



May 23, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 59th 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.

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Enjoy!

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by Brenda Beust Smith



Neither nutgrass, left, nor amaryllis care a fig about gardeners. Mistreat them and they'll just go dormant until, they hope, you go away. Among amaryllis that will be available at the Greater Houston Hippeastrum Society fall sale will be, left to right, 'Cybister Bogota,' Cybister Chico' and 'Elvas.'

SO . . . HOW QUIESCENT IS YOUR NUTGRASS? AND HOW

BEAUTIFUL YOUR AMARYLLIS?

by Brenda Beust Smith

For the first time in years, we have nutgrass. It's continually popping up in the bed where we didn't put newspapers layers down on top the soil before putting mulch on. We ran out.

T Polk of Mother Nature's Landscaping said it's probably because we "disturbed its quiescence."

Well, pardon me!

Nutgrass - which is actually a sedge, not a grass - can lie dormant for years. Make that decades. Make that centuries. You probably don't care that it's been tagged the "world's worst weed"? Or that it's a medicinal plant in the Far East and used to treat nausea, fever, inflammation and - ta, da! - age spots?

Me either. I just want it to go away. Who else would tell you these things?

Unfortunately, far, far below the roots you see when you pull it out, is "The Nut." Pull off its sprout+roots and it cheerfully sends up another set. Or it may decide to go into a state of quiescence until something triggers a divine resurrection - digging in the soil, changing the oxygen/moisture/sunlight levels, severe temperature swings, extreme drought, floods, earthquake...

You can keep pulling it out to stop new leaves that help fuel development of more nuts. Or, lay newspaper or weed guard cloth over the soil before piling on mulch. This will force new growth into the lawn where - okay, I've said it before - mowed nutgrass looks just like mowed St. Augustine.

Extremely healthy St. Augustine won't let nutgrass sprout there either, hopefully forcing the nut into an even longer period of quiescence.



"WHAT'S THAT FLOWER?" is a new column segment. If you're curious about an easily-visible-from-the-street, large blooming shrub or planting, if you can, email me a picture at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net. I may use a photo from my own files if it makes the flower clearer to viewers. Lately I've received queries about:

1. Agapanthus or Lily-of-the-Nile are bulbs often seen in commercial plantings. Some folks have great luck with them. For others they are hard to grow. So don't take it personally if yours don't do well.
(Madeleine Hamm photo)

2. Coreopsis. Our fields are glowing yellow these days with either coreopsis, above (or what some native plant folks call DYCs - damn yellow composites). Sometimes it's easy to identify all our yellow daisy-like wildflowers. Sometimes not. They do tend to cross breed in those fields. Enjoy them especially on I-45 south to Galveston. These, like agapanthus, need an extremely well-drained growing site with full to partial sun.

3. Mimosa. These beautiful, feathery-flowered, extremely fragrant trees are, unfortunately, now on the invasive list for our area. The seeds germinate so easily in almost all soils; they tend to overpower native species needed for our wildlife. But they are so pretty!

* * *

*"... gave one of the slow unblinking stares they do when
they want to give you the full force of their indifference."*

- Martha Grimes, "The Stargazey"

My apologies to Martha. But her description of a Horace the cat does made me think also of amaryllis. These incredibly beautiful, unbelievably hardy bulbs couldn't care less what you do. They're going to bloom when and how they want to, even lying on the floor of the garage. I had it happen.

Of course, it's better if they're actually planted. I have them spotted all over the yard and all are re-gifts. I bought them for my grandmother Mimi Gracida, potted and forced so she could enjoy them in her apartment around Christmas. She would "re-gift" them back to me when the blooms faded and I planted them in my yard. So each bloom brings fond memories of Mimi.

Houston has two amaryllis societies:

* Houston Amaryllis Society (www.houstonamaryllissociety.com). Meetings: fourth Tuesdays, 10am, Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. on the fourth Tuesday of the month. The May 27 meeting will be the last until September. Details: Betty Lenderman, 281-5458893.

* the Greater Houston Hippeastrum/Amaryllis Society. Meetings: second Wednesdays at 9:30am. May 14 meeting was last until September. New site is being scheduled. Details: Charles Prasek, chas541prasek@att.net or 15319 Vandalia Way, Houston TX 77053-2123

Below, Charles' tips on getting the most out of amaryllis plantings. True amaryllis are ideal lazy gardener plants. But that doesn't mean you can't improve their production with some advice from the pros!

