



August 30, 2013

Dear Friends,

Here is the 25th 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 supporting cast of contributing writers and technical specialists who will chime in and tweak away regularly. We would love to keep receiving your input on this newsletter . . . . comments . . . . suggestions . . . . questions. . . .Email your thoughts to: [lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com). Thanks so much for your interest.

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The late Sally McQueen Squire and a few of her favorite bulbs: red tulips, lavender hyacinths, red and white striped amaryllis, orange freesias, hot pink lycoris and yellow daffodils.

**PLANTING BY THE HOLIDAYS!**

**BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

We're moving into our best bulb planting season. Folks moving down here from "Up Nawth" often bemoan the fact that we can't grow their favorite bulbs (or that they don't naturalize as they do in colder areas).

But the truth is, many bulbs grow here and they are definitely great for lazy gardeners.

My wonderful mentor/publisher, the late Sally McQueen Squire, knew a lot about helping gardeners, especially when it came to bulbs. She was known around Texas and beyond as "The Bulb Lady" for a good reason. They were, without a doubt, her favorite group of plants.

Her PLANTING BY THE HOLIDAYS regime started with Labor Day. That's the day, she'd say, to start digging. Not planting, just tilling the soil in beds where you plant to put bulbs, so the soil will be settled and back into its most productive interactive stage by the time Halloween rolls around.

That's the day, Sally said, when actually planting should begin. Here's how she put it:

#### PLANTING BY THE HOLIDAYS by SALLY MCQUEEN SQUIRE

##### LABOR DAY (Sept. 2, 2013)

Start tilling new beds or rejuvenating old beds, allowing adequate time for soil to settle before our big bulb-planting season ahead! One of the best places to buy bulbs is the big annual Bulb and Plant Mart in the fall.

(Sally, a former Garden Club of Houston President, was a true stalwart of the Bulb & Plant Mart, traveling the country in the early days looking for great plants to sell. The 2013 Annual Bulb & Plant Mart will be Friday-Saturday, Oct. 3-4. Details: <http://www.gchouston.org/>. This is the only place left that I know of where you can still buy Sally's book: "**A Gardener's Guide to Growing Bulbs on the Gulf Coast.**")

##### COLUMBUS DAY (Oct. 14, 2013)

Add dirt to bulb beds if the soil has settled. Start amaryllis in containers so they will bloom for the holidays. Then plant them in the garden, in a raised area, in the spring.

##### HALLOWEEN (Oct. 31, 2013)

Plant: Agapanthus, allium, anemone, bletilla, lycoris, ranunculus (claws down!), crocus, Dutch iris, freesia, leucojum, milla, muscari, sparaxis and watsonia. Learn about all these in Sally's book.

##### VETERANS DAY (Nov. 11, 2013)

Start 'Paperwhite' narcissus in shallow dishes filled with pebbles for holiday blooms. Continue planting additional bowls every two weeks, to extend blooming season. The later you plant the bulbs, the shorter time until blooming. If you plant bulbs on Feb. 5, they will bloom about Feb. 22.

##### THANKSGIVING (Nov. 28, 2013)

Plant: Daffodils and pre-refrigerated hyacinths in the ground. Unchilled hyacinths can be planted anytime in hyacinth glasses or containers and refrigerated until the roots fill the glass. Start amaryllis bulbs in pots in a low-light area for holiday blooms.

##### NEW YEAR'S EVE (Dec. 31, 2013)

Start planting tulip bulbs that have been refrigerated at least 4-6 weeks. Tulips can be planted anytime until Feb. 13. Why not on Feb. 14, you ask? Because that's the traditional day for pruning roses in the garden.

##### NEW YEAR'S DAY (Jan. 1, 2014)

Plant all the bulbs you forgot to plant in the fall - especially those tulips and hyacinths! They won't bloom in the refrigerator.

#### VALENTINE'S DAY (Feb. 14, 2014)

Don't worry about bulbs. This is the day to prune your (grafted) roses.

#### WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 17, 2014 - also called PRESIDENTS DAY)

Caladiums can be started in flats inside so they will be ready to put into the ground on Easter. Alstromeria, if you haven't planted them already, need to go into the ground quickly. Stagger gladiolus planting at two-week intervals to produce a long season of color.

