



SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS



Soil Association

SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS NEWSLETTER NO: 147 – SEPTEMBER 2019

<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

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!

Venue, notes etc.

Please use the entrance in Prittlewell Chase, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 9AG (corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase). Our speakers start at 20:00 sharp, but Growing Together is open from 19:00 to prepare the room, etc. **On a practical note, we can always do with some good, gardening related raffle prizes, please!** Please notify Carole if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or change your email address: caroleshorney@hotmail.com

For future reference, our newsletter copy 'deadlines' for 2019 are as follows:

November - Sunday 20 October

Please make a note of all these dates, to avoid disappointment later on, especially our planned visits, when we are asked to provide numbers.

SEEORG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/VISITS 2019

July meeting with Andrew Tann

Andrew kindly wrote the next day: 'It is always a pleasure to have a good exchange with SEEORG! Thank you also for including Agatha. She had some good conversational experience afterwards with some of the group. Yesterday she was informing me of the frost damage on the Polish wheat crops. Some hot weather ahead for next week! My grass will remain uncut. A lot of atmospheric moisture was gathered this morning.'

Sunday 8 September, 11:00 – 15:00: Manchester Drive Allotment Society Annual Show

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

Free admission, plenty to see and to do! As usual, hoping for good weather and lovely music from The Famous Potatoes! They have very kindly invited us along, so come and say Hello!! They are as usual accepting donations from stallholders for their designated charities this year.

Monday 16 September: Group Night

Discussion on 'no dig gardening' facilitated by Darren Lerigo

Is No-Dig Gardening the best way to grow our food? There'll be a discussion of various techniques and experiences that will help us work out how to keep our soils as healthy and

nourishing as we can. Darren started Modern Mint in 2014 as a place for him to meet clients who share his fascination with gardens, pruning and wildlife. His topiary work has been seen in the Guardian, Country Living Magazine and on Channel 4. <https://modernmint.co.uk/>

Saturday or Sunday 28-29 September: SEEOG visit (car-share) to Clayhill Vineyard, Lower Burnham Road, Latchingdon (tbc)

We met the folks from the vineyard last year at Bradfields Farm Dairy on Open Farm Sunday. <https://www.facebook.com/ClayhillVineyard/>

Saturday 28 September, 19:30, WI Hall, West Street, Rochford: Gaynes Park (Manners Way) Allotments & Gardens Association Quiz Night. It is hoped to have teams of a maximum of eight with various categories of questions. The idea is that it will be a fun evening. The cost will be £8.00 per person and this will include a Fish and Chip or Chicken and Chip Supper. A Vegetarian option will be available. We very much hope that we'll be able to make up a team; or you can just book tickets and join friends to make up the teams. It is hoped to have approximately 80 at the quiz night. As the quiz is at the WI Hall there is no bar, so please bring your own drinks and nibbles. The hall opens at 19:00 with the Quiz starting at 19:30. The profit from the quiz night will be used to help the running of the site. If you would like tickets, please contact Ray How as soon as possible, 07720 719 224.

Saturday 5 October: Apple Day in St Laurence Orchard, 11:00 – 14:00

Trust Links are holding the ninth annual Southend Apple Day event on Saturday 5th October at St Laurence Orchard, Southend-on-Sea. Southend Apple Day will feature a range of activities including apple picking, juicing, children's games, tours of the orchard, music, BBQ and raffle. Musicians from Growing Together will be playing and local groups will have stalls promoting their projects. It is coming up to 100 years since the historic St Laurence Orchard was planted for World War I veterans. The one-acre orchard is now a haven for wildlife and features more than a dozen different varieties of apple trees, many of which originate from Essex.

Trust Links has been looking after St Laurence Orchard on behalf of Southend Council for 14 years and holds regular work parties to maintain the orchard. Money raised from the event will help to run vital projects throughout the year.

St Laurence Orchard is located on the corner of Eastwoodbury Lane and St Laurence Way, opposite St Laurence Park. For further information, please call 01702 213134.

