



October 31, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 81st 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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By Brenda Beust Smith



Start now to force bulbs like tulips, left, and hyacinths, center, for holiday gifts and/or home decorations. Right, a big swap meeting is coming up for landscape-appropriate Texas prairie plants like coneflowers.

FORCED BULBS MAKE WELCOME HOLIDAY GIFTS & PRAIRIE FLOWERS GREAT FOR LANDSCAPES

Plenty of time ahead to force some bulbs for indoor blooms. These make great holiday gifts for teachers, shut-ins, hospital patients, office workers . . . well, for anyone actually. They're ideal for brightening a house, office or sick room on gloomy, nasty, cold winter days.

It's so easy. And you probably have many usable containers right at hand. Or, you can buy the more expensive specialty forcing jars. The wonderful thing about bulbs is that, if not mistreated in transporting/storing by distributors, they'll bloom in some form or shape no matter what you do. I've had paperwhite narcissus bulbs bloom in a bag atop my washer in the garage (forgot they were there!)

Amaryllis, tulips, hyacinths and paperwhite narcissus are easiest to force either in water or in soil. Amaryllis and paperwhite kits in many nurseries and plant departments include pots, soil, bulb and easy instructions. After they bloom, both these easily transplant to gardens for decades of flowers. Almost all the amaryllis in my yard are forced bulbs I gave my grandmother, Mimi Gracida. After they bloomed, she gave the bulbs back to me.

Use firm, high quality bulbs. If you're serious about producing beautiful blooms, shop a nurseryman you trust. Age and overheating can trigger distorted blooms. If you're just going to have fun with the kids, buy whatever's easiest to find. But don't be surprised if next year you find you're hooked and have to go buy

more reliable bulbs. This is addictive.



Water-rooting is an easy route to go for, left to right, paperwhite narcissus, hyacinths, amaryllis and tulips - as long as you follow a few simple guidelines

(Excerpted in part from the LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD, Page 56)

FORCING IN WATER -General guidelines

This is a lot like making stew. Everyone has his own recipe, and they all work - with just a few simple guidelines:

- * Choose a jar with a rim small enough for the bulb to sit on with only the roots extending into water below or ...
- * Use rocks or marbles to create a "shelf" on which bulbs can be set so only roots extend into water below.
- * A clear container makes it easier to monitor the water quality and gauge root growth.
- * Always keep the water level slightly below, but not touching, the bulb base. Touching water may rot bulb. Roots will grow downward to reach moisture.
- * Change water regularly, once a week unless it gets cloudy sooner.

Hyacinths, tulips and narcissus will start bloom process faster if in a cool location. With tulips and hyacinths, cooling at first is a must if the purchased bulbs don't say "Pre-Cooled."

HYACINTHS: Set bulb-on-jar/rocks in refrigerator, not touching walls. When roots reach about 4 inches, take out and set in a dim lighted area until a 1-inch green sprout appears. Then move into the light. Darker bulbs are very fragrant.

PAPERWHITE NARCISSUS: These do well in a shallow dish or deep container with pebbles (see photo). Set bulbs on top. Fill with water up to, but not touching, bottom of bulbs. Set in a cool dark spot until tiny green sprouts appear. Then move into more light. Houston's "Bulb Lady" Sally McQueen Squire always advised a teaspoon of gin in the water to make paperwhite stalks stand up straight.

AMARYLLIS: Use a VERY sturdy jar or container. These grow tall and easily tip over. Set in a dark corner (doesn't have to be that cool) until roots appear. Move to slightly more light until the tiny green sprout appears.

Once you see little green sprouts on all these, move them out into full light.



FORCING IN SOIL

Narcissus, hyacinths, amaryllis and tulips can also be forced now in containers filled with soil for Christmas blooms.

Since amaryllis and narcissus are tall, make sure the container is heavy enough that they won't tip over. Plant so the "neck" of bulb is above ground (where the bulb starts to fan outwards, see photo). Set in a dark spot (doesn't have to be cool) until you see green sprouts.

Unless your tulips and hyacinth bulbs say "pre-cooled," these two will need cold to flower. Since container plantings are usually too large to go in the refrigerator, a dark spot on the floor of the garage is a good option.

