Group. If you're not in the panel there are still plenty of other ways to get involved. Keep an eye on gardenorganic.org.uk/members-experiments for updates.

6. Isle of Wight college offers pupils rare agricultural course.
<https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/isle-of-wight-college-offers-pupils-rare-agriculture-course>

7. All Muck and Still Magic? The booklet "Sort out your soil - a practical guide to green manuring for growers" is published by Cotswold Seeds, a major supplier of organic green manure seeds. This useful resource, also of value to gardeners, can be found on the Garden Organic website www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sort-out-your-soil

8. The Lemon Tree Trust contacted us recently. They're unable to send anything to the refugee camps at the moment but there are groups of refugees who do have allotments here. Has anybody any spare seeds they would like to donate to these groups? Ron and Ane have already saved hundreds of hollyhock seeds which the refugee groups love.

9. Blossom Day: Friday 14 April, 1pm – 3pm at St Laurence Orchard
Unwind in the historic 1-acre orchard, take part in fun orchard-themed activities and tuck into tasty tea and cake. Where to find them? Eastwoodbury Lane (at the junction with St. Laurence Way), Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6UY. Entry is on St Laurence Lane toward the airport. Please be aware this site does not have a car park. However, St Laurence Park across the road has a small car park available to use.

10. This introductory through to beginner online course will introduce you to our planet's most important pollinators, including aspects of their biology and ecology.
<https://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/static-courses/discovering-bees-online/>

11. As part of SEEORG membership and support of the Soil Association we receive their magazine, Living Earth. The last magazine had an article on World Soil Day and the importance of healthy soils for climate and nature. We the readers are also urged to choose organic. 'With every purchase of certified organic products, you're voting to reduce the use of pesticides and promoting nature-friendly farming.' This put me in mind of a passage in Landlines by Raynor Winn, who also wrote 'The Salt Path'. She has just witnessed a huge area of land being mechanically mown and these are her thoughts:

'Like so much of the farmland in this country, this isn't privately owned land. It belongs to one of the huge corporations... For the corporations, biodiversity isn't part of the equation and certainly can't be balanced against the desire for higher and higher profits... But this is the choice we make every time we shop. Like the dairy cows that never see a grass field, or the hens that never see daylight, this vast area of land stripped of insect life in minutes is the true cost of cheap food. No matter how many wild flower seeds we sow in our gardens it's an equation that can't be balanced.' This is a depressing thought: the system is stacked against us, it seems. But we can't give up, we must keep on doing what we can and actually I'm all in favour of wild flower seeds.

12. Guardian (29/01/23) reports the government/DEFRA has for the third year allowed neonics for sugar beet (lacewings are and can be used/encouraged but what can you do with an industry that has stopped leaving beet tops on the field to feed the pink footed geese!) Europe has continued to ban them.

13. Though in Europe “No Patents on Seeds” lost its appeal against patents on peppers and in the pipeline are barley, melons, tomatoes and dandelions as new varieties bred conventionally to Syngenta, which covers all derivatives from them. With opposition from the German Plant Breeders Association there may be hope. Syngenta are usually to be seen at the Essex Schools Food and Farming Day at Writtle College, starting again this year for the first time since Covid. Last time they were handing out 'bees' to the schoolchildren, a shameful act. Sadly we are not attending this year although we had some wonderful ideas from GMFreeze. For an event of this size we need at least six people on the stall because it is frantic!

14. Guardian (01/02/23) “a breath of fresh air” with a report about the Black Mountain College in Brecon offering degrees dedicated to climate action (BA HONS in sustainable futures: arts, ecology and systems change) validated by Cardiff Metropolitan University. There is a similar scheme in Barcelona.

15. Guardian(11/02/23) “British apples are not getting the 1000 chilling hours that they need - below 6C but above freezing. Farmers are currently ripping out orchards because of climate breakdown but looking to Japan and Australasia for possible replacements.