Wednesday 9 October, 10:00 to 12:00: Over 60's Social Club at Leigh Community Centre

Each month Leigh Community Centre runs different activities on a range of subjects. Hot drinks, biscuits and a selection of board games will also be available for those who would just like to have a quiet chat. Sessions cost just £2 for unlimited refreshments and all activities. Booking is not required. For more information, please contact 01702 716288. In October, SEEOG present 'Gardening demonstration, discussion and advice with South East Essex Organic Gardeners'.

Saturday 19 October, 10:00 – 15:00, Eco Fair event at Leigh Road Baptist Church, Leigh-on-Sea

We haven't yet decided on SEEOG's participation; it may be a straightforward stall or talk on home-composting.

Monday 18 November: Group Night

SEEOG member Kamil Pachalko presents an update on Southend in Transition Community Allotment – see <https://sitcommunityallotment.wordpress.com/>

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. Tuesday 3 September, 19:00, The Railway Hotel, Southend-on-Sea: Once upon a Tree (Southend) meeting

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2429851517246794/>

2. Saturday 21 September: Walking Together Sponsored Walk

With less than a month until their annual sponsored walk, Trust Links are encouraging individuals and families to get their registration completed for 'Walking Together'. The walk will be started by the Mayor of Castle Point, Cllr Colin Riley, at Growing Together Thundersley. The walk is suitable for all fitness levels and all ages and is a wonderful way to spend a Saturday as participants will walk from Thundersley, through Belfairs Woods and along the peaceful Prittlebrook Greenway. Walkers will then be treated to a free bacon or vegetarian sausage sandwich before heading to Rochford via the historic St Laurence Orchard in Southend.

http://www.trustlinks.org/events_176_Walking-Together-for-Trust-Links

3. Saturday 5 October: Apple Day at St Laurence Orchard, 11:00 – 14:00

Saturday 30 November: Christmas Fayre at Growing Together Westcliff, 11:00 – 14:00

NEWS

Allotment news: Folly Grove site, Hockley

1. Hockley Parish Council is now moving forward with the new allotment site. Land in Folly Lane has been allocated to the Parish Council and an Allotments Working Group consisting of the Parish Clerk, councillors and residents have made several site visits. Boundaries have been established, parking spaces have been provided and water is being connected. Work will now progress to finalise the lease and start marking out the site. Members of the Environment and Open Spaces Committee will meet again on Monday 2 September at 19:30 in the Parish Hall, 58 Southend Road, Hockley SS5 4QH. Full agenda details will be at <http://www.hockley-esssex.gov.uk/home/> in due course.

Chairman's notes

1. Crapes Fruit Farm (Andrew was our speaker in July)

Andrew Tann's talk 15 July: "Traditional fruit growing in a changing environment"

Andrew's talk was in essence about observation, to enable us as growers to understand changes to the environment upon which we as organic growers work; looking for elements that move us to balance that working with nature gives.

The history of moving away from chemical interventions and effects of climate at Crapes; impacts - that in the nine months previous we had two droughts and a third pending - the stresses upon trees, at which point of their seasonal growth, especially around times of blossom to fruiting; pollination, the opportunities for invertebrate cycles and the effects upon the crop. There used to be a pamphlet "Friend and Foe in the Garden" that looked at this dynamic.

<https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/garden-friends-foes/>

Andrew took us on a journey through this, looking at the move from "with chemicals there are NO insects " BUT flailing/reducing prunings in situ on the sward gives an environment for bacteria, fungi and insects in and from the mulch; small dry cuttings hold the moisture; keeping a 6-inch sward enables earwigs (voracious carnivore of caterpillars).

- Long grass holds mist and fog retaining moisture - dew effect.
- The dry winter and dry spring and the June rain gave no response with the apples - they did not set firmly - then June drop - all with stressed trees. Apple flowers are moisture sensitive; the blossom is supported by sap but the trees were dry. E.g. February temperatures: two weeks with no moisture, when rosette leaves are ready for bud burst (they protect the blossom buds); then April's sharp frost, in conjunction with the dryness, closed buds and the

bumblebees were slow to emerge; hive bees will not go to flowers if there is no nectar - none because of the dryness. Consequences are lack of pips and poor storage.

