

**Reading Food Growing Network
AGM Sunday 23rd February 2025
Committee report for 2024**

What we did during 2024:

2024 AGM at RISC on Sunday 25th February. Susan Young gave her talk on “Growing Beans”. Beans - to shell and eat fresh, or to dry and store - are easy to grow, easy to cook, delicious, nourishing and are healthy for us and the healthy for the planet. Susan told how she discovered beans during travels in South America. Interested to see what she could grow at home, Susan experimented with multiple varieties sourced from countries in Europe to discover which beans grow well in an English climate and are good to eat. Susan will explain how to sow, grow, harvest, dry, store and cook them, and will share her favourite ‘must grow’ varieties.

Susan is a retired university lecturer who specialises in music education and continues to write and research on that topic. She has always been an enthusiastic vegetable grower and now lives in the Wye Valley on roughly 2 acres of land. There are cultivated areas for vegetables and flowers but the majority of the land is a beautiful wild flower meadow. The idea to write about her bean enthusiasm and encourage others to recognise the value of growing beans had been in the back of her mind for a while and then the lockdown offered the right opportunity to make it happen. Susan is the author of “Growing Beans A Diet for Healthy People and Planet”.

Ran seed swaps We ran the following seed swaps during the last 12 months:

Farmers Market Saturday 17th February

RFGN AGM Sunday 25th February

Twyford Growers Thursday 14th March

Bean Pole Day Saturday 20th April

Waterfest (with Incredible Edible Reading) Saturday 8th June

Climate Festival plastic free picnic (with Incredible Edible Reading) Sunday 16th June

Caversham Horticultural Society Autumn Show Saturday 31st August

Farmers Market Saturday 5th October

Karen also continued to run the seed swap from home, using the postal service to distribute the seeds.

RFGN coordinates the local network for Good to Grow (formerly known as The Big Dig).

No date for this year's Good to Grow week. More details at: <https://www.goodtogrowuk.org/>

RFGN helps with the Veg4Reading project, which provides fresh fruit and vegetables to people in food poverty. We liaise with individual growers and allotment groups to gather in gluts and donations throughout the growing season. If anyone who has surplus get in touch.

RFGN collaborated with Food4families and Transition Town Reading to investigate creating an Incredible Edible Reading.

Continued our member benefits schemes: as members of RFGN we are entitled to discounts at Suttons Seeds (50% off seeds and 20% off other items from their catalogue). We previously joined Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library and received our 2023 seeds. Garden Organic is no longer associated with the Organic Gardening Catalogue, however we get discounts via GO membership at Tamar Organics, EvenGreener and the Wildlife Community.

We're also members of Social Farms & Gardens <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/> who provide very helpful advice.

Informed and connected people via our website, mailing list and social media.