16. Food Diversity Day zoom “The Lentil Underground: The Power of Pulses” - 10th February is World Pulses Day. 2016 was the International Year of the Pulse. There has been a decline in pulses and Britain is one of the worst but Hodmedod seek to reverse this as Leguminosae have protein and fibre and a huge range of flavours. Lebanon has 10,000 lentil varieties, India has 17,000 chickpeas. In the Middle Ages we had peas and broad beans; the Fava bean was our staple for 2,000 years. Parched peas and Carlin peas have micro nutrients/tannins and can be a bi-crop with barley, as well as used for intercropping and poly-cropping. Lentils up to Shetland, Gotland lentil, Ratvick pea, etc. Hodmedod have 35 farmers working with them to re-establish this source of protein and fibre and their soil benefits to aid the reduction in intensive cattle and dairy to reduce GHG. Eat more pulses for the planet's sake!

17. The Peter Melchett Memorial Lecture (19/01/23) with Andy Cato: “Can innovation unlock an agroecological farming future?” We need to move old ideas and traditions to new times. Various points mentioned: Henry Dimbleby's report; Albert Howard's Agricultural Testament, Rodale and no till; Hodmedods; a community of farmers moving from chemistry to biology; the innovative farmers scheme of research; F A Kings` ‘Farmers of 40 centuries’; Jo Gridley and the Soil Association Exchange; Greta Thunberg's cathedral-thinking inclusivity; satellite imagery and data sets for ground and farm surveys.

18. A book recommendation....Professor Dave Goulson’s “The Garden Jungle” or Gardening to Save the Planet. Published by Vintage/Penguin Random House UK Paperback @ £9.99.

19. 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. You can also try their new online course – find out all about the benefits of composting at home and how to get started.

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=

20. SEEOG talk on 16 January 2023

The apple`s journey from Tian Shan, which is between the fertile crescent and the Yangtse. The uniqueness of each apple pip Indigestible (but camels will break it down), sought by colour at fruiting time and eaten and passed through bears, deer, boar and - with the domestication of the horse (7000yrs ago in China) traversing the Silk Road - the sweet Malus pumila travelled, seeding and fruiting being selected for colour and sweetness. Grafting (3500 years ago) and orcharding developed.

Local land use in SE Essex from the Neolithic till today was highlighted. The word orchard was derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for their practice of orcharding.

The Medieval period had its collards and the likes. By the 19th century we can see orchards attached to all farms - some moated - being a valued resource. The East of England saw an orchard century from 1850 -1950 and Southend had a very high density of orchards but on land planned eventually for housing. All this was illustrated with maps and visuals from the following sources:-

- 'The Extraordinary Story of the Apple' by B. E. Juniper and David Mabberley
- 'The Making of the British Landscape: How We Have Transformed the Land, from Prehistory to Today' by Francis Pryor
- 'Essex Farming, 1900-2000' by Peter Wormell
- 'The Orchards of Eastern England: History, Ecology and Place', by Gerry Barnes and Tom Williamson + the survey of Essex orchards showing local densities historically.
- 'Holistic Orchard' by Michael Phillips for the fungal duff illustrations
- Ordnance Survey local historic maps

Then we moved to Graham Burnett introducing his publication "Glomalin" (a Spiralseed publication). This was to initiate the concept of "patchwork orchards" and features the work of James Taylor, Dennis Gould, Claire White, Shaun Badham, James Ravinet and Steve Jordan. Further works from this has seen Project 49 working with Kelley Ann Buckley on a film collaboration to capture the field recordings and microsounds of life, decay and soil at St Laurence Orchard - listening to fungi, lichen, rotting apples and the trees themselves. Alongside planting initiatives from the Greening Southend project, a local fruiting harvest could be gleaned from a patchwork of fruiting trees accessible to the public. A project for local food resilience.

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

21. Graham Burnett will be speaking at The European Permaculture Community Forum (EUPC), a 5-day online event taking place from March 1st – 5th 2023, dedicated to sharing inspiration and information from across the community to as wide an audience as possible. Tickets give you access to the live event as well as all recordings! Day 1, Beyond the impossible burger: Ecological veganism and radical agricultural futures, followed by panel and Q&A from the audience, 18:00 GMT (London / Lisbon).
<https://forum.eupc.community/programme/>

22. Heartbreak and Horticulture: Ellen Willmott

Ellen Willmott was one of the most significant female horticulturists of the 19th century, famed for her impressive and influential gardens at Warley Place and her various methods of sabotage against her gardening rivals in later years.

