



August 29, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 72nd issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. This is 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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## WILDLIFE NEEDS GARDENERS TO LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE ... DOUG TALLAMY AGREES

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH



**"We are finally recognizing that humans are part of nature and to survive in the long run, we must live with nature."  
Doug Tallamy. L to r, monarch, monarch caterpillar and hummingbird feeding babies (Wikipedia photo)**

**The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!**

*"The World Is Too Much With Us" - William Wordsworth*

It could all be rather discouraging.

For all the talk about planting more beautiful natives in our landscapes, for all the plant sales and workshops and incredible native bloomers being marketed today, for all the education on how much our local and migrating fauna needs help replacing their habitat we have destroyed with urban sprawl, the vast majority of our suburban yards are full of plants that require too much water and do nothing to help the vital cycles of nature.

Some want to blame nurseries for lack of plant availability. That's not fair. These are businesses and nurserymen have to sell what **WE** customers will buy.

Others blame HOAs and POAs that promote and insist on Stepford Wives-type front yards with huge expanses of well-mowed, year-round green lawns and mustache landscaping. (a row of low-pruned single-variety shrubs across the front). There's nothing wrong with this style of front row plantings if the plant choices are ecology-friendly, which they usually aren't.

What is truly amazing about gardeners - especially those who see and want to help "the big picture" - is their never-say-die attitude.

They just keep plugging away, converting homeowners to more ecology-friendly plants one yard at a time.

One of our most influential events in this arena is the [Wildscapes Workshop and Native Plant Sale](#), sponsored every year by the [Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston](#). This year's featured speaker, Dr. Doug Tallamy, is author of **Bringing Nature Home**, among other great books and a nationally-recognized, much honored leader in the efforts to help homeowners view their landscapes as integral, extremely influential components in the natural world - whether they like it or not.

I asked Doug for his take on these efforts of our more-ecology-conscious gardeners. Love his response:

*"Environmentally destructive status symbols, such as huge lawns, were once the norm in this country, but are now being replaced by good land stewardship. We are finally recognizing that humans are part of nature and to survive in the long run, we must live with nature.*

*"We all rely totally on natural systems to support us, and to adopt widespread landscape practices that destroy these systems is beyond shortsighted. We have co-opted 95% of the lower 48 for our own uses, so for nature to survive, we must start to share our spaces, particularly where live and work. It's easy, it's enormously rewarding, and it's the future.*

*Status quo landscaping comprised of little beyond turf grass and Asian ornamentals can no longer be the norm, just as thirsty lawns are now a thing of the past in the southwest. Native-dominated landscapes need not be wild, or messy, or less attractive. Formality is a design issue, not a feature of particular plant species. We have the knowledge to produce productive, beautiful, living landscapes, and the only thing holding us back is the fear of change."*

Doug also gave me the go-ahead to use a section from his book, **Bringing Nature Home**, in our *Spotlight on Visiting Experts* below. You can hear more from him personally Sat., Sept. 13, seminar, 8:30am-3:30pm, at the Houston Zoo's Brown Educational Center, 6200 Hermann Park Dr. Details: [npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop](http://npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop)

Doug's Houston talk, "Why We Need More Natives in Our Garden" is part of the annual Wildscapes Workshop and Plant Sale. Also on the seminar (\$40) agenda are David Renninger on Urban Prairies and Perspectives, Glenn Olsen on Plants for Wildscapes Landscapes (featuring plants available at the accompanying plant sale), Katy Emde on Appreciating Insects and Matt Buckingham on Attracting Reptiles.

The plant sale (which is always one of the best ever in this area) is open to Seminar attendees only from 11:45am-3:30pm. Doors will be open to the public 1-3:30pm. Details on the sale and seminar are available at [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston), 832-859-9252 or [trisheratops@aol.com](mailto:trisheratops@aol.com). Check website for additional activities.

