

# SOUTH EAST ESSEX ORGANIC GARDENERS

## NEWSLETTER NO: 84: NOVEMBER 2008

<http://www.seeog.org.uk>

The group 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 £7.00 per annum, £10.00 family.*

"Whether it's a back garden, or a farmer who can spare a quarter of an acre near the edge of a village, or a company who owns a bit of waste ground they're not using for the next few years. If they can let people use it to grow vegetables, then brilliant."

*Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Daily Mirror, 17 Oct 2008*

### SEEOG GROUP NIGHTS/EVENTS/NEWS

Our venue is currently St. David's Church Hall, 400 Rayleigh Road, Eastwood (off The Rodings), at 8.15pm. Please note, however, that we will be moving to Growing Together sometime in 2009 but that the actual date is not yet confirmed.

#### MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER

"A Year on a Unique Farm" with Simon Gibson, Salvation Army - Hadleigh Farm

I will basically talk about life on the farm balancing farming operations including Organic crop and Animal production with a farm attraction, the public and the weather. I will talk about the things we produce and why and how we sell them; and also what we aim to achieve by the farm attraction side of things, such as education and leisure, and information about the wider work of The Salvation Army. As our animals are quite friendly, there are also stories of their individual exploits!

Simon Gibson

Monday 19 January:	Nick Macey, of River Nene Organic Vegetables, will tell you all about the good and bad sides of running an ethical business and trying to compete with supermarkets that are all claiming to be greener than green.
Monday 16 March:	Growing Tomatoes with Mike Thurlow, Audley End
Monday 18 May:	Soft fruit at Hilltop Farm
Monday 20 July:	"The Maximise Recycling Scheme one year on" - Rochford DC
Monday 21 September:	How WWOOF Works with Trudi Warner
Monday 16 November:	To be confirmed

Kamil wonders if our readers would be interested in the Garden Share Project that Transition Town Totnes is piloting at the moment. He thinks this would be a low-effort but successful project if they keep on promoting it. There are some photos of it here. The project in Totnes is running for the second year.

<http://totnes.transitionnetwork.org/gardenshare/home>

With a bit of promotion, we could easily build up one here. For more information, and to get involved, just email Kamil at [kamilpac@googlemail.com](mailto:kamilpac@googlemail.com)

### MINIBUS TO CRAPES FRUIT FARM, COLCHESTER: SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER

The minibus is now full but contact Carole in case of cancellation.

Please contact Andrew Tann direct if you wish to pre-order: Crapes Fruit Farm, Aldham, nr Colchester, Essex CO6 3RR.

Tel: 01206 212 375, email: [andrew.tann1@virgin.net](mailto:andrew.tann1@virgin.net)

<http://www.england-in-particular.info/goods/g-case1-22.html>

## **SEEOG TALKS/EVENTS**

1. Tuesday 14 April 2009, 7.30pm: Talk to the Westcliff Crowstone Townswomen's Guild, with venue to be confirmed.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

The Government response to epetition:

"We are entirely committed to allotments for all the benefits they provide communities, including the opportunity to grow fresh produce in line with current thinking on healthy eating, organic food, exercise, fostering community cohesion, enhancing biodiversity, and providing educational opportunities and health benefits"

[www.number10.gov.uk/Page16920](http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page16920) gives the full text of the government response to South West Counties Allotment Association who flagged up the need to make it compulsory for local authorities and developers to make provision for allotments and community gardens on every new development. The response spells out the responsibilities of local authorities and the mechanisms and relevant planning policies available to them.

Karen Kenny is the ARI mentor for the Eastern Region and also the Eastern Region NSALG representative. Her mobile number is 07712766916 and her email address is [karen.kenny@homecall.co.uk](mailto:karen.kenny@homecall.co.uk)

Darren Fazackerley is the Essex representative of the NSALG and his email address is [darren.fazackerley@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:darren.fazackerley@harlow.gov.uk). His home number is 01245 490700. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you want help.

## **ASHLYNS ORGANIC FARM**

Dr Tim Gardiner has now published his report, Insects of Ashlyns Organic Farm. The aim was to see if the well known benefits of organic farming to biodiversity could be proven at Ashlyns. The results of his study are available here at <http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/document/pdf/InsectsofAshlynsOrganicFarm.pdf>

Ashlyns' address is The Courtyard, High Laver Hall, High Laver, Essex CM5 0DU; Telephone: 01277 890821, email [info@ashlynsorganics.co.uk](mailto:info@ashlynsorganics.co.uk) <http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/>

## **EAST ANGLIA POTATO DAY 2009: SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY**

9.30am - 2.00pm

Mid-Suffolk Showground, Stonham Barns, Stonham Aspal, Near Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6AT

Admission and tuber price to be confirmed.