#### ST. PATRICK'S DAY (Mar. 17, 2014)

Oxalis (those 4-leaf clovers sold in grocery stores love our gardens!) Dahlias can be started now but tubers usually require a full season of growing before producing flowers.

#### EASTER SUNDAY (Apr. 20, 2014)

Plant amaryllis and caladiums in the ground now. Don't plant caladiums earlier because these rot too easily in cold soil. Amaryllis will naturalize here; no need to lift.

#### MOTHER'S DAY (May 11, 2014)

Plant achimenes. Crinum and cannas can be planted any time, except the dead of winter.

#### MEMORIAL DAY (May 26, 2014)

Okay to plant caladiums this late if you use plants.

Thanks, Sally! I miss you so much.

And, have to add, with climate change, we are usually able to plant things like caladiums a little earlier than decades ago when Sally drew up this list. And amaryllis can pretty much be planted anytime as well.

But on the other side of the coin, don't wait any later than New Year's Day to put in tulips and hyacinths. They need cold and usually they don't get enough as it is here.

Neither come back, simply because it takes so much out of the bulb as it is to produce flowers in our too-warm-for-them climate.

Sally's advice on dahlias should still work. But a safer route is to buy them already planted and enjoy their probably-however-more-likely-brief bloom period.

You can force lots of these bulbs inside, however. I'll do more on this later. But if you're one of those super-organized, plan-ahead types, here are the directions: "[Forcing Winter Color.](#)"

This is a fun list and these bulbs should give you at least one good season of fabulous blooms even if they won't naturalize.

But what I'd like to do, given our changing climate, is to update it with your help.

What are your favorite Texas Gulf Coast-hardy bulbs NOT on this list? Email me at [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net).





Great gingers, left to right, pinecone, peacock and butterfly.

## BULB IS A PRETTY BROAD TERM!

Don't limit yourself to strictly the bulb-shaped bulbs. When hort folks talk about "bulbs," they're also including bulb-like plants.

For example, daylilies and ranunculus are usually included with "bulbs," but they're actually herbaceous perennials. Other bulb-like plants are gladiolus (corm) and canna (tuber). Why are they grouped in with bulbs? I have no idea.

Probably because we gardeners like bulbs, and those who sell bulbs don't want us to overlook similar plants.

The good news is that at it's big upcoming 7th Annual Garden Faire, [Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Garden](#), a number of bulb-like plants will be available for sale:

- \* Gingers (rhizomes) which are great for shade and sun as well. (Make sure you ask which go where.)
- \* Rainlilies. These march to their own drummers so don't be upset if flowers don't make regular appearances. They're such a delight when they do bloom.
- \* Caladiums. These will be sold potted so you can enjoy them in the fall, protect them through winter and then set them out in spring.

The fair will be Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 28-29, free at Mercer on the picnic/arboretum side (west of Aldine-Westfield). On hand will be numerous regional plant societies, local artists specializing in garden art, a variety of children's activities supported by the Kingwood Chapter of the National Charity League, the Kids' Korner Activity Area offers kids. Bring your picnic lunch. Details: 281-443-8731 or [www.hcp4.net/mercer](http://www.hcp4.net/mercer).

Questions aimed at me can be emailed to [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net) (altho I'll get any you send to this newsletter as well).

## ARCHIVES OF BRENDA'S COLUMNS

(Link to archives: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs172/1112503958110/archive/1112822112421.html>)

"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.

For correspondence that is specific to Brenda, feel free to email her directly at [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net).

## WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

Aug. 31: "Orchids for Beginners" demonstration and workshop at Clown Alley Orchids, 3119 Lily St., Pasadena, TX; 281-991-6841; [ClownAlley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ClownAlley@sbcglobal.net). \$20 fee includes starter plant and all materials.

September 5 is the deadline for registering for Brazoria County Master Gardener Training. The session begins on September 12 through November 14, 2013 on every Thursday from 9:00 am to 3:30 p.m. The new fall class will be held at the Brazoria County Extension Office, 21017 CR 171, Angleton, TX 77515. Master Gardener Training program is 60 hours of classroom training that covers a wide range of gardening topics. Course cost is \$99. For more information contact the extension office at 979-864-1558 x110 or email <http://txmg.org/brazoria>.

