

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

A Local Group of...



Supporting and Working With...



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 177 / SEPTEMBER 2024

<https://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

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

Housekeeping, etc.

We hope you'll enjoy reading this newsletter and look forward to meeting up soon. To avoid disappointment, do please make a careful note now of **OTHER EVENTS IN OUR CALENDAR.**

SEEOG membership fees

SUBS WERE DUE IN JULY! PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU RENEW! If you have not paid your subs by 16 September, regrettably you will not receive any further newsletters and you will have to pay the guest fee of £2.00.

Membership fees or renewals 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 July of the following year.

You can pay by Bank Transfer, cheque, cash or by post:
Bank details: Account No: 65198805; Sort Code 08 92 99

If you're sending a cheque, please send it to Ray How, SEEOG Membership Secretary, 5 Dalys Road, Rochford, SS4 1RA. It should be made payable to South East Essex Organic Gardeners. Alternatively you are welcome to pay in person at one of our meetings.

We would also like to thank those members who pay by Standing Order. It's easy enough to forget a renewal so maybe a few more of you might like to consider this option?

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

Newsletter copy

If you want to send us any little snippets/news items for our newsletter, our copy 'deadline' for November 2024 is Sunday 27 October.

Tell us about your new no-dig patch or how you look after the hedgehogs/slow worms/frogs in your garden/community garden/allotment/balcony, plus any news on which of our talks so far you have found the most interesting. Plus photos for our website, most important!

Plus suggestions for speakers and trips out for this/next year. The odd article on other areas of organic thought would also be most welcome. The important thing is to do it!

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. This does save a lot of time!

SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2024

How to get to Trust Links Rochford, 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.

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

Monday 16 September: 'Essex Seagrass Project: protecting and restoring Essex's super seagrass', presented by Alex Smith, Marine & Coastal Engagement Officer, Essex Wildlife Trust' (see Ron's note on seagrass further down).

Combatting climate change and providing a massive green bonus for all of us, especially as we are a coastal community / <https://www.essexwt.org.uk/what-we-do/protecting-wildlife/projects/seagrass>

Monday 18 November: Open pollinated seeds, presented by Andre and Spencer from Lauriston Farm

Lauriston Farm grow a few varieties of open pollinated seeds on the farm and have grown seeds for the Seed Cooperative in the past.

<http://open-pollinated-seeds.org.uk/about-peter-brinch/>

Thursday 5 December , 19:45 for 20:00: 'Soil - Geology With Worms' , a Zoom presentation by Ian Mercer FGA on World Soil Day

SOIL – or Geology with Worms - earth, dirt, land, ground, loam, humus...? The Latin root "homo-" is related to "humus", "earth" or "born" and so it refers to "earthly being" or "born of the earth" – and thus refers to all of humanity. In answering the question, "What is Soil?", we can begin to realise that "What we do to the land, we do to ourselves."

Soil is the planet's thin, vital surface layer where geology and biology combine to recycle dead matter back into life.

Vitally, plants and animals depend upon the minerals in the rocks and sediments within the land surface. Soil is created continually during an amazing exchange process involving mineral particles, fungi, microbes and small animals, notably earthworms. Minerals are dissolved and their chemical building-blocks transferred into plant roots along millions of threads of fungus; in exchange, the fungus gains energy from 'sugar chains' produced by the plants using energy from sunlight shining on their leaves.

Ian's talk takes us from the geological - biological interface of soil to the stark reality of the survival of civilisation on this planet. Ian Mercer FGA is a retired geologist and gemmologist who worked for the Geological Survey and Museum from 1965 and for the Gemmological Association from 1990.

2025 speakers

Monday 20 January: "How Regenerating Soil & Plant Health Can Create 'Buffers' Against Climatic Changes" presented by John Metcalf: Founder of Sow & Grow Regenerative, Regional & Grow Your Own Ambassador for People's Food & Farming Alliance

Saturday 8 February: Seed Potato Day, 11:00- 14:00, in partnership with Trust Links at Trust Links Rochford, Trust Links House, College Gardens, Rochford, SS4 1YL (updates via our website).