<https://www.essexwt.org.uk/blog/guest-writer/heartbreak-and-horticulture-ellen-willmott?fbclid=IwAR1wWNLT-WBYPD3jH-LkrE3WnP2f7P97AXy90KdaQBG7zeuxjPFm8W1rU48>

23. Josh's Tomatoes, the place to show all his weird and wonderful tomato varieties that he grows, He has over 100 varieties! More below.....

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1679462025816880>

24. We seem to be experiencing a blip with our fresh food supply. Whether it's because of the weather and climate change, or Brexit and the lack of importance given to our food security, at least some of us gardeners can grow a few of our own veg. to keep us going. We have leeks, various types of salad leaves, chard, spinach, kale, cabbage and parsley. We don't grow turnips but let us know if you do and how you like to eat them. I think the main thing is to use what we do have available and not to get obsessed with any one particular ingredient. We are also lucky that we can have access to frozen, tinned, bottled and preserved foods; some from our own harvests. Something to think about later on in the year.

25. Get growing everyone! Home Grown 2023 - join our free online family growing course!

Cllr James Newport - ECC Rayleigh North/ RDC Downhall & Rawreth - has funded these packs from his ECC locality fund so please take advantage of this FREE scheme. Do you and your family want to learn how to grow your own fruits and vegetables at home? Then join Groundwork East's free Online Family Growing course starting Thursday 23rd March! You'll receive your very own Grow Pack*! It will include gloves, tools, seeds, trays, labels, etc., everything you need to get started. Then, across the entire growing season, Groundwork will send you 12 emailed newsletters packed full of online learning resources, activities and information to help you and your family gain the knowledge and confidence to grow your own food.

<https://info.groundwork.org.uk/online-growing-2022-0-1>

26. This gorgeous book is a children animated story: Ziggys Frightening Flight: A Story About Habitat Loss - Wild Tribe Heroes <https://g.co/kgs/u4dQCy>

27. Belfast's Alleyways and Orchards: Community groups in Belfast have transformed neglected alleyways into attractive social spaces - using paint, planters and colourful bric-a-brac. Helen Mark maps the changes.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001g398>

28. Josh's Tomatoes (Shoeburyness based): <https://www.facebook.com/josh.warner3>

Josh advertises his collection of tomatoes on this Facebook page. He's been growing and saving seed for quite a few years now so has decided to start some plants to sell. This year, he will have available the following @ £2.50 per plant to cover pots and compost. He'll likely do a little table sale when they are ready for collection. People are putting in pre orders at the moment and they should be ready in roughly 5 or so weeks.

Mini Orange, Brad's Atomic Grape, Pink Tiger, Gardeners' Delight, Yellow Pear, Black Cherry (good blight resistance), Sunburst Cherry, Dancing with Smurfs, Rio Grande, Piramide, Chocolate Pear, Pink Stripe, Yellow currant,
Super Snow White, Golden sunrise

Rosella, Red zebra, Aladdins lamp, Tigerella, Pink Thai Egg

Cherokee Purple, Siegel's Stripes, Dragon's Eye, Cherokee Rose, Marmande, Saint Pierre, Gary'O Sena Rutgers

With huge thanks to our contributors – they really do us proud, don't you think?

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. 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

Pesticide Action Network North America,

PANNA held two webinars on 17th and 30th January: "Pesticides and Climate Change". The first was authored by Asha Sharma and Margaret Reeves. Pesticides are designed to kill insects, fungi and bacteria; they pose acute risk to the central nervous system, the eye and gastrointestinal tract. There were 382 million unintentional incidents and 2.4 million farm workers with cancer. There is a call for environmental justice with people of colour and more of Latino backgrounds (USA). The global south is seeing pest pressure, crop resilience and reduced chemical efficacy. 2021 pest range increased with temperature aiding faster pest reproduction; climate stressed plants become more susceptible so increase of pesticide use! 99% of which are fossil fuels.

Big Pharma answers with precision tools (AI) so business as usual! The solution is via Agroecology which is already practised worldwide with much of its knowledge with local indigenous folk. Mitigation and adaptation requires carbon sequestration with the resilience of organic soil matter that holds and delivers moisture and allows filtration down; this, with resilient local/indigenous knowledge, will provide for resilient diverse economies and will also provide better diets. But it needs long term access to land. This is very much slowed down by corporate lobbying and digital tools. There is a need to democratise the food system, support farmers to transition and accept lower yields but greater biodiversity. There is a need for life-cycle research that accounts for adjuvants in pesticides which are not considered active ingredients.