Sept. 6 - Registration deadline for 12-week Texas Gulf Coast Gardener Program at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Garden. Call 281-443-8731 or visit park at 223-6 Aldine-Westfield, Humble, to enroll. The two-tier program for both beginner and intermediate-level gardeners was developed with guidance from Dr. David Creech and Stephen F. Austin State University's Mast Arboretum staff in Nacogdoches. Classes, starting the third week in September, will meet Tuesdays (Tier 1) and Thursdays (Tier 2), 9am-3pm (fee: \$225).

September 7: Rainwater Harvesting and Cisterns. We will discuss very low-cost methods of absorbing water on your property, as well as more expensive methods such as rainwater cisterns. Sat, Sept 7. 9 - 11:15 am. \$24 members. \$36 non-members. Westbury Community Garden, 12601 Fonmeadow, 77035. For more info: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

September 7: WILDESCAPES WORKSHOP & Native Plant Sale, Landscaping with Native Plants to Attract Wildlife, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At the Houston Zoo's Brown Education Center in Hermann Park [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston)

September 7: Saturday with the Master Gardeners, Garden Talk Topic "Water Gardening"  
Join the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners' in their 4 acres of demonstration gardens on Saturday, September 7th and talk to the MG volunteers who design and maintain them. It's a great way to learn about gardening and plants well-suited to Fort Bend County. Gardens will be open from 9:00-11:00 a.m. on September 7th. Attend an informal garden talk on Water Gardening which starts at 10:00 a.m. in the Water Garden. Call 281-341-7068 or visit [www.fbmjg.com](http://www.fbmjg.com)

September 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Become a Citizen Scientist. Help preserve native species in the area by learning how to monitor and eradicate invasive plants and animals at this workshop designed by the Texas Invasives Organization for those ages 16 and older. At Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center. Reservations are required. <http://www.hcp4.net/jones/>

September 7: Fall Shrubs & Tree Planting Clinic, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss: <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>. Free. Fall is the ideal time of year to plant trees and shrubs. Discover new varieties and old favorites of trees and shrubs suited to the Texas environment. Get tips on designing your landscape with trees and shrubs, and learn how to properly prepare your soil and plant for a naturally healthy and beautiful garden.

Sept 9: HUG (Houston Urban Gardeners) Event: Cool Geeky New Ways to Grow Food; Seeking presenters  
I often have people come up to me with some wonderful new equipment, inspiring doo-dads or new (or old) ways of growing food that look very interesting. Our Sept. 9 meeting will focus on the theme of fun, new, geeky stuff and new/old methods of growing food. Even better if it's for growing in your apartment, balcony or vertically. We have 3 to five interested people involved so far. Is there something you heard about or saw that YOU want to share? Let me know at the next meeting or email me [atlaurel@houstonurbangardeners.org](mailto:atlaurel@houstonurbangardeners.org). <http://www.houstonurbangardeners.org/>

September 10: Precinct 2 Harris County Master Gardeners event: Green Thumb Series at 6:30 pm, Chris Hammen, a Harris County Master Gardener will be speaking on Fall Vegetable Gardening at the Clear Lake Mtg room, 5001 NASA Pkwy in Seabrook. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. <http://hcmga.tamu.edu> or 281 855 5600

September 14: Nacogdoches/Arcadia: Naked Ladies and Oxbloods: SFA Gardens Arcadian Fall Bulb Bus Tour, September 14. Visit Texas Gardener columnist Greg Grant's Emanis House dogtrot in Shelby County's rural community of Arcadia. Depending on the weather, see red oxblood lilies (*Rhodophiala*), several different colors of spider lilies (*Lycoris*), or assorted rain lilies (*Cooperia*, *Zephyranthes*, and *Habranthus*). Unfortunately their display depends on the first fall rains so a grand naturalized bulb display isn't guaranteed. Visit Grant's old family home with an open breezeway running through it, along with his small cottage garden, chickens, and bluebird houses. Dress comfortably for potentially hot weather. The bus tour will be from 9 a.m. until noon. All participants will meet at the SFA Ag building, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, at 9 a.m. \$25 for Friends of SFA Gardens members, \$30 for non-members. For more information and reservations contact Elyce Rodwald at 936-468-1832 [erodwald@sfasu.edu](mailto:erodwald@sfasu.edu). Other SFA Gardens events and information can be found at [sfagardens.sfasu.edu](http://sfagardens.sfasu.edu)