The rest: Seed-swap table, chip and potato tasting, Alan Romans value seeds, Ipswich Organic Gardening Group, Suffolk Organic Gardeners, advice

Watch this space - more interesting things will be added.....

The booking form will be in the January newsletter!

## **FARMERS' MARKETS**

- **Leigh-on-Sea**: In Leigh Community Centre, Elm Road, on Saturday 22 November, 9.00am - 12.00noon. **John has been wonderful with transport all year but he cannot manage 22 November. Can anyone help, please, on a one-off basis?**
- **Rochford**: In the WI Hall, Market Square, on (Saturday) 7 March, 4 April, 2 May, 6 June, 4 July, 1 August, 5 September, 3 October and 7 November 2009, 9.30am - 12.30pm.
- **Hadleigh**: At the Salvation Army, Home Farm, Castle Lane, held on every second Wednesday of the month from 12.00 onwards.

- **The Southend-on-Sea Farmers' Market** takes place in the High Street every second and fourth Saturday of every month, 8.30am - 4.00pm.

## **FOOD FOR LIFE PARTNERSHIP**

There are a couple of workshops being organised by Food for Life in the East of England very soon. Diane Fisher is putting on a Garden Organic workshop at one of the Flagship schools in Peterborough; the other workshop is on setting up farm links and is being held at The Apricot Centre near Manningtree. John, Sue and Carole are going to Manningtree. Karen Brenchley has sent out details to all the Food for Life schools in the region. Diane doesn't have plans for another growing workshop this term but Karen is very keen to have one in the Essex area in the Spring or Summer term. Once this is organised, she will send out details to us and all the Food for Life Partnership schools. There are definite plans to hold another Farm Links workshop at Ashlyns Organic Farm in the Spring term, which will be a little closer to Southend-on-Sea than Manningtree. For information, Karen Brenchley is the East of England Regional Co-ordinator. T: 07917 671 416; E: [kbrenchley@soilassociation.org](mailto:kbrenchley@soilassociation.org)  
<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>

## **GARDEN ORGANIC NEWS**

'Fifty years on, we have won the argument - most gardeners think the organic approach is best.....'  
We [re-produce the attached article from the current edition of The Organic Way](#), in which 'Garden Organic trustee Dave Allan describes Garden Organic Local, our vision of how members and local groups can help to achieve our simple purpose: getting more people growing organically.' Read it carefully, especially the three boxed questions, which are as follows:

1. How should the network be organised locally?
2. What help and advice would the network need from Garden Organic and how could it help promote our organisation locally?
3. What links should be set up between the different networks so they can all pool ideas and experiences?

Please send your thoughts to Carole, which we can pass on to Dave Allan later.

## **GARDEN ORGANIC FOR SCHOOLS**

Plumberow Primary School's School Garden - In September 2006 working groups were set up with the aim of achieving the Healthy Schools Advanced status. One of the issues raised was the need to make the children more aware of the need for a healthy diet and to know where their food comes from. We also wanted pupils to become more aware of their carbon footprint. We had a small area of land adjacent to the playground which was earmarked for development.

In October 2007 we held a 'Green Week' which introduced the children to the concept of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.' We had many visiting speakers and had a fun packed week creating all sorts of things from items that are usually thrown away. The school now recycles paper, shoes and textiles on a regular basis. We learned how to save water and started 3 large compost bins in the new garden. The plans for the new garden began with a letter home asking for help from parents and requesting various building materials. We were inundated with offers and the work began. The earth was dug out and recycled slabs were laid as a base for a new shed which was funded by the PTA. Recycled guttering and a water butt were added and plant pots were collected over the winter. In the Spring a parent did all the hard landscaping, building raised beds and a pond. The children planted seeds and hoped for some better weather!!

For our first year, we have been very successful. We have harvested crops of potatoes, onions, cauliflowers, radishes, lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, beetroot, French beans, runner beans, sugar snap peas, strawberries and herbs. Everything has been grown organically. We have also grown sunflowers and other flowers. Bird boxes and insect boxes have been added and our retiring Head teacher bought us a bench to rest on!