- Rain excesses can cause anaerobic water logging, which later affects flowering and crop set, when also at a time of high temperatures; so less crop and loss of balance in the proportion of leaves to apples.

- Heat stress checks growth - so no summer pruning back - so don't stick to convention - RHS.

Andrew looked at Red Spider Mite and a predatory mite for whom warm winters are good found with bramble and dog rose. He uses nothing for Codling Moth; possible disorienting of Lepidoptera by pheromone traps.

- Consideration of flowering for times of pollination groups.

All this is inter-related:

- Apple Scab, aphids, dryness concentrates sap; rosy leaf curling, aphids' stickiness - mummified apples

- The role of ladybirds and spiders; look at the life cycles, plantain as a host plant; woolly aphids and great tits along with other birds.

The lessons learned from continuous observation; understanding the interaction of climate changes; climate impacts locally as well as globally; the effects of weather upon life cycles of the "friends and foes" for us as growers.

Andrew is a great observer and sharer of this way of gentle growing organically at Crapes Fruit Farm.

tannandrew@gmail.com - <https://crapes.wordpress.com/>

2. 39% of our food came directly from the EU in 2018. With a 10% rise in prices, the general low intake of fresh fruit and veg, there is a public health impact. Professor Tim Lang (President Garden Organic) believes there will be a real public health impact if a no deal happens. RSA Food Farming and Countryside report considers that there are ten years to stop an ecosystem breakdown in UK, UNLESS there is a move within agriculture to integrated pest management, organic farming, conservation, regenerative agriculture and agroforestry - hence agroecology.

3. Agroforestry - why? England has only 10% woodland and we can and need to move to 22%; 3% added by using shelter belts and hedgerows; growing with 70 - 200 trees per hectare; putting trees on the grade 4 land would add 12%, reaching 25%.

http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/?i=articles.php&art_id=1033&go=Information%20and%20publications

4. PANNA US farmland is 48 times more toxic than 20 years ago, Imidacloprid the most widely used. Neonic's systemic drawn up via roots can last in the environment from months to years while insects experience growing toxic loads; they have 92% lethal toxicity to insects mostly on corn and soya (maybe GM too) - Imidacloprid and Clothianidin from Bayer and Thiamethoxam from Syngenta.

5. PANNA is suing the EPA over the use of the brain harming Chlorpyrifos with Earthjustice.

Since 2013, in the US, there's been a 50% drop in farm income.

<https://earthjustice.org/features/what-you-need-to-know-about-chlorpyrifos>

6. Here at home, the withdrawal of the Metaldehyde slug pellets; and what of GM - an alignment with the US approach to GM and increase in growing herbicide tolerant grain.

Farmers' Markets 2019

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's Farmers' Market at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, 3rd Friday of the month from 09:00 to 13:00, apart from December (08:30): Friday 20 September, Friday 18 October, Friday 15 November and Friday 21 December.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1818935024986153/>

Friends of Ryton Organic Gardens

The sale to Coventry University is going ahead, and there's a possibility that there will still be a Garden Organic presence at Ryton, but no-one knows if that will happen or what it might look like. The gardens' Asset of Community value status has another four years to run and will continue under the new ownership.

Tenancies for the groups and businesses that use the premises are being formalised at the moment, including that for 5 Acre Farm, the community supported agriculture project on the field. This seems to be quite a complicated process. Our understanding is that the new tenancy agreements are a pre-sale necessity. Meanwhile the gardens are open on weekdays, but not at weekends.

FROG is available to help Garden Organic in any way that might be useful, but we, like you, are finding the whole process somewhat frustrating and it's hard not to lose enthusiasm. This whole thing has been running for 18 months now, so it's not surprising that we are flagging a bit!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofRytonOrganicGardens/about/>

http://www.fiveacrefarm.org.uk/?page_id=1137

Garden Organic has GMO worries

Whatever your thoughts on genetic engineering in plants – and the organic view is against it for a variety of reasons - it is important that we know what we are buying. Under EU regulations, any genetically modified (GM) ingredients in our food have to be listed on the packaging. But, as we prepare to leave the EU, our right to make an informed choice about what we are buying and eating is under threat. Indeed the new Prime Minister has already worryingly stated that he plans to 'liberate' the UK from GM regulations. This is probably to align us with the US approach to GM crops, which is far more relaxed and opens the way to US trade deals; or a massive increase in growing herbicide-tolerant grain which has been genetically engineered by agrichemical corporations such as Bayer (Monsanto). Garden Organic is supporting the current action Don't Hide What's Inside our Food, to ensure that post-Brexit regulations include clear labelling. We urge members to sign the petition, organised by GM Freeze, and write to their MPs.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/gmo-worries>

