



January 25, 2014

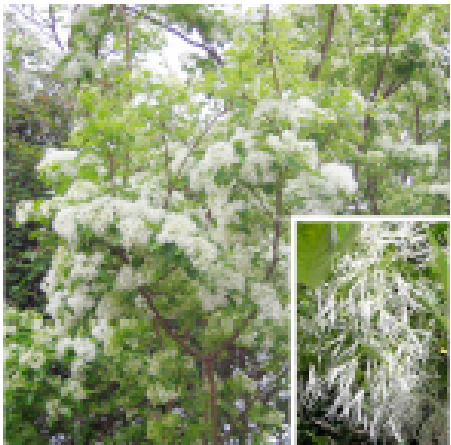
Dear Friends,

Here is the 45th 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. Thanks so much for your interest.

Please or sign yourself up to receive this newsletter by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" link just below. We will never sell or share our mailing list to protect the privacy of our subscribers.

Enjoy!

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Recommended for bayou planting and great for home landscapes, l to r, red buckeye, Mexican buckeye and fringe trees.

HEADLINE: LISTEN TO OUR BAYOUS! . . . DON'T FORGET SNOWBELLS! . . . ATTRACTING WINTER HUMMINGBIRDS

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

"Landscaped and lined with trails, (our) bayous will be lifestyle magnets for highly educated young professionals, attractions so powerful they'll suck all the highly coveted young engineers out of scenic places like Boulder, Colo..."

- Lisa Gray, "Bayous for Dummies" (Houston Chronicle, Oct. 17, 2010)

Houston is known as the Bayou City for good reason.

Our 2,500 miles of waterways are our lifelines, our best friends and, when we mistreat them - which we have done numerous times over the decades - they can become our worst enemies.

Even if you think you live far from a bayou, if you're in this general vicinity, they do affect you one way or another.

Smart Greater Houston area residents appreciate this fact and have learned to "listen to our bayous." The more intelligent among us have learned to respect the plants bayous like, protect them from plants and effluents they don't like, and to pay attention to warning signs they give us.

Since all of us live on, or very close to, bayou banks, we share their unique ecology. Now, thanks to the [Bayou Preservation Association \(BPA\)](#), we have a newly re-released guide to which native plants work best - from wildflowers to trees, from groundcovers to vines - in our often weather-challenged environs.

The Guide, originally written decades ago by this newsletter's Mark Bowen, is now an even more comprehensive plant overview, with information as invaluable to homeowners as to those who are landscaping/planting public bayou areas.

Looking for a great shade tree? The Bayou Planting Guide has 34 recommendations, ranging from American elm and bald cypress to white oaks and winged elms. Three of the medium to smaller ornamental trees and shrubs are pictured above.



The lists go on and on through grasses, vines, groundcovers and dozens of bloomers like, above, white *Crinum Americanum*, yellow coreopsis, giant white spider lilies and multicolored lantanas.

The booklet's tips on planting wetlands, woodlands, prairies, wildflower meadows and erosion-control sites are just as applicable to the various environments of many home landscapes.

The updated Bayou Planting Guide was funded by the [Garden Club of Houston](http://www.gardenclubofhouston.org). Download your free copy at www.bayoupreservation.org.

* * *

Lots of followups to [last week's newsletter](#):



Add to [last week's column on super-hardy winter bloomers](#) - Pam Hasker mentioned snowdrops. How could I forget? They bloom in my front garden and were Houston's late Bulb Lady Sally Squire's favorite. Pam says hers haven't bloomed and I wondered if perhaps they were 1. planted in soil that stays too wet during our monsoons or 2. were planted too near a summertime sprinkler. They like to be extremely well drained and on the dry side during their summer dormancy.



More winter flowering delights for hummingbirds - Yuletide camellia, left, David Verity cuphea (cigar plant) and skullcap (Scutellaria)

One of the best things about being a garden writer is that no matter how much you think you know, something new and fascinating is always around every corner.

Last week I mentioned [Beverly Logan's call for any of our winter-blooming plants that are servicing our year-round hummingbird species](#). She mentioned pansies, which I never thought of as hummingbird plants. Now comes a report from Paula Bazan with even more new-to-me ideas.

Writes Paula: "I have a male Rufous that has been here for months. I still have three feeders up and I have a small cigar plant with beautiful blooms. We doubled the frost cover we put on it so it still looks good. I even saw the hummer nectaring off of a camellia!"