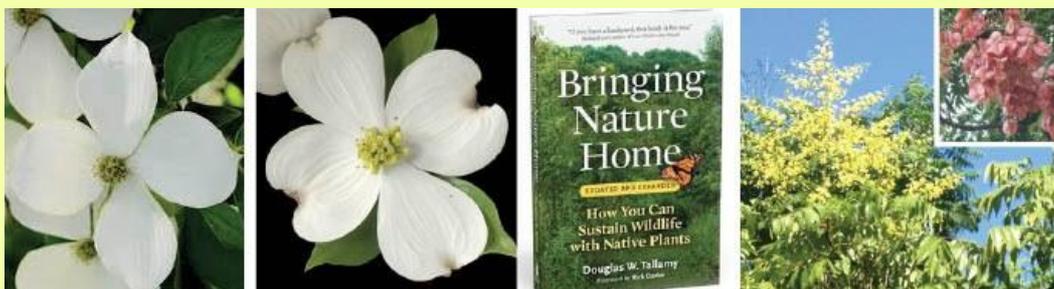


### BONSAI - A CHANCE TO LEARN FROM EXPERTS

Ever been fascinated by bonsai at a plant show or nursery? You should be. Chances are you've already been beguiled by this ancient art form's subliminal relationship to harmony, honor and patience.

Bonsai beautifully executed are relaxing, respectful, symbolic of balance between nature and man. Who among us could not use more inner peace vibes to help cope with daily life? The historic fascinating art of bonsai will be in the spotlight Sat., Aug. 30, at the 5th anniversary open house of Timeless Trees Bonsai Nursery, 2707, Rosenberg. Extraordinary examples of this unique horticultural art form will be discussed and on display during the Bonsai Iron Chief ficus styling competition.

Guest artist Jason Schley of Florida will be carving a Giant Podocarpus all day long. Other demos include 10am-deadwood creation & preservation; 11am-cypress carving, 1pm-Shohin; 2pm-tool sharpening and 3pm-Portulacaria. Details: <http://www.timeless-trees.com/>



*"We have planted Kousa dogwood (left), a species from China that supports no insect herbivores, instead of our native flowering dogwood (Cornus florida, second from left) that supports 117 species of moths and butterflies alone ... we have planted golden raintrees (right) from*

*China instead of one of our beautiful oaks and lost the chance to grow 532 species of caterpillars, all of them nutritious bird food." Center: "Bringing Nature Home" by Doug Tallamy.*



## "Removing insects from an ecosystem spells its doom..."

by Dr. Doug Tallamy

Excerpted from "Bringing Nature Home"

<http://www.bringingnaturehome.net/gardening-for-life.html>

What will it take to give our local animals what they need to survive and reproduce on our properties? NATIVE PLANTS, and lots of them. This is a scientific fact deduced from thousands of studies about how energy moves through food webs.

All animals get their energy directly from plants, or by eating something that has already eaten a plant. The group of animals most responsible for passing energy from plants to the animals that can't eat plants is insects. This is what makes insects such vital components of healthy ecosystems. So many animals depend on insects for food (e.g., spiders, reptiles and amphibians, rodents, 96% of all terrestrial birds) that removing insects from an ecosystem spells its doom. But that is exactly what we have tried to do in our suburban landscapes. For over a century we have favored ornamental landscape plants from China and Europe over those that evolved right here. If all plants were created equal, that would be fine. But every plant species protects its leaves with a species-specific mixture of nasty chemicals.

With few exceptions, only insect species that have shared a long evolutionary history with a particular plant lineage have developed the physiological adaptations required to digest the chemicals in their host's leaves. They have specialized over time to eat only the plants sharing those particular chemicals.

When we present insects from Pennsylvania with plants that evolved on another continent, chances are those insects will be unable to eat them. We used to think this was good. Kill all insects before they eat our plants! But an insect that cannot eat part of a leaf cannot fulfill its role in the food web.

We have planted Kousa dogwood, a species from China that supports no insect herbivores, instead of our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) that supports 117 species of moths and butterflies alone. In hundreds of thousands of acres we have planted goldenrain tree from China instead of one of our beautiful oaks and lost the chance to grow 532 species of caterpillars, all of them nutritious bird food. My research has shown that alien ornamentals support 29 times less biodiversity than do native ornamentals.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!! Sat., Oct. 11: 5TH Annual JANE LONG FESTIVAL, Fort Travis Seashore Park, Bolivar Peninsula, Tx. Details: [www.janelongfestival.org](http://www.janelongfestival.org). For a free info kit, email [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)**

