



Dear Friends,

This is the 10th issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. This a project of The Lazy Gardener, Brenda Beust Smith, John Ferguson and Mark Bowen (both John and Mark are with Nature's Way Resources). We also have a great cast of contributing writers who will chime in regularly. We would love to keep receiving your input on this newsletter comments suggestions questions. . . .Email your thoughts to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your interest.

Please .

Enjoy!

"SEXY BAMBOO, CALADIUM PLEA, EASTER LILIES,
OLEANDER NAMES & HATS OFF TO PATTY"

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH



I was so captivated by this picture on Jerry Seymore's website, I wanted to rush right over and buy every one of these bamboos.

But Jerry - of the famed [Jerry Jungle Gardens](#), a private tropical horticultural wonder in North Houston - is not only cute, he's an honest dude.

These bamboos, which he will have for sale at his big upcoming Open Gardens/Sale Saturday, May 25, are indeed very colorful when new stalks appear.

But this photo, he admits, was "somewhat enhanced" via photoshop. Still wanted to use it with this column. It really made me feel so good when I first saw it.

And, the good news is, once the clumping (not running) stalks mature, you can paint them all you like, he says. In fact, my asking gave him the idea of having his granddaughter paint some for the big 9am-5pm sale.

Tip: take your own wagon and go early. "Tropicals" enthusiasts come from a long way to see what new delights Jerry is selling from his 10 acre "jungle." Check his website, jerrysjungle.com, for details.



"ERROR IS A HARDY PLANT . . .it flourisheth in every soil" - Martin Farquhar Tupper

Boy, can I testify to that! Almost a decade ago, when Husband retired as head coach at Aldine High School, we gave a celebratory yard party. Garden writer ... yard visitors ... I knew what folks were expecting to see.

Won't go into detail about how much I "cheated," but one trick I learned from pros was to line the beds with caladiums. White caladiums make everything around them "pop."

As Oscar Wilde so astutely pointed out: "No good deed ever goes unpunished."

Husband so loved the way the caladiums looked, every spring hereafter he's said, "Why don't you plant those white things?" "I sure like those white things." "What this yard needs is some of those white things."

Caladiums are wonderful but they're not my idea of a lazy gardener plant. They're pretty for a couple of months if planted in a really well drained spot. Their roots won't handle staying wet too long.

Then, once the heat and drought of summer sets in, they disappear, unless constantly watered.

Constant watering is not my bag. Once I get a plant established, if it requires my continual attention to survive, then obviously God does not want it growing in my garden.

What I need is a super-hardy substitute for caladiums. Something that will provide that white-white "POW!" yet easily survive on its own throughout our hot, dry summers and occasional monsoons.

Any suggestions?

TIP O' THE TROWEL TO HOUSTON'S NEW BULB LADY!



Houston Bulb Society founder Patty Allen of [Bayou City Heirloom Bulbs](#) has been honored by the [International Bulb Society](#) for her generous sharing during fundraisers and other efforts.

Congratulations on a well-deserved award!

The Houston Bulb Society has been a little slow to get off the ground, which amazes me considering how many wonderful bulbs do well here.

The thing is, they often are not the bulbs usually promoted in national bulb books - which is why a local organization is so important. Email Patty at prallen2@peoplepc.com for more details.



Galveston's new Oleander Garden Park, 2624 Sealy at 27th St. includes, below l to r, 'Elizabeth Head,' 'Mrs. J. E. Thompson' ('Scarlett Beauty'), 'Terry O' and 'Mrs. H. L. Runge' ('Splendens Variegatis') with its bright yellow variegated leaves and dark pink double flowers that are just coming into bloom.



STROLL AMONG THE OLEANDERS!

The oleanders are blooming en masse in Galveston now and nowhere are they more beautiful (and labeled!) than in the new Oleander Garden Park, 2624 Sealy at 27th St.

The [International Oleander Society](#), which is based on the Isle, is holding a "Stroll in the Park" event and plant sale Saturday, May 18.

Here you can hear the wonderful stories behind named oleanders in bloom and on sale. Each has a fascinating tie to the Isle's incredible history. Also available, memorial engraved bricks for the garden.



ARE YOUR EASTER LILIES LATE TO BLOOM THIS YEAR?