GM news: Brazil's plans for gene-edited cows got scrapped – here's why, and topical

A gene-edited bull didn't only get a new gene for hornlessness. An unexpected piece of bacteria DNA had also entered his genome. Here's an interesting article on a story covered by GMWatch earlier (this month). GMWatch reported that cows gene-edited to be hornless were found to contain two copies of the DNA construct (plasmid) that carried the desired hornless gene variant into the target site. The plasmid contained antibiotic resistance genes.

This was an unintended outcome of the gene editing, by the biotech company Recombinetics. The company did not find and publish this discovery – that was left to scientists at the US FDA. The episode shows why it's crucial to strictly regulate this technology, contrary to the lobbying push to de-regulate it.

<https://www.gmwatch.org/en/news/latest-news/19109-brazil-s-plans-for-gene-edited-cows-got-scrapped-here-s-why>

Lauriston Farm news: Weekend Workshop with Susan Raven 27th - 29th September 2019

They are very excited to announce that Susan Raven will be at the farm running a weekend workshop at the end of September. The workshop, 'Communicating and Co-creating with the World of Nature Spirits and Elementals', is Level 1 in this series. Susan Raven is an author, singer-songwriter, speaker and life-long student of Anthroposophy, who specialises in the works of Rudolf Steiner. For the past fourteen years, she has lived in the remote hills of mid-Wales, deepening her understanding of the elemental kingdom and developing the ability to perceive this formative world and its inhabitants. In 2012, she published her book 'Nature Spirits: The Remembrance: A Guide to the Elemental Kingdom.'

Over the weekend workshop the following will be explored:
Rudolf Steiner's 'Six Essential Exercises' for awakening super sensible perception
The significance of colour on the inner and outer screen
The language of sense, sound and smell
Protocols for greeting and questioning the nature spirits
Ways in which the human being can help the elementals return to their right and proper sphere

Introductory Talk: Friday 27 September	19:00 – 20:30
Workshop Day 1: Saturday 28 September	09:00 – 18:00
Workshop Day 2: Sunday 29 September	09:00 - 15:00 or 16:00

For those seeking a short introduction into the subject, just the talk can be attended. However, those who are taking part in the main workshop must commit to the whole event, including the talk.

Prices and booking:	Introductory Talk: £7
Weekend Workshop:	£95 (includes introductory talk)

Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Lunch is 'bring and share'.

Email raven@izun.co.uk - 01686 689031. Payment is by bank transfer or cheque. Make cheques payable to Susan Raven. Bank details and postal address will be provided on request.

Members' contributions

1. Organic Avenue

There are so many amazing organisations who work hard to ensure we get the freshest, most sustainably grown, nutrient dense food and this group is a place to bring all their information together, bounce ideas off each other, share, learn and discuss... so if you're in the UK and have an interest in organic produce, pull up a chair and join in the discussion.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/organicavenue/about/>

2. 'I grow everything I can': Salford's enthusiastic allotment growers explain what they love about this popular trend

More than 100,000 people are believed to be on waiting lists for allotment plots amid a growing buzz about home-grown food.

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/wellbeing/allotment-growing-food-gardening-climate-change-environment-salford-manchester/>

3. 'Our livelihoods are tied to that land.' – A call for Food Sovereignty

The issues surrounding farmers' rights in Malta are often neglected. The increased competition from imported produce, local supply-chains designed to favour the middlemen and the rapidity of development across the island have seen the population of farmers in Malta dwindle. In June, we had the opportunity to attend training organised by Young Friends of the Earth - Europe in collaboration with Friends of the Earth Cyprus - to learn all about food sovereignty, a concept that places the rights of peasants, farmers and land workers at its core. The training invited participants from five other countries, namely, Cyprus, Ireland, Austria, Estonia, and Denmark.