Spotlighting Our Plant Organizations

Greater Houston Hippeastrum/Amaryllis Society



Also available at the Greater Houston Hippeastrum Society's fall Amaryllis Sale (date/time to be announced): 'Gervase', 'Ice Queen', 'Ruby Star', and 'Tosca.'

"The 10 Biggest Mistakes Newcomers Make Growing Amaryllis/Hippeastrum in the Greater Houston Area" by Charles Prasek of the Greater Houston Hippeastrum/Amaryllis Society

1. **Over-watering!** Containers must allow drainage or bulbs will rot. Use raised beds in the garden. In water culture, base (basal plate) of bulb must be above water level.
2. **Not giving bulbs a good start.** The first 12 months are critical in developing a good root system and building overall bulb health so that bulbs will have a greater propensity to produce bloom and offsets.
3. **Improper fertilizing.** Bulbs develop steady growth with light (1/4 strength) feeding MAY through SEPTEMBER. These are particularly heavy feeders so additional applications of seaweed extracts, fish hydrolysates, and compost teas will enhance growth and vigor.
4. **Poor soil management.** Incorporate leaf mold and compost to develop a healthy, friable soil texture thus increasing microbial activity.
5. **Too much summer sun exposure.** Ideal: morning sun till noon with shade until 4pm. Summer afternoon sun is harsh and the straps (leaves) will 'bleach-out' interfering with photosynthesis robbing bulbs of stamina.
6. **Unnecessarily stressing bulbs.** Bulbs require access to moisture and nutrients on a continuous basis - uneven growing conditions results in diminished bloom and a gradual decline (shrinking) of bulbs.
7. **Ignoring bulbs.** Pay attention to bulb health. Healthy bulbs are surprisingly resilient and resist pests and disease. However, pest and/or disease problems need to be addressed immediately to limit damage to bulbs.
8. **Limiting your selections.** Know that in addition to the common there are "Spider," "Miniature" and "Double" types; Dutch, Israeli, South African, South American, Japanese and Australian-sourced bulb varieties and species all of which govern timing of blooming, growth habit, propagation and grooming.

9. Planting bareroot bulbs at the wrong time. Divide bulbs and transplant bareroot only in the months of April and October. Bulbs with an intact root ball and soil may be transplanted anytime of the year.

10. Not realizing how amaryllis bloom. The Amaryllis/Hippeastrum bulb has the capacity to nurture blooms for two consecutive years. Good culture ensures bloomscapes now and initiates "inflorescences" for next year's blooming.

* * *

P.S. The bulbs I received back from Mimi usually went into the ground around April or May. These bulbs forced in pots for winter bloom did have the healthy root systems he describes above. So would bulbs dug now to thin out stands that have gotten too thick.

Keep an eye on our calendar below for meetings and sales by both Houston amaryllis groups

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*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.

John's Corner

Organic Fertilizers and Nutrients - 1

This week we are going to start a new series on organic, natural fertilizers and nutrient sources.

The old obsolete model of plant nutrition is based on feeding the plant directly via water soluble nutrients. The modern methods are based on soil biology where one feeds the soil and the microbes in the soil feed the plant. These are very different approaches.

A question often asked is why an organic or natural product versus an artificial fertilizer? So this week we will look at what happens when we use an artificial fertilizer.



I became interested in this subject over 30 years ago when I started studying natural and organic methods. My interest was increased when I read an article in the Journal of Environmental Horticulture 17(2):95-98, June 1999 where the researchers found that Azalea Lace Bugs were actually attracted to plants fertilized with artificial fertilizers! Artificial fertilizers create fast, but weak unhealthy growth that actually attracts insect pests and increases a plants susceptibility to disease.

Another example: artificial fertilizers are labeled 10-10-10 which means they contain 10% nitrogen (N), 10% phosphorous (P), and 10% potassium (K). This is where the NPK comes from and it is the amount of nutrient in the fertilizers (30%). Did you ever ask yourself what is in the other 70%?

