

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

A Local Group of...



Supporting and Working With...



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NEWSLETTER NO: 182 / JULY 2025

<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.

To avoid disappointment, do please make a careful note now of ALL EVENTS IN OUR CALENDAR. Our meetings start at 20:00 sharp, unless stated otherwise.

Membership

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 paying by 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

Summer-themed pictures for our website? And do visit our website! Any knowledge or insight you want to share? A write-up of a SEEOG event or other related event you've been to and more!

We're receiving final submissions for the **September 2025 newsletter by Sunday 31 August**.

Suggestions for trips out? The odd article on other areas of organic thought would also be most welcome. Please also 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 2025

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 21 July:

19:30: AGM

AGENDA

Apologies for absence

Minutes of last AGM

Chairman's report

Treasure's report

Election of officers

Election of committee members

Any other business

20:00: 'Climate Change Gardening' presented by Clive & Sue Boase / GROUP NIGHT

Clive and Sue 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.

Clive is chair of Climate Change Gardening, a charity based in East Anglia. Through the charity's busy outreach programme, as well as their website and newsletter etc, they raise awareness of the many practical ways in which gardeners can develop their gardens to help mitigate the climate crisis and enrich local wildlife. They're looking forward to hearing about gardening in Rochford!

<https://climatechangegardening.org/>

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 2025: TRUST LINKS CELEBRATE 25 YEARS!

Date: Thursday 10 July

Time: 2pm-7pm

Location: Trust Links, 47 Fairfax Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 9AG

You can join them anytime between 2-7pm to enjoy tours of their therapeutic garden, with live music, speeches, BBQ and much more! Book your FREE ticket here at <https://www.trustlinks.org/25-celebration/>

NEWS

Allotment news: Are Allotments Protected from Development?

Allotments are a cherished part of the UK's landscape, providing space to grow food, socialise, and support biodiversity. But with increasing pressure for new housing, many plot holders worry about potential development. So, what legal protections exist?

Legal Protections

Under the Allotments Act 1925, local authorities must seek permission from the Secretary of State before selling or repurposing statutory allotments (sites that are owned by the local authority and the allotments are not a temporary use for the site).

Approval is only granted if:

- There is no significant demand for allotments in the area.
- Adequate alternative provision is made for displaced allotment holders.
- The loss of the allotment does not significantly impact the local community.

However, temporary and private allotments—often on privately owned land owned by private individuals or organisations like a church—do not have the same level of protection and are at greater risk of development.

Can an Allotment Be Developed?

Despite these safeguards, allotments can still be lost to development. However, allotment holders and communities can take action to protect their sites by:

- Demonstrating demand – A waiting list shows that plots are needed.
- Highlighting environmental and community benefits – Allotments support biodiversity, mental well-being, and social cohesion.
- Engaging with local MPs and councillors – Raising awareness can help strengthen opposition to development.
- Starting petitions and media campaigns – Public pressure can be a powerful tool.
- Joining the National Allotment Society (NAS) – The NAS provides advice, support, and advocacy to protect allotments.

Protect Your Allotment

While legal protections exist, staying vigilant and engaged in local planning decisions is key. Have you or your community faced threats to your allotments? Share your experiences and thoughts, please 🙋

<https://www.thenas.org.uk/>

Crapes Fruit Farm: A Spring of mixed fortunes and change

Since I took over from my father, here at Crapes, I have witnessed most weather which could have been thrown at us, both decimating extremes and, just as challenging, the marked contrasts not just from week to week but within an individual week itself.

For once we had a decent dose of cold winter temperatures, at the right time, with rainfall keeping the land topped up until mid March. Then the sun broke free which in itself is no bad thing, except that temperatures both day and night climbed. Blossom was much earlier than during the mid 1980s. Incidence of frost was unbelievably rare. Even the insects rose to the occasion. Fruit is there to be seen and hopefully it will grow through the June Drop period as we enter July.

The one part of the growing equation missing is any appreciable rainfall since mid March. It seems to have been replaced by wind which is aggravating the situation-drying everywhere and increasing the transpiration rate of already struggling trees.

Here, the second half of July can be the most difficult-the most likely time for apples to be bleached or 'cooked' by the sun as moisture levels are often very low.

A challenging season ahead for whatever is being grown.