The children love being in the garden and are learning the skills to be able to grow their own vegetables in the future.

Futures Community College and Great Wakering Primary School are among the fourteen Essex schools that have joined the Garden Organic scheme since the end of August.

## **MANURE**

Pam Mitchell, The Grange, Murrells Lane, Hockley (Tel. 01702 207491) has a very good, old supply of manure. If you ring her first, giving a couple of days' notice, she will arrange for a load to be brought to the gate to ease bagging up.

## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

The Garden History Society event 'Fruit in Historic Gardens' at Hampton Court Palace on Saturday 15 November has an excellent line-up of speakers, and a bonus is that Todd Longstaffe-Gowan will lead tours to the site of the proposed fruit garden that he and Susan Campbell are planning at the palace - Enquiries: 020 7608 2409.

Dawn Cadby, the Promotions & Marketing Officer, Waste & Recycling at Essex County Council told us recently that they unfortunately just don't have the budget to run a Master Composter activity in Essex at the moment. The actual cost to set up such a scheme is very high and, although they recognise the benefits of having master composters, it isn't something they are able to do in the near future.

## **PLANT LABELS**

Have you tried Graham Oster-Ritter's used aluminium litho plates yet for your plant labels? We've found them very useful when we've run out of juice or margarine cartons! They can be cut with scissors quite easily and make sturdier labels than our cartons! If you're interested, please either ring him on 01702 558871 or email grahamoster@aol.com - he can bring some aluminium to Group Night. There will be no charge for the above but a small donation to SEEOG would be appreciated.

## **SE ESSEX WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK**

SE Essex Women's Network is holding a 'Make Your Own Natural Cosmetics and Toiletries Evening' on Friday November 21st.

Central to WEN's approach is the belief that women have the right to information to enable them to make fair and healthy choices. WEN also believes a precautionary approach is healthiest for people and the planet. So, given that a big question mark hangs over many of the man-made chemicals in everyday products such as shampoos and shower gel this evening will provide an alternative - easy-to-make products which are healthier and (often) cheaper than the questionable products which women are constantly pressured into buying.

If you'd like to know more come along to Anna-Lisa's house at 89 Grove Road, Rayleigh, Friday 21st November at 7.30. Please phone Anna-Lisa on 01268 747877 to let her know you are coming and also bring a towel and £1 to help cover the cost of ingredients.

Eileen (Peck)  
Chairperson S E Essex WEN

## **SOIL ASSOCIATION**

### **Transition: Food and farming in 21st century Britain**

18-19 November 2008, The Passenger Shed, British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

You are invited to attend the Soil Association's annual **conference**, which is examining how fossil fuel depletion, climate change, diminishing soil and water resources and population growth present an unprecedented threat to global food security. To address these challenges Britain and every country in the world needs a future food plan.

The Soil Association's 2008 conference will bring together everyone who cares about the future of food, from farmers, food manufacturers and retailers, to policy makers and citizens. It is an opportunity for delegates to listen, debate and inspire a plan for feeding Britain. The conference includes a series of workshops exploring

responses to the issues raised, with themes such as soil, energy, public procurement and trade. Soil Association members get a discounted rate on booking by visiting <http://www.soilassociation.org/Web/SA/saweb.nsf/ConferenceBooking?OpenForm>

## **SOIL ASSOCIATION AGM AND MONTY DON`S SPEECH**

What Monty Don alludes to in the Lady Eve speech is that, unless there is a culture of "food understanding", which would cover what we grow locally and when available, then we have a cultural and consumer gap. No chance for local direct sales, farmers' markets, local bioregional based box schemes.

Growing Communities Hackney (soon to be twinned with Havana) connects cooking, farmers' organic box scheme with seasonal recipes etc., that builds local resilience, which is the base of the Transition Town movement - Totnes onwards. The thrust was a cultural change for food - see Mario Marinieri`s work, the Transition Town Westcliff sites, urban production in Havana, Avant-Gardening in New York producing 25% of fresh herbs, roof gardens of Chicago and the rest of the world.

Pass on the cultural knowledge - use all urban spaces as learning zones for cultural development of growing, sharing knowledge in diverse and unique local ways, then people will appreciate the organic Demeter of the Soil Association producers (perhaps some need to question the meat/feed/methane syndrome - the grain and pulse inputs could have a more efficient stock-free way to produce - trees as alternatives to pasture - fruiting and fuel. This has a global application.