Water well, but afterwards set the pot up on something so the drain hole is unobstructed. Let the pot drain completely before setting it on the garage floor. Then don't water more often than once a week, and always let the soil drain well before putting it back on the floor.

As soon as you see green, set out where you can enjoy watching it grow.

Tulips will be prettier if the bulbs' flat side faces out. A nice outward fan of leaves will frame flowers in the center. Double-layer tulips for a lush display. Fill container 1/2 full with soil. Set bulbs in with enough space between for another bulb. Fill with soil until just the bulbs' top tips are showing. Set another upper row of bulbs in the in-between spaces. Fill with soil so bulbs are completely covered. This will stagger your bloom period, providing longer color.

Plant amaryllis and paperwhites in the garden after forcing. Tulips are annuals here; they won't bloom again after being forced. You can try planting hyacinths, but don't take it personally if they don't return.

Daffodils, freesias, Dutch iris, callas and most other bulbs are iffy for forcing, but it's worth a try.

For "the rest of the story" (now you know how old I am!), drop by the Marie Workman Garden Center, 112 West Spreading Oaks in Friendswood at 9:30 am on Thurs., Nov. 6. Patricia Martin will be sharing more information on "Forcing Bulbs for the Holidays." For more details on this free Heritage Gardeners in Friendswood event, call 281-992-4438.



Good prairie plants for the garden, easily started from seeds, include, left to right, Texas coneflowers (beautifully photographed by Don Verser), lyre leaf sage and Gaillardia (Indian blanket)

LEARNING FROM OUR PRAIRIES

Our native prairies have inspired many of the native plantings we now take for granted in our low-care, low-water gardens today. What to learn about more and pick up free seed?

The Houston Chapter, Native Plants Association of Texas is holding a Prairie Plant Swap and Learn Your Prairie Plants program Thurs., Nov. 13, 6:30 pm at 3015 Richmond Ave (1st Floor Conference Room).

Participants are invited to bring your extra prairie plant seeds and sprigs for both identification and swapping. [RSVP LINK](#). They'd appreciate an [RSVP/pre-registration \(Click here for RSVP/pre-reservation\)](#). But drop-ins are welcome too (with or without plants/seeds to swap).

* * *

READERS WRITE ABOUT . . . WINE BOTTLES, FUN GARDEN SIGNS, AND CITRUS

* WINE BOTTLES ON BOTTLE TREES. Wine bottles are beautiful but remember how heavy they are. Mary Johnson of Woodville wrote that she wants to use these (*in spite of the fact that friends looked at her like she had spinach in her teeth when she said she was going to get a bottle tree*). Good for you, Mary! Just make sure your bottle tree is extra strong. Wind will make those weighty wine bottles even more of a possible missile if they're not on a long-enough, strong enough arm. If they are, however, they're not only beautiful but probably won't fade as most bottles sold for bottle trees will.

* TIME TO SHOP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Sue G. from New Caney wants to give a friend with a new lawn-less backyard fun signs for her winding pathways and her just-moved-here neighbor some gardening books. Where can she get these? I can think of one great place, the [2014 42nd Annual Herb Fair](#), free admission, Saturday, Nov. 1, 9am-3pm at the Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Among the wonderful herbal and garden gift

items are always really fun things brought by Lucia Bettler from Lucia's Garden, an herbal bookstore and gift shop. And I saw where Stephanie Frogg with Garden Charms will be there too with some neat signs I'd love to have. In an upcoming issue, we'll feature some great gardening gift items available at our nonprofit gardens and nature center gift shops.

*** LEARN FROM THE BEST:** Dan Livingston has just moved to I-10 West area and wants to plant citrus trees. Where's the best place, he asks, to get advice? You're livin' right, Dan. Every January our Master Gardeners, Urban Harvest and other nonprofit groups hold enormous fruit, nut, berry and good landscape tree sales. Before you go, however, know that so much time, energy and money is wasted by folks who don't take the time to learn about the best varieties for this area. Take advantage of the upcoming program below. Dr. Natelson is one of our foremost experts on citrus and other fruit trees.

Thurs., Dec. 4: Best Citrus Selections and Citrus Grafting by Dr. Ethan Natelson, 6:30pm sign-in, 7pm program, Harris County AgriLife Extension Service Auditorium, 3033 Bear Creek Drive. Free. Gulf Coast Fruit Study Group event. Details: Yvonne Gibbs at ambra1@att.netgcfsg.weebly.com.