<http://foemalta.org/food-and-agriculture/foodsovereigntycyprus/>

4. Buy organic food to help curb global insect collapse, say scientists

Urging political action on pesticide use is another way to help stem 'collapse of nature' Buying organic food is among the actions people can take to curb the global decline in insects, according to leading scientists. Urging political action to slash pesticide use on conventional farms is another, say environmentalists.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/13/buy-organic-food-to-help-curb-global-insect-collapse-say-scientists>

5. The greenhouse effect and planet Earth: Archives, January 24, 1984, 30:57

In 1984, journalist Peter Kent examines the global rise in carbon dioxide levels and asks scientists how the world's climate might react.

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2678581122/>

6. “What is happening to our front gardens?” Earlier this month, our regular contributor Eileen Peck asked: “What is happening to our front gardens?” Whilst Eileen can understand the reasons, she is becoming increasingly concerned about the number of front gardens that are paved from fence to fence. Attractive planting is not only something to admire as we stroll past, it is also a lifeline for our wildlife, particularly our pollinators who are continually being deprived of habitats and wildlife friendly corridors. Do read the article. You might like to print off the ‘Thank You’ cards that Eileen has provided so we can give them to people with lovely front gardens, or pop them through their letterboxes. This website - <https://healthylifeessex.co.uk/2019/07/pictures-beautiful-wildlife-friendly-front-gardens/> - is a response to one of Eileen Peck’s articles. Perhaps some SEEOG members might like to send us pictures of their wildlife-friendly front gardens?

7. The Climate Crisis is moving us toward a food catastrophe

The world faces widespread water shortages, permanent vegetation loss, uncontrollable wildfires, and declines in crop yields unless action is taken to fight climate change. The world’s top climate scientists released a harrowing new report in Geneva, Switzerland (on Thursday) that lays bare the stakes for humanity, as well as the urgent transformations necessary if we’re to maintain the basis of our civilization. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN-sponsored assembly of volunteer climate scientists from around the world, was focused on land — specifically, the ongoing and projected effects of a warming planet on the ability of humanity to continue to support ourselves with food.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/ipcc-land-report-climate-change-869466/>

8. At Southend Refills, they aim to make low waste shopping as accessible as possible. Their products are as affordable as they can make them while still being environmentally friendly and low waste throughout the whole supply chain. Their delivery service will make shopping for refillable products as convenient as a milk round or supermarket delivery service. They are also looking at more pop up stalls and local collection hubs for their services so, if you would like to work with them, please get in touch.

<https://www.facebook.com/Southend-Refills-342747583087991/>

9. Experience the satisfaction of your own home grown fruit and veg! It's been National Allotments Week but you don't need an allotment to grow some produce. If you've got a garden or a few pots on a balcony or windowsill, this book has lots of great tips:

<http://ow.ly/WquC50vf3Mu>

10. Malta imposes immediate ban on pesticide flagged by European Food Safety Authority

Chlorpyrifos was developed in 1966 but was recently flagged by EFSA as having the potential to cause Parkinson’s disease and affect the development of the unborn child.

<https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/>

11. Book tip: ‘The Future History of the Arctic’

The author is Charles Emmerson, who is a geopolitics expert, has worked on global policy issues at the European Commission, International Crisis Group and World Economic Forum, and has travelled all over the world interviewing local people and experts. (For me), the book made absolute compelling reading; is not at all stuffy or boring but full of salient facts which will totally affect future generations in geopolitics and geoscience. He covers energy insecurity + the struggle for natural resources + climate change with its environmental impact and the re-making of global trade routes (NE Passage + NW Passage) because of the melting ice masses; their potential for conflict cannot be exaggerated. And too, so cleverly depicted, are the maps with the North Pole laid out centrally which gives one a totally different aspect of the geography of the north, with its huge lengths of coastlines, which show the proximity of the competing countries. It is an eye-opener and I learnt a great deal from him.