A lady mayor of Quincy, Washington first noticed children becoming sick, livestock dying and crops failing. She figured out that they had one thing in common. They had all been exposed to a local artificial fertilizer. She contacted Duff Wilson, an environmental reporter for the Seattle Times. They found the fertilizer contained hazardous waste. The complete story and the government cover up is told in the book *Fateful Harvest*, by Duff Wilson (Harper Collins Publisher, ISBN 0-06-019369-7). It explains how hazardous waste is disposed of in synthetic fertilizers and ends up contaminating the food supply and hurting our children and pets. The State of Washington and the Country of Canada made this practice illegal; however, on October 23, 2002 the EPA made it legal for hazardous wastes (heavy metals) to be disposed of in artificial fertilizers, and they do not have to tell you (no labeling). The State of Washington's environmental department tested numerous brands and found that many of them contained hazardous materials including some sold here in the Houston area.

Artificial fertilizers are chemically salts. The reason we put salt in canned goods, jerky, pickles, etc. is to kill bacteria. There is a good bacteria that lives in healthy soil (*Actinomycetes*) that is salt sensitive. This bacteria's role in nature is to control fungal pathogens (it eats them). When artificial fertilizers are applied, we lose this good bacteria and diseases like Brown Patch, Take-All, and St. Augustine Decline are given an opportunity to grow unchecked in our lawns. Synthetic nitrogen fertilizers increase the amounts of toxic nitrates in dietary intake. According to the National Research Council, 6 of the top 7 and 9 of the top 15, foods with oncogenic (cancer causing) risk are produce items with high nitrate content from pesticides or nitrogen fertilizers. A 12 year study comparing organically grown versus chemically grown showed that chemically grown foods had 16 times more nitrate (a carcinogen).

Chemicals not absorbed by the grass can leach into ground-water and pollute the water supply. In time local ponds, streams, and lakes become polluted. Salts accumulate in the soil and can "lock up" water and other nutrients making them unavailable to grass, salt buildup also reduces the soil's ability to absorb water and air. Fast release chemicals needlessly stress the grass making it more susceptible to insects, disease and injury. Slow-release fertilizers are coated with other materials that can further pollute the soil and environment. Thatch greatly increases with the use of synthetic fertilizers since the soil becomes too acidic for earthworms and microorganisms (if the salts have not killed them first) hence they are not available to break down the thatch back into beneficial organic compounds. Thatch makes a good home for insect pests like chinch bugs and sod webworms. Chemical burning and browning often occurs if synthetic fertilizers are over applied to grass. Destruction of earthworms and microorganisms leads to a reduced root zone in the soil which means more watering required and additional fertilization required to keep plants green which starts the cycle all over again.

Excess salts used in synthetic fertilizers cause two problems. First, they reduce the moisture holding ability of soils and cause what moisture is present to be bound more tightly to the soil making it harder for plants to absorb. Second, also salt exposure reduces a plants root's ability to absorb water even if the soil is fully saturated. Plant roots do not like salts and will avoid them if possible. Since most commercial fertilizers are composed of soluble salts (ammonium nitrate, potassium chloride, etc.) and as these salts build up in the soil, more water (irrigation) is required, the plants are weaker and more susceptible to insects and disease hence require more pesticides, fungicides, etc.

New studies have shown that nitrate from synthetic fertilizers stimulate the germination of weed seeds. In tests of 85 species of weeds it was found that nitrate could replace light requirements for germination, and increase germination under adverse temperatures. Other studies have shown that nitrate increases weed germination rates 11 times higher (3% to 34%). Acres USA February 1997, Harold Willis, Ph.D.

The other issues with artificial fertilizers is that when we try and feed the plant directly, we have to purchase many different types: turf grass, hibiscus, azalea, palm tree, rose, etc. This is very expensive and requires a lot of storage and extra work.

Artificial fertilizers that contain herbicides (Weed and Feed) should never be used. They are some of the most damaging to soil and plant life. If a Weed and Feed is used on turf grass is used it will harm trees even 100 feet away, as tree roots may grow 100 feet or more from the trunk of the tree.

For additional information on the problems with artificial fertilizers see the following papers at <http://www.natureswayresources.com/infosheets.html>

"Why Organics"

"Organic Fertilizers - The Nutrient Story"

SUMMARY:

We do not need artificial fertilizers anymore as there are many good organic ones and better, lower cost methods of supplying nutrients that reduce and even prevent the secondary problems. The better nurseries and garden centers now carry organic fertilizers and are easily available.

