



**Women's
Environmental
Network**

S E Essex Women's Environmental Network NEWSLETTER

February 2013

Word from the Secretary

So here is the first newsletter for 2013 which I hope you'll find interesting. We've had a packed few months at SEEWEN, with our re-skilling workshops that have taken place – and the allotment has grown (literally) to include a neighbouring plot!

There are articles on Saving on Heating Bills and Bert's Birdfeeder. The Mooncup relaunch and an article about Evernote – if you haven't tried them, the articles could persuade you to! We also have our handy notes from FOE about all things environmental, money saving tips and thoughts.

Our AGM is planned for the 21st February. We really hope to see you there, as it is the time when we plan what we hope to achieve this year as well as elect our board members, who, without you, would be nothing.

Here's to 2013 – lets hope it's drier and warmer than 2012!

Dairy Dates –

Third Thursday of every month – WEN meeting. Moved to our new venue. Growing Together Community Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea. February meeting, AGM.

Fourth Thursday of every month – Transitional Towns meeting in Cricketers Pub, London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea.

Saturday 23rd February – SEEORG Seed Potato Day. Growing Together Community Gardens, 47 Fairfax Drive, Southend-on-Sea 10-2. £1 admission

Text Alerts

If you wish to receive information on the next WEN event direct to your mobile, text 'Yes Please' with your name to 07941154166. You will not be charged for any texts you receive, and you can cancel at any time by texting 'no more' to the same number. It's a great way to receive a little reminder in the busy world we live in.



Light up my life

Remember to turn your lights, appliances and chargers off when you're not using them. If you turn a light off for even a few seconds, you will save more energy than it takes the light to start up again, no matter what sort of lights you have. And virtually all electrical appliances can be safely turned off at the plug without upsetting their systems - the only exceptions are satellite and digi-boxes which should be left plugged in so they can keep track of any programmes you want to record. A family could save around ££££ a year just by remembering to turn things

DIGIN NEWS

By Pauline Spong

In October we had our Open Shed Meeting and gave ourselves a well-deserved pat on the back for the success of most of our crops. Once again we had suffered with tomato blight and have unanimously decided not to grow tomatoes on the plot next year. The strawberries were once again pathetic so they have been given a good talking to and moved to another site nearer the front of the plot away from the shade of ye olde oak tree. Fingers crossed for better fruits next year. The raspberries were delushus once again and the extra rows are starting to show their worth. Our second shed is proving its worth as a storage area for equipment and drying area for harvested crops. We had a lovely pond dipping event for children and the pond area is maturing and improving and hopefully by next summer we shall be able to sit and ponder under the willow arbour. We had hoped to have some more Diggers to join our work but will have to keep up with canvassing next year. At present we have about 8 regular Diggers with a few more who attend less regularly and we are keenly aware that we may lose Carol to the charms of la belle France. So if any of you non digging WENnies fancy a bit of keep fit en plein air you would be more that welcome to join us.

We have had some good social times at the plot not least the birthday party for Eileen.



Thankfully we have arrived at the end of a very soggy, boggy Autumn and while the temperatures have plummeted at least we have had some fabulous crisp sunny days. Maybe this means we will have some nice sprouts for Christmas??!! (Parp!Parp) We have already been busy generally tidying up and bedding the allotment down and are planning a winter final "tucking up" of the plot on December 8th when the order of the day will be silly , warm hats



, scarves and willies and Diggers are hopefully bring festive mince pies and mulled wine to keep us in a cheery festive mood. So far we have beds have been dug over, covered with cardboard and some over-winter plants covered in fleece.  Broad beans sleeping in a blanketty bed... . Then all that will be required is an occasional visit to pick winter greens and just to keep a check on the security of the site till we "open up shop" next year. I don't know about the other Diggers but I find going to the Dig In extremely therapeutic and love being there.

We were very proud to be awarded Gold for best communal area in Southend in Bloom this year. Well done you Diggers!

Let's twist again

Wash glass jars and use them to save small amounts of leftover food in the fridge, or the contents of a tin after it has been opened. A cheap alternative to tupperware, that's easy to recycle.

