



February 14, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 48th 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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HERBS & PRUNING ... OUR AREA IS UNIQUE!

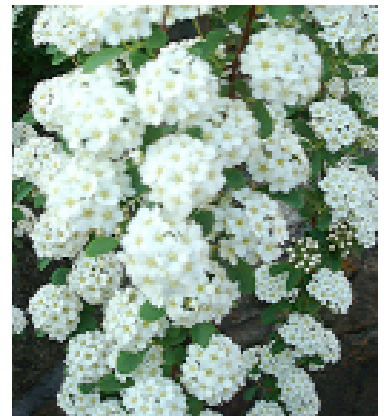
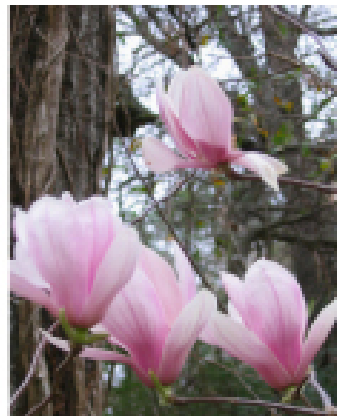
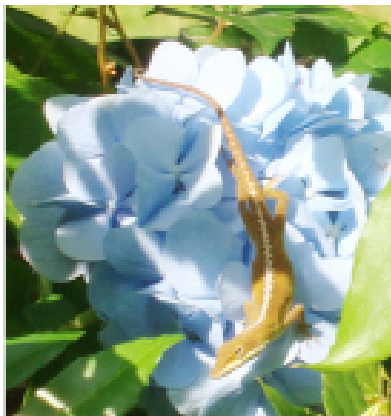
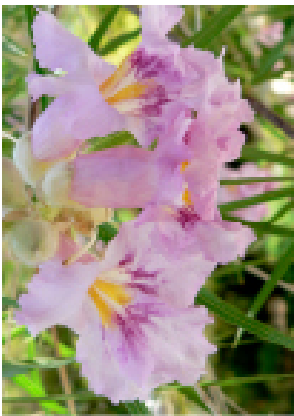
BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Last week's notes on pruning roses brought queries about lots of different plants: "Is it okay to prune my ... azaleas, camellias, oleanders, silver bells (Halesia), etc?"

Depends.



It's okay to prune SUMMER-blooming shrubs & trees such as (above, l to r) althaea, cestrum, Mexican orchid tree, crepes and vitex. Also, esperanza, hummingbird bush, parkinsonia and others that prefer to produce flowers when it's blazing hot.



Don't prune SPRING-blooming shrubs, such as (above, l to r) desert willow, hydrangeas, magnolias or bridal wreath. You'll cut off all your flowers. Prune spring bloomers AFTER they finish blooming. This also applies to azaleas, dogwood, redbud, Mexican plum, Texas (Mexican) olive tree, oleander . . .

"Whoa!" some of you are probably saying. "Galveston prunes the dickens out of its oleanders this time of year!"

Yeh. But they have two good reasons:

1. Oleanders are considered spring bloomers, but they're late spring, so almost summer. Lots of time ahead to set new growth and bloom.
2. (and most important) Galveston powers-that-be gotta think about tourists. Imagine how it would look in the tourist-peak summer months if all the oleanders were cut back to the ground?

This just shows you how tough oleanders are. They'll bloom no matter how much we torture them - or prune them at the wrong time.

The important thing to remember is: NO shrub here needs to be pruned unless you have a good reason for doing so. All our hardy shrubs will bloom and thrive just fine if you never prune them.

Pruning opens wounds. Don't do it unless you have a good reason.

"Just because it's spring" is NOT a good reason! In particular, don't commit crepe murder or - even worse - pay someone to do it just because they tell you it has to be done now. It DOESN'T! Why? [Click here](#).

What are good reasons for pruning?

- * "Want a different shape."
- * "Grabs me as I mow past."
- * "Knocking down the house eaves."
- * "Scratching the car as I drive by."
- * "It's gotten too scraggly. Want thicker growth for more flowers/fruit."
- * "Branches are rubbing against one another."

Just DO have a reason!