Mine is and I wondered about it until I lunched with friend Sharon Ennis Axton. I wrote about her wonderful Easter lilies in <http://blog.chron.com/lazygardener/2012/05/sharons-easter-lilies> .

To my relief, Sharon said her are just starting to bloom - late this year, probably because of the prolonged cold.

Often here, Easter lilies bloom beautifully for a couple of years, then start dying off. Not so Sharon's. They've been going strong in her Southwest Houston yard for almost 20 years!

"THE LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD" - Specifically for Houston Area gardens - WHAT TO DO EACH MONTH - when to fertilize, prune, plant what where, best plants for sun, shade, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc. Based on Brenda's quirky 40+ year Houston Chronicle Lazy Gardener column.

PDF format, print out only the month you need. \$20 total, checks payable to Brenda B. Smith. Mail to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2103.

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

May 18: 1-4 pm, The Lone Star Daylily Society will host their 18th Annual Daylily Flower Show and Daylily sale at the Alvin Senior Center, 309 West Sealy, Alvin, Texas. Admission is free.

May 18: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. Cultivating Your Outdoor Pallet: Watercolor Technique Workshops. Saturdays, May 18 and June 8, 9 am - noon. Attend one or both classes to explore the techniques and wonder of watercolor through live demonstrations. A supply list will be provided following registration. Each class costs \$40, and TMS members receive a \$5 discount. Please call 281-443-8731 for details. www.hcp4.net/mercer .

May 18 & 19: 9 am-5 pm, The Houston Cactus & Succulents Society is having their Spring Sale at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center in Memorial Park. 4501 Woodway Dr Houston, TX 77024, (713) 681-8433. Free and open to the public. <http://www.hcsstex.org/> .

May 19: 1:30-3:30 pm, Wabash Antiques & Feed Store. Tropical Fruits by Dianne Norman Join us for a talk on tropical trees and their care. Dianne will focus on avocado trees but will cover other tropical trees. Questions are welcomed. Instructor: Dianne Norman owns her own Wholesale Nursery, is a Texas Master Gardener and had one of the first Organic Subscription Farms in the Coastal area <http://wabashfeed.com/eventcalendar.html> .

May 18 & 19 - The Houston Cactus & Stucculents Society is having their Spring Sale at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center in Memorial Park. 4501 Woodway Dr Houston, TX 77024, (713) 681-8433. Free and open to the public.

May 19. Payne's in the Grass Daylily Farm Celebration of Daylilies: May 19th, 9:00 to 5:00, 2130 O'Day Road, Pearland, Texas 77581. Free. 281-485-3821 or 713-419-6661. www.paynesinthegrassdaylilyfarm.com for more details.

May 20: 8:30-11:00 am, Open Garden Day. You are invited to tour the working and demonstration gardens maintained by the Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions. A program on Dividing Bromeliads will be offered from 9:30 - 10:30 am. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, CHILDREN WELCOME! Location: Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff, Houston, TX 77034.

More info: jansidk@aol.com.

May 22: 7:30 pm, "Crossing the Andes" presented by Dick & Phyllis McEuen. This presentation will illustrate cacti & succulents found in Argentina, Chile, and the Atacama desert. Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. <http://www.hcsstex.org/>

May 25: The Houston Area Daylily Society in conjunction with the Houston Hemerocallis Society and Cypress Creek Daylily Club will be hosting their annual Daylily Show and Plant Sale at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church located at 4040 Watonga, Houston, Texas 77092. The Flower Show is from 1:00 -3:00 pm and the plant sale will begin at 10 am until sold out. Admission is free.

May 25: 9 am-5 pm. Jerry's Jungle Gardens Plant Sale, private collection, 712 Hill Road. Daylilies, crinum, ginger are blooming, and NEW Plants from recent collecting. www.jerrysjungle.com .

May 25: Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening 101 Clinic, 10:15 am at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss; <http://www.calloways.com/garden-events> . Free.

May 28: 7:30 p.m., Hibiscus Society Program at the Garden Center in Herman Park, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: soil food web, for more information contact John Newton at 832-222-2965.