TIP 0' THE TROWEL TO URBAN HARVEST AND SUNNYSIDE GARDEN

Urban Harvest received a Mayor's Proud Partner Award on Monday, October 27. The first community garden in Sunnyside was built in October 2012 and has 14 garden beds growing seasonal fruits and vegetables. Urban Harvest staff, volunteers and community members added a second garden with another 14 beds in May 2014. Congratulations!

IF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR GROUP IS CONSIDERING A COMMUNITY GARDEN, here's the place to start. Saturday, Nov. 1, 8am-noon, the M C Williams Middle School, 6100 Knox, is looking for volunteers to help in such a garden, and Urban Harvest advisers will be on hand to answer question and point folks in the right direction. Let them know you're coming : lilly@urbanharvest.org.

JOHN'S CORNER



FLOURIDE

Over the years I have found that when I visit properties or talk with customers, over watering is the problem at least 85% of the time. I have also known for years that chlorine and chloramines that are added to our water kill microbes like bacteria. Hence the more one waters their lawn or landscape with water from public systems the more disease problems they have, as these chemicals kill the good microbes that protect plants from soil pathogens.

I was reading a new study published in the journal *Toxicology* that found that fluoride has demonstrated cardiotoxic effects which include the *calcification and hardening of the arteries* on humans. Other animal studies have shown the nephrotoxicity of this common additive and even death. I have known for years that Fluoride is extremely harmful to human health (birth defects, lower IQ, impaired immune system, osteoporosis, kidney, bone and muscle problems and cancer). Researchers found that levels as low as 1.5 ppm (parts per million) have both lethal and adverse effects on salmon. So I started wondering; does fluoride affect soil microbes and plants? I then decided to research it and find out more. As a result, this is the subject of today's column. The product we call Fluoride contains the element Fluorine (F) which is extremely reactive chemically and is very toxic to mammals and many other life forms. The military considers fluorine one of its best chemical warfare agents. We now know that the studies showing it to prevent cavities were falsified by the companies wanting to get rid of an industrial hazardous waste resulting from the manufacture of aluminum and phosphate fertilizer saving them billions of dollars in disposal costs.

Landscaping Problems Associated with Fluorine (Fluoride)

Fluoride generally remains in solution and plants are exposed to this chemical by water, air and soil. Fluoride is a poison that accumulates in plant foliage and often leads to toxicity symptoms on sensitive plants. This happens over time, thus we may not realize why are plants are getting sick and declining or just die suddenly. Fluoride strongly inhibits photosynthesis and other processes in the plant. It is absorbed by the roots (or stomata) and moves through the plant accumulating in the leaf

margins.

Plant pathologists at OSU have found that typical fluorine injury symptoms on broadleaf plants include marginal and tip necrosis (pre-mature cell death) that spread inward. On conifer needles it spreads towards the base of the needle. The symptoms produced often look similar to drought or salt stress.

A wide variety of plants are fluoride sensitive. A few examples by common name are: apricots, box elder, blueberry, sweet corn, Douglas-fir, gladiolus, grapes, Oregon grape, western larch, peach, pine, plum, blue spruce, tulip, corn plant, yucca, spider plant, Tahitian bridal veil, liliium spp. (list from Plant Disease Handbook).

Another study found by botanical name that *Calarhea spp.*, *Chamaedorea elegans*, *Chlorophytum comosum*, *Cordyline terminalis*, *Ctenatthe oppenheimiana*, *Dracaena spp.*, *Gibasis pellucida*, *Lilium spp.*, *Maranta leuconeura*, *Spathiphyllum spp.*, and *Yucca spp.* are very fluoride sensitive to as little as 1 ppm in water.

As you can see a wide variety of plants are subject to fluoride damage. Other plants although not sensitive are hyper accumulators of fluoride like spinach.

Other Sources of fluoride:

We find that some types of perlite are high in fluoride and must be leached before use. Other products like super phosphate fertilizer is made from the mineral apatite which is high in fluoride (another reason not to use artificial fertilizers). The waste product from the phosphate fertilizer production is hexafluorosilicic acid along with other toxics like arsenic, lead and small amounts of radioactive elements (and this is what is added to our drinking water).