Now to changes afoot, imminently. I am retiring. Much of the orchard is being taken on by two separate local families. There will still be apples here. Obviously there will be changes with a much younger generation getting to grips introducing new ideas. Please note a change in the contact email to crapesfruitfarm@gmail.com for further information. Thank you for your support through many years. <https://crapes.wordpress.com/>

GM news: England and UK: Beyond GM legal action says "no" to hidden GMOs / FLASH!! Sorry for long post!

Beyond GM has announced important news about a significant legal challenge they have just launched – and how we can help make it happen.

What's going on?

In May, the UK government quietly brought in new regulations that fundamentally change how genetically modified organisms are regulated in England. The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025 create a new category of GMOs, called “precision bred organisms” (PBOs), and exempt these from the food and environmental safety requirements of other types of GMOs. This is a sleight of hand that has serious implications for the environment and the food system.

It allows these "precision bred" GMOs to enter the food system and wider environment without labelling, without adequate traceability systems and without any proper safety testing or impact assessments.

This will be a committee item tonight.
<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/stop-hidden-gmos/>

See more details below.

Our food system shapes our environment, and we can't protect either without transparent and truthful information that allows us to make informed choices and take informed actions.

These new Regulations take all that away:

- * Consumers have lost the right to know and make choices about genetically modified PBOs in their food.
- * Organic and biodynamic farmers and food producers still have a legal obligation to avoid contamination with all GMOs, including PBOs. The new Regulations take away the necessary tools and processes to ensure the integrity of organic and to avoid loss of consumer confidence and trade.
- * Artisanal, traditional, natural and geographical indication farmers and food producers will also find it difficult and expensive (if not impracticable) to avoid contamination, risking the integrity of their brands and potential loss of income as well.
- * The environment is at risk since all GMOs can interact with wild and fragile ecosystems in unpredictable ways. They can multiply, persist and quickly become dominant.
- * Devolved nations Scotland and Wales have explicitly said they don't want to grow or sell GMOs and yet the Westminster government intends to force unlabelled precision bred GMOs into their markets.

Why Beyond GM is taking legal action

Beyond GM said:

"When democratic processes fail this spectacularly and regulations are pushed through that threaten our food system, environment and basic rights to know what we're eating, legal challenge becomes the only option.

"The regulation of genetically modified organisms – any genetically modified organisms – requires us to set limits, to assess impacts and to work within the law.

"Our legal team at Leigh Day and Matrix Chambers has identified serious potential illegalities in the Genetic Technology Regulations, including breaches of the Human Rights Act, the Aarhus Convention and the Habitats Directive. They have also identified areas of overreach where the regulations go beyond what Parliament has authorised, for instance, preventing any safety testing that could reveal problems with these organisms.

"In light of this, we have sent a pre-action letter to Defra Secretary of State Steve Reed, putting the government on notice that we intend to pursue a judicial review."

What does Beyond GM want to achieve?

Beyond GM explains: "We believe the new regulations should be revoked before they become operational in November 2025, that a full impact assessment should be performed and that a new, more robust and inclusive process should be put in place to rewrite them in a way that is responsive to the needs of citizens and the natural world.

"Legal challenges are expensive and have several stages. We're facing a well-resourced government department with deep pockets and teams of lawyers whose job is to (sometimes) defend the indefensible.

Beyond GM is asking people to donate to the legal action:

"We estimate we need to raise £37,575 in the next 30 days to take us to the next phase of the case and significantly more – circa £100,000 – to cover legal costs and liabilities over the whole of the action. If we don't reach this first funding goal we are unlikely to be able to continue.

"To make donations easier and to ensure every penny goes straight to our legal team.
<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/stop-hidden-gmos/>

"Whether you can spare £5 or £500 or more, we are grateful for every donation that brings us closer to transparent, democratic GMO regulation in the UK.

"Thank you. Pat Thomas and Lawrence Woodward"

GMWatch supports the legal action

GMWatch and other concerned groups engaged in good faith with the Westminster government, the farm ministry DEFRA, and the Food Standards Agency, in discussions on the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025, from its inception to implementation.

At every stage we advocated for a rigorous evidence-based approach to assessing the risks of so-called 'precision bred' GMOs, as well as calling for transparency and accountability by maintaining traceability and labelling requirements.

These elements are the minimum needed to ensure that public health and the environment are protected and that farmer and consumer choice over whether to grow and eat GMOs is preserved.

