



December 26, 2014

Dear Friends,

Here is the 88th 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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CELEBRATE! TREES . . . 2015 COLOR OF THE YEAR . . . VEGETABLE GARDENING NOW!

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH



Left to right, celebrating the return of my Mexican bauhinia. Center, Salvia vanhouttei could possibly qualify for Color of the Year. Right, maybe closer is Red Sails lettuce, which needs to be planted now. Such a difficult color they chose.

MEA CULPA, URBAN HARVEST!!!

Before I write anything else, need to apologize to Urban Harvest. Somehow UH's big 15th Annual Fruit Tree Sale was left out of our list of great tree sales in last week's column. The Urban Harvest sale will be 9am-1pm (or sell-out) Sat., Jan. 17, in the Greenbriar lot at Rice University.

Are you new to growing fruit trees in Houston? We are a unique subtropical area unlike the rest of Texas and most certainly unlike the rest of the nation. Success depends on using the right varieties.

Be smart. Whether you plan to attend Urban Harvest's sale, any of the others listed in our calendar below or no sales at all, two great opportunities to learn what works best here will be Urban Harvest's free "Prepare for the Fruit Tree Sale" classes at the United Way Community Resource Center, 50 Waugh Dr. Two opportunities to attend:

- * Tues., Jan. 6, 6:30-9pm
- * Sat., Jan. 10, 9:30am-noon

Another good idea: link up with some of Urban Harvest's upcoming classes: "How to Prune and Train Fruit Trees," "High Density Orchard" and "Fruit Tree Basics." Details on all these: <http://urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale>.

SPEAKING OF "TREES," HELP ME CELEBRATE!

No, not the New Year. My decades old Mexican bauhinia (Texas orchid plant) has returned! This was one of my best hummingbird-/butterfly-attracting plants.

Over the years I have tortured this poor plant beyond words. Unable to decide if I wanted it to be a multi-trunked tree or a wide shrub, I alternately pruned it drastically, either across the top to encourage more branching or by thinning to limited vertical branches to encourage taller growth.

No matter what I did, this deciduous stalwart (dies back in winter) returned every spring and produced such pretty blooms. But this past spring, I guess I went too far. No new growth re-appeared after a pruning. I was so sad.

But here it is, mid-December, and lo! A delightful stalk of the familiar hoof-shaped leaves has appeared in the middle of a low-growing crepe, about 5 feet away from the original plant. Needless to say, that crepe has to go!

That stalk is too close to our front yard sidewalk. It'll probably eventually crack the concrete. But hopefully not in my lifetime.



You be the judge. Do any of these look like "marsala" (insert) to you? Left to right, coleus, Magenta pansy, or Plum Delight loropetalum? Even if it doesn't quite make it, San Felipe red maple, right, is a GREAT choice for this area.

MARSALA? COLOR OF THE YEAR? HUM....

Love seeing what Pantone picks each December to be its next "Color of the Year." Usually they're pretty choices. This year it's "marsala."

If you're a wine aficionado, you might have some idea what this looks like, since it's named after a wine produce near Marsala in Sicily. The descriptions are fun. *"A naturally robust and earthy wine red with grounding red-brown roots."* (Huh?) *"A muted shade of scarlet."* And, from a less enthusiastic critic: *"Think rust . . . or blood, the freaky dried kind . . . a dull brick."*

For those who like to be "IN" even with their landscapes, I asked a number of local nurserymen which plants they carry in this color.

Loved the immediate response from Mary Cummings of [RCW Nurseries](#). She immediately recommended San Felipe Red Maple. Mary says, hands down, this is the best red maple for our area. It is so named because it was found on San Felipe by our great horticulturist, Lynn Lowery.

Among RCW's other offerings that include varieties in this color: cleyera, coleus, red-tipped photinia, pomegranate (the fruit), Crimson azaleas, Plum Delight loropetalum, red-leafed bilbergia, Queen Emma crinum, *Dracaena marginata*, manfreda, Flapjacks kalanchoe and red dyckia.

Red Dragon is one of many sedums in this color range, Mary says. Or you might try Snow Bush breynia, Cinco de Mayo rose, hamelia, Bush and Obsession nandina, red bananas or Dutchmans pipe vine.

At **Green Life Nursery & Landscaping** (Bolivar Peninsula/409-286-5458). Mike Hambleton sees this color in some of his different fountain plants and in magenta pansies.