Be a draught excluder

Unless your home is very new, you're likely to be losing some heat through draughts all around the house. Why not invest in proper draught-proofing products for the doors and windows, seal your skirting boards with mastic, and fit chimney balloons or sealed fire guards? Depending on your house, materials could cost up to £160 but you could save up to £90 a year

BERTIE'S BIRD FEEDER

By Pauline Spong

Further to my article re the bird feeder I got for my father-in-law, Bert, I am very pleased to report that it has been a great success and Bert is thrilled with it. He has robins, bluetits, sparrows and unwanted pigeons visiting it. I have tried to get a photo of birds on the feeder but haven't managed to get a worthwhile one.

Treat your tiles

Give tiles a sparkle by cleaning with a simple solution of 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water. Rinse then wipe dry.

Harvest Supper

By Kara MacKay

Harvest Supper was held in the on the 20th October 2012 at St Marks Church and was a great success with many groups coming together to share lovely soup and apple dishes. The pumpkin soup was kindly made by Corinne Layton, and everyone chipped in with their homemade bread to accompany it. Homemade apple puddings were delicious and the quiz produced by Kim, was very entertaining – especially when it came to light that some of the anagrams contained the wrong letters! Raffle prizes were kindly donated and the evening was thoroughly enjoyable and a great chance to catch up with different groups.



Uses for old carpet

Carpets have a surprisingly big impact on the environment - so why not get the most out of yours? When they're no longer suitable for the floor, use small pieces to line cupboards, car boots, pet baskets, as doormats or to lag pipes. They're also handy to put under plant pots to protect windowsills or shelves.

Do away with disposables

Our love affair with disposable products continues to grow. Generally, the production of these involves more resources and more energy than the reusable alternative. Chances are they cost more too in the long run. See if you can avoid as many as possible when you go shopping, and find more sustainable alternatives.

Why I love Evernote.

By Lisa Wood

We all do it. We're out and about somewhere and we see 'the thing' that has inspired us. Whether that is a book, picture, or quote. We want to capture whatever it is so we write it down. Then the time comes to find 'the thing' and we can't. We've left the note book/scrap of paper at home or in the car. The magazine article has been thrown away. The website has been forgotten forever. This is where Evernote comes in.

Evernote is a 'cloud based' software/app that can 'link' all your devices. You can download the app to your smart phone, i phone, tablet, blackberry device and computer and away you go. When you're out and about, you can take a picture of that image. You can type in that quote in a 'note'. You can scan the recipe from your magazine. You can save that website automatically in a couple of clicks. You can save that document you're working on direct from Word / Polaris etc. in a click, Evernote really is that powerful... It also has amazing text recognition, so you can take a picture of that business card or 'white board' and it all gets saved in your Evernote 'cloud'. It also has a list option, so those 'to do' lists and shopping lists are with you whenever you need them.

Two things that make Evernote stand out from all the other cloud based storage systems for me. The first one is that Evernote updates your 'Cloud' automatically as you work and every time you 'quit'. So when you've finished your 'internet research' and saved all your websites or scanned images, these will get updated without you having to remember to do it. This, for me at any rate, is one of the big downfalls with 'cloud' based programmes. My complete inability to 'save' as I work or my computer crashes and all that hard work goes to waste. The other is Evernotes' powerful 'search' facility. You can, if you want, set up several 'notebooks' within Evernote. Personally, I have 'gardening', 'pets', 'recipes', 'contacts', well, you get the picture. If I wanted to find the information about a cafe I ate in three months ago in Tiptree, I could just type in the word 'Tiptree' and where I had taken a photo of the business card, menu, or the meal (yeah I know, I am sounding even more sad!) then it would bring up those details.

Think about this for a minute. If you were looking for a recipe that involved say, chicken, pasta and chilli, you could type in those words and it would search all of your scanned, searched, downloaded or typed recipes and bring up those ones that included those words! Type in two or three words to a saying and it will search for the rest. When you need some inspiration, look through your collated quotes and pictures and get back on track.

Admittedly, getting started can be a pain. Actually getting round to scouring the pile of magazines that have been sitting in the spare room for years is a daunting task. But even if you do say, 10 a week. That will soon diminish the fire hazard that to you is important information.

Personally, I was dubious about working with cloud software. I was worried about security, but then I realised if I don't put anything confidential on there, then there is nothing really to worry about. Evernote has made my life more organised. No more pieces of paper lying around with notes on or note books in my bag needing a pen that no doubt won't work or leak when I need it. I also thought I wouldn't use it that much...I was very wrong there! The best thing about Evernote though, is that it's free. You can use up to 60mb per month with no charge. If you are not using Evernote for business use, that should be more than enough.

