



April 25, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 55th 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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Two great ladies are being celebrated: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, left, turns 40! And the International Oleander Society spotlights the new Jane Long Oleander at its big Oleander Festival Luncheon

MERCER CELEBRATES . . . NEW OLEANDER . . . FABULOUS WATER GARDENS . . . AND WILDFLOWERS IN LAWNS

Fun times coming up for gardeners!

* **Friday, May 2 - The new Jane Long Oleander**, commemorating the Mother of Texas, will be in the spotlight at the Oleander Festival's kickoff Luncheon at Moody Gardens in Galveston. As you can see from the picture above, this unique bloom mostly produces six petals, rather than the usual five-petal oleander bloom.

This is significant because Jane Long spent six incredible months on Bolivar Peninsula, laying the groundwork for her amazing role in the establishment of the Republic of Texas. Want to know more about "Our Mother"? Email me at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net with your request for the Jane Long packet.

Back to this new historically-named oleander, hybridizer Bob Newding will be guest speaker with " . . . rest of the story." Make luncheon reservations with Mary Branum at 281-433-2945 or mbranum1@hotmail.com. The luncheon is a fundraiser for Galveston's Oleander Garden Park, 2624 Sealy, which will host a "Stroll in the Park" May 18. Details: www.oleander.org.

The Jane Long Oleander will be available for sale by the International Oleander Society at the 2014 Oleander Festival, May 3-4 at Moody Gardens Visitor Center, 1 Hope Blvd., Galveston. It will also be sold by the [Jane Long Society](#), a committee of the [Bolivar Peninsula Cultural Foundation](#), at the Jane Long Festival, Oct. 11, on Bolivar Peninsula.

* Meanwhile, north of Houston, flowers will be bouncing and trees swaying when [Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens](#) celebrates its 40th Anniversary. I am so awed by this. Three decades ago, my son, who is autistic, was on a therapy program out of Philadelphia that ordered us to walk up and down hills.

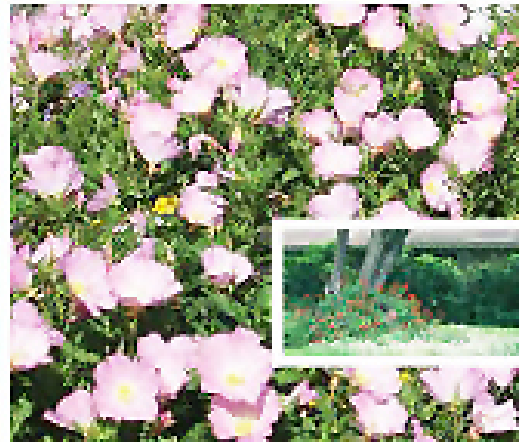
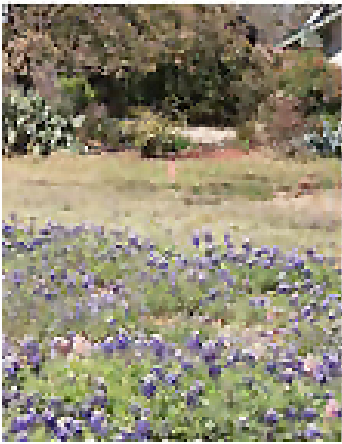
Hills . . . in Houston?

All we have, we tried to tell them, are freeway overpasses! But they insisted, so we investigated and discovered the now-out-of-bounds high banks of Cypress Creek. Imagine my surprise and delight, as we walked up and down the steep bank, when suddenly the strange, overgrown forest was filled with the most incredible camellias I'd ever seen.

They were Thelma Mercer's camellias and no one was more thrilled than I when her treasures became one of the focal points of a new botanical garden in my part of town. (Now you know how really old I am!) It was a park back then, just not yet a "treasured" one.

Mercer's "Fabulous at Forty" Garden Party and Auction will be Sat., May 3. Guest speaker Greg Grant has probably impacted your garden more than you will ever know with all his floral introductions, most of which are treasures rescued from old gardens across the South and, thanks to Greg, introduced into the nursery trade. Reservations are required at 281-443-8731.

Even if you can't make the party, be sure to go out to Mercer, our living plant library, some time soon. It is SO GORGEOUS right now as the picture above proves.



It's a great year for wildflowers such as bluebonnets, left, and evening primroses.

This has been a great year for wildflowers and it's exciting to see so many homeowners in urban subdivision neighborhoods allowing bluebonnets to bloom in front yards.