But the authorities refused to listen at any point and failed to implement even the most basic safety and transparency measures around these new experimental GMOs. In its reckless moves, which prioritise commercial interests over those of the public, the Westminster government may well have broken national and international law.

That's why we fully support this legal action against the government initiated by Beyond GM.

Members' contributions

1. PANNA NEWSLETTER

Many state legislative sessions have completed business for 2025. PAN has been represented in coalitions working to halt proposed legislation that would provide pesticide companies with a LIABILITY SHIELD-to prevent individuals from seeking accountability if harmed by pesticides and that pesticide company misrepresented the risks their products might have for our health. This is Modern Ag Alliance spearheaded by Bayern, in light of Monsanto (owned by Bayer) failing to divulge the risk for non-Hodgkin lymphoma to users of Roundup. This has been blocked in 8 States Failure to Warn/Lawsuit Immunity/Liability Shield.

<https://www.panna.org/>

2. PAN UK

Ron and Ane have flagged up PAN's webinar (full details below) and the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) study and post about tampon toxicity from Glyphosate in cotton that is internally used and more readily absorbed.

<https://www.pan-uk.org/period-products/>

3. In The Flower Garden | Im Blumengarten (Brecht & Eisler)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjMySHmmjPE&list=RDljMySHmmjPE>

4. The Oxygen Project

More than 60 hectares (148 acres) of butterfly habitat have been restored across the Midlands through the Butterfly Mosaics scheme, a four-year project led by Butterfly Conservation and funded by Severn Trent Water. The initiative four sites with support from hundreds of volunteers and partners including wildlife trusts, the Forestry Commission, local councils, and private landowners.

The project aimed to reverse long-term declines in butterfly populations by restoring diverse grassland and woodland environments. Conservation efforts included clearing overgrown vegetation, planting native trees, laying stones for basking and using sustainable methods like goat grazing and robotic mowing to maintain open spaces.

Significant results include the restoration of critical habitat for the Silver-studded Blue at Prees Heath, the last stronghold for the species in the Midlands. Work also supported species like the Grayling, Wood White, Brown Hairstreak, Grizzled Skipper and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, many of which have seen population drops of over 60 percent since the 1970s due to habitat loss.

While last year marked one of the worst on record for butterflies in the UK, this collaborative effort serves as a strong example of how targeted conservation can provide a hopeful path forward for biodiversity and ecological resilience.

[https://linktr.ee/theoxygenproject.getinvolved?](https://linktr.ee/theoxygenproject.getinvolved?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwK92OlleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHik77iLpK54k6TT3ltegldho8GUDoRVhTX8IRx4PXjMWpkITgqMh4q1MUHCaF_aem_9MinRr2hDpZ9vTcPctKIDA)

[fbclid=IwQ0xDSwK92OlleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHik77iLpK54k6TT3ltegldho8GUDoRVhTX8IRx4PXjMWpkITgqMh4q1MUHCaF_aem_9MinRr2hDpZ9vTcPctKIDA](https://linktr.ee/theoxygenproject.getinvolved?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwK92OlleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHik77iLpK54k6TT3ltegldho8GUDoRVhTX8IRx4PXjMWpkITgqMh4q1MUHCaF_aem_9MinRr2hDpZ9vTcPctKIDA)

5. Sutton Farm, Rochford

Hamelin have just unveiled a brand new sensory trail at their Sutton Farm site in Rochford, a vibrant, inclusive outdoor space for autistic adults, people with learning disabilities, and those living with dementia. This wonderful new addition was made possible thanks to the generous funding from Active Essex and Ford Motor Company and the incredible efforts of volunteers.

<https://hamelin.org.uk/news/new-sensory-trail-launched>

6. North London's OmVed Gardens have reopened to the public, unveiling new buildings which comprise the UK's first centre for food, ecology and creativity. The reopening coincided with 'Into the Seeds of Time', an exhibition by Vivienne Schadinsky documenting the journey of beans from seed to harvest <https://www.caughtbytheriver.net/2025/05/omved-gardens-reopens/>

7. Worm Charming with Moley: The Global Soil Safari

This April, children across the world were invited to swap screens for spades and take part in a muddy, hands on science mission-the Global Soil Safari.