September 15: Organic Container Gardening. Don't have enough space to grow your favorite herbs and vegetables? Container Gardening may be your answer. Sun, Sept 15. 2:30 - 4:30 pm. \$36 non-members. Wabash Feed, 5701 Washington Ave, Houston, TX 77007. For more info: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

September 17: Planting the Fall Vegetable Garden (hands-on). What better way to gain expert knowledge than to see how it is done firsthand through our fall gardening course. Tue, Sept 17. 6:00 - 8:30 pm. \$24 members. \$36 non-members. Westbury Community Garden, 12601 Fonmeadow, 77035. For more info: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

September 17th: The Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens kicks off the Texas Gulf Coast Gardener classes this fall! Starting with the first gardening series: Tier-1: Basic Gardening- runs Sept. 17th-Dec. 10th, Designed for beginner to intermediate level gardeners. The curriculum will include topics such as site development, plant selection, propagation, mulching and composting, lawn care and many others. Meets on Tuesdays. For more information, call 281-443-8731 or [emailmsociety@hcp4.net](mailto:emailmsociety@hcp4.net).

September 18: Precinct 2 Harris County Master Gardeners event: at 10:00 am, Gudrun Opperman will speak on Shade Gardening. Gudrun is a Harris County Master Gardener and a Clinical Biologist. She has been volunteering at Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Garden for twenty years. 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> or 281 855 5600.

September 19th: December 12th: The Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens is offering Tier-2: Landscape and Garden Plants. Topics focus on plants that can be successfully cultivated and utilized in the Texas Gulf Coast climate. Participants will learn about new and exciting plants to add to their collection while improving their horticultural skills. Meets on Thursdays. For more information or to register, call 281-443-8731 or email [msociety@hcp4.net](mailto:msociety@hcp4.net).

September 19: Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening presented by a team of Fort Bend Master Gardeners Master Gardeners will provide helpful and timely information on growing methods and proven crops for Fort Bend County. The public is invited to this free program hosted by the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners at the Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Road in Rosenberg. Social at 6:30 pm; program from 7:00 - 8:00 pm. Call 281.633.7033 or visit [www.fbmj.com](http://www.fbmj.com)

September 20: application deadline for The Fort Bend County Master Gardener Training class, a program offered by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service that begins on Wednesday, October 2, 2013. Classes are Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9am - 3:30pm during the month of October. The cost of the class is \$200 (\$353 for couples). For more information visit [www.fbmj.com](http://www.fbmj.com) (under Become a Master Gardener) or you can call 281-633-7033 or 281-342-3034.

September 22 & 23: 7th Annual Farm and Food Leadership Conference. Where: Bastrop Convention and Exhibit Center. Times: Sunday, September 22, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. & Monday, September 23, 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. This unique conference focuses on the policies and regulations affecting our farms and our food. Hear top speakers on a variety of issues including genetically engineered foods, the politics of organics, the 2013 Farm Bill, FDA's food safety regulations, urban farming, raw milk, water, and so much more! [farmandranchfreedom.org/farm-food-leadership-conference/](http://farmandranchfreedom.org/farm-food-leadership-conference/)



September 29: Houston: Sustainable Living Through Permaculture 1: SLTP 1. The design principles of Permaculture (PC) are explained, observed and illustrated in a series of breakout sessions at a home and garden remodeled to reflect PC sustainability principles. Sunday, September 29. 2 - 6 p.m. \$50. NE Loop Residence. Location to be provided to enrolled students. For more information, call 713-880-5540 or visit [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org).

