



December 19, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 87th 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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Left to right, celebrate Evergreen Day by planting a beautiful native like the magnolia. But check restrictions before buying! Second from right, checking in on that poinsettia hedge in Memorial and, right, care of Christmas gift plants like cyclamens.

## **TREASURE TROVE OF TREES . . . BUT, READ THIS BEFORE YOU PLANT! . . . KEEPING CHRISTMAS PLANTS PRETTY**

**BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

Did you celebrate Evergreen Day? It's today, Dec. 19. If not, don't worry. You can always have an oneiric flit outside (hopefully well-garbed) to celebrate the Winter Solstice. That's Dec. 21

Evergreen Day traditionally was intended to spotlight the day everyone goes out to the woods to find a live Christmas tree. But who now waits until Dec. 19 to put up a Christmas tree - fresh-cut or otherwise?

Perhaps these days, Evergreen Day should send us out to find evergreen landscape trees so we'll have beautiful foliage year-round. Now through February is our prime tree planting period. New trees will have time to set strong root systems before they get hit with our intense summer heat and often punishing droughts.

Nationally, Arbor Day is the last Saturday in April. Texas has elected to celebrate Arbor Day in November.

But in either of those months, our Greater Houston area temperatures might be in the 90s - really too warm to plant trees.

For this reason, Houston celebrates Arbor Day on January 25, 2015. This great planting period is the reason January is also our prime time for organizational tree sales and tree giveaways, including:

\* **Jan. 17-18 - Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center**, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. 10am-4pm. Native tree saplings given away, planting advice, exhibits, activities. Details: [www.hcp4.net/jones](http://www.hcp4.net/jones) or 281-446-8588.

\* **Jan. 25 - Houston Arboretum & Nature Center**, 4501 Woodway. 10am-2pm. Festivities include a big native plant sale. Details: [www.houstonarboretum.org](http://www.houstonarboretum.org).

Also - CenterPoint Energy and Trees For Houston are offering 2,500 free trees to homeowners to plant around their homes to save energy. Species include Bald Cypress, Bur Oak, Cedar Elm, Live Oak, Nuttall Oak, Pecan, Red Maple, Shumard Oak, Sweetgum & White Oak. Register for the free trees at [ArborDay.org/EnergySavingTrees/CenterPointEnergyrborDay.org/EnergySavingTrees/CenterPointEnergy](http://ArborDay.org/EnergySavingTrees/CenterPointEnergyrborDay.org/EnergySavingTrees/CenterPointEnergy).

### MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL TREE SALES

When it comes to picking the best possible tree variety for your needs, almost all of our eight-county Master Gardener programs and Urban Harvest will sponsor major tree sales in January and February (with a heavy emphasis on natives and fruit/nut trees).

Just a few:

Jan. 24 - [Fort Bend County Master Gardeners](#) Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale

Jan. 24 - [Montgomery County Master Gardeners](#) Fruit and Nut Tree Sale

Jan. 31 - [Harris County Master Gardeners](#) Fruit Tree Sale (at Bear Creek)

Feb. 14 - [Harris County Master Gardener](#) Tree Sale (in Pasadena)

Feb. 21 - [Brazoria County Master Gardeners](#) Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale

Keep an eye on our calendar below for Arbor Day events in your area. If you know of any not listed, please let me know at lazy [gardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gardener@sbcglobal.net)

**HOWEVER, BEFORE YOU PLANT THAT TREE . . .** In the meantime, a tip o' the trowel to KTRK GardenLine's longtime host, [Randy Lemmon](#), and [RCW Nurseries](#) for some great tree planting advice

Randy picked up and published RCW's warning to its customers in his regular [GardenLine newsletter](#) (a valuable resource for any Greater Houston area gardener. RCW, one of Houston's premier tree nurseries, reports it is seeing an increase in homeowners running into major (translation: expensive) problems with their Homeowner Associations.