Hope they made it through that last cold spell. But even if they didn't, know that your yard is probably encouraging other homeowners to try this themselves. Thanks for that!

In the Greater Houston area, wildflowers (that you want) will only work in yards that are extremely well drained. If yours isn't, consider creating an isolated raised areas or planting them in pots that sit in the garden. Bluebonnets cannot stand prolonged periods in very wet heavy soil, as our gumbo clay tends to be during our spring and fall monsoons.

Don't plant seed now. Do this in the late fall. But you can put in plants which can be found in nurseries. They'll hopefully drop enough seed. Depends on how severely they were forced into bloom.

If you're lucky enough to have had bluebonnets, primroses, etc., bloom naturally in your lawn this spring, don't mow too soon. A general rule says that when half the stand has gone to seed, it's okay to mow. Enough seed has been dropped to ensure next year's display.

Couple of tips on how to enjoy lawn wildflowers without infuriating the neighbors:

- * Mow gradually around the outer edges of the bloom spread, slowly decreasing the size, giving plants toward the center a little more time. This helps create a greater concentration of color, and makes the display look more planned - an important consideration in most suburban neighborhoods.
- * Insert a hardscape such as a birdbath, large rocks, a fun sculpture, in with the flowers.
- * Next spring don't mistake spouting bluebonnets for clover and mow down the newly-emerging plants!

Unfortunately for a friend, allowing wildflowers to decorate her front lawn in spring prompted letters from her neighborhood association. Her solution was to insert a fun sign in the patch, urging viewers to be patient while her wildflowers were setting her seed. The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center does this on Woodway. Great idea!



When this lantana blooms,
watch out! This will
become a landing runway
for butterflies!

Shhhh.... Monarchs feeding!



If you've tried and failed to get bluebonnets and other spring wildflowers to bloom in your yard, chances are it's too low. Wildflowers generally grow in extremely well-drained areas, so they do well on lawns raised way above ground level. Otherwise, too much of the seed will rot in our spring monsoons.



One way to draw the eye away from fading wildflowers is to have lots of color or eye-interest exploding in other areas. Beautiful and beneficial water gardens do this and serve multiple other purposes in our landscapes.

Our Society Spotlight today is on water gardens. Mark your calendar for the big Houston Pond Society and Lone Star Koi Club Water Garden and Pond Tour Fri.-Sat., May 3-4, 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/>).

One great starting point for the Pond Tour is at the home pictured at right above, 218 Leyden Court in Katy. Full details available at: the Houston Pond Society, <http://houstonpondsociety.org>, the Lone Star Koi Club, <http://lonestarkoi.com>, or 713-822-5515.

Spotlighting Our Plant Societies.

Houston Pond Society & Lone Star Koi Club

The Ten Most Common Mistakes in Installing and Maintaining a Pond

BY DAN COOK

Lone Star Koi Club and Houston Pond Society

1. Have a plan-don't just dig a hole in the middle of the back yard and call it a pond.
2. A pond is part of the whole landscape picture. Make sure it fits in and complements the rest of the yard.
3. Koi or Goldfish? The construction of each type pond is different. A koi pond is typically deeper and requires a higher degree of filtration than a goldfish pond.
4. Make it bigger. The biggest regret that pond owners have is they didn't make it big enough.
5. Install a bottom drain. This will help keep the pond clean and will make it easier to drain the pond.
6. Install a bog filter. This will help keep the water clear.
7. Don't overfeed your fish. This will get the water dirty.
8. Don't let your installer sell you what he wants to install. Get what you want. Do a lot of research and look at a lot of ponds before starting construction.
9. Don't install invasive or illegal plants such as water lettuce or water hyacinth.
10. Clean your pond regularly. Get the leaves out of the pond and clean the filters on a routine basis.

*Note: If you haven't seen your specialty plant group in our "Society Spotlight," it could be we do not have valid email address for you. To make sure your group is contacted, email us at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

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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. A pdf book. \$20. Make checks payable to Brenda B. Smith and mail to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2013.

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

(Events in Houston unless otherwise noted. No events picked up from other newsletters or media releases. Submit written in the format below, specifically earmarked for publication in the Lazy Gardener & Friends Newsletter.)

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., Apr. 26: Self-Watering Containers by Angela Chandler, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920 Rd, Tomball. Free. 281-351-8851, www.arbortgate.com

Sat., April 26: Backyard Basics - Fruit Production by Deborah Birge, 8:30-11am, Fort Bend County Extension Office, 1402 Band Rd, Rosenberg. \$15 (\$25 couple). Details: brandyrader@ag.tamu.edu, 281-342-3034, www.fortbend.agrilife.org or www.fbmj.com.