June 1: 10 am, The Arbor Gate. Attend a Field Trial without the Field; Saturday, June 1, 2013 Hear about & see the latest breeding of ever-popular caladiums. We'll have the latest introductions from the past 5 years to see, as well as the newest trial varieties to evaluate & vote on. Let your voice be heard - here's a chance to let the breeder know what you, the public, wants to see come to market. All your votes & comments will be compiled & added to the trial results for 2013, out of which 6-8 new varieties will be chosen. This is part of a formal field trial, that usually only large growers & university researchers get to attend - so come on out & give us your opinion! For more information, visit www.arborgate.com .

June 1, 2013 - Designing your outdoor spaces with naturally inspired elements. Learn key tips to boost the look of your Texas landscape. Sometimes we all need a little help getting started with a project. Join us as we walk through the basics of landscaping. From soil preparation, to a simple design, to selecting plants... we'll help you get started. We promise! Join us at 10:15 a.m. for the clinic, Landscape Design 101. This 10:15 a.m. clinic takes place both Cornelius Nursery locations. Learn more at <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

June 3: Open Garden Day The Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 will be hosting Open Garden Days twice monthly during June, July and August on 1st & 3rd Mondays. Hours are from 8:30 am - 11:00 am. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions and will present educational programs from 9:30 am - 10:30 am for children & adults. Programs for June 3: For Children - "Plant Identification Game & For Adults - "Why is Plant Identification Necessary." Where: Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff, Houston, TX 77034. <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

June 8, 2-5 p.m., USGBC Program at the Bernhardt Winery, 9043 CR 204 Plantersville TX 77363, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: soil food web, wine tasting included, www.bernhardtwinery.com

June 8: 10 am, Tomato Contest. Judges will choose winners in the categories of largest fruit and best tasting fruit. Don't miss out on the fun! For entry and category information, please go to www.arborgate.com and click on Class Schedule. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, CHILDREN WELCOME!

June 8: 9:30 am - 3:00 pm The Plumeria Society of America will hold two sales this year (June 8 & July 20). There will be a Gorgeous Bloom display of the flowers available, an 'Ask the Experts' table plus door prizes throughout the day. Arrive early for best selection. For more information visit www.theplumeriasociety.org or Like us on Facebook. Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Rd 1 Seabrook, TX (Clear Lake area)

June 9: American Hibiscus Society/Lone Star Chapter Show and Sale, 1-4 pm, Bellaire Community Center 7008 S. Rice, Bellaire, TX

June 12: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. Lunch Bunch. Wed., June 12, noon - 2 pm, Spring Creek and Harris County Precinct 4 Greenway Projects: With just a few miles of connecting trails, the Spring Creek Greenway and adjoining Cypress Creek Greenway have the potential to connect over 300 miles of existing hard surface and equestrian trails, as well as many Precinct 4 parks and natural spaces from Humble to Tomball. Join Mike Howlett, greenway project manager, for an overview of the largest forested urban corridor in the United States, and discover the multitude of flora, fauna, and recreational opportunities that abound here. Anyone seeking additional information or requiring special assistance to participate in any program should contact Mercer at 281-443-8731 or online at www.hcp4.net/mercer.

June 17. Open Garden Day. The Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 will be hosting Open Garden Days twice monthly during June, July and August on 1st & 3rd Mondays. Hours are from 8:30 am - 11:00 am. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions and will present educational programs from 9:30 am - 10:30 am for children & adults. Programs on June 17: For Children - "Butterflies" & For Adults - "Irrigation for your Home Gardens." Where: Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff, Houston, TX 77034. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, CHILDREN WELCOME! <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

June 19, 10 am. Master Gardener Lecture Series. Suzy Fischer will be speaking on "Edible Landscape". She is a founding and current board member of Urban Harvest. Her mission is to promote healthy communities and sound nutrition by educating the public. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Where: The Meeting Room at Clear Lake Park (on the lakeside), 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook, TX 77586. <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

June 20: 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The Plumeria Society of America's 2nd sale. There will be a Gorgeous Bloom display of the flowers available, an 'Ask the Experts' table plus door prizes throughout the day. Arrive early for best selection. For more information: www.theplumeriasociety.org or Like us on Facebook. Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Rd 1 Seabrook, TX (Clear Lake area)

July 12: 11a.m., Brazoria County Master Gardeners, Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: composting (back yard and small scale), for more information contact Dana Morisse-Arnold (979) 864-7713.

