



January 9, 2015

Dear Friends,

Here is the 89th issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. This is a project of The Lazy Gardener, Brenda Beust Smith, John Ferguson and Mark Bowen (both John and Mark are with Nature's Way Resources). We also have a great supporting cast of contributing writers and technical specialists who will chime in and tweak away regularly. We would love to keep receiving your input on this newsletter . . . comments . . . suggestions . . . questions. . . Email your thoughts to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your interest.

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Enjoy!

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Harris County Precinct 4 promotes natives/low-water landscaping with signage on Birnamwood Blvd. and eco-friendly plantings such as, left to right, purple fountain grass, lycoris and Louisiana iris.

By **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

BURR! . . . THANK YOU PCT. 4! . . . HOUSTON HORTICULTURE TREASURES . . . ORGANICS . . . HOLISTIC GARDENS

For most of us, the big question now is: "Will this freeze kill my . . ."

Quite frankly, at this point, it's really hard to tell. We don't know what's ahead. Normally our soils do not freeze. It does not stay that cold long enough. But if we should have another winter like 1989, for example, all predictions will go out the window. Then it actually went down to 7 degrees, and stayed below freezing for it seemed like forever.

If you mulched well, and it's a normally Gulf Coast-hardy plant, then it should be okay. It may go dormant for winter, and return in spring. That's Nature's way of protecting the roots.

If you haven't yet mulched well, do it today. Warm moist soil is your best friend. Leaves, pine needles, purchased mulch . . . whatever you use is better than not using anything at all. If neighbors are raking leaves and setting them out in the curb for the garbageman, pick those up and dump them on your gardens.

To cover or not to cover depends on the plant. I never cover anything. But then, over the decades, I've:
1. eagerly picked up friends' and neighbors' raked & bagged leaves and dumped them on my gardens. I get the

leafblower and make waves moving as many as possible from our lawns into the gardens.
 2. managed to kill off most if not all my plants that won't survive winters here.

Blankets are better than plastic. Both should be removed as soon as temperatures rise to, say, 40s during the day. Temperatures will be a lot higher under that cover, especially plastic. Nurseries carry frost cloth and other protection. It's a lot easier if you just plant hardier things.

THANK YOU PRECINCT 4 AND BIRNAM WOOD SUBDIVISION!

For those of us who decry the current trend of subdivisions tightly restricting which plants (too often water-guzzling non-natives) residents can use in their landscapes, a new movement is - hopefully - starting in North Harris County on Birnamwood Dr. in Spring.

Under the direction of Harris County Pct. 4 Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, a campaign to raise awareness about eco-friendly road projects is being advertised with new signs on Birnamwood Dr., Harris County's first LID (low-impact-design) road project.

This stretch between Cypresswood Drive and Spring Creek Drive, features a 32-foot wide center median being planted with native and other low-water plants in a design that provides natural water filtration and other features that save on maintenance costs. Similar Pct. 4 projects, modeled after Birnamwood, are installed or in progress on Riley Fuzzel, Louetta and Holzworth North roads.

Of course, for us gardeners, the biggest question is: exactly which native grasses, wildflowers and other Gulf Coast-hardy plantings are used in these eco-friendly projects? Can we use them in our gardens? Yes, you can - providing your subdivision deed restrictions will let you. Included are:

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES: Bamboo muhly, Gulf muhly, Lindeimer muhly, dwarf fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'), Cherokee sedge, variegated Japanese sedge, inland sea oats, Mexican feather grass, *Miscanthus* maiden grass, purple fountain grass,

BULBS: Bicolor iris, crinum lily, Louisiana iris, spider lily (*Lycoris radiata*), variegated flax lily, yellow flag iris,

GROUNDCOVERS: Katie ruellia, *Wedelia texana*

TREES: Bald cypress, Texas redbud, Savannah holly

WILDFLOWERS: Among those being seeded by the project's contractor, Klotz Engineering, are bluebonnets, purple prairie clover, Texas yellow star, gayfeather, plains coreopsis, *Gaillardia* (Indian blanket), claspig coneflowers, scarlet sage salvia, pitcher sage salvia and blackeyed Susan.



Birnamwood Blvd. plantings will include Texas redbud, Indian blanket (Gaillardia), gayfeather, claspig coneflower and pitcher sage salvia.

P.S. I know some folks are cringing at the mention of ruellia. Katie ruellia is a dwarf form of the truly horribly invasive tall ruellia, or Mexican petunia. It does spread, but is a clumping ruellia. Remember too, there is a "running" ruellia which even though it is low-growing, is also quite invasive. If you stick with "Katie," it does make a good blooming groundcover.