Paula's camellia is a "Yuletide," a delight for this area since it's almost always in bloom at Christmas. Her cuphea is a "David Verity," one of our best choices. (Note: I would be very surprised if cuphea and skullcap would survive the low 20s we've had lately. However, they might, if protected, which you might want to do if you're trying to provide nectar for hummingbirds.)

Beverly adds Scutellaria (skullcap) to her hummer recommendation list.

And, one last housekeeping chore:

* As noted [last week](#): I've been driven crazy trying to remember in which Martha Grimes book I read the great quote "Stay cold." Finally did what any sane mystery fanatic would have done in the first place, I contacted [Murder by the Book](#) (the great mystery bookstore on Bissonnet). A customer knew right off, said MBTB's Sally: "The Old Silent." YES!!!

* * *

CANCELLED: Jan. 30- "Plant Conservation in a Rapidly Changing World" by Dr. Peter Raven, the Mercer Society lecture at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Dr. Raven is unable to attend for medical reasons.

Please read, and consider signing, the petition to establish a Houston Botanical Garden: <http://www.houstonbotanicgarden.org>.

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THE LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD . . . also based on Brenda's Chronicle column - when to do what in Greater Houston area gardens. PDF file on CD. \$20. Make checks payable to Brenda B. Smith and mail to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2013.

Check out our Calendar of Garden Events below. Don't see your group's activity listed? That's because no one sent it to us! Make sure your events are listed by emailing them to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net. Events will not be picked up from other publications.

John's Corner

Soil Amendments - Lava Sand



This week I want to continue talking about soil amendments of volcanic origin and discuss Lava Sand. This is an interesting subject since some gardeners swear by it and others have had very disappointing results.

As with so many other products that use a generic type name, there are dozens of types of sandy minerals sold as Lava Sand throughout the country. A few years ago when I was writing a book with Howard Garrett (a colleague of mine) he had stated that he had great results in using Lava sand in the Dallas area while my experience had been on the negative or neutral side. However, at various conferences and events many others have stated that they have had great results. I was curious as to why the different experiences occurred. So I went to New Mexico and Colorado and visited some of the mining operations that produced Lava sand.

Lava Sand is a natural substance that come from the crushing of various rocks made of lava. In general the lava cooled quickly so big mineral grains did not have time to form as in granite or basalt. As a result, any dissolved gasses in the lava did not have time to escape, and they formed many tiny air bubbles that contribute to lava sand's high porosity. The color of lava sand depends on the type of lava than was used and may be brown, reddish, or black.

To explain the differences in the types of Lava sand and their benefits, I want to clarify a couple terms used in describing materials of all sorts: permeability and porosity. These terms are often used incorrectly in horticulture. Porosity is the amount of pore space in a substance and permeability is the ability of a fluid (liquid or gas) to move through a substance. For example Styrofoam has a very high porosity and zero permeability and that is why it is used in ice chests, insulation, etc. By contrast, Limestone rock has low porosity but often high permeability so much of our oil and natural gas comes from limestone rock formations as the oil and gas can easily move through the rock and be collected. Many rock minerals sold as Lava sand have a high porosity

but low permeability as compared to Pumice which often has high porosity and high permeability.

Since lava sand is produced directly or as a by-product of crushing lava, the particles tend to be irregular in size with many sharp edges rather than rounded as in other sands (bank sand, beach sand, etc.) that have been exposed to the action of water and tumbled by the action of the water breaking off the sharp edges, thereby creating a rounder particle shape. This difference in particle shape changes the physical properties when used as a soil amendment. Lava sand is not permeable, hence it does not hold water on the inside of the grains as other soil amendments (pumice, vermiculite, perlite, expanded shale, etc.). However, due to its irregular surface it has a lot more surface area than rounded sand particles thus more water can be stored as a coating on the individual grains. Many of the good microbes live in these water films, and as result lava sand offers some small advantage in this area. However clay particles and humus in compost can hold many times more water than lava sand and more surface area.

Lava sand is almost neutral in pH, with some types being slightly alkaline and others slightly acidic depending on the source of the lava. As most amendments of volcanic origin it is relatively inert so it does not change the pH or release significant amounts of minerals (nutrients). It also tends to have a low cation exchange capacity (C.E.C.) value hence does not hold nutrients from other sources very well especially when compared to clay or the humus in compost.

Lava sand is composed mainly of aluminosilicate minerals similar to other rocks of volcanic origin. Depending on the source of the lava sand, it may or may not have additional plant nutrients like iron. The minerals (elements) in lava sand tend to be locked up chemically and very slow to break down and be released into the soil where plants and microbes can use them. However there are a few exceptions to this depending on the geologic origins of the Lava sand.