Unfortunately, the Harris County Master Gardener's January Open Garden Day re-launch had to be cancelled due to the icy roads, but we're looking forward to a successful event in February when we'll be hosting programs on Spring Vegetable Gardening. February Open Garden Day will run 9-11:30 a.m., Feb. 25 in the Demonstration Gardens at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr., Houston. The event provides a hands-on opportunity to learn more about this month's Green Thumb Gardening Lecture Series, which also covers Spring Vegetable Gardening. (A flyer for the event is pasted below. I'm happy to facilitate interviews if you would like to speak to a Master Gardener or Extension Agent about spring vegetable gardening tips.)

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

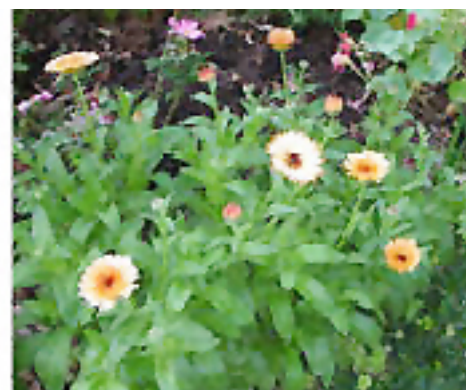
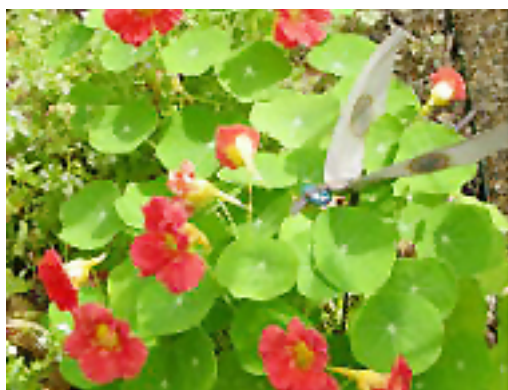
THE LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD . . . also based on Brenda's Chronicle column - when to do what in Greater Houston area gardens. PDF file on CD. \$20. Make checks payable to Brenda B. Smith and mail to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2013.

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.





Herb Garden of Susan Wood in May: coriander going to seed on left: dill in bloom on right. (Pink oleander blooms - not edible! - in background) This shows what your cool weather annuals will look like at maturity after planting in late fall or early winter. Susan Wood photos.



Three cool weather herbs: left, nasturtiums in bloom, showing how cold hardy it is in zone 9A. Center, Borage, with frost on leaves & flowers. Right, calendula, Zeolights variety, in bloom. Susan Wood photos.