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**Brenda's group lectures include: "How to Reduce the Size of Your Front Lawn to Save Water Without Infuriating Your Neighbors," "Landscaping for Security," "10 Commandments of Lazy Gardening," and "What's Blooming in the Lazy Gardener's Garden." Details: [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)**

## JOHN'S CORNER



## MULCH CORNER - Toxic Mulch Syndrome Part 3

It appears that the issue of toxic (sour) mulch has reappeared. This past weekend I heard Randy Lemon of Garden Line fame talking about sour mulches. I have talked with a couple new customers over the last few days that have had plants dying that appear to be from the toxic mulch (cheap) they used, and a colleague (a professional landscaper) e-mailed me about plants dying from toxic mulch.

Last year we discussed this issue in length and the articles can be found on our website and in the archive of back newsletters. This past week I read a new study published last year by the Woods End Laboratories on "Killer Mulches" that has found another mechanism for creating toxic mulch.

The researchers at Woods End found 37,000 ppm of formic acid amongst other acids! Formic acid is one of the most plant-toxic forms of organic acids. This type of acid is produced during the conditions of pyrolysis (similar to making biochar).

Mulch producers create very large piles of raw woody mulch often over 20 feet tall (I have seen 50 foot tall piles in driving around Houston at some mulch producers).

These piles become wet in some areas of the pile (wetting from summer downpours) which allows microbes to start the decomposition process releasing large amount of heat. The pile becomes very hot and the oxygen is quickly used up, allowing some pyrolysis to occur inside the pile.

These conditions for partial pyrolysis allow pyruvic acid found in wood to be split into formic acid in addition to methanol and acetic acid. Methanol is an alcohol and it only takes a few parts per million (ppm) to kill a plants roots, and acetic acid is essentially vinegar (often used as a herbicide). Hence the mulch was extremely toxic to plants.

The researchers found that even the vapors coming off the mulch caused extreme foliage damage. They diluted the mulch 100:1 and it was still inhibited the growth of plants. The mulch was so acidic (pH = 2.2) that even microbes could not live in it, hence it was not being biodegraded.

The question my colleague had was, " How can one area of a garden be affected and another are not affected?"

There are a couple possible reasons: 1) First when a dump truck is being loaded, large front end loaders are used that can easily hold 5 cubic yards in one scoop of mulch. The first scoop will come from the outside of the pile which has a lot more aeration (less problems) while the second scoop comes from deep inside the pile where it is hotter an no oxygen (lots of problems). When the material is dumped much of the toxic material is still together and when applied it would go into one area of the garden and the less affected mulch applied in another area.

2) It is possible that after the toxic mulch was applied the sprinklers were turned on and some of the toxic chemicals were diluted and washed away before it had a chance to damage plants.

So why do mulch producers stack mulch into large piles? You probably guessed the answer "it is cheaper". Land around Houston is expensive and one can store several times as much mulch in the same space by piling it higher. If a consumer sees very tall piles (over 10 feet) of mulch at a vendors location it is an indicator that they do not care about the customer. Just like the vendors that sell dyed mulch they do not care about the customer and only want your money.

As the old gardening proverb states:

I have no quarrel with a man whom has a lower price, whom better knows what his product is really worth.

Another way that mulch can become toxic is by the landscaper themselves. Often landscapers will fill their trailer (metal sides) with mulch and cover with a plastic tarp. If it is allowed to sit for a couple days (over a weekend or a couple days of rainy weather) the microbes will quickly use up all the dissolved oxygen. The mulch will become anaerobic and the microbes start producing acids, alcohols and other toxic compounds that contaminate the mulch. Then when it is applied it will stunt or even kill the plants.

## WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

*Gardening events only. Events listed are in Houston unless otherwise noted. Submit events written in the format used below, specifically earmarked for publication in the Lazy Gardener & Friends Newsletter. Email to [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)*

**Wed., Sept. 3: Mulch and Compost by John Ferguson**, 9am, University Baptist Church, (second floor), 16106 Middlebrook Drive. Gardeners by the Bay Garden Club event. Details: Marjorie, 409-877-9784

**Thurs., Sept. 4: Terrariums 191** by Ann Wegenhof, 10am, Municipal Utility Building #81, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr., Katy. Free. Nottingham Country Garden Club event. Details: [www.nottinghamgardenclub.org](http://www.nottinghamgardenclub.org) or 713-870-5915.