Like many soil amendments of volcanic origin, it may be paramagnetic to some degree. Many gardeners and farmers believe paramagnetic materials give them noticeably improved results in gardening and agriculture. Some of my research when in graduate school was in magnetization studies. I went through my CRC (Handbook of Chemistry and Physics) and looked at some of the minerals that compose Lava sand and they all have relatively low values of a property called magnetic susceptibility, hence most lava sands would have low paramagnetic values. I will save a more complete discussion of my experiences with Paramagnetism and gardening for a future article.

In summary, it will not hurt to use Lava sand but the best results will come from mixing it with compost, greensand, organic fertilizers and other amendments. In Houston and along the Gulf Coast there are other options that will probably work better and at lower cost.

PROS:

- will not break down (rot or decompose)
- does not compact
- gives beneficial microbes a place to live (bacteria, fungus, protozoa, nematodes, etc.)
- has no offensive odors
- loosens the density of heavy clay soils (will take a lot, expanded shale is a better option)
- neutral in pH so it does not change the acidity or alkalinity of soil
- free of pathogens
- reduces crusting , cracking and swelling of soils

CONS:

- for the Gulf coast it must be shipped a long way
- higher cost than other soil media with similar properties
- dries out quicker than other soil amendments
- low nutrient availability
- has a low buffer capacity to prevent pH change
- variable benefits depending on your soil and where you live

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

(Events in Houston unless otherwise noted)

Sun., Jan. 26: "New Crainer Introductions" by Everett Crainer, Brazoria daylily hybridizer, 2-4 pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event, free. Details: 281-351-8827 or mary@springcreekdaylily.com.

Jan. 27 - Mar. 3: Texas Gulf Coast Gardener Program begins, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Tier 3. Meets for six Mondays. Led by Mercer's Education Director Scott Meadows, and other experts; lessons and workshops on landscape design, hardscapes, water features, and sustainable design practices. Registration: 281-443-8731.

Tue., Jan. 28. Bear Creek Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens Open Days begin, Harris County Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr., Houston, 9-11:30 a.m., every fourth Tuesday. 10 am - Mini-workshops for adults, educational activities for kids and garden tours. Q&A with Harris County Master Gardeners. Jan 28 workshop topic: "Soil and Composting." Details: 281-855-5600

Sat., Feb 1. "Rose Pruning Workshop," Fort Bend County Saturday with the Master Gardeners, Fort Bend County Agrilife Extension Office, 1402 Band Road, Suite 100, Rosenberg. 9 - 11 am. Details, 281-341-7068 or <http://www.fbmjg.com/>.

Sat., Feb. 1: "Edibles: Fruits and Berries in the Garden," free clinic, 10:15 am, both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

Sat., Feb. 1: "Antique Roses," 10am, free, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. Details: <http://www.hcp4.net/jones> or 281-446-8588

Sat., Feb. 1: "Introduction to Beekeeping" by John Berry. 1:30-3:30 pm, Wabash Feed, 5701 Washington Ave. Free. Details; www.wabashfeed.com

Tue., Feb.4: "Empress of the Garden - Old Garden Roses - The Ultimate Plant" by Mike Shoup of the Antique Rose Emporium, noon, Harris County Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr.. 11:30 am - \$5 hamburger lunch available. Details: 281-855-5600 or <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>

Wed., Feb. 5: "Garden Daze" 4-session series begins with Horticultural Coordinator Teri MacArthur, 8:30-10:30am, free, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. Session (close up spacing) details: <http://www.hcp4.net/jones/> or 281-446-8588. Future meetings on Wednesdays, Feb. 12, 19, 26.

Thur., Feb. 6: 29th Annual Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference, 8 am - 4pm. Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Wharton, and Waller Counties at Building "B&C" of the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 Hwy. 36 South, Rosenberg. Conference presentations will include: Building Soils from the Ground Up, Improve Yields and Quality with Season Extenders, Crop Rotation

Strategies, Niche Varieties from Garden to Fork, Pesticide Laws and Regulations Update, Grow it and sell it!, and Integrated Pest Management - Biological Control Methods. 281-342-3034 or <http://fortbend.agrilife.org>.

Thur., Feb 6: "Angraecoids" by Brenda Oviaat, 7:30 pm, First Christian Church 1601 Sunset Blvd. Houston Orchid Society event, free. Details: Debbie Peterson fgdebbie@gmail.