RCW staffers are urging homeowners to read your fine print before making any major landscape investments. Many HOA, POAs and civic club agreements include strictly controls on which plants, including trees, can be used in front yards, heights of plants in back yards and even leveling of uneven lawns, to name just a few of the restrictions.

For more information, log onto Randy's newsletter: <http://www.ktrh.com/onair/gardenline-with-randy-lemmon-25172/homeowners-beware-know-your-hoas-restrictions-13028918/#ixzz3KyxzJmPw>

### CHECKING IN ON THAT MEMORIAL AREA POINSETTIA HEDGE

Years ago, Ed Holland planted some of his Christmas gift poinsettias along the driveway of his Memorial area home. They grew, and grew, and grew. He found if he didn't cut them back in February, the branches became too brittle and broke off. Pruning back not only produced stronger stems, but thicker growth (see photo top of column). Usually, he says, leaves start turning red around Thanksgiving. This year, they're running late but are coloring nicely now. He fertilizes with MicroLife which, he says, produces a really intense color.



Popular holiday gift plants include, left to right, Christmas cactus, chrysanthemums, kalanchoes and gloxinias

### NOW ABOUT THOSE OTHER CHRISTMAS GIFT PLANTS . . . EXTEND THEIR STAY!

(Excerpted from the *Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD* (see below)

Heat, and overwatering are the main reasons Christmas gift plants (including poinsettias) drop

flowers/colorful leaves too soon. Remove foil so water won't collect in the bottom. Position away from drafts. Water sparingly. At night, set pots on a plastic mat on the floor where it is cooler. (Condensation damages carpets and floors.) When flowers/foilage fade:

**POTTED AZALEAS:** Repot using a slightly acidic soil. Place in cool location until spring. Plant in ground in a well drained spot with filtered sunlight. Or, leave in the container, and place outside in filtered sun until fall. Then move it into stronger light to encourage blooming.

**BROMELIADS:** Water in plant cup. Use rainwater or distilled water at room temperature. During summer, move to a shady outside location with good air circulation.

**CHRISTMAS CACTUS:** Transplant into a mixture of 4 parts leaf mold, 1 part Perlite and 1 part sand. These need good bright natural light (no direct sunlight), good air circulation and excellent drainage. Don't overwater. To trigger blooms, in fall move plant into area of relative cool darkness from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. As soon as color shows, bring it back out into light.

**CHRYSANTHEMUMS, KALANCHOES, POINSETTIAS:** Cut stems to 2". Set in protected area. Keep soil barely moist until spring. Mist to compensate for lack of humidity if inside. In spring, move to garden, or plant in container with sand, predampened peat, Perlite and potting soil. To trigger color, treat as Christmas cactus above. Poinsettias hold color for months if humidity and other factors are to their liking. My grandmother, Mimi Gracida, kept brilliant red leaves on hers well into June. But she hated air conditioning and kept the windows open in her Montrose-area apartment. It was like a greenhouse in there!

**CYCLAMENS AND FLORIST GLOXINIAS:** When foliage fades, cut back on water. When plant is gone, set pot in a cool spot in garage. In spring, transplant into a mixture of 1 part soil, 1 part predampened peat and 1 part sand. Set in filtered light and pray. Neither likes our heat.

**FUCHSIAS:** I used to say these incredible hanging flowers need more cold than we can give them except in the middle winter. That's what ALL the experts say. But then I saw with my own eyes a fuchsia in full bloom in the middle of July, hanging from an eave at the home of Clint Horne and Mary Alice Justice, just off I-610 and Ella Blvd. Clint didn't understand my surprise. He said it bloomed all the time -wasn't it supposed to? There truly is such a thing as a "green thumb." Some folks truly can get plants to do things the rest of us just can't.

*\* 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 - 21

## BONE MEAL

This week I want to take a look at another common organic fertilizer called Bone Meal.

