

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

A Local Group of...



Supporting and Working With...



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER NO: 189 / SEPTEMBER 2026

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

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.

We also have a Facebook group for SE Essex Organic Gardeners, for members and supporters at Why not check it out? <https://www.facebook.com/groups/43705483846/>

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.

If you wish to set up a standing order, you can pick up a form, fill it in and let your bank know what you want to do. This is an easy way to remember and it just gets done automatically.

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

Newsletter copy

Climate or heat-themed? And pictures for our website! Any knowledge or insight you want to share? Can we share advice? We're receiving final submissions for the **November newsletter by Sunday 25 October**. Suggestions for trips out? The odd article on other areas of organic thought would also be most welcome. Please 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 2026

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/>

Sunday 6 September: Open Day at Manchester Drive Allotment Society, 11:00

(opposite Cricketfield Grove, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 3EZ). Nina has kindly confirmed that she has allocated our tables in the shaded area by the tree.

Monday 21 September: "Japanese Gardens-a brief history, reflections on the 2025 Japanese Garden Intensive Seminar" presented by Damien Errington

Saturday 3 October: Apple Day, 11am to 2pm, St Laurence Orchard, corner of St Laurence Way and Eastwoodbury Lane, SS2 6UY

Celebrate the apple harvest with a fantastic morning (or afternoon) outdoors, surrounded by nature and community spirit. Whether you're a returning visitor or joining us for the first time, Apple Day offers something for everyone to enjoy. Prick, press and taste! One of the highlights of the day is the chance to **pick your own apples straight from the orchard** and create your own fresh apple juice using the apple press. It's a fun, hands-on experience that both children and adults love and a great way to discover where your food comes from.

<https://www.trustlinks.org/apple-day-2026/>

Monday 16 November: "Gardening the World", presented by Cliff Stone on behalf of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Monday 7 December: World Soil Day: Spencer Christy, Farm Director Lauriston Farm Limited, will present this year's talk.

NEWS

1: Counting down until Saturday 19 September 2026!

The Canewdon Summer Produce Show is back and Rupert needs US to help spread the word!

Please share this event with as many Southend and Essex friends, family and neighbours as possible. The more the merrier, this show belongs to the whole community. Whether you've grown at home, at an allotment or even on your kitchen window sill!

This used to be a much-loved annual tradition in Canewdon, a highlight of the village calendar for years. Sadly it disappeared when the previous Horticultural Society disbanded, and the village has been without it ever since.

The Canewdon Community Allotments Association is determined to bring it back and, with your support, they think this September could be the start of something really special. Whether you want to enter, come along to spectate and support, or simply share this post, every single one of you helps make this happen.

Saturday 19th September 2026

12pm – 5pm at Canewdon Village Hall, Lambourne Hall Rd, Rochford SS4 3PG

secretary@canewdonallotments.uk

Let's bring this back where it belongs. Entry form here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G9sPzHf3ayJzP_UBHOEpBVFbKa3uHhtu/view

2: Save The date for Great Big Green Week 2027: 5th to 13th June

Whether you organised an event last time or are getting involved for the first time, now is the moment to start planning.

<https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/>

Members' contributions (very gratefully received.....)

1: Fantasy Fibre Mill is developing open source textile processing machinery to enable the emergence of a local, decentralised, community-owned textile economy. Fantasy Fibre Mill works at the intersection of regenerative agriculture, ethical fashion and the emerging movement of the commons. We aim to disrupt the current extractive, destructive and exploitative supply chains and instead produce textiles which nurture the local environment and community. We are building and empowering a worldwide community of textile activists to radically re-shape how we produce and consume textile based products.

<https://www.fantasyfibremill.com/>

2: Why the UK needs the horticulture sector growth plan for food security

Extreme weather is re-wiring our food system.

<https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2026/08/18/why-the-uk-needs-the-horticulture-sector-growth-plan-for-food-security/>

3: Could the Middle East crisis make us rethink how we fertilise our gardens and growing spaces? Our President, Professor Tim Lang, discusses these issues and more in his latest blog

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/fertilisers>.

4: What if resilience starts at your back door?