Sat., Feb. 8: "Grow Astonishing Indoor Orchids" clinic, free, 10:15am, both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Details: <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

Sat., Feb. 8: "Bed Preparation Basics" by Mark Bowen, 1:30-3:30 pm, Wabash Antiques & Feed, 5701 Washington. Free. Details: 713-863-8322

Mon., Feb. 10: "What to Plant and Do Now" by Terry Garner, 6:30 pm, Houston's Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray, Houston. Free, Houston Urban Gardeners event. Details: www.HoustonUrbanGardeners.org.

Feb. 11 - Feb. 18: "Spring Vegetable Gardening," Harris County Green Thumb Gardening Series: Feb. 11 - 6:30-8:30 pm at Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook; of free lectures continues with talks on Spring Vegetable Gardening: Feb. 15 - 10 am-noon at Maude Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., in Katy: Feb. 18 - 6:30-8:30 pm at both Clear Lake Park Meeting Room in Seabrook and at Trini Mendenhall Sosa Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd. in Houston. Details: <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>

Wed., Feb. 12: "Pre-Hispanic Uses of Cacti and Succulents Among Indigenous People" by Liliana Rodriguez Cracraft, Houston Cacti and Succulent Society. Noon-2 pm., Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Garden Lunch Bunch event, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free but reservations required: 281-443-8731.

Wed., Feb. 12: "Sugar, Sex and Poison: Shocking Plant Secrets Caught on Camera" by William Cullina, Coastal Main Botanical Gardens Executive Director. 9:30 am - Coffee, 10 am - Lecture, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 717 Sage Road, Houston TX. The 2014 Nancy Stallworth Thomas Horticulture Lecture, presented by the Garden Club of Houston. Free. Details: <http://www.gchouston.org>

Thur., Feb. 13: Rose Pruning Demonstration by Houston Rose Society Rosarians, 7:30 pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church parking lot, 1819 Heights Blvd, Houston (enter on W19th near Yale St.). Free. Details: www.houstonrose.org.

Thur., Feb. 13: "Weed Free-Organically" by Jay White, organic grower and "potager" (kitchen garden) expert, 7 pm, Ina Burndrett Conservation Education Building, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St., Nacogdoches. Stephen F. Austin State University Gardens' Theresa and Les Reeves Lecture Series. Rare plant raffle. Free. Details: 936-468-1832 or grantdamon@sfasu.edu.

Sat., Feb. 15: Harris County Precinct 2 Master Gardeners Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale, Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7600 Red Bluff Rd. in Pasadena. 8 am- Plant Overview by Heidi Sheesley, Treeseach Farms; 9 am-1 pm - Sale. Details: <http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/>

Sat., Feb. 15: Fort Bend Master Gardener Preview of Vegetable-Herb Sale, 9-11 am, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg. Details: 281-341-7068 or www.fbmga.com .

Sat., Feb. 15: Invasives Beware" mapping of species crowding out native varieties, 2-4pm, free, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. Details: <http://www.hcp4.net/jones/> or 281-446-8588

Sun., Feb. 16: Rainwater Harvesting Workshop by Joe Blanton, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway, Houston. Two-session workshops session repeated during day. Fees and registration: Details: 713-681-8433 or www.houstonarboretum.org

Mon., Feb. 17: Harris County Precinct 2 Master Gardeners Open Garden Day, 8:30-11 am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston. 9:30 am - "Growing Tomatoes and Peppers in Our Area" by Guy Lazarus. Master Gardeners Q&A. Free, children welcome. Details: <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

Tuesday, Feb. 18: "Help! One-on-One With Randy Lemmon" (Saturday-Sunday morning "GardenLine" host on NewsRadio 740 KTRH). 10am, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Hall, Sugar Land, free. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Details: www.sugarlandgardenclub.org or 281-937-7075.

Wed., Feb 19: Harris County Master Gardener Tomato & Pepper Sale Preview" by Jean Fefer, 7 pm, Harris County AgriLife Extension Office auditorium, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Free. Details: <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>

Wed., Feb. 19. "Landscape Pruning - Plants and Trees" by Robert "Skip" Richter, Harris County AgriLife Extension Agent, 10 am, Clear Lake Park meeting room, (on the lakeside), 5001 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 Wednesday Lecture Series. Free. Details: <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

Fri., Feb. 21: "Winter Tree ID" Workshop with Teri MacArthur, 1-3pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. Free. Details: <http://www.hcp4.net/jones/> or 281-446-8588

Sat., Feb. 22, : Fort Bend Master Gardeners Vegetable-Herb Sale. 9 am-noon (or sell-out), 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg (in front of greenhouse behind Agriculture Center). Details: 281-341-7068 or www.fbmga.com.