Other sources include bone meal (which can contain 1,000 ppm of fluoride) or sodium fluoride (NaF) which is considered an inert substance by the EPA and allowed in the Organic Standards and used in many common products.

Other sources of fluoride are found in wine and grapes due to the fact that many pesticides (over 150) contain fluoride due to its extreme toxicity. This is why eating conventional produce is a major source of fluoride due to pesticide residues and another reason to "go organic". Many other studies have linked fluoride to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS:

- 1) The first step is to avoid using public water supplies if it contains fluoride.
- 2) If you suspect that you have a fluoride problem one can add extra calcium to the soil. The calcium reacts chemically and binds with the fluorine atom to form calcium fluoride (CaF_2) which is insoluble and prevents a plant from absorbing the fluoride. Greensand and Ag-lime are good sources of calcium.
- 3) Use rainwater - another good reason to install a rain barrel or other rain capture system.
- 4) Filter the fluoride out of the water. There are several ways to filter water with reverse osmosis being the most effective but is wasteful of water and energy. There are under sink filters based on Activated Alumina. Distillation is an effective method of removing fluoride but energy intensive. Other filters use animal bones that have been charred at high temperatures. The fluoride binds to the charred material as the water moves through the filter.

Note: The only inline garden hose filter that claims they remove fluoride was the ecoONE in references below.

SUMMARY:

I now know why I will occasionally loose a plant in my greenhouse. The fluoride builds up in the potting soils and leads to the plant decline. Even now I have a couple of small Mexican Bay trees that have started showing symptoms and I could not figure out what was wrong. Now I have a working theory and will take water from my pond and try and flush the soil and see if I can save them.

REFERENCES:

[The Fluoride Deception](#), Christopher Bryson, Seven Stories Press, 2004, ISBN: 978-1-58322-700-8. This book exposes the cover-up on the dangers of fluoride by the EPA and FDA to protect the profits of major corporations by allowing this toxic waste in our water and food supply.

[The Case Against Fluoride - How Hazardous Waste Ended Up in Our Drinking Water and The Bad Science and Powerful Politics That Keep It There](#), Paul Connett, PhD, James Beck, MD, PhD, H.S.

Micklem, DPhil, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2010, ISBN 978-1-60358-287-2 This book covers all the latest research on fluorine and its dangers to human health and why almost every country in the world no longer allows it.

Fluoride the Aging Factor: How to Recognize and Avoid the Devastating Effects of Fluoride, by John Yiamouyiannis, PhD, 1986, ISBN 13: 978-0913571019

Dr. Yiamouyiannis was a biochemist whom first exposed the history of how certain companies duped the medical community into putting a hazardous waste into our water supply.

<http://www.fluoridealert.org> - website dedicated to removing fluoride from public water systems

<http://articles.mercola.com> - good summary of health problems associated with drinking fluoridated water

<http://www.exposingthetruth.com/how-to-remove-fluoride> - an over view of the different filtering methods

<http://www.boogiebrew.net/water-filter/> - inline garden hose filter to remove chlorine and chloramines (not fluoride) a step in the right direction, good for 35,000 gallons.

http://www.cleanwaterfun.com/Garden_Hose_Filter.html - inline garden hose filter to remove chlorine and chloramines

<http://www.asktheecogeeks.com/environmental-products/ecoone-hose-filter/> - EcoONE hose filter- they claim they remove fluoride along with heavy metals and many pesticides. Good for 40,000 gallons.

A BOOK REVIEW:

Energy-Wise Landscape Design - A New Approach for your Home and Garden", Sue Reed, New Society Publishers, 2010, ISBN: 978-0-86571-653-7

I found this book a nice refresher for some very basic ideas from my old environmental and applied physics classes. Sue Reed has done a good job presenting how a correct landscape design can greatly reduce energy costs for a home. The first few chapters present the basic ideas from shading in warm areas to heat capture in cold areas. Methods to increase wind flow or decrease wind flow depending on where you live are provided with easy to understand examples. There are lots of well drawn graphics that present the concepts in picture form that are easy for anyone to understand. In later chapters she covers everything from lawns to water efficiency and the energy requirements for different types of systems. Other chapters cover installing and maintaining planted areas, to building structures in the landscape. The final chapters cover harnessing energy from wind, solar, flowing water or geothermal and how to incorporate them into the landscape. The entire book is about energy efficiency from the design, to the plants, to the energy requirements in transportation or manufacturing of the products used. This book would be a good non-technical overview of the issues involved for anyone planning to build a new house or building or even just improving an existing one.