12. The Indian state where farmers sow the seeds of death

Cancer rates are the highest in the country, drug addiction is rife, and 900 farmers have killed themselves in two years. How did Punjab turn toxic? The road to Langroya village weaves its way through fields rich with crops that offer a vivid snapshot of India's kitchens. There is wheat, rice, sugarcane, maize, mustard seed and a rich variety of vegetables that have made this corner of the country India's most important agricultural region. Like the majority of their compatriots in Punjab, Langroya's residents rely on farming for their existence. About three-quarters of the state's 30 million-strong population is involved in agriculture, with wheat the number one commodity. But while Punjab is known as "India's bread basket", there are challenges amid the abundance.

The list of concerns includes withering land, chronic illnesses, water shortages and an opioid drug epidemic that has wreaked havoc on village life. Over the past two years, more than 900 Punjabi farmers have killed themselves, and the state has the highest rates of cancer in India. A government survey estimates that more than two-thirds of households have at least one drug addict in the family. Added to this is the burden of paying off loans that many farmers take out from unofficial lenders at exorbitant interest rates. Locals blame it all on "zeher" – poison.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jul/01/the-indian-state-where-farmers-sow-the-seeds-of-death>

13. How America's food giants swallowed the family farms

Across the Midwest, the rise of factory farming is destroying rural communities. And the massive corporations behind this devastation are now eyeing a post-Brexit UK market, by Chris McGreal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/09/american-food-giants-swallow-the-family-farms-iowa>

14. National ban on weed killer in public places announcement

Malta should now consider total ban - Friends of the Earth Malta have hailed government's decision to implement a ban on products containing controversial weed killer glyphosate from public spaces as a step in the right direction.

<http://foemalta.org/press-releases/glyphosateban/?fbclid=IwAR2wcnfCOp4nU8KCxSx0YQsYB-AFMxyHftICcp3c2nDVXBB8DESnFo57Its>

15. Autumn Plant Fair with Artisan Market: Sunday 15 September, 10:00 – 16:00

With specialist nurseries, artisan products, conservation zone, entertainment and children's activities, they'll have something for every taste and age. Plant Heritage is a charity dedicated to the conservation of rare garden plants.

<https://www.helmingham.com>

16. Once-Upon-a-Tree (Southend) is a new group hoping to plant as many trees as possible in the Southend area and to prevent mature trees being cut down. Carole Mulroney, the new local Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, has halted all non-emergency felling of street trees. That is good news and a first step. The group is now looking for possible sites for tree planting and asking everyone to look after what saplings they have which could be planted out in November. The group can be contacted on Facebook and their next meeting is on Tuesday 3 September at 19:00 in The Railway Hotel, Clifftown Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1AJ.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2429851517246794/about/>

17. SEEOG has established a link with The Westborough School (Southend-on-Sea) and we are hoping to support them as they develop their gardening potential. A few years ago, the gardening group was in full swing with several teachers and parents willing to be involved. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, this support has now dwindled away and Tara Smith - the teacher in charge of growing areas and the garden club - is working with only one parent helper to lend her a hand. SEEOG are hoping to muster the occasional work party to help restore those areas that have become overgrown and are no longer being cultivated. One of our members, Rob Foster, who works in tree care, has been hired to clear away dead wood

and to cut back trees that are growing over pavements and across paths. The other thought is that maybe SEEOG could offer support by passing on seedlings for their vegetable beds and other plants that would fit into their planting plan. If anyone would like to be involved, please let us know.

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

18. The Rochford Hundred Agricultural Society Annual Ploughing Match (for Jane) is being held at Little Stambridge Hall on Saturday 28 September. The ploughing will start about 10:00 and go on till about 15:00, using both tractors and horses as well. There will also be a small number of stalls and refreshments will be available; all welcome, free entry. The full address is Little Stambridge Hall Lane, Rochford SS4 1EW.

19. Sharon went to an interesting talk (last night) at the Refill Room in Leigh. The talk, given by a guy called Jack, was motivated by Charles Dowding's no dig method and has created a market garden business from scratch this year called Jack's Patch. He is offering a veg box scheme for collection at the Refill Room on Fridays.