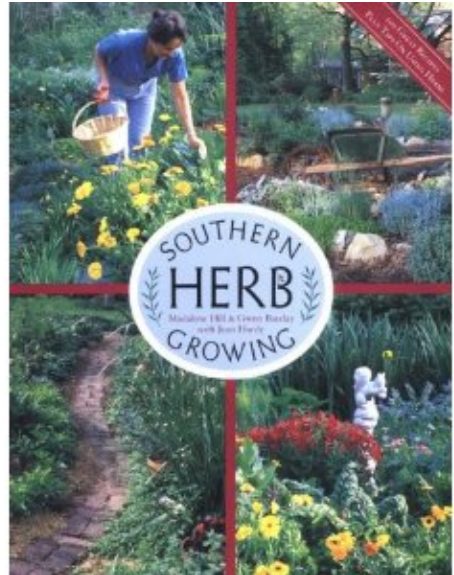
10 Biggest Mistakes Newcomers Make

Trying to Grow Herbs in the Houston area

By Susan Gail Wood

South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America

1. Not taking advantage of Herb Society of America events or website. See: www.herbsociety.org and the Houston group, www.herbsociety-stu.org.
 2. Trying to garden the way they do "up north." We are zone 9A. Buy a copy of "Southern Herb Growing" Hill & Barclay from a used bookstore or Amazon.com since it is out of print. Learn how to grow all our most popular herbs along with information on recipes, history and uses.
 3. Trying to grow basil before the soil warms up. It needs warm days to germinate if planting from seed. Plants can be set out in late spring or summer since they love the heat.
 4. Trying to grow cold weather annual herbs in the summer. Plant dill, parsley, fennel, borage, cilantro and nasturtiums in the fall or late winter. (Only nasturtiums will die back from a hard freeze.) All will go to seed once the weather heats up in early summer (time to plant basil).
 5. Cutting back or removing annual herbs before seed ripens, eliminating "volunteers" next season. Let annual herbs drop ripe seed to come up again next season when the time is right.
 6. Neglecting to start a compost pile. By returning all healthy plant material (including leaves and grass clippings) to the soil after composting, you will enrich the soil and have lots of volunteers.
 7. Growing the wrong "tarragon." This is hard to keep through our hot, humid summer. Try "Texas tarragon" instead: *Tagetes lucida*, better known as Mexican mint marigold. It's easy to grow year round and will bloom in late October with small yellow flowers. Cut back to ground in spring if top freezes.
 8. Forgetting to water when there's not enough rain. Water seeds once planted to keep moist during germination period. Water newly-transplanted container herbs for a week to get established in your garden. Water at least once a week during winter or when needed in summer. Use mulch.
 9. Planting perennial herbs too close together. Give them enough room to mature.
 10. Forgetting to cut herbs to use and enjoy often. Clipping back up to 1/3 of the annual or perennial herb now and then will make bushier plants. Use harvest for culinary, craft or decorative uses. A beautiful bouquet of fragrant herbs & flowers for the home is delightful.
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Visitors are welcome at the Herb Society's upcoming 7pm meetings at the Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive, Houston (713-284-1997):

Wed., Feb. 19: "Louisiana Cooking" by Lucia Bettler of Lucia's Garden

Wed., Mar. 19: "Plans for Memorial Park" by Jay Daniel, Houston Parks Department

Wed., April 16: "Herbal Skin Magic" by Karen Cottingham

Members are always on hand to answer questions and diagnose problems. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org.

John's Corner

Soil Amendments - Limestone and Dolomite



The past few weeks we have been discussing soil amendments of volcanic origins. This week I want to talk about soil amendments from sedimentary deposits. I often get asked how much lime should I apply to my soil? What the person is really asking is; how much calcium do I need? Many people use the term "Lime" in a generic sense for all products that contain calcium (Ca). Often the terms Lime, Limestone, Dolomite, etc. are mis-used and the person purchases the wrong product and gets disastrous results so I want to start with some definitions.

Lime - It is also referred to as Quicklime and is calcium oxide (CaO). It is sometimes found naturally in nature, where coal seams have burned or near volcanoes where there are limestone deposits that have been exposed to the high heat. Lime is produced by crushing and heating limestone which is calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) to very high temperatures. The heating process drives off the carbon dioxide (CO_2) leaving the calcium oxide. It is often used to create very hard soils before concrete is poured to make a harder and stronger base. Lime is very reactive (extremely alkaline) and caustic and should not be used in horticulture especially gardening.

Slaked Lime or Hydrated Lime - is produced by adding some water to the Quick Lime (Ca(OH)_2). This reduces the toxicity but the product is still very alkaline and should not be used in gardening. This is the lime product used to make various kinds of mortar and it is often added to cement to make it harder. Imagine what it does for your soil!

Note: Lime or Hydrated Lime may cause severe skin irritation, chemical burns, lung damage and blindness.

Agricultural Lime - Available by many names, AgLime, biolime, garden lime, etc. It is made by pulverizing limestone and sometimes chalk into a powder.

Dolomitic Lime - Is a type of limestone that has magnesium carbonate (MgCO_3) in the rock in addition to the calcium carbonate (CaCO_3).

This discussion will be limited to Agricultural Lime and Dolomitic Lime which may have a use in agriculture and horticulture.

Limestone does not dissolve in water very easily. For agricultural lime to be effective it must be ground or screened into a powder. As the particle size gets smaller the total surface area of the particles increases. This allows for a much faster breakdown and release of the calcium (or magnesium) by microbes in the soil so the minerals will become available to plants and soil life. The "fineness" of the particle is usually described by mesh size. Mesh size is just the number of wires per inch that the screen is composed of. For example, an 8 mesh screen will have particles

the size of BB's and a 60 mesh screen will have particles the size of face powder. If the limestone is larger than 8 mesh it has little or no value in gardening as the calcium is not available to plants. It costs a lot more to screen any material to smaller sizes hence the low priced products are a waste of money as they do not work.