July 17, 10 a.m., Harris County Master Gardeners, Pct. 2 at Clear Lake Park, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: health and the environment, for more information contact Edie LeBourgeois at (281) 998-7660.

July 20th 9:30 - 3:00 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds 3350 Hwy 36S--Rosenberg, TX
Recipe for Success has summer internships available. For more information, visit <http://recipe4success.org/get-involved/internships.html>

Submit calendar items to lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the sponsoring organization. Please note: "garden calendar request" in the subject line.

Need speakers for your group? Brenda's "Lazy Gardener's Speakers List" of area horticultural/environmental experts is available free for the asking. Email your request to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

MULCH CORNER

REDWOOD MULCH

BY JOHN FERGUSON



Last week we talked about Cedar mulches available in Houston area and along the Gulf Coast. This week we are going to look at Redwood mulches. Redwood mulches are available in two forms, bark (shredded or nuggets) and shredded wood. Redwood mulches became popular since they are slow to decompose lasting 6-7 years in some cases, they are naturally fire resistant, and the shredded wood has a natural reddish color. Redwood, also has a natural insect-repelling and rot-resistant qualities and it resists termite and ant infestations and lasts longer than other wood mulches.

Redwood mulches come from 3 genera which are: Sequoia and Sequoiadendron of California and Oregon in the United States and from Metasequoia from China. These are very tall trees that live for thousands of years, however they have become endangered due to logging, habitat destruction and air pollution.

Barks and uncomposted sawdust from redwood, cedar, Douglas fir, larch, eucalyptus, and spruce trees, are considered toxic to many plants. Any bark that is high in tannic acids and phenols is potentially harmful unless thoroughly composted and leached.

In addition to the natural chemicals, like all mulch that is improperly handled redwood mulch sometimes contains toxic substances that can also kill plants. This usually occurs when large piles of mulch sit in landscaping yards and don't get oxygen. To avoid this problem, buy mulch that has been allowed to weather and air out. Smell the mulch before you buy it. If it has a foul odor like vinegar or silage, buy a different product or lay it out on a concrete surface for a few days before you put it in your garden. Once the odor goes away, the mulch is safe to use.

Like all bark and wood mulches it has a very high C:N ratio. It does not cause as much nitrogen tie-up problems as others mulch types since it is slow to decompose. As all single species mulches it does not support as wide a diversity of beneficial microbes as other types of mulches. Also the same chemicals that make it slow to decompose also kills a lot of the good microbes that plants need.

It is not a sustainable product and the usage leads to habitat destruction. There is also a cost in transporting redwood mulch from the Pacific coast to our area and the transportation generates a lot of unneeded carbon dioxide emissions. The bottom line is that it very expensive and is not a good choice for Houston and the gulf coast.

BOOK REVIEW

BY JOHN FERGUSON

THE BOOK: TEAMING WITH NUTRIENTS

Teaming With Nutrients, by Jeff Lowenfels, Timber Press, ISBN: 978-1-60469-314-0. This book is about how plants absorb nutrients and use them. It covers plant cell biology and how they work to move water and nutrients into the plant. It explains nutrition from a simple chemistry and microbial point of view. It is well written with lots of good pictures and illustrations to explain various ideas and concepts.

The first section of the book spends a lot of time explaining the different types of cells found in a plant and how they work. With this background Jeff goes on to explain the basic chemistry of the soil and nutrients and how the plant gets them weather directly or via microbial action. The final section of the book covers organic fertilizers and why they work better than synthetic ones.

The only weakness in the book is a lack of coverage on the importance of trace elements and micronutrients that are not required by plants but essential for animal and human health.

Jeff is also the author of Teaming With Microbes which is an excellent book on soil biology and the Soil Food Web.

This book is for the gardener whom wants to understand more and improve their success.

GOT GARDENING QUESTIONS?

Be sure to check out our gardening blog at www.lazygardenerandfriends.com to get your gardening questions answered and to interact with other gardeners.



JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!



Save 20%: Redeem this coupon for a big discount on Nature's Way Resources Fungal Compost (<http://natureswayresources.com/products.htm>). Please note: this offer is for bulk material (by the cubic yard) purchases by retail customers only at Nature's Way Resources, located at 101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX.

Offer Expires: 6/1/13