Monday 17 March: Chris Collins on "How to build & grow a school garden"

Monday 19 May: Sandie Cottee on the creation of Rettendon Bell Fields allotment site

Monday 21 July: 'Climate Change Gardening' presented by Clive & Sue Boase
They will cover the impact that climate change is having on gardens, how we can continue to have a productive and enjoyable garden despite climate change, and the measures that gardeners can adopt that will actually help counteract climate change.

Monday 15 September: "We argue that we must invest in gardeners rather than more infrastructure" presented by John Little, The Green Roof Company

Monday 17 November: Ben Lambert, Crapes Fruit Farm (content to be confirmed)

OTHER EVENTS IN OUR CALENDAR 2024/2025

Southend's Green Get Together (free event): Wednesday 25 September, 18:30 – 22:00 at The Alex, 53 Alexandra Street Westcliff-on-Sea SS1 1BW. Join us to meet up with local environmental organisations and green minded people, hear more about what is happening in Southend and beyond. Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/southends-green-get-together-2024-tickets-995025767857?aff=oddtcreator>

Apple Day: Saturday 12 October, 11:00 – 14:00 at St Laurence Orchard, on the corner of Eastwoodbury Lane and St Laurence Way, opposite St Laurence Park, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6UY.

Essex Field Club's annual Exhibition and Social : Saturday 30 November, stallholders from 11:00, public 13:00 – 16:00, at The Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea, SS16 4UH. What should our display be about? "Why Organic?" Please email your suggestions.

Charles Dowding's talk is now confirmed, as per details below. Hosted by Manchester Drive Allotment Society.

DATE AND TIME

Tuesday 3 December 2024, 19:30: "No Dig Gardening" presented by Charles Dowding
Charles Dowding is the leading UK proponent of the No Dig method of vegetable cultivation.
<https://www.charlesdowding.co.uk/about>

VENUE FOR TALK

Leigh Community Centre, 71 - 73 Elm Road, Leigh on Sea SS9 1SP
<https://www.leighcommunitycentre.com/>

TICKETS

Tickets (£10) are available at the weekend on a 'cash only' basis from Manchester Drive Allotments (Cafe area) from 10am to midday. **Address:** Manchester Drive (opposite Cricketfield Grove), Leigh-on-Sea SS9 3EZ

If you are on **John Pollard's list**, you will be able to collect and pay for them at our next meeting on 16 September. Please bring the appropriate money on the night (cash only).

For queries, please contact John Pollard:07985 243754

2025

Coming to perform at Trust Links Rochford, April 2025: Three Acres And A Cow

<https://threeacresandacow.co.uk/>

Save the date for the Great Big Green Week 7 – 15 June 2025

Mark the dates in your diary for the UK's biggest annual celebration of action to tackle climate change and protect nature. Whether you want to get involved with your community, your business or your school, it's never too early to start spreading the word?

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

NEWS

Crapes Fruit Farm: September beckons

We have made it thus far with apparently no sun scorch or markings attributed to hail, though some did fall on the other side of Aldham several weeks ago. At the moment, the apple varieties are running a week or so ahead of the long term average, though there are no records being broken for earliness. The real test will be when the Ribston Pippin are picked - hopefully not before 12 September. They are totally inedible at present! Worcester Pearmain will be available from mid week, Discovery are all finished, earlier than usual. Plums are now cleared. Pears are almost non existent. Quince are none. Medlars will have appreciated the rain yesterday, though not that much here in Aldham - 10mm. We are still frustrated by a deceptively failing telephone system which will accept voicemail messages, which we are unable to recover on 1571. Please do not try calling us on the land line. It is 100% more reliable to make contact with my mobile, please! 07481469312 - please either leave a voicemail message or send a text message for me to retrieve and respond to.

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

GM news

1. The use of conventional pesticides in agriculture on agricultural land will no longer be allowed in the Brussels region as of 2030. The use of synthetic pesticides by others than farmers will be banned in 2025. The new law went into force on 17 July. While this decision could be considered anecdotal, considering the few 250ha of agricultural land from the region, it creates a precedent as it is the first time a European region has taken such a decision to protect citizens' health and the environment against pesticides.