Oct. 4-5: Bulb & Plant Mart at Holly Hall Retirement Community, 2000 Holly Hall St. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 4; 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Oct. 5. New this year: a Garden Garage Sale of garden treasures. Sponsored by the Garden Club of Houston. Details: [www.gchouston.org](http://www.gchouston.org)

October 5: Nacogdoches: The SFA Gardens at Stephen F. Austin State University will host its annual Fabulous Fall Festival Plant Sale from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, October 5, at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St. in historic Nacogdoches. A wide variety of hard-to-find, "Texas tough" plants will be available, including Texas natives, heirlooms, tropicals, perennials, shrubs, trees, and exclusive Greg Grant and SFA introductions. Most of the plants are extensively trialed in the gardens before being offered to the public and most are produced by the SFA Gardens staff and volunteers. This popular event benefits the SFA Mast Arboretum, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, Gayla Mize Garden, and educational programs hosted at the gardens. The educational programs at SFA Gardens reach more than 15,000 students ages 1 to 100 on a yearly basis. The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring a wagon. For more information, call (936) 468-4404, or visit [www.sfagardens.sfasu.edu](http://www.sfagardens.sfasu.edu) two weeks before the sale for a list of available plants.

October 5-6: Spring Branch African Violet Club, Annual Fall Sale, West Gray Multiservice Center 1475 West Gray Street, Houston, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, 10:00a.m. - 3:00p.m., Free Admission, Violets of all types such as standards, miniatures, semi-miniatures, and trailers will be available. Other Gesneriads such as Episcias and Streps and supplies such as potting soil, pots, and fertilizers will also be featured. Club members will be available to answer general questions on growing African Violets. For further information, contact Karla Ross, 281-748-8417, [kjwross@yahoo.com](mailto:kjwross@yahoo.com).  
Note: This is our fall sale and does NOT include a show.

Nov. 1-3: Antique Rose Emporium's 25th Annual Fall Festival of Roses. Free. Programs: Nov. 1 - 11am, Propagation by Glenn Schroeter; 1pm, Grow Roses by Judy Barrett; 2:30pm, Psycho Lighting by Linda Lehmusvirta; 3:30pm, Afternoon Tea. Nov. 2 - 11am, Grandma's Garden by Greg Grant; 1pm, Lawn Gone by Pam Penick; 2:30pm, Bulbs by Chris Wiesinger; 4pm, Fearless Gardening 101 by Felder Rushing. Nov. 3 - Behind Scenes Tour by Mike Shoup. Details: [www.antiqueroseemporium.com](http://www.antiqueroseemporium.com)

Submit calendar items to [lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com). Events must be submitted by the sponsoring organization. Please note: "garden calendar request" in the subject line. We list calendar items up to two months ahead of time.

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](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net).

## MULCH CORNER

BY JOHN FERGUSON

## INORGANIC MULCHES: SPECIALTY PLASTICS



Last week we looked at clear plastic so this week we are going to take a brief look at specialty plastic mulches.

These plastic mulches share many of the benefits and negatives of regular black and clear plastic mulches and they are different in some ways. While these types of mulches are not recommended for the average gardener, I believe many gardeners will find the subject matter interesting.

There has been a lot of research published over the last decade on how color affects plant growth along with insect and disease issues. I will summarize all the research in a future article.

**Colored plastic** - this is a new type of plastic mulch designed to use color and reflectance to help plants grow. For example red plastic has been found to increase yields of tomatoes when compared to other colors and preliminary work shows red plastic might work better for strawberries and apples also. As with all plastic mulches, shallow root systems are often created and during drought periods the plants may not survive the stress. Research at the USDA has found that a certain frequency of red plastic (SRM-Red, sensitive reflecting mulch) film will increase growth of tomatoes 12-20% as compared with black plastic. However drawbacks are the same as with clear or black plastic.

**Silvered Plastic** - Another type of colored plastic mulch is silvered. This aluminum coated plastic has been found to reduce insect populations several times over black plastic in several types of crops. However drawbacks are the same as clear or black plastic and the costs are a lot higher.

**Micropore Plastic** - This is a new form of black plastic about 2 mils thick and has tiny holes that allow some air and water to pass through, but the holes are too small for weeds to grow through. It is designed to address some of the drawbacks of using plastic mulch. As with all plastic mulches it should be removed after air temperatures warm up. It is sold under trade names like "Miracle Mulch".

**Infrared Plastic (IRT)** - This is a new form of black plastic that lets infrared radiation pass through, helping to warm soil faster than regular black plastic. This mulch warms soils in spring better than standard black plastic, and it blocks the part of solar radiation that weeds need to grow better than plain black plastic. It is most effective in specialized applications.