It's 37°C where I am in the UK (today). And while we might be enjoying the sunshine, the extreme heat and lack of rain are creating some very real challenges for food production. British vegetables should be coming into their seasonal peak right now. Instead, growers are reporting significant losses across crops including broccoli, peas, carrots, potatoes, lettuce and tomatoes.

And it's not just here. Some of the countries we rely heavily on for imported fruit and vegetables- including Spain, Portugal and Morocco-are also experiencing difficult growing conditions. The result? Less food, more imports and higher prices. All of this is happening alongside a cost-of-living crisis that is already putting enormous pressure on household budgets.

So what can we do? I'm not suggesting we all need to become completely self-sufficient or start stockpiling food. But I do think this is a good moment to think about resilience. Because the more of our food that travels through long, complicated supply chains, the more vulnerable we are to things happening somewhere else in the world. Growing even a little food at home shortens that supply chain considerably: a few pots of herbs, some salad leaves, tomatoes, beans, potatoes, fruit bushes.

A few extra things grown in the garden that can be shared with family, friends or neighbours. And when we can, buying from local growers means keeping more of our food pounds within our own communities and knowing a little more about where our food has come from. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. Every little bit we can grow, buy locally, preserve, share or learn to produce ourselves is a small act of resilience. And perhaps that's one of the most useful things we can take from a difficult year like this. Not fear. Not panic. But a reminder that we have more power than we sometimes realise.

Credit: People's Food & Farming Alliance

<https://www.the-pffa.org/>

5: Launching "*Second Saturdays*" a monthly open days at Lauriston Farm

We're trying something a little different! We usually head out to four markets a month across Essex, but from September onwards we'd love to welcome our customers to the farm itself. This way you can see where your food is grown and meet the people behind it. So, until the end of the year, we'll be open to the public every second Saturday of each month. Save the dates: **12 September, 10 October,**

14th November, 12th December

<https://www.lauristonfarm.co.uk/>

6: New podcast with Manda Scott and Clive Lewis MP on what Burnham needs to do, and how the UK Government is silencing a National Security Assessment report on climate breakdown. When we have well-known food insecurity, wildfires raging across the country, and 2,700 extra dead due to the heatwaves, how can the government justify keeping this report from us? We need to know how we can act to make ourselves safer, so we can do the job our leaders are avoiding. Full episode is here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/grown-up-politics-2-how-can-andy-burnham-deliver-a/id1492827360?i=1000776411680>

7: The modern potato traces back to an ancient chance encounter between a wild tomato and a small tuberless plant approximately nine million years ago in South America, in a hybrid event that produced the first underground storage organ neither parent could have made on its own
<https://share.google/p3BsOjY0Mi0lezKeH>

8: From Lynda, one of our members (and a GO member): "..... As you may remember only one of my seeds grew but struggled to release the first leaves from its seed coat. I eventually planted this out in my greenhouse and it has slowly developed about six tomatoes which have yet to ripen. You may be interested that I have grown a Heritage tomato called 'Stonor' for about eight years which is an incredible cropper. To date 14 plants have produced almost 30lb!!"

9: Most insecticide safety testing is conducted on western honey bees, the widely recognised bee that has been commercialised for its honey. When a pesticide is tested and passes as relatively safe to honey bees, it is assumed that the chemical will be safe for all other pollinators too. A new study from Queen Mary University of London suggests that this 'assumption' deserves a second look. Researchers exposed four pollinators, bumblebees, solitary mason bees, blowflies, and painted lady butterflies, to two insecticides: clothianidin, a restricted neonicotinoid, and sulfoxaflor, a newer chemical marketed as a safer alternative. Rather than just watching to determine which species survived, they looked inside each one's brain and tried to detect which genes were switched on or off in response to each chemical. The results were surprising! Find out more on our blog: <https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticides-are-tested-on-honey-bees>

10: From Guy Singh-Watson, Riverford Founder: It's getting serious (and data centres can't help us) For decades I have been infuriated by articles in The Economist, The Telegraph et al. suggesting that higher CO2 levels and rising temperatures would be a good thing for Europe's farmers, increasing the rate of photosynthesis and hence yields. A few people further south might suffer (they don't have much money anyway) but at least we would be OK. What are these pillars of rationality writing now as Europe burns? Perhaps that it is too late to fight climate change so we had better adapt and go with it, or, if we reduce our use of fossil fuels at all, it must be a "gentle transition"?