Now that we have the basics out of the way, when and why should we use powdered limestone? The practice of using ag-lime began when one used the toxic artificial fertilizers to provide plant nutrients. Many of these make the soil acidic as they breakdown hence one must spend additional money to correct the acidity problem. This practice of applying lime is sometimes referred to as sweetening the soil.

One of the problems we face in gardening is that a pH test only tells us if the soil is acidic or alkaline, it does not tell us if we need calcium or magnesium much less about the health of our soil such as a microbial or other nutrient imbalance (In modern soil science the pH of a soil by itself is essentially worthless). Plants and soil life require far less magnesium than calcium. Hence, when we use a dolomitic lime the soils gets far too much magnesium. Sandy soils need about 7 parts calcium to one part magnesium and heavier clay soils need about a 10:1 ratio for most plants. Almost all limestone has some magnesium carbonate in it. When the levels of magnesium carbonate are higher geologists call it dolomite. In some cases the calcium to magnesium ratio can reach 1:1. Hence when one uses a dolomitic lime they get far too much magnesium. Too much magnesium cause other nutrients to be locked up and not available to plants along with creating hardpan and compaction.

Soils, plants and microbes need calcium and it is used in creating good soil structure (helps clay loosen up and become more friable). Calcium can also replace sodium on the soil particles and on the humus helping to remediate a salt problem.

If a GOOD soil analysis indicates that ag-lime is required, then all one has to do is sprinkle it lightly over the surface of the soil (do not till as tilling does far more harm than good). If a good quality (fine screened) limestone is used the natural acidity of rainwater will quickly dissolve it and allow the nutrients to enter the soil.

Note: In organic rich soils full of microbes if there is excess calcium fungus will absorb it and form calcium oxalate crystals on their hyphae removing it from the soil system bringing the chemistry of soils back into balance naturally. Fungus can do this for other nutrients also preventing an excess from causing problems.

Summary, ag-lime is rarely needed if biological (organic) methods are used in our gardens as there are better and more cost effective ways to provide calcium to soils than using ag-lime.

PROS:

- found all over the world in essentially unlimited quantities
- increase the pH of soil making them less acidic
- provides a source of calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) if dolomitic limestone is used
- helps with water penetration in very acidic soils (low pH)
- improves the absorption of major plant nutrients in very acidic soils
- on pasture land it helps cows grow quicker and stronger and helps cows produce more milk
- may help loosen clay soils
- a few species of plants need extra calcium in the soil (many species from the Mediterranean (olives and many herbs), Texas Hill country plants like salvia greggi, etc.
- for legumes it increase nitrogen fixation as bacteria prefer a slightly alkaline soil
- may help alleviate some plant diseases (ex. clubroot of brassicas and tomato end rot is often associated with a calcium deficiency)

CONS:

- takes energy to crush, screen and ship to market
- rarely needed
- too much ag-lime leads to hardpan and compaction of our soils
- as in all mineral or rock dusts it may be a respiratory or eye irritant
- many products do not list if it is dolomitic lime or the calcium/magnesium ratios
- better sources of calcium (crushed egg shells, bone meal, crushed oyster shells). Gypsum provides calcium and sulphur and does not change the pH or create soil problems from too much magnesium

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

(Events in Houston unless otherwise noted)

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

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

Sat., Feb. 15: Brazoria County Master Gardeners 8th Annual Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale, 8am-noon, Brazoria County Fairgrounds, 901 Downing St. Angleton. Details: txmg.org/brazoria or 979-864-1558 ext. 110.

