



November 21, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 84th 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.

Please or sign yourself up to receive this newsletter by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" link just below. We will never sell or share our mailing list to protect the privacy of our subscribers.

Enjoy!

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Let your gift dollars do double-duty by shopping at the many nonprofit sites around town, such as, left, Mercer Botanic Garden's Gift shop. Center: GreenPrints, a true gardening treasure, celebrates its silver anniversary. Right, rooting tips from some great guys.

DOUBLE-DUTY GIFT SPENDING . . . ROOTING CUTTINGS . . . TIP O' THE TROWEL TO GREENPRINTS

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

The holidays are looming. But before you head to retail stores with your gift list, consider shopping some of our great nonprofit resources. This way, your money does double-duty with . . .

- * great usually-unique gifts and
- * contributions to those who make our communities far nicer places in which to live.

Here are just a few ideas. If we've missed some, send them in. I'll include them in future columns. Click on underlined words for direct links (some turned blue, some didn't!):

NATURE CENTERS WITH GIFT SHOPS

- * **Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge** Gift Shops. Two locations, each with fun gift options:
 - The Refuge Center, 4017 FM 563 in Anahuac.
 - The actual refuge entrance (where we like to watch alligators from the safety of the Shoveler's Pond levee). On FM 1985/Whites Ranch Road, 11 miles west of Highway 124 (between Winnie and High Island).

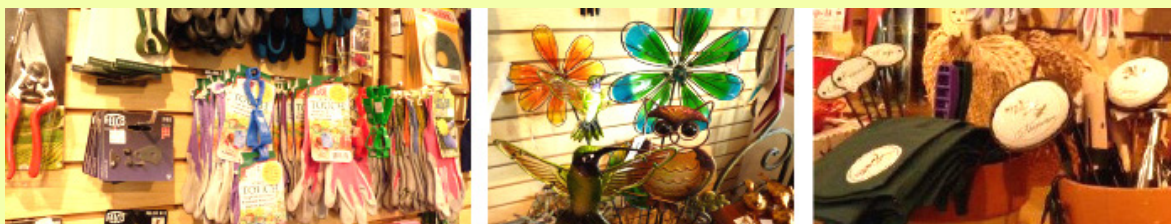
- * **Houston Arboretum & Nature Center**, 4501 Woodway. Two great Christmas gift buying opportunities:
 - Sat., Dec. 6, 1-3pm workshop demonstrates how to combine nature, art and a little craftiness to make perfect gifts (and decorations). \$45. Reservations/details:

- Dec. 6-7 and 13-14, a big **Winter Native Plant Sale**, 9am-4pm. Perfect spot to find plants (gift or otherwise) that will easily survive our often unpredictable winters.



Among the super-hardy, landscape-great plants at the Houston Arboretum winter sale will be, left to right, American Snowbell (*Styrax americanum*), Mayhaw (*Crataegus opaca*), and Carolina Buckthorn (*Frangula caroliniana*). Any one of these would make a great Christmas gift.

* [Mercer Botanic Garden](#), 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Really neat nature- and gardening-oriented items, as well as a selection of plants. Below, some of Mercer's great gift shop ideas.



* [George Ranch Historical Park Gift Shop](#), 10215 FM 762 Rd, Richmond;

* [San Jacinto Battleground and Museum Gift Shop](#), One Monument Circle, La Porte.

* [Sea Center Texas Gift Shop](#), 300 Medical Dr, Lake Jackson;

* [SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center](#), Nacogdoches

Almost all area museums have really neat gift shops - visit those in your area.

* **Fri., Dec. 12 - Houston Federation of Garden Club's Holiday Extravaganza**, 9:30am-1:30pm, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. \$20 includes a catered lunch. Tickets/details: recounts@aol.com or 713-895-8021.

* Many **Farmers Markets** are run by non-profit groups with an array of handmade items and unique gift food options. Check the [The Houston Chronicle's Best Farmers Markets Guide](#).

* Don't overlook **MEMBERSHIPS to the above-listed Nature Centers** as well as to our numerous specialty plant societies. We have over 30 such international, national and local plant and related societies and nature centers in the Greater Houston area, including:

- [Armand Bayou Nature Center](#), 8500 Bay Area Blvd., Pasadena.

- [Citizens Environmental Coalition \(CEC\)](#). A must email newsletter for anyone and everyone interested in what's happening among the environmentally aware and concerned in the Greater Houston area. Free. Just sign up.