Bone meal is sold as a dry inert powder made from animal bones and used as a high phosphorous (P) organic fertilizer. It is used as an ingredient in animal feed from dogs and cats to fish. It is also used as a natural calcium mineral source for humans and found in some supplements. It is a slaughterhouse by-product of our meat industry and the most common source is from cattle, however it may be made from hogs, sheep, chicken or fish.

Bone meal is primarily considered a phosphorous source; however, it contains some nitrogen (N - 1-4%), calcium (Ca - 24%) and magnesium (Mg) with small amounts of other nutrients and trace minerals. A typical analysis is (N-P-K) of 4-12-0 with some ground and steamed meals of 1-13-0.

**Note:** If one sees the last number (K) as anything but zero then it most likely has had some potassium chloride *salt* added to it. It is no longer organic and should not be used.

Many myths persist that bone meal contains mad cow disease (BSE) bovine spongiform

encephalopathy. According to research, the prion protein is not found in blood, bone, or milk, hence it has never been found in blood meal or bone meal. Additionally, the bones are most often cooked to dry them out and make the bones more brittle and easier to grind into a powder (Some brands are cooked with high temperature steam).

Usage varies from 5-6 pounds per 100 square feet to adding a couple of tablespoons into the bottom of a transplant hole for a 4 inch plant. Many gardeners like to use a little bone meal in the bottom of the hole when planting bulbs as it seems to help them get off to a good start producing stronger plants. If the bone meal is finely ground it can be mixed into water and used in this way to apply to the soil and get it into the root zone quicker. Microbes in the soil eat the bone meal and make the nutrients available to plants at the correct time and in the correct amount.

Many animals (carnivores) naturally eat bones as part of their diet and as a result are attracted to bone meal. This includes pets (dogs and cats) to raccoons and other animals. One website for pets indicated that it can make dogs sick. My dogs over the years never had any problems and if I turned my back on them they had their nose in the bag licking it up.

Many gardeners like to make their own bone meal and it is a great way to recycle a common waste product. My grandmother was a gardener and after using leftover bones from chicken to beef to make stock, she would dry them on some newspaper out in the sun for a couple days. After drying, my job was to take a hammer and beat them into a pulp for her to use in the garden.

#### SUMMARY:

Bone meal is another organic tool in a gardeners toolbox and is a great way to supply phosphorous and calcium to our soils or help out in a compost pile.

#### PROS:

- good source of phosphorous and calcium
- relatively inexpensive
- good availability
- available in bags or bulk
- slow acting so lasts a long time
- easy to use
- often used in compost piles as a calcium and phosphorus source
- can be applied dry or as a liquid
- low salt
- renewable resource
- good for lime loving flowers (clematis, Hydrangea, etc.)
- good for almost all bulbs

#### CONS:

- may be dusty (wear a mask)
- may attract to carnivores like dogs, cats and raccoons
- not a complete fertilizer
- too much can cause nutrient tie-up problems
- buying liquid bone meal is a waste of money as it is mainly water
- too much may prevent the growth and colonization of roots by mycorrhizal fungi
- cheap low quality brands may contain chemical salts

## 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](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)***

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

**Sat., Jan 3: Compost Class**, 10-11am, The Woodlands Township Parks, Recreation and Environmental Services Campus, 2801 Millennium Forest Drive, The Woodlands. Free. Co-sponsored by The Woodlands Township, Montgomery County Master Gardeners, Nature's Way Resources and Waste Management. Details: <http://thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov> or 281-201-3800

**Tues., Jan. 6: Grafting Your Own Fruit Trees by Herman Auer**, 6:30-8:30pm, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

**Wed., Jan. 7: The Hardest Landscape Roses by John Jons**, 9:30am, University Baptist Church, 16106 Middlebrook Dr. Free. Gardeners by the Bay event. Details: <http://gibt.org> or Marjorie, 281-474-5051

**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](http://nottinghamgardenclub.org) or 713-870-5915 or 979-885-6199