<https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2024/07/brussels-become-first-european-region-ban-synthetic-pesticides-agriculture>

2. American biotech lobbyist drives GMO deregulation discussions in UK, EU

Suddenly Jack Bobo is everywhere, with a position at the University of Nottingham apparently created for him. By Jonathan Matthews and Claire Robinson.

<https://www.gmwatch.org/en/main-menu/news-menu-title/news-reviews/20449-review-573-lobbywatch-american-lobbyist-in-europe-jack-bobo>

Members' contributions

1. Sara Venn - The Community Gardener in Bristol (do read her story)...

We have health and safety protocols on chemical use, heavy machinery use, even poor weather dangers, but I know of no one in the horticulture industry who takes the sun seriously. Do you? So please wear a hat if the day's going to be hot and sunny, cover your shoulders, use SPF, and at breaks reapply. And let's get horticulture talking about this!!

Incredible Edible Bristol, gardens, inspiration, information and more, but all around gardens, growing and farming, with a bit of local food thrown. Such inspiration! If you're on social media (also on Instagram), go to <https://www.facebook.com/saralimback>

2. Southend's Green Get Together: Wednesday, 25 September, 18:30 – 10:00 at The Alex

53 Alexandra Street Westcliff-on-Sea SS1 1BW. This is all about meeting up with local environmental organisations and green minded people to hear more about what is happening in Southend and beyond. Several of us attended last year when John Pollard gave a very nifty talk about SEEOG. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/southends-green-get-together-2024-tickets-995025767857?aff=oddtcreator>

3. The Dirty Dozen (or foods containing most pesticides)

The results of the government's residue testing programme are only available for the preceding year. The results below are, therefore, based on the most recent data available. The UK government tests roughly 3,000kg of food for pesticide residues each year. Once the results are published, PAN UK analyses this data and makes it accessible to the general public by producing the annual 'Dirty Dozen'. The Dirty Dozen lists the fruit and vegetables most likely to contain residues of two or more pesticides (known as 'pesticide cocktails') to help inform people's shopping decisions.

Percentage of samples with multiple residues: Peaches/Nectarines 85%; Grapes 84%; Strawberry 83%; Cherries 81%; Spinach 73%; Apples 72%; Brussels Sprouts 50%; Cucumber 47%; Tomato 46%; Apricots 43%; Lettuce 39%; Beans with pods 38%.

<https://www.pan-uk.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Dirty-Dozen-2023.pdf>

4. Did No Mow May achieve anything?

It must have saved the council some money. But more importantly it got people used to the idea of seeing some longer and larger patches of grass with seed heads. As time went on, some wild flowers started to appear and colours changed; occasionally some quite large plants were added to the mix. In rewilding schemes just letting nature thrive can be enough to kickstart the return of certain species and we can in fact replicate this in our gardens. You can leave some wilder areas; think about a small pond because nothing more than an old sink is needed to make an impact; plant a tree with blossom and fruit; grow open flowers for pollinators and to maintain our natural plants; try to grow from organic seeds or growers so flowers are insect friendly; don't make your garden too tidy and don't cut back old growth too quickly because the seeds are a good source of nutrition for the birds. We can only hope that some wildlife will return and an element of biodiversity will have an improved chance of spreading. Our gardens are important.

5. Know Your Onions....

Let's start with a startling fact. What's the world's most global food crop? Is it Wheat? Rice? Potatoes? or even the tomato that I wrote about recently? It's nothing so obvious, rather it is the humble brown, red or yellowish bulb that you've probably got piled up in your kitchen right now: the onion.

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2022/10/08/know-your-onions/>

6. No dig gardening expert Stephanie Hafferty has written us another brilliant blog, and this time it's all about making compost go further. Besides being a great read, it is really informative and we know that many of you will find it very useful.

