

LOG

August 2012

Welcome to the LOG Newsletter for August 2012.

AGM

This will be held at our first meeting on Friday 14th September, followed by a short talk.

The programme for 2012/13 is not yet complete. If you have any ideas for speakers then please let us know.

LOG on Tour 2012

Leicestershire Organic Group attended two events this year with the possibility of a third later in the year, with our information stand.

First was the University of Leicester Botanic Gardens open day on 1st July. Although a dull and cool day there was a good attendance with a lot of interest shown in our stand especially the perennial problems of getting rid of slugs and making perfect compost.

A week later we also had a stand at Brocks Hill Environment Centre in Oadby as part of a "Naturally Healthy Living" day. A day of sunshine and showers again saw plenty of visitors to our stand, especially during the morning. After lunch the crowds thinned out considerably most opting to watch the tennis final at Wimbledon.

At both events we had the impression that more people are now interested in growing your own although not necessarily organically, but it's a start.

Overall we felt both events were well worth attending in order to spread the organic message and we did sign at least one new member with lots

WINTER PROGRAMME

Friday September 14th

AGM and short talk

Friday October 12th

Wholefood Supper

Friday November 9th

A talk about Cossington Meadows

By Chris Hill, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

Friday December 14th

Rutland Willows

Growing, harvesting, preparation and weaving of willow

Friday January 11th 2013

David Carter

Birds of Prey

SUMMER PROGRAMME REVIEW

Saturday June 9th

Visit to Ryton Organic Gardens (Garden Organic/HDRA HQ).

We met in the reception (entrance to the shop) at 2pm for a walk round the gardens and visitor centre. As some members had not visited for some while we decided to take the 2.30pm guided tour. Our guide was interested in fruit growing so we spent a long section of the tour in the fruit gardens. This is at the top of the site and not visited so often, so it made an interesting diversion from the usual routes round.

Following the walk round we took tea and snacks in the cafe and then made a visit to the shop to make purchases to take home with us.

Secret garden counters growing threat to plant life.

by Steven Morris

The fence, made of two types of mesh and topped with barbed wire, is designed to keep out rabbits, deer and, perhaps most importantly, human invaders. Strict bio-security measures - everyone must walk through a de-contamination area - are in place to ward off invisible plague and pestilence. You get the feeling that if they could build a big bubble over the whole area, they would.

This is the National Trust's new plant conservation centre, a secret £700,000 complex built to ensure the survival of rare and endangered flora threatened by disease, global warming, unsympathetic farming practices, plant thieves and the trampling of careless animals and people. It was built after a disease outbreak at the trust's previous centre.

Hidden away in a series of glasshouses and poly tunnels somewhere in Devon (the Guardian was given a tour on the understanding that we did not reveal the location), experts and skilled volunteers are making sure that plants no longer growing in carefree abundance in the trust's 200 gardens, 100 landscape parks or in the many wild places it manages have a chance of a future.

Mike Calnan, head of gardens at the National Trust, described the centre as the most important plant conservation initiative the charity had launched for more than half a century. "This represents a new beginning for the trust in looking after the largest collection of historic plants in the world," he said. "It's vital that we preserve these plants for future generations to enjoy."

Calnan jokes about the fence but it is here for a reason. Some of the plants are rare and collectors would like to pinch a cutting or two, and keeping people away reduces the chance of disease spreading.

The trust used to carry out its conservation work at its Devon property KnightShayes Court. But in 2009 a plantation there was hit by the disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, also known as sudden

oak death, and Defra, the government's environment department, advised the trust to move its operations. Nursery manager Chris Trimmer chose the new base - a former farm far from towns among a labyrinth of lanes.

Trimmer and his team will be able to look after some 12,000 plants at anyone time. The idea is that they will take in rare specimens (which must first spend time in quarantine, propagate them and send the new plants back out to gardens, woods and clifftops. They will keep some "parent" plants at the centre to make sure species are not lost.

The centre will also be home to the trust's plant collections specialist, whose tasks include overseeing a database of the charity's plants. It has just recorded its 300,000th - a holm oak at Westbury Court Garden in Gloucestershire that dates back to the time of the Gunpowder plot.

The plant conservation centre will not be found in any guidebook or on the trust's website and it lacks the grandeur of many of the charity's buildings, but its horticulturists believe it could come to be regarded as one of the National Trust's most important properties.

Article from The Guardian, Friday June 22, 2012. Sent in by Tony Clarke.

Group Web Site

We have now produced a simple web site at:

www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

This will contain latest information about the programme and our newsletters. Please take a look and if you have any suggestions then contact us below or email info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

The next Newsletter will be produced in December 2013. Articles can be sent to info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

**Leicestershire Organic Group is a joint local group of
The Soil Association and Henry Doubleday Research Association
(Garden Organic)**

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