**Sat., Jan. 10: Growing Avocado and Papaya by Jerry Hurlbert**, 9-11:30am, and **Successful Growing Peaches in Galveston County by Herman Auer**, 1-3pm, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

**Wed., Jan. 14: Fall Gardens and More by Mabel Bryant**, 1pm, Mangum-Howell Center, 2500 Frick Rd., Deer Park. Free but preregistration required at 281-591-7830 or the center. Details: [www.hcp4.net/ccenters](http://www.hcp4.net/ccenters)

**Sat., Jan. 17: Preview of Fort Bend County Master Gardener Jan. 24 Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale**, 9-11am, Bud O'Shields Community Center, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg. Free. Details: [www.fbmga.com](http://www.fbmga.com) or 281-341-7068

**Sat.-Sun., Jan. 17-18: Arbor Day Celebration & Tree Giveaway**, 10am-4pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick, Humble. Free. Details: [hcp4.net/jones](http://hcp4.net/jones) or 281-446-8588.

**Mon., Jan. 19: Open Garden Day**, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff. Free. Q & A with Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

**Tues., Jan. 20: Garden Design Spring 2015 by Billy Marberry**, 10am, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Details: <http://sugarlandgardenclub.org>

**Tues., Jan. 20: Gardening by the Square Foot by John Jons**, 6:30-8:30pm, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

**Wed., Jan. 21: Citrus and Fruit Trees for the Houston Area by Heidi Sheesley** (preview of Feb. 14 Master Gardener Sale trees), 10am, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook. Details:

**Sat., Jan. 24: Fort Bend Master Gardeners Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale**, 9am-1pm or sell-out, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Bam H, 4310 Highway 36 S, Rosenberg. Details: [www.fbmga.org](http://www.fbmga.org) or 281-341-7068.

**Sat., Jan. 24: Montgomery County Fruit and Nut Tree Sale**, 9am-noon. 8-9am: Educational presentation. Details: [www.mcmga.com](http://www.mcmga.com)

**Sat., Jan. 24: Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening by Luke Stripling**, 9-11:30am, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

**Tues., Jan. 27: Harris County Master Gardeners Open Garden Day, Soil & Composting**: 9am- noon (10 am-adult workshop, children's activities). Free. AgrilLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

**Tues., Jan. 27: Anyone Can Grow Roses by John Jons**, 6:30-8pm, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

Fri., Jan. 30: 3rd Annual Sustainable Landscape Conference - Sustainable Parking Solutions, 8:30am-3:30pm, Big Stone Lodge, Dennis Johnston Park, 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring. Hosted by Mercer Botanic Gardens. Reservations/fees: 281-443-8731

**Sat., Jan. 31: Harris County Master Gardeners Fruit Tree Sale and Symposia**. 9am-1pm, County Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Preview at 8am. Details: [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx)

**Sat., Jan. 31: Winter Tree ID Walk**, 10am & 2pm, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Dr., Humble. Free.

Details: [www.hcp4.net/jones](http://www.hcp4.net/jones) or 281-446-8588

**Sat., Jan. 31: Growing Great Tomatoes (Part 2) by Ira Gervais**, 9-11:30am, and **Growing Blueberries by Dr. David Cohen**, 1-3pm, Galveston County Agri-Life Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free but reservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

**Sat., Feb. 7: Compost Class**, 10-11am, The Woodlands Township Parks, Recreation and Environmental Services Campus, 2801 Millennium Forest Drive, The Woodlands. Free. Co-sponsored by The Woodlands Township, Montgomery County Master Gardeners, Nature's Way Resources and Waste Management. Details: <http://thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov> or 281-201-3800

**Sat., Feb. 14: Harris County Master Gardener Fruit Tree Sale**, 9am-1pm, Campbell Hall, Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7600 Red Bluff Rd., Pasadena. Details: [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx)