Click here to read the article: <https://www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk/latest-news.aspx>

7. In a stunning move that has left health food advocates shaking their heads, Whole Foods Market, long celebrated as a paragon of organic and non-GMO foods, has partnered with Impossible Foods, a company that brazenly embraces GMOs, and even at times synthetic biology, in its “plant-based” meat products. This alliance not only contradicts Whole Foods’ carefully cultivated image but also raises serious concerns about the potential health risks posed by Impossible Foods’ offerings.
<https://non-gmoreport.com/whole-foods-betrays-its-non-gmo-roots-the-impossible-foods-controversy/>

8. Blighted by tomato blight? Anton Rosenfeld shares advice about how to spot it and what to do about it? <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/way-to-beat-the-blight>

9. Food for Life's Cook and Share to return in November?

The much-loved campaign to get people trying new recipes and connecting over good food will be back for the month of November. We’re currently working on new recipes and resources to share in the months leading up to it and we’re looking forward to seeing all the wonderful meals and dishes you’ll be putting together. Expect more updates soon!

[http://ffillinks.foodforlife.org.uk/m/1/34830132/02-b24226-](http://ffillinks.foodforlife.org.uk/m/1/34830132/02-b24226-78111fd163e3456298a209dad452bba8/3/888/895311f0-13c5-4698-90db-a7b629927f03#)

[78111fd163e3456298a209dad452bba8/3/888/895311f0-13c5-4698-90db-a7b629927f03#](http://ffillinks.foodforlife.org.uk/m/1/34830132/02-b24226-78111fd163e3456298a209dad452bba8/3/888/895311f0-13c5-4698-90db-a7b629927f03#)

10. Beningbrough's garden vision, a touch of the Mediterranean in Yorkshire

2016 marked the 300th anniversary of Beningbrough Hall and in celebration of this historic milestone Andy Sturgeon was set the task of creating a long-term plan to refresh, improve, and in some areas reinvent the eight-acre garden.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/yorkshire/beningbrough/the-garden-vision-at-beningbrough>

11. “I’ve had a dreadful year trying to protect the winter sprouting broccoli plants which I grew from seed.” First problem was when they were small they were attacked by slugs. Very successful remedy from Steve Jordan who introduced me to putting beer in the bottom of a container. They are attracted by the yeast and drown in the beer. I’m not keen on killing any wild creatures but I was desperate and I guess they died happy. Much less successful was the netting to deter birds - kindly given to me by Ron. Before draping the netting over the broccoli plants I carefully picked off the caterpillars but unfortunately didn’t remove the as yet not hatched eggs laid, I guess, by the swarms of Cabbage Whites which seem to like my garden. Off I went for a few days and on my return the plants were reduced to skeletons with hardly a leaf left! My chard and French beans are doing very nicely but if anyone has any spare winter sprouting broccoli plants to sell me - please get in touch. Having heard Nick’s talk ‘Why Organic?’ I’m more than ever keen to grow my own!

12. Eryngium.... One name for it is Miss Wilmot’s Ghost and there’s an interesting local connection.
<https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/the-legend-behind-the-garden-skeletons-of-miss-willmotts-ghost/>

13. Wildlife boosted by England’s nature-friendly farming schemes, study finds

Areas where farmers provide good habitats show notable increase in butterflies, bees, bats and breeding birds

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/aug/09/wildlife-boosted-by-englands-nature-friendly-farming-schemes-study-finds>

14. Walmer Castle and Gardens, Deal (Kent)... All around the garden you will find structures such as these by the buggy park. This dead hedging doesn’t just ensure a natural way of recycling our green waste, it also provides habitat for all kinds of creatures such as (stag) beetles, small rodents, birds and hedgehogs. As the branches at the bottom deteriorate, new ones will be put along the top as and when pruning work in the garden is done. Even in smaller gardens dead hedging can save lots of trips to the recycling centre and provide wonderful habitat.

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/walmer-castle-and-gardens/>

15. Looking for a recipe for your summer beans? Lucie from The WI (National Federation of Women's Institutes) shares a veg-filled risotto, and other recipes. Head to <https://mycoronationgarden.org/summer-leek-broad-bean-and-runner-bean-risotto>

16. Regen, organic & agroecology: what's the difference?

Find out what three main routes to sustainable farming actually mean and how to support them. <https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/features/regenerative-organic-and-agroecology-whats-the-difference/>

17. The Future of Organic, from accountant to first generation organic dairy farmer: Sarah Swadling meets Sophie Gregory on the farm she runs with her husband, Tom, in Dorset. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00219by>