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IF ONE OF YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS IS TO GARDEN MORE ORGANICALLY, you've picked the right year to get started. The United Nations has declared 2015 as The Year of The Soil. Why? Because worldwide, soils are in danger from expanding cities, deforestation, unsustainable land use, bad management, pollution, overgrazing, climate change...the list goes on and on. The hope is that focusing on this natural resource will improve things.

Houston's on the bandwagon. On Jan. 29, OHBA (Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance - a Houston Metro Area non-profit organization) will present an evening with Kristin Ohlson, author of "The Soil Will Save Us," 4-8pm at the United Way Building, 50 Waugh Dr. \$75. Details/registration: OHBAonline.org.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO LEARN . . . Registration is now open for the six-week Tier III course of the **Texas Gulf Coast Gardener** (TGCG) program, hosted by Mercer Botanic Gardens and The Mercer Society. Classes meet at Mercer, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble, 9am-3pm, Mondays, Jan. 26-March 2. Registration (\$115) ends January 20. Call 281-443-8731 or visit the park to enroll. Details: www.themercersociety.org

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A TIP O' THE TROWEL TO TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE magazine for having the savvy to spotlight a true Houston treasure, Terry Hershey. In the current issue's article "[Force of Nature.](#)" author Lydia Saldana says it all in her opening:

"One cause. One woman. Indomitable energy. It was enough to jump-start the Houston environmental movement in the mid-'60s and lay the groundwork for a generation of activists..."

If you don't already subscribe to TP&W magazine, you're probably missing out on some of this state's most exciting natural gems - horticultural and more. (www.tpwmagazine.com)

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Speaking of horticultural gems, I was so sad to see that Cornelius Nursery on Dairy-Ashford is closing. The late Sterling Cornelius was a giant force in Houston's horticulture development, a true Southern gentleman who provided an incredible moment of professional peripeteia for a young novice gardening writer. I'll always be grateful he came into my professional life. [Cornelius Nursery on Voss Road](#) will continue as always.

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GARDENING FOR THE SOUL One of the most fascinating aspects of a garden to my mind are its developmental and restorative powers. Nationally-known horticulture expert Dr. Joe Novak began focusing on this aspect when he was at Texas A&M and he now lectures widely on how to create a "Holistic Teaching Garden." If you are involved with a garden that helps those with special needs and you have special needs for that garden, let me know. A lot of folks here want to help.

In the meantime, we have a chance to hear Dr. Novak in a series of free lectures at White Oak Conference Center. At the end of his "Spotlight" article below is a listing of this series. These will be listed individually in our Calendar as well.

** 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.*



Amaryllis are ideal for a Holistic Garden. They need very little care and repeat year after year. In winter, put an inch of compost on top the bed. Separate bulbs every few years. Photo: Dr. Joe Novak



SOCIOHORTICULTURE - THE HOLISTIC GARDEN

by Dr. Joe Novak

sociohorticulture.com/

A holistic garden employs the basic concept of holism - a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In a holistic garden, interactions among gardeners, plants, animals and environment produce results greater than the sum of individual parts. The interaction of the gardener with the natural ecosystem produces benefits not anticipated.

Nature is restorative. Contact with nature reduces mental stress and fatigue and helps us to relax. Our garden is nearby nature. In a holistic garden, the gardener doesn't fight nature, but works with nature.

The rewards are both physical and mental. Many gardeners say the greatest benefit is the feeling of peacefulness and serenity they experience when in the garden. Vegetables and flowers are important, but the psychological impact was considered more important.

Another basic tenet of the holistic garden is that anyone who wants to garden should be able to do so, regardless of ability or disability. Holistic garden design follows the guidelines of the Americans With Disabilities Act so anyone who wants to enter and work in the garden can do so.

Gardening techniques are almost exclusively those of organic gardening, such as:

- * Utilization of mulches and composts for soil improvement, weed control and plant fertilization
- * Cultural practices other than synthetic chemicals to control pests and diseases and improve the plants environment.
- * Encouragement of beneficial microbial organisms below and above ground
- * Attraction of desirable wildlife by providing habitat, water and food.

Contemplative design features help a holistic garden become a place for contemplation. The soft fascination provided by nature helps to free our minds so we can think clearly to find solutions to problems. Many well-known authors, composers, philosophers, artists and statesmen understood the importance of contact with nature and many were avid gardeners.