Bathing beauty

Try this for a home-made bath treat, that will leave your skin feeling silky smooth. Put a small handful of oats into the foot of a stocking or one tight leg and tie a knot. Add it to your bath - either under running water or just plopped in. It will make the water slightly milky, which will make your skin lovely and soft. Don't forget to compost the oats afterwards.

Clever computing

Get into the habit of switching your monitor off when you leave your PC for more than a minute or two. If you factor in all the time you spend away from your PC - tea breaks, lunch, toilet breaks, meetings - you'll be surprised at how much energy you can save

Sparkly taps

Remove limescale from taps by taking half a lemon and rub around the end of your taps, or leave slices around the base. Leave for an hour, or overnight, if they're bad, then rub with an old toothbrush or cloth and rinse. Lemon juice shouldn't be used on plated taps.

Cold winters – how to bust those bills!

Adapted by Eileen Peck

If, as is promised, we get a really cold winter this year (the coldest for 100 years someone said!) it might be worth thinking about how we keep warm indoors. Martin Lewis's money savings tips gave lots of useful hints on how to keep warm and keep your carbon footprint down -

Should I leave the heating on low all day, or turn the thermostat up and down?

You'll save energy, and therefore money, by only having the heating on when it's required. Using a timer is best, because your thermostat is designed to turn your heating system on and off to keep your home at the temperature you set it.

Is it cheaper to use radiators or electric heaters?

Electric heaters are one of the most expensive forms of heating. Generally, the cheapest way is using an efficient gas central heating system, with a full set of thermostatic radiator valves, a room thermostat and timer.

Do phone or laptop chargers still use electricity when they're plugged in, but not connected to the device?

Try to unplug chargers when not in use. A lot of devices draw power when plugged in and not in use. This is sometimes known as vampire power. Using this standby power can be easily avoided by switching devices off at the wall.

Would painting my radiators black help?

No. It's best to keep them the standard white, although the difference is not huge. It's more important to insulate your walls to prevent the heat leaking out of your home altogether.

If you'd like to know more visit (see <http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/energy-saving-myths>)

Ten tips for a beautiful food waste bin

More than 80 per cent of us with food waste collections love recycling food at home and think all councils should collect food scraps weekly. The slops can then be treated and turned into clean green energy.

Recycle your specs

No longer need that pair of specs? Just drop them off at your local optician where they'll be sent to Vision Aid Overseas, a charity that provides eyecare and glasses for people in developing countries

Mooncup Relaunch

Contributed by Carol Ferritt and Eileen Peck

The Mooncup has released a video which they hope to go 'viral' with about how much better for the environment, and better for you. I think they are planning on catching a younger audience with the video, but it's worth a look...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zj4NhC8ahM&list=UUzKTqg8Rk6yMd3TfiS1OPvA&index=1>

To link in nicely with this relaunch, Bodykind are currently selling the Mooncup for a reduced price of £17.95, with no postage to pay! This equates to approximately 15p per period! So if the environmental side of using a Mooncup isn't enough to make you take the plunge, the substantial savings should!

<http://www.bodykind.com/browse/120-Menstrual-Cups.aspx>

Treat your soil this winter

Green manure is the term given to plants you grow in order to feed your soil. These plants help retain nutrients and give shelter to insects that feed on pests.

Around the web

Various contributors

Please watch this fabulous video and pass it on to others. Every time it's watched, a girl's school in Pakistan get some cash.

<http://portal.sliderocket.com/BBVXH/Hoshyar-Foundation>

This link is to a pamphlet released by Schumacher College which runs courses in sustainable living. This pamphlet is on 'The New Materialism'. I found it a good read and raised some very interesting points.

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001WwbBwHUXgoPkxXvWRBehvZGVUBFva8OteKuoKq_xacBVqiMx_U8OiWtFB6G21Ut3cssAbGKsCDz45uBHxEzeb5FnIAJvREglqiEN-o658Paj2lOBbYKTeMiRkbbPp6_uMsLF2zOulvP_OdMbzAxwcVbNsO-ZUXUdnUlvsOWE22O4hpQ51jcRuVH96Tr43jyTgPd4AoorGo=

Our blogging WEN.

Eileen has started a blog and hopes you can all stop by to catch up on her musings, and maybe leave her a comment on how you feel about what she says –

<http://looksliketheworldsmad.blogspot.co.uk/>