

GROWING TOGETHER

The Self-Sufficiency Group

JUNE 2023

Newsletter



GROWING TOGETHER Self-Sufficiency group exists to enable and encourage its members to practice self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and maintain a "sustainable life style" in a fast changing worldwide environment

View this newsletter at:-

www.ehss.org.uk

Indoor meetings are held at 19.30 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the:-

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We are now "Outdoors" for the next three months!

OUR JUNE MEETING WILL BE ON
THURSDAY THE 15th at 7.00pm

Please read and digest this info!!!

The June visit will be to Andy and Ellie Kinear's wonderful Veg and Cutting garden, plus their beautiful Rose Garden. (Our other option fell through, but maybe next year?)

Orchard Park Farm

Lurgashall

West Sussex

GU28 9EU

Navigate to Lurgashall village green. On entering the centre of the village take the track that runs North behind the Noah's Ark public house. (Between the church and the pub). Orchard Park Farm is about 100 yards along this lane on the left hand side.

Please read this carefully: due to the main road through Midhurst being closed indefinitely (till all the organizations involved can decide what to do with the façade of the Angel Hotel, the only bit of it left), going east is not so straight forward. Most of us have to go to Fernhurst and then down to A272 East of Midhurst, ie Easebourne, and thus through towards Petworth and surrounding areas. For this visit you can of course go East from Fernhurst to Lickfold and then Lurgashall.

BUT PLEASE NOTE: THE MEETING WILL BE ON THURSDAY 15TH OF JUNE, AT 7 pm, as the Kinear's will not be available on our usual Wednesday.

For those of you who missed the lambing day, this will be an opportunity to see the farm and set up there. For those of you who attended, I hope you enjoyed it enough to want to come and see the garden in its June splendour.

We suggest a donation of £3 each.

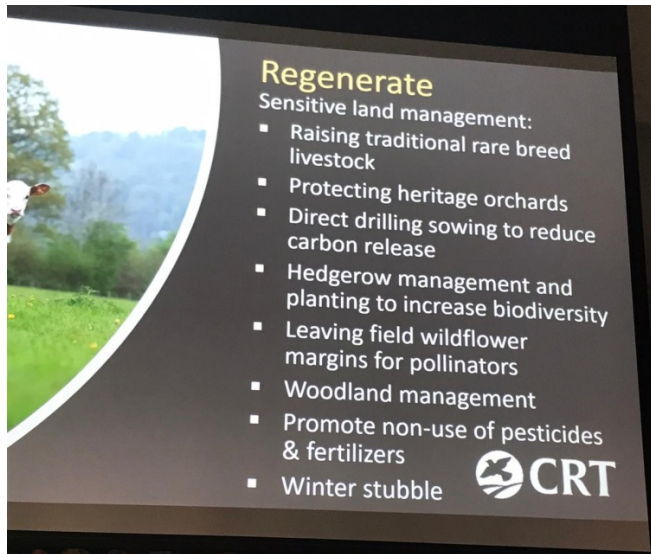
Talk Entry fees 2023:

After much useful debate at the AGM month, it has been decided to increase the entrance fee at talk meetings to **£2** for members and **£4** for visitors to cover the cost rises from renting the hall and the speakers. However, it has also been decided to allow a member to bring a new to EHSS "**first time guest**" at the member's fee of £2. We hope you are all happy with that as we feel it is a good compromise which may encourage our members to introduce possible new people to our group.

For new members: the hall is open to us from 7.30pm and the talks start at 8.00pm, with a duration of approximate 1 hour. Members pay £2 on the door and visitors pay £4. All are welcome!! Free Tea and Coffee are usually available from 9.00pm.

Resume of May talk

Nick Dobbs from The Countryside Regeneration Trust was a sheer delight! And such an interesting talk.



that biodiversity was crashing, and it has been having a quiet revolution ever since. The Trust has its headquarters in Cambridge, but the farms and other land they own are all over England.

Our nearest are Pierrepoint Farm, (dairy) at Frensham, and Twyford Farm, Horsted Keynes. The latter is pasture, woodland and b&b. Some have been left to the Trust, others purchased to save them, (precious eco systems and habitats) from intensive farming. Indeed, Pierrepoint is soon to have a new tenant as the dairy heard there at present is too large in number, at 160 cows, and is damaging the habitat, which includes water meadow and an SSSI.

The CRT says farmers are guardians of nature, Well, some are and hopefully more will be in the future. Volunteers are a very important tool in the CRT's box, and they work hard at all sorts, including monitoring species, and a huge variety of conservation projects, plus working in the offices. These farms do produce food....they are not there just to look pretty! The Trust believes wildlife and flora protection can indeed go hand in hand with food production.

Many of these farms have public footpaths running through them, so access isn't a problem, and it is the intention of the Trust that many of them become the heart of the communities where they are.

Part of the work of the Trust is to control invasive species on their land. Rhododendron and Himalayan Balsam among the plants, and the American mink. The latter were often let out of fur farms, by people who did not understand what a devastating effect they would have on the indigenous wildlife. Yes, fur farms are appalling, and they should not be allowed to exist, but letting them out ...

How does the Trust farm? The tenants are encouraged to raise traditional rare breeds, protect heritage orchards, use direct drilling on the arable land and plant hedges. 118,000 miles of hedgerows lost in the uk, and 71% of farmland lost. Did you know that if the stubble is left all winter after arable harvest it protects against soil erosion and provides insect habitat. New woodlands are being planted too.