18. Imagine what would happen if we doubled the amount of land we grow fruit and veg on! Riverford reports 49% of growers are worried their businesses won't last a year: while diet-related illnesses cost the NHS six billion annually. Here's what we can do. <https://www.soilassociation.org/media/27380/homegrown.pdf>

19. Limited time offer! Brief Fungal Foray – why fungi are our friends... Order your Glomalin today at the special price of just £5.00! <https://spiralseed.co.uk/product/glomalin-issue-1-patchwork-orchard/>

20. Bagnolet, Paris: The 10th of September is recognized by La Via Campesina and its allies worldwide as the International Day of Action Against the World Trade Organization and Free Trade Agreements. It was on this day in 2003, outside the WTO Ministerial Meeting venue in Cancun, Mexico, that Lee Kyung Hae, a Korean peasant, sacrificed his life to protest against the devastating impact of opening national borders to free trade. At the time of his martyrdom, Lee wore a sign around his neck that read "WTO Kills Farmers." <https://viacampesina.org/en/international-day-of-action-against-the-wto-and-free-trade-agreements-call-to-action/>

21. Recent readings (and a timely reminder here for our Zoom meeting in December; don't miss it!) "Essex Rocks" - Ian and Ros Carter, Pelagic Publishing

This looks at the coming together of Britain and Essex and its movement and geological history - from near the south pole engagement with Gondwana, Avalonia, Laurentia and Baltica, still drifting northwards having passed through various climatic zones during the past few hundred million years adding a wonderful variety of sediments. The tilt and erosion, uplift and folding and projected to continue north in future. They point out that the rapid change in climate will be catastrophic for the natural environment and the onset of a mass extinction event - the Anthropocene. But further study and application can help prevent the most far reaching effects of this abrupt transformation upon natural ecosystems and human life. Too rapid for the present day complexity of human society to cope with. We need to be far less dependent upon a network of remote food supplies. They point out Essex society, food and wildlife depend upon the soils and sediments of the county; no-till farming, cover crops and crop residue protect the vital, natural organic content and allow rain into the soil without erosion. Carbon is absorbed from the atmosphere and not lost during ploughing and productivity increases - a dual benefit.

From the Soil Association - Home-grown: a roadmap to resilient fruit and vegetable production in England. A collaboration with Sustain and Wildlife trusts to look at impacts upon public health with seven steps to help secure a sustainable future for our growers, our environment and our communities. We need to support these to ensure a food security strategy.

1. Develop a cross-departmental approach to horticultural policy.
2. Support a just transition towards farming on peat-free soils.
3. Decentralise production and scale up agroecological horticulture.
4. Improve supply chain fairness and flexibility.
5. Harness the potential of public procurement.
6. Boost urban and peri-urban horticulture.
7. Invest in farmer-led research, collaboration, and innovation.

Peter Godfrey-Smith - "Other Minds" and "Living on Earth": A lot about cephalopods/octopus life. He sees deliberate human action continues and extends a long tradition of organisms transforming nature. Life forms have shaped the environment and the very landscape around them in the most basic sense, plant life can redirect the path of rivers, which reshape the topography of land. His concern is that deliberate human actions are destroying nature, wrecking ecosystems and leading to the extinction of many species. He traces how various plants, animals, and bacteria became dependent upon one another through co-evolution/complementarity.

22. Tomatoes in S. Wales - According to our Welsh friend, a Swansea grower has 100 stunted tomatoes no more than 6 inches high, which has broken his year on year very productive growing regime, put down to the lack of light and amounts of rainfall sustained during the early growing season. Adaptation and change is what we need to engage with.

23. From Garden Organic: Huge thanks to everyone who has helped us reach 1 million listens on our Organic Garden Podcast! We are hugely grateful to our loyal listeners - and the growing number of new ones. If you haven't yet checked it out, head to <https://audioboom.com/channels/4987940-the-organic-gardening-podcast> to have a listen - and get inspiration, advice, tips and interviews to help you get gardening organically.