The second webinar was with Jeanette Acosta, an indigenous permaculture specialist; Rob Faux, an Iowa farmer, and Nayamin Martinez of Central California Environmental Justice Network. They were looking at Solutions.

A steward listens to the land to watch and care for the diversity of growing systems embracing its complexity – there may be longer crop rotations, intercropping, perennials, maintenance and animals with a lot of buckwheat grown. The principle is adapt agriculture to the land, not land to agriculture. Central Valley California has 200m tonnes of pesticides pa. They are looking for environmental justice for the amount of drift. The aim is wholistic traditional agriculture with all living beings in relationship to the environment so giving ecological health. There was an Inuit Circumpolar Summit at COP15 along with the National Conference of Indian Nations. Aims for small farmers' access to seeds, women's access to finance and land rights to ground water. (Just watched the film Dark Matter - Dupont and Teflon!)

Agroecology is an overall philosophy, an overarching approach, and Regenerative and Organic is part of it; rethink agriculture.

This gives some insight into what's happening in other places. (Ron)

Pesticide Free Essex

We attended Pesticide-Free Towns' first Campaigner Catch-up of 2023 on Tuesday 21 February. It was a great turn out and a really interesting conversation came out of it – we hope you found it insightful if you attended! They're working on a blog which will capture the practicalities of getting our social housing and council estates to go pesticide-free – do look out for this in the weeks to come, along with Kemal's great work in Colchester on glyphosate. You can sign up at <https://www.pan-uk.org/sign-up/>

Potato Day: How did it go for you? Some thoughts

As Matt said, we're all 'potatoed-out' after a brilliant day – and sold out, too! It was a good day's team work and a good social event for all to engage in. Great collaborative working in a positive way – a lot of new faces. Thanks to all! We had a lovely day! We also learnt a little bit about Trust Links House during the Passivhaus tour and talk, as well as getting our items mended at the Repair Cafe! Thank you to the Essex Asian Women's Association for providing some beautiful home-made curry, which is always a hit!

From SEEORG's point of view, we felt it went well; we suspect Trust Links felt similar. General atmosphere: people seemed happy and grateful for the assistance given on the potato stall. A few commented that they appreciated being able to buy individual tubers. There was a good mix of customers with some growing experience who knew exactly what they were after and others who were totally new to growing. We saw a few familiar faces from last year. Layout: It seemed to flow well, the venue lends itself to accommodating a good number of people and there seemed to be enough activities to keep every stall busy but not too busy, other than the curry stall perhaps. Was definitely worth getting there for 9am to secure enough tables and get everything set up. We think the layout for our stall worked OK. One thing that wasn't clear to customers was where to pay, so perhaps a sign might be useful, though Ray's red jacket is always a helpful beacon!

Things to consider for next year: Thanks to Carole for printing off some copies of the order form for the day. They were useful for those behind the potato stall to have an at a glance view of what we have – definitely do that next year. It was quite surprising that the majority of our payments were in cash so for Potato Day this year it wasn't a big issue, however, we think it's worth reconsidering having Zettle or similar if more events come up in the future. Perhaps next year, we could note which varieties sold out in what order, to give a better idea what's popular. We were aware nearer the end that people were buying from what was left but it wouldn't have been their first choice.

As long as we all have access to information to answer queries about growing times, which ones are first earlies, good for mash, alternatives etc. it will be good.

A very enjoyable and successful day! Roll on 2024!

Soil Association, latest news

1. SEEOG needs to get active! Government's environment plan fails to protect soil

The government has failed to recognise the vital role for soil in sustainable farming and put it at the heart of its new Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). It has also broken a commitment made in the House of Lords to produce a Soil Health Action Plan for England. SEEOG needs to take action!
<https://www.soilassociation.org/news/2023/february/17/new-environment-plan-dumps-soil/>

2. The Soil Association is also running a campaign to change children's food for good. They want to expand their Food for Life work and are pushing the government to provide free nutritious meals for all primary school children.
<https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/schools>

We hope you've enjoyed this newsletter and look forward to meeting up soon later this month!

Please don't forget to check up with all the extra news items on our website, ie. Potato Day, Bradfields Farm Dairy, Hügelkultur, all at <https://seeog.org.uk/>

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