So it is not little England isolationism but local cultures connecting with all others globally. From the panellists for the talk, we had visions from Rosie Boycott - Boris`s vice! - seeing a hub of 100 miles around London to draw in direct production from farms.

The National Trust's local produce - home produce from kitchen gardens, which enhances farming and tenants' income with community understanding.

Hackney Growing Communities and Transition Towns mentioned.

Audience responses to Mario`s plea for "Can we have a food and energy education, please?"

Food is:

- history is knowledge is culture
- language is maths is science is art
- plants are soil are energy
- geography is rivers is folklore
- nutrition is health, is wellbeing, is water, is flowers, is meadows, is inclusive, is convivial, is festive

Food is ..... the staging of the seasons

We need food literacy - Roberto from Cuba, Havana - a permaculturist - says it goes beyond organic and its energy inputs, social relations. We eat every day - it joins us to producers, ITS CULTURE

Some farmers seemed to feel left out? Not mentioned, but the whole thrust is to enable people to differentiate between vast corporate agribusiness and the organic farmers who produce food from a LIVING SOIL way that is long term sustainable, land preserved in perpetuity for organic production is the Soil Association's initiative.

Talk and inspiration for a bifurcation movement, a critical historical moment: peak oil, climate, global economic collapse of capital, short or long? Nevertheless, collapse and crisis!

IN SHORT

Our way forward is develop resilience, garden, support with knowledge share, value food, pay a good price.

"The CHEAP fossil based production is over

Global marketing is over

SEASONAL is in

LOCAL is in

SHARE and develop growing knowledge

A very interesting day - Ron Bates

## **TIPS AND HINTS**

Eileen picked this up in a Sunday magazine colour supplement and thought you might like it:-

*'Fallen half-fermented apples litter the ground and look pretty unappealing to us humans - even if wasps and other insects might find them luscious. If you want to put the apples to a useful purpose, pop them into a series of small plastic bags and put them in the freezer. Then, in the depths of winter, defrost a bag or two and lay on a banquet for bird such as thrushes and blackbirds, which are sure to enjoy a bit of half rotten fruit.'*

## **UPDATES TO SEEOG AND ARI FILES**

Children's Food Campaign, October 2008

## **USEFUL WEBSITES**

1. Start recycling today in 4 easy steps by going to <http://www.recyclenow.com/>
2. It only takes a minute to start saving money and energy with the Energy Saving Trust - <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/What-can-I-do-today/Support-our-campaigns/Energy-Saving-Week/The-energy-saving-clock>
3. Traditional orchard survey - get involved! The information that currently exists about the extent and condition of traditional orchard habitat is limited and out-dated and their aim is to produce an accurate inventory of the habitat, which can then form the basis for conservation action in the future. To date, they have looked at nine counties. The results and more details about the project can be found by following this link <http://www.ptes.org/?news=30>. Please note that the work undertaken in Essex and Cambridgeshire is incomplete but still ongoing.
4. Sustainable Communities Act - This is the new Act of Parliament that came into effect last month and will give significant opportunities for Transition Towns to achieve their aims. It gives communities new and real powers to make central government do more locally to promote genuine sustainability. However, there is a hurdle - you and your communities will only be able to use this Act if your local authority chooses to 'opt in' to it when invited to by central government last month. So it's worth writing to your local councillors urging them to opt in to the Sustainable Communities Act process when invited to by central government. More info about the Act at [www.localworks.org](http://www.localworks.org)
5. New member Kamil Pachalko plans to make subpages on [www.transitionwestcliff.org.uk](http://www.transitionwestcliff.org.uk) on food projects and events in the area and would welcome your emails.
6. You can view Graham Burnett's pictures from his recent California adventure at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/naturewise/collections/72157606473475810/>
7. Nick and Lesley thought you might be interested in this article: <http://www.farmersguardian.com/story.asp?sectioncode=21&storycode=20891> (and I think this magazine might not be on your reading list!) Who needs livestock to go organic?

## **SEEOG COMMITTEE**

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Please post/phone/email your contributions for the January newsletter to Carole by the end of December at the very latest.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 26 November at 7.30pm.

Finally, please notify Graham Oster-Ritter on [grahamoster@aol.com](mailto:grahamoster@aol.com) if you wish to receive your newsletter by post/email, or to change your email address,