<https://www.fee.global/global-action-days-2025>

8. What does a fair return for farmers look like?

How can the UK be food secure, build resilience, boost biodiversity, and tackle climate extremes or pollution, when there's so little money in farming, asks Nick Easen.

https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/features/a-fair-return-for-farmers/?utm_campaign=WL+Digital+Digest+-+Issue+48+-+16+May+25&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Wicked+Leeks

9. The Landscape Revolution

After Brexit, we left the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, the CAP. For many people-whatever they made of Brexit-this was a golden opportunity to come up with something better. A NEW farming policy, which would encourage efficient food production while rewarding farmers for environmental work. Nearly a decade later, where have we got to? This is a programme about agricultural policy, so if you're not a farmer you may not think it's for you. But farm policy is also environmental policy and food policy...so the seismic shift that farmers are going through right now will have an impact not just on their lives and businesses, but on the landscapes we see, the food on our plate and price we pay for both.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002bs13>

10. National action plan for pesticides 'a poke in the eye'

David Burrows digs into the UK's new proposals, which lag far behind the EU

https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/news/national-action-plan-for-pesticides-a-poke-in-the-eye/?utm_campaign=WL+Digital+Digest+-+Issue+45+-+25+Apr+2025&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Wicked+Leeks

11. SEEOG makes a monthly donation to the Soil Association and we have supported many of their campaigns. At the moment they are trying to get people to think about the quality of life of dairy cows. Many dairy cows are raised inside industrial units without access to natural grazing and the unnatural conditions also lead to an over reliance on antibiotics. Cows on a grass-based diet produce lower yields of milk but their quality of life and welfare is greatly increased; their milk also contains more omega-3 and hopefully no antibiotics. Organic milk may be a little bit more expensive but isn't it worth it in the long run? With thanks to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter! Keep it coming!

12. Wow, what a day! Last Tuesday the Essex Agricultural welcomed over 3,000 KS2 primary school children from 72 different schools across Essex to the Essex Schools Food & Farming Day they held at ARU Writtle. They were joined by Suffolk Farmer & TV presenter Jimmy Doherty (Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park) who saw first hand all the interactive learning about how our food gets from field to fork.

Find out more here -

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/25272396.jimmys-farm-owner-joins-children-food-farming-day/>

Writtle was also a good day for our SEEOG composting display and we were a great team. The timings of groups coming through really helped, giving us chances for breaks to look after ourselves and each other. We all enjoyed the day and achieved a great deal, plus the bonus of 15 schools offering their emails so we can connect with those at some point. 😊 Sharon and Jane's passion and enthusiasm shone through and our tables looked amazing. Full credit to them for all the behind-the-scene time and work. There are now photos on our website.....

13. On Wednesday 9 July, thousands of people from every corner of the UK will come to Westminster to tell our MPs: this is a moment for leadership that protects what matters most — our health, our nature, our communities, our climate, and our future.

<https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/mass-lobby-2025>

14. The Soil Association is also running a campaign to highlight the growing reliance on Ultra Processed Food-UPF. They are urging the government to resist the influence of the UPF lobby and promote the use of nature friendly UK fruit and vegetables. They are very active in the campaign to provide universal free school meals that are nutritious, varied and minimally processed. They run a school's Food for Life award scheme.
<https://www.soilassociation.org/>

Greetings from Simon and Mary Wallace, SEEEOG members (Gozo branch!)

Simon and Mary have been busy with their tree planting e-NGO and they are piloting the Groasis Waterboxx scheme after receiving funding from The Alfred Mizzi Foundation.
<https://www.groasis.com/en>
<https://sigargozo.org/>

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK / Free webinar (Global Glyphosate Study) on Wednesday 9 July, 13:30-14:15 (BST)

New, groundbreaking research linking Glyphosate to cancer is forcing governments to review their support for the world's most popular weedkiller. This webinar is an exclusive opportunity to hear about the most comprehensive, global study ever conducted on Glyphosate from its only UK-based contributor, Professor Michael Antoniou (Professor of Molecular Genetics and Toxicology at Kings College London).

Published on the 10th June in the prestigious Environmental Health journal, the study confirms that Glyphosate and Glyphosate-based herbicides cause multiple types of cancer, even at exposure levels deemed to be "safe" by the EU. It was coordinated by the Ramazzini Institute in Italy and involved scientists from across the US, South America and Europe.

In response to this landmark study, the European Commission has said that it will review this new data and "act immediately to amend or withdraw the approval" of glyphosate if it "no longer meets" the EU's safety standards. This decision would have huge implications in the UK and beyond.

You can register at this link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kvIQ8usaTyKULxSlaXAjkw#/registration

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