Sat, Apr. 26: Orchids Intermediate Class, 2pm, Clown Alley Orchids, 3119 Lily Street, Pasadena. \$35. Details: 281-991-6841 or www.clownalleyorchids.com

Sat., Apr. 26: Hibiscus Clinic, 10:15 a.m. Cornelius Nurseries, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Contact: www.corneliusnurseries/clinics

Sat., Apr. 26: Earth Day Native Plant Sale, 9am-5pm. Also: Edible Wild Plants, 9am-1pm (\$65). Both: Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Dr. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org

Sat.-Sun., Apr. 26-27: "Through the Garden Gate" Heritage Gardeners of Friendswood Spring Garden Tour, Sat. 12-4pm, Sun. 1-5pm, five gardens in Friendswood, 112 W. Spreading Oaks; tickets \$10. Details: 281-992-4438 or www.heritagegardener.org

Sun, Apr., 27: Space City Hibiscus Society Sale, 1-4pm, East Harris Co. Activity Center 7340 Spencer Highway, Pasadena; www.spacecityahs.org

Sun., Apr. 27: Designing Rain Gardens & Nature Ponds, 3-5pm, \$65, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Dr. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org

Tues., Apr. 29: Growing Vegetables in Containers by Dr. Joe Novak, 6-8pm, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. \$50 Near Northwest Management District event. Details: 713-895-8021, , info101@nnmd.org or www.nnmd.org/Programs/GardeningWorkshops.html

Sat., May 2: Oleander Festival Kickoff Luncheon honoring the new Jane Long Oleander. Moody Gardens Hotel, Galveston. Reservations and details: 409-770-4321 or www.oleander.org

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

Sat., May 3: Houston Hemerocallis Society and Houston Area Daylily Society Daylily Sale, 10am-4pm or sell-out, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Details: 281-469-4109, lorisgarrett@comcast.net or www.ofts.com/hhs

Sat., May 3: Drip Irrigation by Fort Bend Master Gardeners, 8:30-11am. Demonstration gardens open for tour. Fort Bend County Extension Office, 1402 Band Rd, Rosenberg. \$15 (\$25 couple). Details: 281-342-3034; brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu; fortbendagrillife.org or www.fbmga.com

Sat., May 3: Native Plants - Texas Style Clinic, 10:15 a.m. Cornelius Nurseries, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Contact: www.corneliusnurseries/clinics

Sat., May 3: Garden to Kitchen Demos, all day, Sunshine Farm, 5800 Jackson Road, Montgomery. Details: www.goodcleanlivin.com or www.goodcleanlivin.com.

Sat., May 3: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Garden's 40th Anniversary Garden Party and Auction, 6pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Reservations: 281-443-8731.

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

Fri.-Sat., May 3-4: 2014 Oleander Festival and Grand Oleander Sale, 10am-4pm, Moody Gardens Visitor Center, 7 Hope Blvd., Galveston. Details: www.oleander.org

Sun., May 4: Growing Tropical Trees by Dianne Norman, 1:30-3:30pm, Wabash Feed & Garden Store, 5701 Washington Ave. Details: wabashfeed.com, 713-863-8322, dianne@wabashfeed.com

Tues, May 6: Aquaponics by Jim Bundscho, noon, Agrilife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-627-6818

Tues., May 6: Soil Management for Home Gardens by Dr. Joe Novak, 6-8pm, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. \$30 Near Northwest Management District event. Details: 713-895-8021, , info101@nnmd.org or www.nnmd.org/Programs/GardeningWorkshops.shtml

Sat., May 10: Sugar Land Garden Club Annual Spring Garden Tour, East New Territory Subdivision, Sugar Land. 9am-3pm. Map and details: <http://sugarlandgardenclub.org/>

Sat., May 10: Space City Hibiscus Society Sale, 1-4pm, Nessler Center, 2010 5th Ave. N. Texas City. Details: www.spacecityahs.org

Sat, May 10 - Brazosport Daylily Society sale, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Lake Jackson. Details: 979-297-1889, ninaimperial@comcast.net; Nancy Freshour, 979-285-9664, www.facebook.com/brazosportdaylilysociety

Sat., May 10: Cypress Creek Daylily Society Show (no sale), Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-

Westfield, 281-356-2534.