Sat., Feb. 15: Basics of Landscape Design, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. www.myenchanted.com

Sat., Feb. 15: Trees for Houston Urban Fores-Tree Keeper Course 2014, 9am-noon, Trees for Houston, 10401 Stella Link (Clark Condon Associates Building). \$20. Details & register: <http://www.treesforhouston.org/> or brooke@treesforhouston.org

Sat., Feb. 15: Earth-Kind Gardening Practices for Texas, 10:15am at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

Sat, Feb. 15: Container Herb Garden by Ed Dreier, 1:30-3:30pm, Wabash Antiques & Feed Store, 5701 Washington Ave. Free. Details: <http://wabashfeed.com/>, 713-863-8322 or Debbie@wabashfeed.com

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, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston. 9:30am - "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, 7pm, 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, 10am, 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>

Wed., Feb. 19: Herbs - Louisiana Cooking by Lucia Bettler, 7pm, Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr., 713-284-1997. South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America event. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org

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

Fri., Feb. 22: Growing Azaleas and Camellias by Leon Macha, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

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

Sat., Feb. 22: "10 Most Effective Organic Solutions to Suburban Gardening" by John Dromgoole, 11:30am, Kingwood Garden Center, 1216 Stonehollow Drive, Kingwood. Details: 281-358-1805 or www.Kingwoodgardencenter.com

Sat., Feb. 22: "Orchids: Intermediate Class Potting, Dividing, Mounting," 2pm, \$35, Clown Alley Orchids, 3119 Lily St., Pasadena. Details: 281-991-6841 or www.clownalleyorchids.com

Sat., Feb. 22: Daylilies in the Landscape by Rev. Marlow Shubert , 2-4pm, Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield Road, Humble. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. Free, Details: 281-351-8827 or mary@springcreekdaylily.com

Tue., Feb. 25: Open Garden Day in Harris County Demonstration Gardens, Bear Creek Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. 10am - "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>

Wed., Feb. 26: Cactus & Succulents by Bruce Moffett and Josie Watts, 7:30pm, Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society event, free. Details: <http://www.hcsstex.org>

Sat., Mar. 1: Spring Vegetable Gardening Open Gardens and Talk, 9-11am, Fort Bend County Master Gardener demonstration gardens, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. 10am: Informal lecture. Details: 281-341-7068 or <http://www.fbmga.com/>.

Sat., Mar. 1: "Secrets to Your Best Tomatoes Ever" by Tom LeRoy, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2 pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

Sat., Mar. 1: NatureFest, 9am-3:30pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

Sat., Mar. 1: Green and Weedless: Lawn Care for Texas, 10:15am at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N.

Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

Sat., Mar. 1: 2014 Sunshine Farm Days & Spring Gardening Plant Sale, Jenkins Sunshine Farm LLC., 5800 Jackson Rd., Montgomery. Details: 936-648-6145 or www.goodcleanlivin.com

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

Wed., Mar. 5: Ants...Crazy and Fiery!!! by Dr. Paul Nester, Texas A&M, 9:30am, Gardeners By The Bay event at University Baptist Church, 16106 Middlebrook Drive. Details: Marjorie, 281-474-5051 or <http://gbtb.org>

Wed., Mar. 5: Gardening Daze, 8:30-10:30am, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

Thurs., Mar. 6: "Will My Orchid Ever Bloom Again?" by Bruce Cameron, Orchid Obsession owner, 10am, 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, 11am-5pm, 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. 10am-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.

Sat., Mar. 8: "How to Grow Orchids, Bromeliads and Other Air Plants" with Zac Stayton, 9-11am, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Dr., Tickets \$23. Details: <http://www.hmns.org/>

Sat., Mar. 8: Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2's Annual Perennial, Herb and Tomato/Pepper Sale, 9am-1pm, 7600 Red Bluff Rd., Pasadena. 8am: "Plant Overview" by Heidi Sheesley, Treeseach Farms. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Sat., Mar. 8: Montgomery County Master Gardeners' Spring Plant Sale, 9am-1pm, Montgomery County Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. 8am: Program. Details: 936-539-7824 or <http://www.mcmga.com>

Sat.-Sun., Mar. 8-9 Galveston Home & Garden Show, Galveston Convention Center at the San Luis Resort, 5600 Seawall Blvd, Galveston. Sat. 8, 10am-6pm; Sun. 11am-4pm. Speakers: Christopher Wiesinger, Brenda Beust Smith, Tom LeRoy, Baxter Williams, Jan Brick and Michael & Nicole Graham. Fees, details: www.galveston.com/homeandgardenshow

Sat., Mar. 8: Growing Citrus in Containers by John Panzarella, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

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

Tues., Mar. 11: "Irrigation," 6:30pm, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 event. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Wed., Mar. 12: Gardening Daze (working in gardens), 8:30-10:30am, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