TIMELY TIP:

Be sure to check out the website of "The Bulb Hunter" Chris Wiesinger and his website and free email <http://www.bulbhunter.com/>

ORGANIC GARDENING SOLUTIONS

BY MARK BOWEN

KEEPING BROWN PATCH AT BAY

I am still running across a large number of folks that are battling brown patch in their St. Augustine lawns.

Here are some tips to minimize the damage and increase the chances for recovery:

- 1) Stop watering the lawn until spring to avoid creating ideal conditions for brown patch (particularly wet soils with less oxygen during cool night periods).
- 2) Avoid fertilizing Brown Patch affected areas with nitrogen rich fertilizers until spring since nitrogen tends to fuel the spread of Brown Patch.
- 3) For diseased lawn areas that are not low, consider sprinkling 1/4-1/2 inch of leaf mold compost over the lawn. This topdressing will introduce beneficial microbes known to fight the fungus that causes Brown Patch. The compost will also improve the health and structure of the underlying soil thereby improving the chances of resisting Brown Patch in the future.
- 4) For low lying areas, think about using the product Actinovate. One packet of this product will treat up to 5000 square feet of lawn with beneficial microbes known to suppress Brown Patch. Next spring, consider re-grading low areas if possible so that water will spread out properly. As a result, your soils will be less likely to be oxygen deficient and Brown Patch prone.
- 5) Next spring, switch to Microlife 5-1-3 with Brown Patch Control for any areas with a history of Brown Patch to introduce extra microbes known to help fight off Brown Patch.
- 6) Avoid over-watering all year, especially during the lead up period to Brown Patch season (the tail end of summer right before the first cool front comes through).
- 7) Think about changing out affected lawn sections with tougher groundcovers if you run into a situation where Brown Patch is a perpetual problem no matter what you do.



Brown Patch Disease Affecting St. Augustine Lawn

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE

POSSIBLE BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS



WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALENDAR

Gardening events only. Events listed are in Houston unless otherwise noted. Events must be written in the format used below, specifically earmarked for publication in the 'Lazy Gardener & Friends Newsletter.' Email to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

Fri.-Sat., Oct. 31-Nov. 1: 26th Annual Fall Festival of Roses, Antique Rose Emporium, Independence. Details: www.antiqueroseemporium.com

Sat. Nov. 1: 42nd annual Herb Society of America/South Texas Unit's Herb Fair, 9am-3pm, Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Free. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org. (note new site.)

Sat., Nov. 1, "Fall Vegetable Gardening" by Fort Bend Master Gardeners Vegetable Specialists, 10am, Demonstration Vegetable Garden, Agricultural Center, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Free. Details: 281-341-7068 or www.fbmg.com.

Sat., Nov. 1: Creating a Bird Friendly Backyard, 10:15 am, both Cornelius Nurseries. Details: www.corneliusnurseries/events

Tues., Nov. 4: Cover Crops by Jean Fefer, Ph.D., noon, AgriLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

Wed., Nov. 5. Pumpkins, Squash and Gourds by Corrie Ten-Have, 9am, University Baptist Church, 16106 Middlebrook Dr. Free. Gardeners By The Bay Autumn event. Details: Marjorie [281-474-5051](tel:281-474-5051).

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.

Thurs., Nov. 6, 2014: Perennials by Margaret Sinclair, 9:30am, Municipal Utility Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Drive, Katy. Free.