It is both tragic and laughable that we seem intent on spending our last dollar of discretionary capital, not on transition, but on AI and vast data centres whose purpose will be to persuade us to buy more of the crap that has got us into this mess. The reality, which has evaded these economists but which any gardener and farmer knows, is that yield and quality are more often determined by the extremes than the averages, and the frequency of extreme weather events falling outside crop tolerance is increasing faster than averages are moving.

On our farm in the French Vendée, temperatures above 32°C have caused aubergines to abort their fruit due to stress; runner beans in the UK have done the same. We would have been able to top up from Spain but our growers there are suffering similarly, if not worse. Our UK tomato, pepper, and cucumber season is barely three months but is, so far, faring better with the growth potential boosted by high temperatures and sunlight, balanced out by losses due to stress. Those with irrigation have now, pretty much, run out of water and are keeping what is left for the high value crops. Half the carrots have failed and potato yields will be down 25%. In the south-west, much of our summer broccoli, Tenderstem, cauliflower, and Romanesco has traditionally been grown on unirrigated ground. Many will now fail, with the remaining crops having drastically reduced yield and compromised quality. As our reservoirs run dry and our crops die, data centres will have plenty of water and energy and leapfrog the planning process. It seems they are needed for the only sort of growth that matters. You can't eat it and it's killing our planet but who dares impede a tech bro? If you would like to sign the Change.org petition against the arrival of a new data centre in Devon, you can do so here: <https://www.change.org/p/leave-devon-alone-say-no-to-devon-data-campus-go-fund-me-in-description>

11: Organic September is a nationwide celebration of organic food, farming and sustainable living. Throughout the month, we're shining a spotlight on the benefits of organic and sharing simple ways to make organic part of your everyday life. Our campaign this year is about adding a little more organic to your weekly shop – trying one or two new things and making organic swaps when you can. When it matters most, choose the stamp that symbolises the utmost care for body and soil. Choose organic. <https://www.soilassociation.org/support-us/take-action/organic-september/>

12: An Organic Action Plan for England (OAPE) has been talked about for more than two decades-since then consumer demand for organic foods has only grown, with the market now worth a record £3.9 billion. This year the government made a public pledge to follow through with the plan that will deliver positively for the UK's environment, food production systems and public health. Why now? With only 3% of farmland being organic in the UK, the reliance on foreign imports continues to strengthen and the need for an OAPE only grows. Soil Association farming policy expert Gareth Morgan told Fresh Produce Journal that just 1.6% of UK food sales is organic, trailing well behind other European markets, and how the plan can change things around. Morgan also highlighted that the public is increasingly focusing on "healthy food produced in ways that are kind to the environment." The timing has never been better and we wait for the government to release more information. Check the article below <https://soilassociation.co/45VL5ye>

13: From lettuce to kale, farmer Ben Andrews highlights the challenges of growing vegetables under soaring temperatures on his Herefordshire farm. The extreme heat has hit every part of the farming sector this summer including fruit and veg production, dairy and livestock. Ben, who farms livestock, grows cereal and vegetables crops across 250 hectares, says almost everything has been affected. The kale crop is a write-off, he told The Times and The Sunday Times. While Tenderstem broccoli has survived so far, without further plans for water storage, Ben may have to stop growing vegetables. Food prices are going up for shoppers, but that's not reaching farmers, and as he said "No one is going to pay me more for supplying less."

We welcome the government's £65m drought funding for farmers, but it's not a substitute for a long-term climate strategy for food and farming. We need support for farmers to innovate, grow new crops and build towards climate-resilient soil health, such as farming with trees in the mix, and a move away from synthetic nitrogen fertiliser known for speeding up global warming. This means scaling up crops like peas and beans as well as looking at the future potential for chickpeas, lentils and soy that haven't been widely grown in the UK before, and making sure the new horticulture strategy helps farmers grow a lot more fruit and veg. Check the article to find out more: <https://soilassociation.co/4zoq4K9>

14: As we wave goodbye to the driest July on record, Dr Anton Rosenfeld looks at the impact of extreme weather on crops – with advice on mitigating the effects. <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/how-extreme-heat-affects-your-crops>