Fri.-Sat., Mar. 14-15: March Mart, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Friday: 8am-4pm.; Saturday: 8am-3pm. Cultivation and care info available. Details: 281-443-8731 or www.hcp4.net/mercer

Sat., Mar. 15: The Grass is Always Greener-Organic Lawn Care by Mike Serant, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2 pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

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

Sun., Mar. 16: Invasives Beware (volunteer removal), 2-4pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

Wed., Mar. 17: Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2's Open Garden Day, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. 9:30am: "Pruning and Garden Cleanup" program. Master Gardeners Q&A. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Wed., Mar. 19: "How to Grow Peppers in the Southeast Region" by Gene Spiller, 10am, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 event. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Wed., Mar. 19: Gardening Daze, 8:30-10:30am, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

Wed., Mar. 19: Plans for Memorial Park by Jay Daniel, Houston Parks Dept., 7pm, Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr., 713-284-1997. South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America event. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org

Sat., Mar. 22: "Planting" Porches and Patios, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

Sat.-Sun, Mar. 22-23: Peckerwood Gardens 2014 Open Week, 20571 FM 359, Peckerwood (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

Wed., Mar. 26: Gardening Daze, 8:30-10:30am, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones Wed., Mar. 26: Gardening Daze, 8:30-10:30am, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Details: 281-446-8588 or www.hcp4.net/jones

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

Sat., Mar. 29: "Planting a Butterfly Garden" with Soni Holladay, 9-11am, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Dr., Tickets \$23, Members \$17. Details: <http://www.hmns.org/>

Sat., Mar. 29: Spring Fairy Garden Workshop, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. Free but reservations required. www.myenchanted.com

Sat., Mar. 29: Texas Invasives Citizen Scientist Training, 9am-4pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature, 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Reservations/details: http://www.texasinvasives.org/invaders/workshop_results.php

Sat., March 29, 2014: Garden Villas Garden Club Annual Plant and Garden Accessories Sale, 9am-1pm, Garden Villas Paetk Community Center, 6720 S. Haywood. Free. Details: bburns50@aol.com or 713-545-2926

Sat., Apr. 5: Cockrell Butterfly Center Spring Plant Sale, 9am - noon (or sold out!), Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Dr., 7th level of the parking garage, Details: <http://www.hmns.org>

Sat., Apr. 5: Easy Care Roses by Robbi Will, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206.
<http://myenchanted.com/>

Sat., Apr. 12: Attracting Hummingbirds by Mark Klym, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206.
<http://myenchanted.com/>

Wed., Apr. 16: Herbal Skin Magic by Karen Cottingham, 7pm, Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr., 713-284-1997. South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America event. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org

Sat., Apr. 26: Choosing the Right Vine by Margaret Sinclair, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206.
<http://myenchanted.com/>

Sat., May 3: Know Your Enemy (garden bugs), 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206.
www.myenchanted.com

Fri.-Sat., May 3-4: Houston Pond Society and Lone Star Koi Club, 2014 Water Garden and Pond Tour, 10am-6pm. Self-guided tour. Tickets \$10 available at 30± water gardens and (starting April 26) at Nelson Water Gardens in Katy (<http://nelsonwatergardens.com/>). Details: <http://houstonpondsociety.org/>, <http://lonestarkoi.com/> or 713-822-5515.

Sat., May 17: Creating a Backyard Wildscape by Tricia Bradbury, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206. <http://myenchanted.com/>

Sun., May 18: Celebration of Daylilies, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Payne's in the Grass Daylily Farm, 2130 O'Day Road, Pearland, Texas 77581. Details: 281-419-6661, 281-485-3821, <http://paynesinthegrassdaylilyfarm.com>

Sat., May 24: Enjoy a Night Blooming Garden, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM 2759, Richmond. Details: 281-937-9449. Repeated: 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM 359, Richmond. Details: 281-341-1206.
<http://myenchanted.com/>

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.
Please help us grow by informing all your membership of this weekly newsletter!*

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/>



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<http://natureswayresources.com/>



Save 20%: Redeem this coupon for a big discount on Nature's Way Resources "Herb Mix" (<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: 02/23/14