Nottingham Country Garden Club event. Details: nottinghamgardenclub.org or 713-870-5915 or 979-885-6199

Thurs., Nov. 6: Forcing Bulbs for the Holiday by Patricia Martin, 930am, Marie Workman Garden Center, 112 West Spreading Oaks, Friendswood. Free. Heritage Gardeners in Friendswood event. Details: 281-992-4438

Thurs, Nov 6: Starting a Community or School Garden, Class 1. 6:30-9pm. \$36. Urban Harvest, 2311 Canal St # 124. Details: 713-880-5540 or www.urbanharvest.org

Sat, Nov 8: Urban Harvest's High Density Orchard. 9-11:30am. \$36. UH Central Campus, 4800 Calhoun. Details: 713-880-5540 or www.urbanharvest.org

Sat., Nov. 8: Fall Rose Show, 1:00-3:00pm, South Main Baptist Church, 4300 East Sam Houston Pkwy, Pasadena. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Details: www.houstonrose.org

Sat.-Sun, Nov. 8-9: Peckerwood Garden Open Weekend, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. Guided tours 10am & 1pm. (No children under 12). \$10.

Plant sale 10am-3pm. Free. Details: peckerwoodgarden.org

Sun., Nov. 9: Tree ID for the Novice, 2pm- 5pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Drive. \$45. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org.

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

Thurs., Nov. 13: Healthier Rose Bushes Produce More Blooms by Ed Bradley, 7:30pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church parish hall, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Details: www.houstonrose.org

Sat., Nov. 15: Edible Wild Plants, 9am-1pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Drive. \$65. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org

Sat, Nov 15: Urban Harvest's Fruit Tree Care. 9-11:30am. \$36. UH Central Campus, 4800 Calhoun, Oberholtzer Hall. Details: 713-880-5540 or www.urbanharvest.org

Sun., Nov. 16: Living Witnesses: Historic Trees of Texas by Ralph Yznaga, noon, Moody Mansion, 2618 Broadway St, Galveston. Moody Mansion Galveston Island Tree Conservancy Arbor Day Celebration Brunch. Tickets: galvestonislandtreeconservancy.org/sponsor-arbor-day-2014/

Mon., Nov. 17, Open Garden Day, with Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. 9:30am Educational Programs/ MG Q&A. Open garden/plant sale every Monday May-Oct. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

Tues., Nov. 18: Cool Season Color and Edibles by T. Polk, 10am, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Details: 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

Thurs, Nov 20: Starting a Community or School Garden, Class 2. 6:30 - 9:00pm. 6:30-9pm. \$36. Urban Harvest, 2311 Canal St # 124. Details: 713-880-5540 or www.urbanharvest.org

Sat.-Sun., Nov. 22-23: Heritage Gardeners in Friendswood 48th Annual Christmas Home Tour, 1-5pm. \$10 pre-tour; \$15 tour day. One starting point: Marie Workman Garden Center, 112 West Spreading Oaks. Details: heritagegardener.org or 713-534-7662.

Sat.-Sun, Nov. 22:23: Peckerwood Garden Open Weekend, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. Guided tours 10am & 1pm. (No children under 12). \$10. Plant sale 10am-3pm. Free. Details: peckerwoodgarden.org

Tues., Nov. 25: Harris County Master Gardeners Open Garden Day, 9-11:30am; **Protecting Plants in Winter**: 10am adult workshop, children's activities. Free. AgrilLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

Sun., Nov 30: Landscaping with Texas Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines, 2pm-5pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Drive. \$45. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org.

Tues., Dec. 2: Harris County Vegetable Trials and Texas SuperStars Update by Skip Richter, noon, County Extension Office auditorium, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubP2.aspx>

Thurs., Dec. 4: Best Citrus Selections and Citrus Grafting by Dr. Ethan Natelson, 6:30pm sign-in, 7pm program, Harris County AgriLife Extension Service Auditorium, 3033 Bear Creek Drive. Free. Gulf Coast Fruit Study Group event. Details: Yvonne Gibbs at ambra1@att.net or www.gcfcsg.weebly.com

Sat.-Sun., Dec 13-14: Winter Native Plant Sale, 9am-4pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Drive. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org.

Sat., Dec. 20: Edible Wild Plants, 9am-1pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Drive, Houston. \$65. Details: www.houstonarboretum.org.

Mon., April 21 2015: 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.

Events submitted in the exact format used above will receive priority in inclusion in the calendar. Events NOT submitted in our format 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.

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, certified permaculturist 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 article contributor.

MARY BOWEN

Mary is a realtor with Coldwell Banker and an avid volunteer with the Montgomery County Animal Shelter.

With respect to the newsletter, Mary came up with the idea for the Garden Tails column and co-writes it. Mary is the newest addition to our group of contributors. We will expand her bio as we go.

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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