- [Houston Environmental News Update](#). Ditto the above. The City of Houston [Department of Public Works and Engineering](#) Green Building Resource Center was officially launched on Earth Day 2009. The center, under the Planning and Development Services Division, is now located in the Houston Permitting Center, 1002 Washington Ave, Houston TX 77002. **'Going Green'** is your goal this center offers economical Green solutions for the community. Features include a showroom and classroom with samples of recycled or refurbished materials. Over 50 displays, many interactive, and a library of information provide additional strategies for Going Green are also available. There are also free samples of green material you can share with friends and neighbors.

- **Urban Harvest.** This organization is so special, a gift membership would be an incredible gift for any gardener on your list.

- **Our many international, national and locally-based specialty plant societies.** Many have multiple local chapters, many have such tip-backed newsletters, these alone are worth far more than the price of membership. If you're interested in one of these below, email me at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net and I'll send you a complete set of contacts/websites for . . .

African Violet, Antique Rose, Amaryllis, Begonia, Bromeliad, Cactus & Succulent, Chrysanthemum, Daylily, Fern, Koi, Herb, Hibiscus, Native Plant, Oleander, Palm, Pond, Orchid, Plumeria, Rose and Trees.

- Also great gift memberships for gardeners: **Houston Urban Gardeners (HUG)** and **Trees for Houston.** Google these for details.

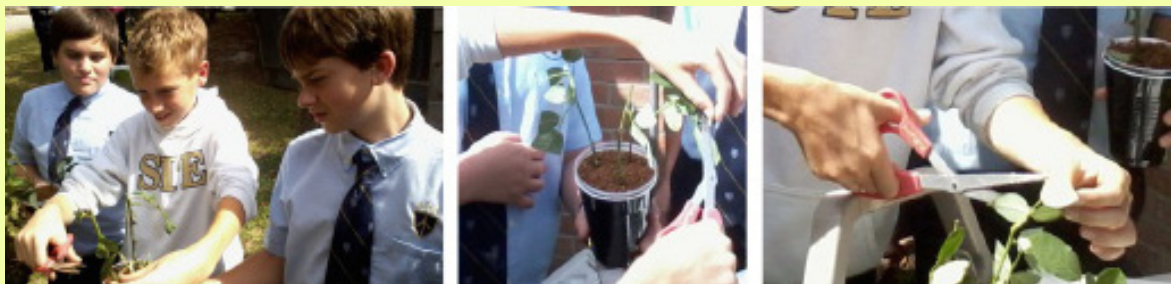
* If you really want to treat a serious gardener, give them a **Master Gardener Course.** (Many of these have numerous chapters. Links will take you to one that can suggest others.)

I'm sure I've left out some great sources and will be horribly embarrassed when (I hope!) you remind me which ones. Email: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net. In most cases, the newsletters produced by these societies and other groups are full of growing tips and advance notices of sales and other events.

One last idea. Although **GreenPrints** isn't a nonprofit enterprise, it is such a delight and so noncommercial in overall appeal, I'm going to both:

1. suggest this as a subscription gift and
2. congratulate Editor Pat Stone on keeping this gardening literary treasure alive and going for 25 years now. Pat dubs her magazines "The Weeder's Digest" and if you remember Readers Digest, that's just the sort of curl-up-&-read publication this is.

To quote Pat: "Only GreenPrints magazine shares the human side: the joy, humor, frustrations, and heart in fine prose and fine art." Best part, anyone can submit articles for consideration. A great place for would-be garden writers to try for that first publication. Details: <http://www.greenprints.com/>



SPEAKING OF SHOPPING FOR GIFTS . . .

In last week's column on Plant Swaps we promised a few tips on rooting plants, and what better source than some guys already starting their Mother's Day gifts?

Left to right, above, St. Thomas Episcopal School 7th graders Brandon Aultman, Harrison Garrett, and Andrew Grimley are using their knowledge of environmental and hormonal triggers from Mrs. Doerries' Life Science class on DNA expression of proteins to root antique rose cuttings each chose especially for Mom.

With luck, they will be in bloom on Mother's Day, May 10, 2015. "DNA expression" aside, the most important things for us home gardeners to remember in rooting cuttings are:

1. Use a light rooting medium to stick the pencil-sized cuttings in. The boys used coco coir, which has a natural rooting hormone.
2. Keep the rooting medium moist at all times.
3. Put the cuttings in an area with some sun such as dappled shade outdoors or an east-facing window indoors.

P. S. I had to ask. Turns out "DNA expressions of proteins" refers to DNA's job of producing proteins needed to build the cuttings' roots, leaves, etc. The boys learned why, from a genetic point-of-view, roots grow under the soil and leaves grow above! Who else would tell you these things?