See link for info: <https://www.jackspatch.co.uk/>

20. Bee population recovering due to regenerative farming, producers say. Paul Kernaleguen says regenerative agriculture has brought bees back to his farm. "With the flowering species (of plants) we have now, you definitely see more," he said. He's referring to the mixture of plants in his fields, near Birch Hills, Sask. Along with his partner, Erin Dancey, he now grows flowers like red clover, phacelia and sunflowers, along with barley, oats and peas they grow to feed their dairy cattle.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5156739/canada-neonicotinoid-pesticides/>

21. Please help Carole! Petition: Scrap VAT on sunscreen! Sun cream preparations are a necessity, not a luxury!

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/266858>

Colin Darroch, Managing Director Boston Healthcare Limited (who works with Melanoma UK), wishes us luck with this worthy cause and hopes the 100,000 target is reached to get it in front of Parliament. Please consider signing and sharing.

22. How to compost your waste

All you need for a successful compost heap is waste, air and water!

<https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-compost-your-waste>

23. Watch Countryfile? Matt and Helen are in Warwickshire, where Matt is marking the centenary of the death of Joseph Arch, the one-time farm labourer who rose to become an MP. Arch fought all his life for farm workers' rights and formed the first national agricultural workers union back in the 1870s. Matt also visits Wellesborne allotments, where the owners have recently paid their own homage to Joseph Arch, who was also a great champion of allotments.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0007z3p>

24. The late Violet Poulten

We have very recently collected seven boxes of gardening books from Violet's daughter, who has asked us to find homes for her huge collection of titles amassed over the years. We invite members to come along to September's meeting (especially with Darren Lerigo, anyway!) and have a look. There's a photo of Vi at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/43705483846/>

25. Norfolk scheme brings ancient wildflower meadows back to life

Restoration project uses seed-rich hay taken from roadside verges to regrow lost meadows
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/aug/23/ancient-wildflower-meadows-restored-norfolk-scheme>

26. Atocha Station Tropical Garden - a lush indoor jungle fills this bustling Madrid transportation hub. The winding paths and many benches within this garden make it the perfect place to kill time or hunker down with a cup of coffee or a book. The lush greenery is a wonderful escape from the chaos of Madrid. It's so serene; you'd be forgiven for forgetting you're in a bustling train station, surrounded by commuters dashing around to catch their trains.
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/atocha-station-tropical-garden>

27. Could a return to bartering be the key to cutting food waste? This cafe is trying
Any successful gardener knows that having too much of something at once can quickly lead to waste — which is why one Geelong cafe has revived the art of bartering. The cafe is turning that abundant home-grown produce into a type of currency, encouraging customers to swap their surplus fruit and vegetables for coffee.
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-14/the-geelong-cafe-turning-excess-backyard-produce-into-currency/11278926>

With grateful thanks to Ron, Simon, Andrew, Jill, Marion and Sharon

Pesticide Action Network UK event: can anyone attend?
Saturday 28 September, 11:00-16:00: 'Local Campaigning for Healthy Towns and Cities' hosted by Pesticide Action Network UK in the Toynbee Studios, London E1 6AB. The workshop will look specifically about the use of pesticides in our towns and cities and is a free event.
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/local-campaigning-for-healthy-towns-and-cities-stopping-the-use-of-pesticides-tickets-64808890135?fbclid=IwAR1Bdtg-YPfLEMhavgrx68YUupDCKMd2Do7wZjixTVJ_tl-JfTCw3q4gn-E

SEEOG library

Any book may be borrowed by members at a cost of 20p per book for each 2-month period. We would very much like to hear from anyone who could take out a few of the books from the cupboard and set them out on Group Night. Our Library needs to be used more!

Soil Association news: Organic September

Organic September is a month-long campaign designed to encourage more people to try organic as a way to promote and educate people about organic food and farming practices. Following a year of unprecedented environmental protest and ground-breaking research, there's never been a better moment to shout about the role organic farming has to play in the climate change debate.
<https://www.soilassociation.org/organic-living/organic-september/>

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