**Tues., Feb. 17: Plant a Diverse Garden by Chris LaChance**, 10am, Knights of Columbus Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Details: <http://sugarlandgardenclub.org/>

**Sat., Feb. 21: Brazoria County Master Gardeners Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale**. Details: [brazoria.agrilife.org](http://brazoria.agrilife.org)

**Tues., Feb. 24: Harris County Master Gardeners Open Garden Day, Spring Vegetable Gardening**: 9am- noon: 10am adult workshop, children's activities. Free. AgrilLife Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

**Thurs., Feb. 26: Preview of Fort Bend County Master Gardeners Feb. 28 Vegetable-Herb Plant Sale**, 9-11am, Bud O'Shields Community Center, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg. Free. Details: [www.fbmga.com](http://www.fbmga.com) or 281-341-7068

**Sat., Feb. 28: Harris County Master Gardener Tomato & Pepper Sale & Symposia**. AgriLife Extension office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Details: <http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx>

**Sat., Feb. 28: Fort Bend Master Gardeners Vegetable-Herb Plant Sale**, 9am-noon or sell-out, Agricultural Center Greenhouse, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Details: [www.fbmga.org](http://www.fbmga.org) or 281-341-7068.

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

**Sat. Mar. 7: Compost Class**, 10-11am, The Woodlands Township Parks, Recreation and Environmental Services Campus, 2801 Millennium Forest Drive, The Woodlands. Free. Co-sponsored by The Woodlands Township, Montgomery County Master Gardeners, Nature's Way Resources and Waste Management. Details: <http://thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov> or 281-201-3800

**Tues., March 17: Hummingbirds! "Allen or Rufous, it's all *Selasphorus* to me!"**, <http://sugarlandgardenclub.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

**If we inspire you to attend any of these events,  
please let them know you heard about it in THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!**

**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](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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## 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.

**GARDEN TAILS**

*Hope One Of Our Readers Can Dig  
Our Adoptable Dog Of The Week*

**NEED A HUG???**

I LOVE to give and receive HUGS!!!

**Darcy ID 235986**

Hi. I'm Darcy. I am a big ole lover!! The volunteers think I am one of the sweetest dogs to ever come through the shelter and they see a lot of sweetness here. I am leash trained and calm but I love to play. I would be great for a family or a solo person. I don't need a big yard, but I would like to go for walks if we don't have a yard. I don't mind baths! (how often do you hear a dog say that?) I LOVE to have my ears scratched and to snuggle. With the cold weather coming, I would

be the perfect snuggle bunny. **Please, please, please** spend some time with me. I really want to be like the cool dogs and have my own family. I'm the perfect size for kids. And, I really like kids, cats, and other dogs. **Please, I have served my time in the slammer.** I need you to be my hero, post bail and bust me out! Look how polite I am, I said please.

**Darcy's Likes Include:** HUGS!!, Soft Beds, People who Opt to Adopt, Tennis Balls, Dog Parks, Hiking, Sleeping in on the Weekends, Squeaky Toys, Being a Couch Potato, Sharing Your Dinner, French Fries, Having Doggie Friends, Splashing in Mud Puddles, Car Rides home, and most of all having a Forever Home!

**Darcy's Pet Peeves Include:** Living at the Shelter, Going to the Vet, Mean Dogs, Fleas, Baths, Politics, Over Population, Puppy Mills.

Please Take Me Out To The Dog Parks and See How Very Special I Am. I am a great dog who deserves a great life. You won't be sorry.

Paws Honor,

Darcy

*As part of our in kind sponsorship of the Montgomery County Animal Shelter, we promote adoptions and donate mulch for their dog park from time to time.*

For more information about Darcy or other adoptable animals, please visit <http://www.mcaspets.org/25-dogs-in-shelter-for-60-days.html>



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[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com) . (Offer good for retail purchases at Nature's Way Resources (101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX).

Offer Expires: 12/31/14