ARTIFICIAL FERTILIZERS:

PROS:

- widely available
- inexpensive (IF total costs are ignored)
- promotes fast growth (subject to increased disease and insect problems)

CONS:

- quality, type, and value varies greatly
- many types or formulations are required for different species of plants
- many types acidify the soil requiring lime to neutralize the acidity
- some brands contain hazardous waste
- destroy the soils organic matter (humus)
- create hardpan layers
- pollute lakes and streams
- major cause of the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico
- destroy soils structure reducing aeration which favors disease and poor root growth
- requires more water
- may kill earthworms and other valuable soil life
- causes the release of greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide (major cause)
- require public water supply to spend more taxpayer dollars to remove dissolved nutrients
- lowers the quality of food
- increase some types of bacteria growth in soils that favors weed growth over perennial plants
- causes growth of pathogenic bacteria in our bayous and streams
- some types hurt trees and other plants making them more susceptible to insects and disease
- attract insect pests and disease

What's Going On In John's Garden:

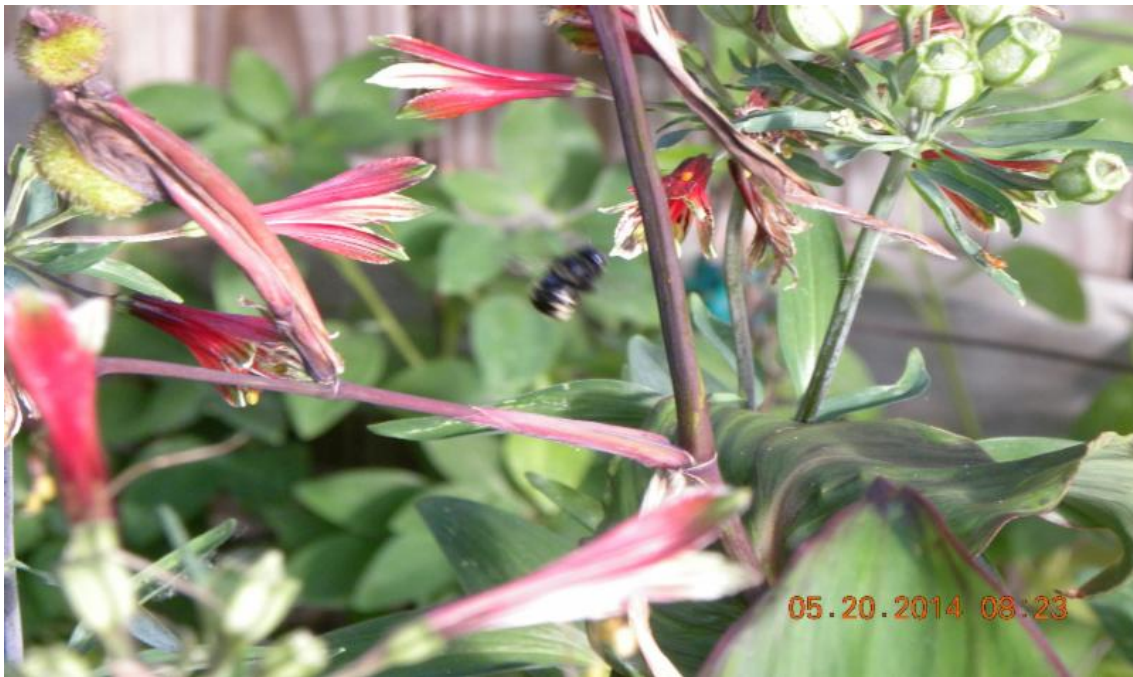
Spring Flowers



I was in the garden this morning and enjoying the flowers when I noticed bees visiting my Spigelia's. I do not want Brenda to have all the fun showing photos of beautiful flowers so I grabbed my camera.

SPIGELIA marilandica - "Indian Pink" or "Pink Root", member of the logania family, southeastern native and to much of Texas, red and gold blooms for 5-6 weeks in the spring, herbaceous perennial, some varieties hardy in Zones 5-10, abundant red and yellow flowers in part shade to full shade and moist well drained acid soils. It often grows at the edge of woodlands where there is bright light but no full sun, pointed dark green leaves, 18-36 inches tall, attracts hummingbirds, bees, and other pollinators, likes a thick aged native mulch. Removing spent spikes prolongs the blooming period. Note: The original soil is our alkaline black gumbo clay that has been amended with compost and aged native mulch and they have been quite happy.

