

# LOG

December 2016

Welcome to the LOG Newsletter for December 2016.

## Annual Seed Order

Every Year we place a group seed order with Chase Organics. Members of Garden Organic will have received a catalogue, but we may have some available at the December Group Night.

Choose your order over Christmas and bring it to the January Meeting. Your seeds will be ordered and available at the February Meeting.

**We aim to give you a saving of at least 25% on catalogue price  
(but may depend on total order size)**

Catalogues may be obtained from Chase Organics by telephoning  
01932 253666



## The Vegetable Gardener

**Giuseppe Arcimboldo  
(1527 - 1593)**

This was the last slide shown by Miriam Stevenson at our November meeting, when the talk was entitled "Gardens and Gardening in Art"

It made an interesting talking point over refreshments, deciding on the vegetables that were part of the picture.

The artist completed a number of works using fruit and vegetables. More can be seen at [www.giuseppe-arcimboldo.org](http://www.giuseppe-arcimboldo.org) or Wikipedia.

# **WINTER PROGRAMME**

## **2017 Dates**

### **Friday January 13th**

“Healing therapies, growing herbs and using them for particular conditions”  
Margaret Chandler

### **Friday February 10th**

“Nepalese life in the mountains”  
Carol Homa

### **Friday March 10th**

Protected Cropping (home produced event)

### **Friday April 14th**

Darjeeling and Bhutan - tea and life in these areas.  
Bob Haskins

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## **Trouble with Radicals**

I recently came across a claim about human health that was entirely new to me. An article by Dr William Bird (founder of [intelligenthealth.co.uk](http://intelligenthealth.co.uk)) says that ‘At a cell level, inflammation is the cause of almost every disease we have... and causes all 23 chronic diseases that afflict us.’ Firstly, I didn’t know there were 23 chronic diseases. (My great-aunts would have thought that trying to name them all was a first-class parlour game) Secondly, I was surprised that if we look closely enough, they are all similar in cause – our immune system heating up a particular set of our body’s tissue. But probably as interesting in some ways is where this was printed – in the Summer 2016 issue of ‘Natural World’: magazine of the Wildlife Trusts. This is not noted for its attention to human health issues. The suggestion that volunteering for Trust working parties helps to counteract it was the peg to hang the article on, along with the suggestion that a view

including trees seems to help our bodies fight back the inflammation. So it is very heartening to find that a normally single-issue organisation is willing to be quite holistic about what its readers should engage with.

The underlying reasons the article gives for the diseases will not be a surprise to most LOG members – inactivity, eating the wrong things, and being chronically stressed. It goes on to explain that each healthy cell has 35 mitochondria. As free radicals start to build up they zap some of these mitochondria. Left to themselves, particularly if you are sitting around for periods longer than 30 minutes, the free radicals continue to leak out. Eventually the cell is unable to divide, ageing speeds up, and inflammation results. The good news is that when you start using your body (ie doing something) the levels of charged radicals drops, the antioxidants start to accumulate, and the mitochondria builds up again, ‘and all the debris in the cell is cleared out’. The quality and suitability of the food you have eaten presumably directly affects what source material your cells have at their disposal. The article went on to say that chronic stress causes our bodies to lay down visceral fat (internal rather than the more normal external fat), and that chronic stress is a gnawing on-going worry which lacks any direct focus or resolution. It claims loneliness is as bad for health as 20 cigarettes a day. Being indoors or cut off from nature contributes more stress, as does lacking specific purposes or objectives. So you can see how meeting up with a group of people in a woodland to do some energetic conservation tasks fits the bill. There is no shortage of other helpful, sociable, and energetic activities that get us out and about clearing out that cell debris – from gardening and handiwork to hiking and cycling; dance and singing to litter-picking, geocaching, photography or all sorts of reasons to get out into a landscape. (Interestingly, it suggests that a work-out in a gym is much less effective, because it is so ‘me’ centred and indoors, so doesn’t bring you out of yourself). All of that may be old hat to people who keep up with such things, but I was gratified to see such explanations in a magazine like Natural World. It is the ability to visualise such things right down to the cellular-scale that could be such a great spur to constructive activity, healthy food and better quality of life.

Robin Stevenson.

## Leicestershire Organic Group Annual report 2016 (extract)

I always try to start the annual report with something recent and topical. Well, how could this not be "Brexit" this year (if such a word really exists). The following comments also come from a place I wouldn't normally look to, The National Trust, who have just published a report about the future of food and farming. Rural parts of England and Wales were very strong in voting to leave the European Union and the impact of this decision could be seen in those areas sooner than elsewhere. After 40 years of the notorious Common Agricultural Policy, Westminster, rather than Brussels will be deciding a national strategy for food and farming. Subsidies, currently worth £3bn will be replaced (or not). The NT is the largest farmer in England and Wales with 618,000 acres and 2000 tenants, and they have a vision of agricultural policy that puts the environment first. The report states that "we want to see a system that increases the benefit to the public of a beautiful, natural environment rich in nature and wildlife and that secures the long term health and productivity of the land on which our farming depends". There are six principles in the report: public money must only pay for public good; it should be unacceptable to harm nature but easy to help it; nature should be abundant everywhere; we need to drive better outcomes for nature, thinking long-term and on a large scale; farmers that deliver the most public benefit should get the most; we must invest in science, new technology and new markets that help nature. Sadly, there is no specific reference to organic methods but it is an interesting report

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### Group Web Site

We have now produced a simple web site at:  
[www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk](http://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](mailto:info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk)  
Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/leicsorganicgroup](http://www.facebook.com/leicsorganicgroup)

The next Newsletter will be produced in April 2017. Articles can be sent to [info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk)

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

For further details contact group secretary, Bob Haskins, 01509 842449, or publicity officer, Leon Marvell, 0116 269 4978.