** 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*

** Brenda's "Lazy Gardener's Guide" - a when-to-do-what in Greater Houston area gardens - is now available on CD only (pdf file). \$20. Checks payable to Brenda B. Smith and mailed to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2103.*

JOHN'S CORNER

Organic Fertilizers and Nutrients - 18

AZOMITE



In horticulture and agriculture there is a principle called Liebig's "Law of The Minimum" which states that a plant's growth and health is limited by the nutrient in shortest supply.

For years our agricultural universities have told us that a plant only needs 16 elements to grow. However many doctors and sustainable horticulturists (organic farmers and gardeners) started questioning this advice since the human body has over 90 elements in it as do many animals. If these elements (nutrients) are not in the soil, then the plants cannot absorb them, and we do not get all the nutrients that we need to be healthy. Today it is believed that hundreds of our health problems are caused and aggravated by the poor quality (nutrient deficient) of our food supply. As our soils became depleted of trace elements, commercial agriculture practitioners began hybridizing food crops to grow on these nutrients deficient soils. This practice has led many gardeners to start growing their own fruits and vegetables with heirloom varieties.

We have several methods available to add these critical trace elements to our soil including fish emulsion and seaweed products, greensand, and some rock dusts. Today I want to talk about another product that is rich in trace minerals called Azomite.

Azomite has been mined in Utah for over 60 years as a mineral supplement . These mineral rich deposits were formed millions of years ago when a volcanic eruption dumped mineral rich volcanic ash into an ancient seabed which was also contained minerals. The name Azomite was coined from "A to Z Of Minerals Including Trace Elements".

For the geologists that might be reading, mineralogically, Azomite is a rhyolitic tuff breccia, and chemically Azomite is a hydrated sodium calcium aluminosilicate that contains over 70 elements.

When Azomite is used in animal feed it greatly improves livestock's resistance to disease and leads to faster weight gain, better quality meat and reduced mortality. It also increases milk production and higher butterfat content. When added to poultry feed, it leads to thicker and stronger egg shells, increased total egg production and improved bird health.

Azomite is easy to use as it comes in a powder or granular form. A few typical applications are:

- 2.5 tablespoons per gallon of water for a soil drench
- 2 tablespoons per gallon for use in compost tea
- 1 tablespoon per 2 inch pot diameter sprinkled over a container
- 2-3 tablespoons per 4-6 inch diameter transplant hole
- one pound per 10 square feet of garden row
- one tablespoon per pound of food waste in a vermi-compost bin

SUMMARY:

Azomite is another natural tool for gardeners to use in improving their soil. It is approved for use in organic agriculture and for use in animal feed from cows to aquaculture.

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

Sat, Nov 22: Urban Harvest's Winter Vegetable Gardening. 9-11am. \$45. UH Central Campus, 4800 Calhoun, McElhinney Hall, Room 106. Details: [713-880-5540](tel: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: All About Citrus 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.gcfsg.weebly.com

Thurs., Dec. 4: Texas Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Show, 6:30-7pm; **Citrus Greening by Monte L. Nesbitt,** 7:15-8pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Reservations required for "Citrus Greening"; home citrus growers entry details: galv3@wt.net. www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston.

Sat., Dec. 6: Deck the Halls Workshop, 9am-noon, SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet, Nacogdoches. \$30. Reservations: sfagardens@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1832.

Sat., Dec. 6: Growing Tomatoes From Seed by Ira Gervais, 9-11am; **Herbs in the Garden by Cindy Croft,** 1-3pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Details: galv3@wt.net. www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston.

Sat., Dec. 6: Backyard Orchards - Winter Preparation, 10am, Fort Bend Master Gardeners' "Edible Backyard" garden, Agricultural Center, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Free. Details: [281-342-3034](tel:281-342-3034) or www.fbmg.com

Wed., Dec. 10: What is a Galveston County Master Gardener?...it takes a village! by Dr. William Johnson, 1:30-3pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Email reservation to galv@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston.

Thurs., Dec. 11: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Open House with Dr. William Johnson, 11am-3pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque; Ph 281-534-3413.

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

Mon., Dec. 15: Open Garden Day with Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Q&A. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

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

Thurs., Jan. 8: Spring Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces by Peg Turrentine and Jennifer Plihal, 9:30am, Municipal Utility Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Drive, Katy. Free. Nottingham Country Garden Club Program. Details: nottinghamgardenclub.org or 713-870-5915 or 979-885-6199

Sat., Jan. 31, 2015: Fruit Tree Sale by Harris County Master Gardeners. 9am-1pm, County Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx

Mar. 6-8: 2015 80th Annual Azalea Trail. River Oaks Garden Club event. Details: <http://www.riveroaksgardenclub.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!

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS



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 United 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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Offer Expires: 11/30/14