The photos below are of Spigelia marilandica often know as "Indian Pink". This patch has been growing in my yard for over 20 years through floods and droughts and has never had any disease or pest problems. It receives a few hours of morning sun then filtered shade the rest of the day.



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., 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

Sun., May 25: Beeyard Visit - Gardeners' Best Friend by John S. Berry, 1:30-3:30pm, Wabash Feed & Garden Store, 5701 Washington Ave. \$20. RSVP: 713-863-8322

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

Sat., May 31: 10am - noon. City of Conroe Landscape Irrigation Symposium: Irrigating & Landscaping

Organically with Water Conservation in Mind. Speakers: Mark Lowry, Mark Bowen, Jeffrey Walls Doug Goodwin & Leslie Keen. 401 Sgt. Holcomb Blvd., South, Conroe. register: waterconservation@cityofconroe.org.

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

Tues., June 3: The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani (Plumeria) by Loretta Osteen, 6:30pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Pre-register: GALV3@wt.net or 281-534-3413

Sat., June 7: Landscaping for Wild Birds, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Free. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/clinics>

Sat., June 7: Native Plants by Fort Bend Master Gardeners, 9-11am open gardens/Q&A, 10am talk, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Details: 281-341-7068; www.fbmga.com

Sat., June 7: Never Too Many Tomatoes at Jenkins Sunshine Farm, 5800 Jackson Rd., Montgomery. Free. Details: www.goodcleanlivin.com; 936-648-6145; [facebook.com/JenkinsSunshineFarm](https://www.facebook.com/JenkinsSunshineFarm)

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

Tues., June 10: Herbs - Garden to Table, 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>

Thurs., June 12: Garden Destinations Within Driving Distance by Debra Bagley, 7:30pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 1819 Heights Blvd. Houston Rose Society event. Free. www.houstonrose.org.

Sat., June 14: Groundcovers in the Landscape, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Free. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/clinics>

Sat., June 21: Summer Lawncare, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Free. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/clinics>

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

Mon., June 16: Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2's Open Garden Day, Clear Lake Park, 5001 NASA Road 1, Seabrook. Details: hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx

Tues., June 17: Herbs - Garden to Table, 6:30-8:30pm, Recipe for Success,
4400 Yupon St. Harris County Master Gardeners event. Free but space limited. Reservations: 281-855-5600
<http://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners>.

Wed., June 18: Fairy Gardens and Terrariums by Judy Jones of Enchanted Gardens, 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>

Thurs., June 19: Wetland Plants for the Home Garden by Mary Carol Edwards, Wetland Biologist at Texas Coastal Watershed Program/Texas Sea Grant: 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston chapter event. Details: www.npsot.org/houston.

Thurs., June 19: Herbs - Garden to Table, 6:30pm, Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter, Houston. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-855-5600, <http://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners>.

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

Sat., June 21: Herbs - Garden to Table, 10am, Maude Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Harris County

Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-855-5600, <http://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners>.

Sat., June 21: National Pollinator Week Plant Identification

by Mike Warriner, 10am, Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble

Mon., June 21: Plant Hunters Camp for 4th-5th graders, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Details: 281-443-8731

Tues., June 24: Open Garden Day - Herbs, 9am, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension demonstration gardens, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Details: 281-855-5600, www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners

Sat., June 28: Heat-Thriving and Colorful Plants, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. Free. www.corneliusnurseries/clinics

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.

Wed., July 16: Foods from the Americas by Sally Luna, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multi Service Center, 1475 West Gray. South Texas Unit Herb Society of America event. Free. Details: herbsociety-stu.org

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?
YOU HAVE TO SEND IT TO US!

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

To ensure rapid publication, submit events in the exact STRAIGHT LINE format used above so they can be copied and pasted right in. Events NOT submitted in our format will take longer to get published as someone has to reformat and retype them.

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!*

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.





<http://myenchanted.com/>



<http://microlifefertilizer.com/>



<http://natureswayresources.com/>



COUPON: Buy three antique roses and get one free at Nature's Way Resources www.natureswayresources.com .

Offer Expires: 05/31/14