At [Caldwell's Nursery](#), CayDee Caldwell suggests *Salvia van houttii* and *Phaiolcalanthe* Kryptonite orchids

VEGETABLE GARDENING NOW! If you think it's too early to start spring vegetable gardening, obviously you aren't in tune with our planting seasons. In the Spotlight article below, Peg Turrentine and Jennifer Plihal of Nottingham Country Garden Club are allowing us a sneak preview of the free program they'll be giving Thurs., Jan. 8, at 9:30am at the Municipal Utility Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Drive in Katy. (Details: nottinghamgardenclub.org)

Spotlighting our . . . Local Plant Experts!

Lazy Gardener and Friends Newsletter



Get started if you want to harvest beets, lettuce, spinach and snow peas . . .
to name just a few of the vegetables that need to be started now.

OUR SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENS BEGIN AROUND THE FIRST OF THE YEAR

BY PEG TURRENTINE & JENNIFER PILHAL
Nottingham Country Garden Club

Winter is just beginning for us here on the Gulf Coast, but that doesn't mean we can't continue growing fresh, nutritious vegetables.

Prepare your garden soil by digging in some good quality compost or composted manure after removing your summer crops and any weeds.

Plant seeds now for lettuce, kale, greens (turnip, mustard, collard), spinach, carrots, & beets. Tender seedlings will be sensitive to freezing, but plants with 3 - 4 sets of leaves will be hardy. If frost damage occurs, there is still plenty of time to replant through January. The goal is to harvest a crop before you need the space for the next warm season crop. In January you can still plant broccoli or cauliflower transplants if you have a 3' x 3' space available for each plant.

Late December is a good time to plant onion sets (not seeds) of all sorts, and garlic. Around the first of the year, plant seeds for snow peas or sugar snap peas on a trellis.

It's also time to peruse the seed catalogues to decide on the specific varieties of warm season vegetables you will want to grow. If you need advice on the best varieties to grow in our area, be sure to check out the websites <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu> or <http://urbanharvest.org/vegetables> and follow the links for home vegetable gardening. Order seeds as early as possible to ensure your selection.

The Spring vegetable garden begins around the first of the year. Cost-conscious and variety-conscious gardeners plant the seeds for tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and basil in a warm, protected place during the last week of the year. A pack of seeds costs about the same as one transplant; so if you desire multiple plants of a particular variety, it pays to grow your own. Start your seeds in a warm spot in your home or in a greenhouse. Once the seeds sprout, you'll need a strong light directly above them for your seedlings to thrive. Transplants go into the garden around mid-Feb., but need to be protected from late frosts. Use a liquid fertilizer weekly to sustain the seedlings until planting them. Plant more than you plan to use, as a hedge against late frosts, then pass-along those you don't need in March.

** 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 WILL BE BACK IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS.



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., 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

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://gbtb.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 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

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

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.fbmg.com or 281-341-7068

Sat., Jan. 17: Urban Harvest's 15th Annual Fruit Tree Sale, 9am-1pm (or sell-out), Rice University's Greenbriar lot. Details: www.urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale.

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 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

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 or 281-341-7068.

Sat., Jan. 24: Montgomery County Fruit and Nut Tree Sale, 9am-noon. 8-9am: Educational presentation. Details: 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

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

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

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 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

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

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

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 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 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

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.

GARDEN TAILS

Hope One Of Our Readers Can Dig

Our Adoptable Dog Of The Week



Chasity ID 235050

Chasity is an amazing young adult dog with loads of personality. She loves to snuggle, play fetch, play in the pools and be loved. A favorite among the shelter volunteers. The dog walkers have **never** seen her show any aggression towards another dog or person. She is full of personality and is guaranteed to melt your heart. Give her a chance and you will find she is your canine soul mate.

Chasity's Likes Include: Tennis Balls, Playing in the Dog Park, Long Walks in the Woods, Playing Fetch, Running, Squeaky Toys, Snuggle with You while Watching Big Bang Theory, Sharing anything You're Eating, McNuggets, Hanging with her Doggie Friends, Pool Parties, Car Rides to her new home, and most of all having a Forever Home!

Chasity's Dislikes Include: Mean Dogs, People Who Don't Spay and Neuter their Pets, Fleas, Baths, Broccoli, Living at the Shelter.

Chasity's Goals in Life: To have her very own human family to love and protect.
To have her very own home where she can feel safe.
To have her very own bed and food bowl.

Please Take Me Out To The
Dog Park and See How Very
Special I am. I promise I will
make you laugh and smile.

Paws Honor,

Chasity



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 Chasity, drop us a line at lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com since Nature's Way Resources is helping foster her, or check out other adoptable animals in need of a forever home, by visiting <http://www.mcaspets.org/25-dogs-in-shelter-for-60-days.html>



**COUPON: BUY ONE OLD GARDEN ROSES & GET A SECOND
FREE At Nature's Way Resources**

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

Offer Expires: 1/15/15