## IN THE NEWS:

Overtime for Deer Park Prairie! "Prairie-grass-roots" fundraising effort gets reprieve, but your help is still needed. Read more: <http://www.bayoulandconservancy.org/#!/save-deer-park-prairie/c19cm>

[Bee die-offs: New tests find bee-killing pesticides in 'bee-friendly' plants from garden centers nationwide - See more at: http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2013-08-bee-die-offs-new-tests-find-bee-killing-pesticides](http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2013-08-bee-die-offs-new-tests-find-bee-killing-pesticides)

If you have a gardening story or news item you would like to share, please send it to us at [lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com).



# ABOUT US

## BRENDA BEUST SMITH

WE KNOW HER BEST AS THE LAZY GARDENER . . .

. . . but Brenda Beust Smith is also:

- \* a national award-winning writer & editor
- \* a nationally-published writer & photographer
- \* a national horticultural speaker
- \* a former Houston Chronicle reporter

When the Chronicle discontinued Brenda's 45-year-old "Lazy Gardener" print column a couple of years ago, it ranked as the longest-running, continuously-published local newspaper column in the Greater Houston area.

Brenda's gradual sideways step from Chronicle reporter into gardening writing led first to an 18-year series of when-to-do-what Lazy Gardener Calendars, then to her *Lazy Gardener's Guide* book and now to her *Lazy Gardener's Guide* on CD (which retails for \$20. However, \$5 of every sale is returned to the sponsoring group at her speaking engagements).

A Harris County Master Gardener, Brenda has served on the boards of many Greater Houston area horticulture organizations and has hosted local radio and TV shows, most notably a 10+-year Lazy Gardener run on HoustonPBS (Ch. 8) and her call-in "EcoGardening" show on KPFT-FM.

In addition to her position as Production Editor on the Garden Club of America's magazine and her freelance writing career, Brenda's latest venture is "THE LAZY GARDENER'S & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER" with John Ferguson and Mark Bowen of Nature's Way Resources.

A native of New Orleans and graduate of St. Agnes Academy and the University of Houston, Brenda lives in Aldine and is married to the now retired Aldine High School Coach Bill Smith. They have one son, Blake.

Regarding this newsletter, Brenda is the lead writer, originator of it and the daily inspiration for it. We so appreciate the way she has made gardening such a fun way to celebrate life together for such a long time.

## JOHN FERGUSON

John is a native Houstonian and has over 27 years of business experience. He owns Nature's Way Resources, a composting company that specializes in high quality compost, mulch, and soil mixes. He holds a MS degree in Physics and Geology and is a licensed Soil Scientist in Texas.

John has won many awards in horticulture and environmental issues. He represents the composting industry on the Houston-Galveston Area Council for solid waste. His personal garden has been featured in several horticultural books and "Better Homes and Gardens" magazine. His business has been recognized in the Wall Street Journal for the quality and value of their products. He is a member of the Physics Honor Society and many other professional societies. John is the co-author of the book *Organic Management for the*

*Professional.*

For this newsletter, John contributes articles regularly and is responsible for publishing it.

## **MARK BOWEN**

Mark is a native Houstonian, a horticulturist and organic specialist with a background in garden design, land restoration and organic project management. He is currently the general manager of Nature's Way Resources. Mark is also the co-author of the book *Habitat Gardening for Houston and Southeast Texas*, the author of the book *Naturalistic Landscaping for the Gulf Coast*, co-author of the *Bayou Planting Guide* and contributing landscape designer for the book *Landscaping Homes: Texas*.

With respect to this newsletter, Mark serves as the editor.

## **PABLO HERNANDEZ**

Pablo Hernandez is the special projects coordinator for Nature's Way Resources. His realm of responsibilities include: serving as a webmaster, IT support, technical problem solving/troubleshooting, metrics management, quality control, and he is a certified compost facility operator.

Pablo helps this newsletter happen from a technical support standpoint.



<http://www.arborgate.com/>



<http://wabashfeed.com/>



<http://microlifefertilizer.com/>



<http://natureswayresources.com/>



**Save 20%: Redeem this coupon for a big discount on Nature's Way Resources New "Tropical Mix" ( <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: 09/08/13**