24. It's easier than you think to choose organic: Switching just some of your shopping to organic items can really help to make positive changes within our food and farming systems. Demand for more organic food means more organic farms. More organic farms mean fewer pesticides, more wildlife and more animals raised to the very highest standards.
<https://www.soilassociation.org/take-action/organic-living/buy-organic/>

25. If you came along to our July meeting you'll remember John coming triumphantly through the door in his little buggy. He would like advice on how to set up an allotment on his 8 X 4 foot balcony, 14 floors up and west facing. He knows the measurements don't add up but he's sure there are lot of things he can grow in a small place.

John has permission to go ahead with his growing area, with a bit of compromise. It is good advice to keep the weight down. The good thing is that he has an HNC in construction, as well as all the years experience with his work. So all is safe. One of the committees members (at the flats) has helped him fit some rafters, to which he then attached a couple of chains with a handle, in case he fell over. It helps him walk out on to the balcony and keeps him steady. At the moment , it apparently looks like a S&M dungeon.

26. AI - the sheer amount of energy for the data cloud computers needs consideration: digital empires, cyber weapons and stealth need cooperation to overcome the ecological crisis or regulate AI and other disruptive technologies such as bio-engineering. These thoughts come from Harari " A Brief History of Information Networks".

27. Our impacts can change - livestock we rear makes up more than ten times the biomass of wild animals. Humans are nine times the biomass of wild animals. We can affect the excesses of factory farming. Are we ready to reduce our consumption and change our diets to be more plant based?

28. CHARLES DOWDING, I first came across the name 'Charles Dowding' at a SEEOG talk by our own Ron Bates. The talk was about soil, or roots, or maybe both. It was three years ago, and Ron had brought some books to encourage further enquiry into the points he was making. One of the books had the catchy title 'Gardening Myths'. With just a year into my allotment life I had fixed on two principles: 1 – listen carefully to those with huge experience. 2 – take it lightly until you can be sure. I watched people cutting their grass borders short when heavy rain was due; then digging and double-digging or rotavating. Surely these acts would lead to water-logging and the flushing out of soil nutrients? And in this way I adapted my former professional scepticism into my new life – adding the third critical ingredient to the hope that allotmenteeing might 'tick all my boxes'.

And it has. The main principle splits into 3:

Be sure...

- ...that you always have something to do.
- ...that you always have something to look forward to.

And...

- ...that you always have something to LEARN.

So I have to thank Charles, and indirectly, Ron, for helping me formulate my way forward.

Since then I have discovered and learned from many of Charles's YouTube videos, dipped into a number of his books, leaned from time to time on his yearly calendar to guide my planting, and have even visited Home Acres where Charles lives and gardens.

Recently Charles has published articles in the RHS magazine and the National Allotment Society newsletter, and has given a number of talks around the country. It is safe to say that he is now the leading proponent of the 'No Dig' method of cultivation UK-wide.

Yet there is something extra that I've been trying to pin down – a *je'n sais quoi* that goes with his mode. And I think it's this: As well as tapping a massive reservoir of knowledge, he retains that academic 'taint' of self-doubt and constant re-examination which promotes learning. After 30 years of growing vegetables in France, and many more in Somerset, he still has that wonder for the How and Why of what he does. He'll admit a mistake, show you a failure, pass off an observation with a 'who knows why', and is constantly experimenting with new ideas. He'll show you a couple of parallel beds – one done with No Dig and one traditional, both planted with the same crops. And he'll monitor and honestly report on them. And you know what – I wouldn't be surprised if he writes poetry, or that he never publishes it, or that you and I will never read it!

And that brings me back to the beginning. The joy, the fulfilment, the uncertainty, the anticipation, all wrapped in a sheath of learning. Doesn't this sound somehow better than all the groans about the weather and rants on slugs?!

With thanks to Ron and Ane, Simon, Eileen and John for your contributions, which are very gratefully received and appreciated.

Pesticide-Free Towns (PFT)

Emma Pavans de Ceccatty, their Project Manager, very sadly left PAN last month after four years as a campaigner. She's off to do a PhD in the Netherlands, still looking at chemicals and their effects on people and planet! PAN UK's work to ban urban pesticides will continue and the Pesticide-Free Towns campaign will be coordinated by new capable hands. She's urged us to keep campaigning, keep pushing for these pesticides to be banned, because she truly believes we're closer than ever.

SEEOG committee

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