**Thurs., Sept.4: Mercer Botanic Garden 40th Anniversary Distinguished Lecture: Tony Avent on "Exploration to Exploitation: the Road from Plant Discovery to Market,"** 6:30pm, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive. Ticket details: 713-639-4629 or visit [www.hmns.org/lectures](http://www.hmns.org/lectures)

**Fri., Sept. 5: Mercer Botanic Gardens 40th Anniversary Special Lecture: Tony Avant on "Backyard Beauties - In Search of**

**Overlooked and Exceptional Natives,"** 10am, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield, Humble. Reservations: 281-443-8731.

**Sat, Sept 6: Urban Harvest's Rainwater Harvesting, Rain Barrels & More.** 9-11:00am. \$36. UH Central Campus, 4800 Calhoun, Bldg & Room TBA, Houston 77004. Details: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

**Sat., Sept. 6: Preparing for Fall with Fort Bend Master Gardeners,** 9-11am, Vegetable and Ornamental Demonstration Gardens, Agricultural Center, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Free. Details: 281-341-7068, <http://www.fbmg.com>

**Sat.-Sun., Sept. 6-7: The Galveston Bay Orchid Society Show & Sale,** Sat. 8am-5pm, Sun. 9am-4pm, South Shore Harbour Resort & Conference Center, 2500 South Shore Blvd., League City, TX. Free. Details: [www.galvestonbayorchidsociety.org](http://www.galvestonbayorchidsociety.org)

**Sat-Sun, Sept. 6-7: Houston Cactus & Succulents Society Show and Sale.** Metropolitan Multiservices Center, 1475 West Gray. 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Many interesting and rare plants. Free.<http://hcsstex.org/>

**Mon., Sept. 8: Biblical Gardening by John Ferguson,** 10am, Amergy Bank Building, 28201 Hwy 249 Business, Second Floor, Tomball. Tomball Garden Club event.

**Mon., Sept. 11, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. "What Judges Look For In Rose Show Blooms"** will be the topic of the Houston Rose Society Meeting at the Parish Hall of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd, Houston, Texas 77008. Entrance to parking lot is on W 19th Street near Yale St. Our speaker, Tommy Hebert, recipient of the SCD Outstanding Judge Award and author of numerous articles on rose culture, will show pictures of previous show winners. Free admission. [www.houstonrose.org](http://www.houstonrose.org).

**Fri. Sept 12: Greater Houston Plant Conference.** 8am-4pm Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: <http://bit.ly/houstonplantmeet>; 979-845-2604

**Sat, Sept 13: Urban Harvest's Constructing the Home Vegetable & Fruit Garden.** 9-11:30am. \$36. Location TBA, Houston. Details: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

**Sat., Sept. 13: Wildscapes Workshop & Native Plant Sale and lecture: Douglas Tallamy, Ph.D., on "Bringing Nature Home,"** 8:30am - 3:30pm, Houston Zoo Brown Education Center, 6200 Hermann Park Drive. \$40, \$50 after Aug. 29. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. Details: 832-859-9252 or [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston).

**Sat., Sept. 13: Fall Lawn Care-What To Do When,** 10:15am, at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/events>

**Tues., Sept. 16: Sugar Land Garden Club Plant Sale Preview by Heidi Sheesley,** 9:30am, KC Hall, 703 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. Details: [www.SugarLandGardenClub.org](http://www.SugarLandGardenClub.org)

**Thurs., Sept. 18: Green Roofs by Dustin Brackney,** Houston Zoo Horticulture Supervisor: 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. Details: [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston)

**Thurs., Sept. 18: Mandatory Orientation Class for Montgomery County Spring Master Gardener Course,** 9am, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe. Spring course: Tuesdays/Thursdays 9am-4pm, January -February, 2015. Details: [www.mcmga.com](http://www.mcmga.com); 936-539-7824.