If you find these difficult to read, you can enlarge the whole page if you receive it electronically.
So firstly, the Trust was started in 1993 by Robin Page and Gordon Beningfield, when Robin noticed

Nick talks of a generational amnesia... the information passed on by each generation gets less and less... think about this... all the old people we knew who had amazing knowledge of the natural world, and we probably took in a tenth of what they told us.

We all know how important regenerating the countryside is. How vital for all our lives and those who follow us. If you do nothing else (who did No Mow May?) have a look at this organization and maybe join. It's not a lot of money, and it could change lives... I did!

Website: www.theCRT.co.uk or phone 01223651215. ~ Dru



MAY I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS!

Jane Burt and I will be doing this... come and see what we have and get a bargain! ~Dru

Oak Moths!

The Forestry Commission has urged the public to report sightings of a toxic caterpillar amid signs it has spread to counties in south-east England.

Oak processionary moth caterpillars, which can be a hazard to human and animal health, were first identified in London in 2006.

Forestry Commission officials say the greatest risk period for the tree pest is between June and August when the species feeds before turning into moths.

The pest feeds on the leaves of several species of oak trees, which can cause the trees to lose their



leaves and limit their growth.

Thank you Frances.

The Compost Bin

Solar heating my greenhouse at night: yes, during the dodgy nights early last month, my greenhouse was kept frost-free by solar energy which cost me nothing! Having replaced an old electric night storage heater with modern heating, I dismantled it for recycling but kept the extremely heavy heat storage blocks – made from feolite, an absorbent building material that has been infused with iron. Laid out along the greenhouse floor, they were amazingly effective in heating up during the day and giving off their heat overnight.

That's all very well if you happen to have an old night storage heater, but - if not- you could always try appealing for those slabs in Freecycle. I have even seen them advertised for sale in ebay!

Talking of solar energy and greenhouses I keep thinking back to the clever solar-panel powered pump connected to the water butt of the greenhouse in the Community Garden near Steep, Petersfield when our group visited a couple of years ago – a brilliant concept because the hotter the sun shone, the more water the plants in the greenhouse received. Definitely a project for the future! Also the adjacent allotment plot which was watered from the stream and a pump powered by solar panels was impressive.

Pigeons are a pest: I know they can decimate brassicas, but in my garden the pigeons have been completely stripping all the top leaves off my cherry tree! They would have had the cherries as well, had there been any, but these were largely absent due to a very poor set during the frosty weather.

Meanwhile I've discovered what it is that decimates my beetroot crop each year – apparently any member of the rodent family can adopt a craving for a certain necessary constituent within the beetroot. The armoured cage I cobbled together last year is now back in place and the crop is safe.

What survived those frosts? Now that our shrubs should all be back in leaf, we can see what didn't survive. Well, my larger dahlias (their tubers growing deeper than smaller border types) have managed to struggle through. Some shrubs perished; even a hardy Hebe – and the vigorous climbing Passiflora – have also succumbed. Some shrubs like salvia were badly affected but new growth is giving them a new lease of life.

New lease of life for the rhubarb: my rhubarb has never been really happy in its previous location in the border in front of the fence – against which grows next door's hungry beech hedge – and for the past couple of years I have been unable to pick any, for fear of killing them off completely. This spring I dug them all up, divided the roots and replanted in a sunnier, more nutritious place with plenty of compost – and my word, have they taken off!

Good month for cuttings: June's an ideal month for taking soft cuttings from most herbs and shrubs and much more, and I am currently rooting replacements for those plants killed by the frost. My method is to fill a 3.5" flowerpot with a 50:50 mixture of potting compost and horticultural sharp sand (about £3 a bag from a garden centre). Take two or three cuttings from this year's growth, about 4" long. Remove the great majority of leaves and any unwanted side shoots. Moisten the mixture and make four holes 2" deep with an old pencil. Out of habit I tend to dip the cut ends in rooting hormone, but it's rarely essential.

Pop the cuttings in the pot, firm the mixture around them, and cover with one of the plastic containers in which they pack products like plain yogurt or soup – they are 3.5" across and about 4" tall. They are an exact fit over the pot and makes the perfect propagator! The cover can be either transparent or white – according to whether rooting will be carried out in a shady or sunny spot (in the greenhouse or on a windowsill). Most plants root within 2-3 weeks.

“Lift and sow” is my current motto for the salad crops



Photo above: any of these options works!

When I start to lift things like radishes and lettuces, I sow a fresh row. In that way our supply rarely runs out during summer.

Alec.

June Please note: Ellie and Andy Kinnear's beautiful rose garden

July a visit to the Community Garden run by Kate Green, in Petworth

August Imbrams Farm, Haslemere

September John Brown "Cheese on the Way" When I booked this talk I did not know he works at Pierrepont Farm in Surrey that we heard about at our May meeting!

October, ecologist Matt Phelps from the Knepp Rewilding project.

November Alan Williams from the RHS talking about the history of allotments

December Christmas Party...which I shall not be arranging!

.NEW TALK ORGANISER NEEDED

This really will be the last year I am going to do this job. I will be retiring from this role from November 2023 onwards.

Please someone, take it on. I feel dreadful about leaving you in the lurch, which is why I have gone on doing it so long... BUT the time has come for someone new.

From personal experience: It really has to be one person in charge: this really isn't a job for a committee!!!

By all means ring for a friendly chat if you are possibly willing to take on this group role.

No talks... no group maybe ? ...Dru