15: We're super excited to be an official partner for the Yeo Valley Garden Festival on 17-19 September-a celebration of all things gardening sustainably, without troweling on the heavy stuff! Come along to hear talks by our CEO Fiona Taylor and head of the Heritage Seed Library Catrina Fenton at The Germination Station, as well as a panel discussion, and wheelbarrows of organic gardening workshops. Find out more about this fantastic event, and book tickets, at <https://yvogardenfestival.co.uk/>

16: Did you know that lots of the food in your kitchen is grown using peat? Let's get peat out of our homes and off our plates! We're delighted to support the Peat-Free Partnership's campaign to help you remove hidden peat from your supermarket shop. It's time to ask your supermarket what they're doing to remove peat, so you can enjoy peat-free food and help save peatlands for people and wildlife. Find an email template at peatfreepartnership.org.uk

17: Last month, we were delighted to welcome the horticulture team from Highgrove Gardens to our Heritage Seed Library for a guided tour of our growing space and seed saving facilities, as well as the opportunity to explore our demonstration garden. It was a wonderful opportunity to share our passion for organic growing, exchange ideas and knowledge, and celebrate the importance of preserving and growing heritage varieties.

<https://www.highgrovegardens.com/pages/highgrove-estate-history?view=information-short>

18: Our annual Heritage Seed Library Seed List will be launching in November – seed officer Rachel Crow shares some exciting new additions.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/the-2027-seed-list-is-coming>

19: Ask your MP to attend the Biodiversity Loss Debate on Thursday 3 September.

<https://actionbutton.nationbuilder.com/share/SPK-QEhCRUE=>

20: Chris Collins on...wise watering.....our head of organic horticulture shares his tips for saving water and watering well during the hot, dry weather.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/chris-collins-on-wise-watering-2>

21: This month we're delighted to be joined by Nancy Matsumoto, writer/editor on our Organic Gardening Podcast to discuss her latest book 'Reaping What She Sows'. The book celebrates women changemakers from around the world who are helping to rebuild our broken food system-from maverick farmers to indigenous and diasporic seed savers.

Listen now at <https://audioboom.com/posts/8943884-reaping-what-she-sows-with-nancy-matsumoto>

22: The contribution of organic farming to climate change adaptation and resilience

How to incentivise diverse and climate-resilient farming systems? Wednesday September 2, 13:00-15:00, online

https://www.organicresearchcentre.com/news-events/events/the-contribution-of-organic-farming-to-climate-change-adaptation-and-resilience/?mc_cid=f3696a7c2b

23: Understanding motivations for agroforestry maintenance and adoption: a comparative analysis in Europe

A new paper from the AGROMIX project, led by Maria Raimondo with ORC's Rowan Dumper-Pollard cited as a co-author, looks at what influences farmers' decisions to adopt and maintain agroforestry.

https://www.organicresearchcentre.com/news-events/news/agromix-paper-motivations-agroforestry/?mc_cid=f3696a7c2b

24: Worms at work: a year of vermicomposting at Southfield Farm

In the Feed the Soil project we're working with farmers across the UK who are using many different methods to process their farm waste. ORC's Principal Researcher – Soil – Dr Julia Cooper reports from the vermicomposting trials.

https://www.organicresearchcentre.com/news-events/vermicomposting-feedthesoil/?mc_cid=f3696a7c2b

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

Greetings from the hot rock!! Our 2026 Annual Report is available to read/download from our website. Dedicated to greening Gozo by planting the right **tree**, in the right **place**, the right **way**. Siġar (which means 'trees' in Maltese) is committed to planting young trees on school grounds and local council lands with plants nurtured from local seeds from the Gozo Plant Nursery and Experimental Farm. It was 43.5 degrees yesterday). <https://sigargozo.org/>

SEEEOG committee

Jane Ponton	Chairperson	01268 565776	JaneAPonton@hotmail.com
Ray How	Treasurer/Membership	01702 544632	ray.how@btoopenworld.com
Ane Bates	Committee	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Carole Shorney	Secretary	01702 201914	caroleshorney@mail.coop
Ron Bates	Committee	01702 477681	anebates@hotmail.co.uk
Vic Shorney	Committee	01702 201914	caroleshorney@mail.coop