Sat., May 10: Culinary Herbs by Fort Bend Master Gardeners, 8:30-11am. Demonstration gardens open for tour. Fort Bend County Extension Office, 1402 Band Rd, Rosenberg. \$15 (\$25 couple). Details: 281-342-3034; brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu; fortbendagrilife.org or www.fbmga.com

Sat., May 10: Rainwater Harvesting by Jim Jahnke. 9-11:00 a.m. at Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Email reservations to galv3@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

Sat., May 10 Shrubs: Roses & Azaleas Clinic, 10:15 a.m. Cornelius Nurseries, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Contact: www.corneliusnurseries/clinics

Sat.-Sun., May 10-11: Houston Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Sale, 9am-5pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Details: www.hcsstex.org

Sun., May 11: Plant a Butterfly Feeder Hanging Basket, 2-4pm, \$65, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Dr. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org

Tues., May 13: Insects in Your Garden, 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>

Tues., May 13: Garden Pests - Identify and Manage! by Dr. Joe Novak, 6-8pm, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. \$30 Near Northwest Management District event. Details: 713-895-8021, , info101@nnmd.org or www.nnmd.org/Programs/GardeningWorkshops.shtml

Wed., May 14: Butterfly Gardening, noon-2pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Bring lunch. Details: 281-443-8731, www.hcp4.net/mercer.

Thurs., May 15: Insects in Your garden, 6:30pm, Trini Menenhall Sosa Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-627-6818

Thurs., May 15: Greening the Prairie by Lisa Gray: 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston chapter event. Details: www.npsot.org/houston.

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/>

Sat., May 17: Lone Star Daylily Society Show/Sale, 1-4pm, Alvin Senior Center 309 West Sealy, Alvin. Details: Details: www.lonestardaylilysociety.org

Sat., May 17: Galveston County Fruit Growers Tour, 9am-noon. Free. Details: Galveston County AgriLife Extension, 281-534-3413; galv@wt.net or www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston.

Sat., May 17: Insects in Your Garden, 10am, Maude Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-627-6818

Sat., May 17: Perennials Clinic, 10:15 a.m. Cornelius Nurseries, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Contact:

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. Details: <http://paynesinthegrassdaylilyfarm.com>

Sun., May 18: Lone Star Hibiscus Society Sale, 1-4pm, Knights of Columbus Hall 702 Burney Rd. Sugar Land. Details: www.lonestarahs.org

Sun., May 18: Shimek's Daylily Bloom Fest Open Garden, 8am-6pm, 3122 County Road 237, Alvin. Free.

Details: 281-331-4395, neshimek@comcast.net or www.cityscope.net/~neshimek

Mon., May 19: Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2's Open Garden, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Program at 9:30am. . Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Wed., May 21: Birds in Our Area by Paul Fagala, Wild Birds Limited, 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>

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. Details: <http://myenchanted.com/>

Sat., May 24: Butterfly & Hummingbird Gardens & Landscape Design Clinics, 10:15 a.m. Cornelius Nurseries, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Contact: www.corneliusnurseries/clinics

Tues., May 27: Insects in Your Garden, 6:30pm, Recipe for Success, 4400 Yupon St. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-627-681

Tues., May 27: Insects in Your Garden / Open Garden Day, 9-11:30am, AgriLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-627-6818

Sun., June 1: Space City Hibiscus Society Sale, 1-4pm, East Harris Co. Activity Center 7340 Spencer Highway, Pasadena. Details: www.spacecityahs.org

Sun., June 8: Lone Star Hibiscus Society Sale, 1-4pm, Knights of Columbus Hall 702 Burney Rd. Sugar Land. Details: www.lonestarahs.org

Sat., June 14: Bolivar Peninsula Plant Sale and Bazaar, 11am-4pm, free, Bay Vue United Methodist Church, 1441 Jane Long Highway (Hwy 87), Crystal Beach. Details: 409-684-2634

Thurs., June 19: Plants That Like Wet Feet by Mary Carol Edwards, 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston chapter event. Details: www.npsot.org/houston

Sat., June 21: 4th annual Tomato & Vegetable Contest, Kingwood Garden Center, 1216 Stonehollow Drive, Kingwood. Details: 281-358-1805 or www.Kingwoodgardencenter.com

Sat., July 12: Texas Rose Rustlers Meeting, 10am-3pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free, open to public. Details: www.texasroserustlers.com or 281-443-8731.