**Sat, Sept 20: Urban Harvest's Fall Vegetable Gardening: What to Plant Now.** 9-11:30am. \$36. UH Central Campus, 4800 Calhoun, Bldg & Room TBA, Houston 77004. Details: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

**Wed., Sept. 20: Native Plants for Your Landscape by Montgomery County Master Gardeners,** 9am-3:30pm, Texas AgriLife Extension office Association, 9020 FM 1484 Rd, Conroe. \$15. Preregister at [www.mcmga.com](http://www.mcmga.com) or 936-539-7824.

**Sat., Sept. 20: Colorful Fall Colors,** 10:15am, at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/events>

**Mon., Sept. 22: Fort Bend County Master Gardener Registration Deadline.** Course runs Tuesdays/thursdays, Oct. 9-Nov. 6, AgriLife Extension Service Office, 1402 Band Rd. \$200/\$353 couple + 50 hours volunteer service. Details: <http://fbmg.com>, 281-633-7033 or the AgriLife office

**Thurs., Sept. 23: Outstanding Plants - Texas Gulf Coast Gardener - Tier-2, 9-week course begins,** Tuesdays, 9am-3pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Details/reservations: 281-443-8731. (Tier 1 starts Sept. 25. Need not attend #1 to attend #2)

**Thurs., Sept.25: Mercer Botanic Gardens 40th Anniversary Distinguished Lecture: Dr. Peter Raven on "Plant Conservation in a Rapidly Changing World,"** 6:30pm, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive. Ticket details: 713-639-4629 or [www.hmns.org/lectures](http://www.hmns.org/lectures).

**Thurs., Sept. 25: Principles of Gardening - Texas Gulf Coast Gardener Tier-1, 9-week course begins,** Thursdays, 9am-3pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Details/reservations: 281-443-8731. (Tier 2 starts Sept. 23)

**Thurs., Sept.25: Mercer Botanic Gardens 40th Anniversary Distinguished Lecture: Dr. Peter Raven on "Plant Conservation in a Rapidly Changing World,"** 6:30pm, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive. Ticket details: 713-639-4629 or [www.hmns.org/lectures](http://www.hmns.org/lectures).

**Sat., Sept. 27: Texas Rose Rustlers 2014 Fall Cutting Exchange,** 10am, Brookwood Community, Brookshire. To request cuttings of specific antique roses, email: [thetexasroserustlers@texasroserustlers.com](mailto:thetexasroserustlers@texasroserustlers.com). Details: [texasroserustlers.com](http://texasroserustlers.com)

**Sat., Sept. 27: Sugar Land Garden Club Fall Festival and Plant Sale,** 8:30am-1pm, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land (new location). Details: [www.SugarLandGardenClub.org](http://www.SugarLandGardenClub.org); Diana Miller, 713-724-3113, [dmiller@realtor.com](mailto:dmiller@realtor.com)

**Sat., Sept. 27: Gorgeous Autumn Color in Containers,** 10:15am, at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss. <http://www.corneliusnurseries/events>

**Sat, Sept 28: Urban Harvest's Sustainable Living Through Permaculture, Class 1.** 2-6pm. \$40. Private Residence @ 610 West Loop/Stella Link. Details: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

**Thurs., Oct. 2: Garden Club of Houston Bulb and Plant Mart Early Bird Shopping and Party , 4:30-7:30, St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. \$20.** Details: [www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx](http://www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx). (Note new site)

**Fri., Oct. 3: Garden Club of Houston Bulb and Plant Mart,** 9am-5pm; St. John the Divine Episcopal Church 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Free. Details: [www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx](http://www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx). (Note new site)

**Sat., Oct. 4: Garden Club of Houston Bulb and Plant Mart,** 9am- 2pm, St. John the Divine Episcopal Church 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Free. [www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx](http://www.gchouston.org/BulbPlantMart.aspx). (Note new site)

**Sat., Oct. 4: Montgomery County Master Gardeners Pre-Fall Plant Sale Presentation (sale is Oct. 4),** 8am-9am, Agrilife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. Free. Details: <http://www.mcnga.com>

**Sat., Oct. 4: Mercer Botanic Gardens Autumn Plant Sale and Market/Houston Orchid Society workshops & displays,** 8am-3pm, 22036 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Details: 281-443-8731

**Sat.-Sun., Oct. 4-5: Spring Branch African Violet Club Annual Fall Sale,** 10am-4pm Sat., 10am-3pm Sun, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. Free. Details: Karla Ross, 281-748-8417, [kjwross@yahoo.com](mailto:kjwross@yahoo.com)

**Wed., Oct. 8: Winter Vegetable Gardens by Darnell Schreiber,** Lunch Bunch, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Details 281-443-8731.