Tue., Feb. 25: Open Garden Day in the Demonstration Gardens, Bear Creek Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. 10 am - "Spring Vegetable Gardens" talk in raised bed area for adults; special children's activities. Garden tours, Master Gardeners Q&A. Free. Details: <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>

Sat.-Sun, Mar. 1-2: Spring Branch African Violet Club's 33rd Annual Show and Spring Sale, Judson Robinson, Jr., Community Center, 2020 Hermann Park Drive. Mar. 1 - Show 1-5pm; sale 9am-5pm. Mar. 2 - show and sale 10am-4pm. Q&A, violets include standards, miniatures and trailers, Gesneriads such as Episcias and Streps, supplies. Details: Karla Ross, 281-748-8417 or kjwross@yahoo.com

Sun., Mar. 2: "Designing Your Dream Backyard Wildlife Habitat" by Joe Blanton, 3-5pm, \$65, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway, Houston. Reservations: 713-681-8433 or www.houstonarboretum.org

Wed., Mar. 5: March Mart Preview: noon - 2 pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Lunch Bunch event. Free but reservations required: 281-443-8732, www.hcp4.net/mercer

Thurs., Mar. 6: "Will My Orchid Ever Bloom Again?" by Bruce Cameron, Orchid Obsession owner, 10 am, MUD Building #81, 805 Hidden Canyon Drive, Katy. Nottingham Country Club Garden Club program. Free. Details: 281-579-7017, 281-578-5558 or www.nottinghamgardenclub.org

Fri.-Sun., Mar. 7-9: 79th Annual AZALEA TRAIL, Houston, 11 am-5 pm, four homes and gardens, River Oaks and Tanglewood areas; River Oaks Garden Club Forum of Civics, 2503 Westheimer; Bayou Bend Gardens, 6003 Memorial Dr., and Rienzi, 1406 Kirby Dr. River Oaks Garden Club event. Ticket details www.riveroaksgardenclub.org or 713.523.2483

Sat., Mar. 8: March Mart Preview. 10 am-noon at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. PowerPoint presentation of plants March Mart, March 14-15. Free but reservations required: 281-443-8731.

Sun., Mar. 9: Landscaping with Texas Native Plants by Joe Blanton, 2-5pm, \$65, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway, Houston. Reservations: 713-681-8433; www.houstonarboretum.org

Fri.-Sat., March 14-15: MARCH MART at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield,

Humble. Fri. - 8 am-4 pm.; Sat. - 8 am-3 pm. One of the Texas Gulf Coast area's largest and most anticipated horticultural events; 2,000+ varieties of plants rarely found, many grown by Mercer volunteers. Cultivation and care info available. Proceeds benefit Mercer. Details: 281-443-8731 or www.hcp4.net/mercer

Mar. 15-16: Houston Arboretum & Nature Center Spring Native Plant Sale, 9am-5pm, 4501 Woodway. Details: 713-681-8433 or www.houstonarboretum.org.

Mar. 22-23: Peckerwood Gardens 2014 Open Week, 20571 FM 359, Peckerwood, TX (near Hempstead). \$10, no reservations required. Plant sale noon-5pm, guided tours at 1pm and 3pm. 979-826-3232 or <http://peckerwoodgarden.org/events> or 979-826-3232

Mar. 29: Nottingham Country Garden Club Plant Sale, 9am-1pm, Villagio Center, Westheimer Parkway at Peek, Katy, TX. Free admission. Details: 281-579-7017, 281-578-5558 or www.nottinghamgardenclub.org

NOTE: PLEASE SUBMIT EVENT NOTICES - IN THE EXACT FORMAT LISTED ABOVE - TO: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

Need speakers for your group? Or tips on getting more publicity for events?

Brenda has two free booklets that might help: "[Lazy Gardener's Speakers List](#)" of area horticultural/environmental experts, and "[Lazy Gardener's Publicity Booklet](#)"

(based on her 40+ years of her Houston Chronicle "Lazy Gardener" coverage of area events)

Both are available free for the asking. Email specific requests to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

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 a coordinator and occasional article contributor.

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.

GREEN THUMB JOBS:

MERCER SOCIETY LOOKING FOR A "GROWER"

The Mercer Society has an opening for a grower to acquire, propagate and grow plant materials to be used for the Society's plant sales among other duties in its collaboration with Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. For a more specific job description and applicant qualifications, email msociety@hcp4.net.



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



<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 "Blueberry Soil" (<http://natureswayresources.com/>). Please note: this offer is for bagged or bulk material purchases by retail customers only at Nature's Way Resources, located at 101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX.

Offer Expires: 02/09/14