Sat, July 26 : The Plumeria Society of America Show & Plant Sale, 9 to 3pm, Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 1st Street, Rosenberg. Details: www.theplumeriasociety.org

WANT YOUR EVENT IN THE LG&F CALENDAR? PLEASE NOTE!

You have to send it to us!

EVENTS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP FROM OTHER NEWSLETTERS OR MEDIA RELEASES.

All submitted events should be written in the exact format used for events above and must be specifically labeled for publication in LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER. Email to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

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

Brenda's 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) Email specific requests to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

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



Clockwise from bottom left: US blueberry grower Henry Sunda, Nanjing Botanical Garden Professor Yin Yunlong, and US horticulturist David Creech and his wife Janet, survey a *Taxodium* nursery near Jinjiang, Fujian province, which has more than 2 million plants. Provided to China Daily.

'Happy Tree' lures Texan to China

by MIKE PETERS (CHINA DAILY)

Editor's note: Many of our readers will remember Mike Peters from his many years as a top notch Houston/Southern U.S. garden writer. Mike writes for the China Daily these days. We love hearing from him periodically and thought everyone would get a kick out of reading a reprint of one of his articles from a little while back that features Texan David Creech among others. Enjoy.

David Creech is a self-proclaimed "plant nut" from Texas who keeps coming back to China for two reasons. The horticulture professor and arboretum director wants to help stop the spread of cancer around the world. He'd also like to help spread blueberry farms around China.

More than a decade ago, cancer research labs and pharmaceutical companies in the US couldn't get their hands on enough *Camptotheca acuminata*, also known as Happy Tree of China thanks to the literal translation of its name, xi shu. The tree is the source of Camptothecin, a cancer-fighting drug.

Creech knew there were more plants - and likely more genetic variety - in the tree's native regions, that is, primarily Southeast China and the Tibet autonomous region.

"My first trip to China was in 1997 when I accompanied Shiyu Li, the director of the National Center for Pharmaceutical Crops at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. Li had received a large grant for *Camptotheca acuminata*," Creech says. "We traveled all over China for about six weeks working with Chinese officials to accumulate germplasm from a wide cross-section of provenances and to study the ethnobotanical aspects of the tree.

It was the start of a long relationship.

"During that first visit," he says, "I met many Chinese scientists and made friends with like-minded horticulturists. Those first encounters led to later invitations to visit China on a variety of projects. "Since that time, I've been to China about a dozen times," he says, and he's always surprised at what he sees.

"I have been totally amazed at the urban vegetation strategy in China. There's no doubt China is a world leader in re-vegetation and highway plantings. Any visitor to China - particularly those who visit the megacities - cannot help but notice that China is planting millions of trees. All the superhighways, highways, roads, railroads, canals and riversides are planted with trees".

Besides providing an aesthetic treasure, he says, "these trees do much to provide a carbon sink, alleviate pollution and reduce erosion".

"I also come back to China because I'm enthralled with *Taxodium* improvement," Creech says, referring to a plant genus in the cypress family. "While baldcypress is a native US tree, we have done very little to improve the species. Chinese researchers have bred promising parents, selected superior clones, and propagated them asexually into numbers that we in the US find difficult to comprehend.

"A couple of years ago I visited a *Taxodium* nursery near Jinjiang (Fujian province) that has over 2 million plants," he says. "That's probably more than is produced in all the United States."

Creech's counterpart, Yin Yunlong, a professor at the Nanjing Botanical Garden (NBG), has introduced him to the extensive breeding and selection efforts that his garden has pioneered in China and the extension of this US tree into highway plantings, parks, and coastal windbreaks. Some of that is documented on the website of Creech's university arboretum, <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>.

Creech is also eager to see China embrace another US favorite: blueberries. "I'm excited that the growing blueberry industry will prosper and provide China with a new and exciting highly nutritious crop," he says. "With significant central and provincial support, many plantings are in the young stages of development. Whether or not they prosper will depend on Chinese scientists, farmers and businessmen. I'm here to help."

Creech is working with professors He Shanan and Yu Hong, also of the NBG, on blueberry research. "It's a new and exciting crop for China," he says. "Blueberries have gained favor with the upwardly mobile Chinese looking for a tasty and highly antioxidant fruit. Thousands of acres are being planted and some have met with great success. The market is under-exploited, and there appears to be great excitement and government support to extend plantings across those areas where this fruit crop has been adapted."

Mike Peters
China Daily
michaelpeters@chinadaily.com.cn
<http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/us>

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 co-editor 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.





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