**Thur., Oct. 9: "Soil Biology and Gardening", "Mulches and Compost", "Backyard and Small Scale Composting" by John Ferguson,** Mercer Arboretum, 9am - 3 pm, Texas Gulf Coast Gardeners Class. Details: <http://www.hcp4.net>

**Fri.-Sat., Oct. 10-11: The Southern Garden Symposium,** St. Francisville, LA. <http://www.southerngardensymposium.org>

**Sat., Oct. 11: A Day of Bonsai Fall Show,** Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Details: 281-443-8731

**Sat., Oct. 11: Cockrell Butterfly Center Fall Plant Sale,** 9am-noon, Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive. Free. Details: 713-639-4751; [www.hmns.org](http://www.hmns.org)

**Thurs., Oct. 16: Plant Propagation by Randy Johnson,** Horticultural Consultant- Randy Johnson Organics: 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. Details: [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston)

**Sat., Oct. 18, Conservation Conversation - Leaf Mulch Madness, 10:00 am at Cypresswood Water Conservation Garden, 4107 Evening Trail Drive, Spring, TX 77388, Free, Details and reservations**  
[bpapp@wcid132.com](mailto:bpapp@wcid132.com).

**Sat.-Sun., Oct. 25-26: Southwest Bromeliad Guild Show and Sale (Texas & Louisiana),** DoubleTree Hotel Houston Airport, 15747 JFK Blvd. Sale: 9am-5pm Sat.; 10am-3pm Sun. Show: 2pm-5pm Sat.; 10am-3pm Sun. Free. Details: Gene Powers, 281-633-9036.

**Fri., Oct. 31: 3rd Annual Sustainable Landscapes Conference,** 8am-3pm, Big Stone Lodge, Dennis Johnson Park, 709 Riley Fuzzell Road, Spring. Details/reservations: 281-443-8731

**Sat. Nov. 1: 42nd annual Herb Fair,** presented by Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit. Free admission 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., 1475 West Gray, Multi Service Center, Houston 77019. Huge plant sale with herbal products, garden vendors and free programs on growing and cooking with herbs throughout the day. [www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org) for details and info on preferred shopper 8 a.m. admittance. (note new site.)

**Thurs., Nov. 6: Mercer Botanic Gardens 40th Anniversary Distinguished Lecture: Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson** on "Growing an Ark: The Expanding Role of Botanic Gardens in Plant Conservation." 6:30 pm, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive Houston, Ticket details 713-639-4629 or [www.hmns.org/lectures](http://www.hmns.org/lectures).

**Wed., Nov.12: Herb Gardening for Home Use by Marilyn O'Connor,** noon-2pm, Lunch Bunch, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Details/reservations: 281-443-8731

**Tues., Nov. 18: Ten Commandments of Lazy Gardening by Brenda Beust Smith,** 10am, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Details: [sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://sugarlandgardenclub.org)

**Thurs., Nov. 20: Native Seed & Plant Swap and Social,** 7:30-9 pm, Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. Details: [www.npsot.org/houston](http://www.npsot.org/houston)

**Mon., April 21: What's Blooming in the Lazy Gardener's Garden by Brenda Beust Smith,** 10am, Walden on Lake Houston Club House. Lake Houston Ladies Club event. Non-member reservations required: Carol Dandeneau. #832-671-4475

**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](mailto: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](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net). Please help us grow by informing all your membership of this weekly newsletter!*



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<http://natureswayresources.com/>

## ABOUT US

### BRENDA BEUST SMITH

WE KNOW HER BEST AS THE LAZY GARDENER . . .

. . . but Brenda Beust Smith is also:

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

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

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

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

Brenda recently ended her decades-long stint as Production Manager of the Garden Club of America's **BULLETIN** magazine. Although still an active horticulture lecturer and broad-based freelance writer, Brenda's main focus now is **THE LAZY GARDENER & 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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