



2G3S NEWSLETTER EXTRA SEPTEMBER 2022

A lot is happening before our next regular newsletter in the middle of November. This 'Extra' starts with these events; and finishes with some timely and interesting tips on saving water, and gardening at a time of water shortage, from two 2G3S supporters.

As ever, if you have queries email us at greengroupssss@gmail.com

A message from our convenor, Claire Lord

Watching the news this summer I've seen reports of record breaking temperatures, widespread drought, horrific 'mega' wildfires and floods of truly tragic proportions. I've felt grief, worry, frustration and helplessness.

A large source of solace for me in these times is knowing that I am not alone in these feelings, and there are things that I can do to help. I joined 2G3S because I benefit from meeting other people who share my concerns, and who can give me ideas of what I can do in my own home to live more sustainably. I also enjoy joining with others to try and have a positive influence on a wider scale. The benefit of synergy is when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

2G3S is a friendly and informal group where visitors and new members are always welcome. Sometimes people just come along because they are interested in a particular topic, sometimes they would like to join in on a more regular basis.

In November we are having a '**Strategic Planning Meeting**' where we will discuss themes such as what issues we feel we should be working on as a group, and how we are achieving our [mission statement](#). From there we will brainstorm some ideas of what we would like to do next year. It is an open meeting and all are welcome, even if you have never met us before!

So, if you fancy getting involved in a Repair Cafe, discussing ideas on how to reduce single use plastic, rewilding a garden, planning a campaign or just listening in to the discussion - come along and join us and input your thoughts and ideas.

We're meeting on **Wednesday 2nd November, at 8pm in Cox's Close Community Room, Stapleford**. Please email 2G3S (greengroupssss@gmail.com) to let us know if you are planning to come along or even if you would just like to send us some ideas! We look forward to meeting you.

Claire Lord

OTHER UPCOMING 2G3S EVENTS

[Nature Walk](#)

THIS SATURDAY 17 September, 2-4pm. Wale Field and woodland path, Little Shelford

[Social Cycle Ride](#)

Please note the cycle ride planned for Monday 19 September has been CANCELLED because of the extra bank holiday. The next ones will be on [Monday 17 October](#) and [Monday 21 November](#).

[Less Carbon, More Comfort: retrofitting your home](#), with Bart Hommels

Monday 3 October 8-9.30pm. This is the second of our two linked talks on energy saving in the home.

See the slides from Warren Pope's earlier helpful- and very popular! - talk about heat pumps [here](#). To be sent a recording of his talk, email us at greengroupssss@gmail.com

[Nature Walk](#)

Saturday 29 October, 2-4 pm. Dernford Reservoir

[2G3S planning meeting](#)

From Climate Anxiety to Climate Action? 8 pm Wednesday 2 November, Cox's Close

[2G3S Book Club](#)

Thursday 24 November, 8 pm: 'Silent Spring' by Rachel Carson / 'Silent Spring Revisited' by Conor Mark Jameson. This was published in 2012, and focuses on what happened to particularly birds in the 50 years after Silent Spring was published. All welcome – do come along having read both, either, or neither!

Repair Cafes coming up (not 2G3S)

Go to cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/repair-cafes/ and follow the links

Bassingbourn Saturday 24 September 2 – 5pm

Willingham Sunday 2 October 1 – 4pm

St Ives Saturday 8 October 1 – 4pm

Chesterton Saturday 15 October 12 – 3pm

Soham Sunday 16 October 10am – 2pm

Cambridge Grand Arcade Saturday 29 October 1 – 4pm

Burwell Sunday 6 November 10am – 1pm

Fulbourn Saturday 12 November 2 – 5pm

Water in the garden

This summer has been a nightmare for gardeners. If we care about groundwater levels and our chalk streams, then we need to draw as little water as possible from the tap for watering. Water butts, of course, are an obvious answer, but the water will run out if it's a long dry spell. So what else can you do?

The fewer containers you have the better. Plants in the ground always need less watering. And for veg gardeners, you can hedge your bets by exploiting autumn, as well as spring sowing. The dews of autumn and spring will promote a surprising amount of slow steady growth, even if it doesn't actually rain. The plants will grow while it's warm enough, stand through the winter, then start growing with the first spring warmth, to produce an early crop.

So what can you sow?

Autumn onion sets can be sown from September to early November, as can shallots. Garlic can be sown in November. Broad beans can be sown from October to November – autumn-sown plants are more resistant to blackfly. There are varieties of pea to sow in October/November. They are slightly different to spring-sown peas – starchier or “marrowfat”, but still well worth having. There are loads of salad crops you can sow. Winter lettuce varieties can be sown in September, or try rocket. And there's a whole range of oriental salad leaves – mizuna, mustard, wasabino.

If you are not exploiting the autumn sowing window, you are really missing out. The essence of good vegetable gardening is to hedge your bets, so sow in spring, summer **and** autumn, and you know you'll always have something on your plate!

Helen Harwood

Some reflections on water saving

The recent drought has made me think again about our water usage. Here are some things I have learned.

Reduce

First of all I started collecting the water wasted waiting for the hot tap to run hot, 1 Litre in the kitchen and two in the bathroom. This is clean water and although I don't use it for drinking it's fine for cleaning, washing vegetables, watering houseplants etc. The bathroom wash basin is one of those silly big shallow rectangular ones, so I halved the amount of water used for washing by putting a washing up bowl in it. As a bonus, the water could then be used for flushing the toilet. An aerated showerhead means I can turn the shower to the lowest functional pressure and hardly notice the difference.

To see if I could save water on laundry I actually weighed out the 3.5 and 7kg loads specified in the instruction book and was surprised to find I could wash 17 shirts or 14 bath towels in one load (No, I don't actually have that many.) I only put clothes in the wash when they either look or smell dirty, apart from a few exceptions for hygiene reasons and together these measures have let me reduce how often I use the machine.

Reuse

If the washing up water is not very dirty (e.g. after breakfast) it stays in the sink and gets used for cleaning, soaking the next lot of dishes, or various other purposes before going on the garden. If it's greasy or has foodie bits in it goes to water the compost heap. I have also worked out how to siphon the shower water and collect the washing machine water to use on the garden too.

Recycle

I used to use some water on the garden, but it now gets much more without taking any more from the tap. This returns the water to the ground, instead of sending it down our overloaded sewers.

Jo Boyle

(For a fuller, illustrated version of this article, go [here](#))

Let's be positive – some links

Finally, since I've a bit of space, a couple of links I thought were interesting:

BBC's Climate Editor Justin Rowlatt on the new King Charles and his environmental campaigning
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-62876790>

and this article from Local Futures about how localisation is 'the best most cogent response' to the adverse effects of climate change, with examples from the Andes in South America
<https://www.localfutures.org/localization-and-buen-vivir/>

The next regular newsletter is in November; contributions to me asap or by end October – thanks.

Linda Whitebread for 2G3S