Sociohorticulture is the use of horticulture as a means to improve quality of life for people with special needs, for example people who have physical or mental disorders, those who are declining in their abilities with advancing age, youth at risk, people who have substance abuse problems and those living in neighborhoods that are in decline. The principles of holistic gardening are not only good for our home grounds, but also the best to use in working with special groups of people.

Dr. Novak can be contacted at <http://sociohorticulture.com/>

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ALL THESE FREE LECTURES BY DR. NOVAK will be held at the White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Register at www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021

- * Wed., Jan. 21: Sociohorticulture - The Holistic Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 7-8:30pm
- * Sat., Feb. 7: Starting Transplants for Your Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am
- * Sat., Feb. 14: Make Your Garden Grow - Really! Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am
- * Sat., Feb. 21: Composting for the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am
- * Sat., Feb. 28: Soil Management for the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am
- * Sat., Mar. 7: Pest ID and Management in the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am
- * Sat., Mar. 14: Growing Vegetables in Containers Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am

JOHN'S CORNER

Organic Fertilizers and Nutrients - 22

WOOD ASH



Over the last few days during this holiday season due to the cold wet and gloomy days, we have had a fire in our fireplace most of the time. A warm crackling fire just takes the edge off the poor weather and brings us comfort. This is the time of year that most of us have fires in the fireplace or in the fire pit on our patios. However, the result of all these lovely fires is a lot of ash that needs to be disposed of, so what is a gardener going to do?

Wood ash has been used as a natural fertilizer for thousands of years as it retains many of the elements (nutrients) that were in the wood before burning. Things like calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), Phosphorous (P), Potassium (K), and many more.

It was from the burning of wood in the 18th century that the name Potash (potassium carbonate, KCO_3) came to be. Trees in America were felled, then burned and the ash was shipped and sold as a fertilizer in Great Britain.

During the burning of wood the nitrogen (N) and sulfur (S) become gasses and are lost. However, the carbonates and oxides will remain along with many minor and trace elements and become concentrated in the ash. These carbonates and oxides have been used for decades as liming agents to correct soils that are too

acidic (wood ash can be very alkaline with a pH of 10-12).

In general hardwoods weigh more than softwoods hence after burning they produce more ash and they tend to have more nutrients per pound of ash. Studies have shown that hardwoods produce 3X as much ash as softwoods and contain 5X the amount of nutrients. Wood Ash typically contains: 10-25% Calcium, 1-4% Magnesium, 5-15% Potassium, 1-3% Phosphorous. If listed as a chemical fertilizer it would read 0-2-10. Note: Wood ash tends to be very alkaline so do not use too much at one time or compost it first. Other nutrients include boron (B), copper (Cu), molybdenum (Mo), zinc (Zn), and a few others.

The ash from most fireplaces usually contains some small pieces of charcoal and even Bio-char. Both of these carbon rich substances are very porous and have a tremendous surface area. This will help increase the aeration of all soils, provide hiding places for good microbes, and increase the CEC (cation exchange capacity) of the soil, enabling the soil to hold and store more nutrients.



Many industries burn wood for a energy source. A University of Georgia study found there is over 3 million tons of ash produced annually in the USA that have to be disposed of. In the acid soils of the Southeast studies have shown that wood ash works better and give higher yields than using limestone to correct excess acidity issues.

A gardener may apply 1/2 to one pound of ash per year for each large shrub or rose bush. Always spread ash evenly so there is no clumps that would create a local alkalinity and salt problem.

For lawns some recommend 10-15 pounds of wood ash per 1,000 square feet. Late fall is one of the best times to apply ash as the soil has all winter to utilize the nutrients and retain in a stable form.

A trick I use, is to collect the ash from my fireplace and place the ash into a 5 gallon bucket with a lid on it to keep it dry. When there is a breeze and just before it rains, I remove the lid and use my electric blower. I aim the airstream over the bucket and slowly lower it until it starts sucking out the ash and scatters it into the wind. Note: Do not aim the airstream directly into the bucket or it will get all over you. The wind will carry a very fine dusting of ash all over the yard. The rain (or sprinklers) will wash the ash into the soil. The minerals are returned to the soil where the microbes will make them available to the plants. The layer of ash is so small per square foot that it does not affect the pH of the soil. The next time I need to get rid of ash I wait till the wind is blowing from a different direction so eventually the whole yard is covered. I have been doing this for years with great results. Note: Do not apply if a heavy rain is expected as the nutrients in wood ash are in a water soluble form and can be easily leached before soil microbes can fix them or they can be absorbed by the soil clay or humus.

One study found that tomatoes that were fertilized with human urine and wood ash had 4 times the yield than the control plants. More studies are looking at human waste as a nutrient source due to eco-friendly toilets that divert urine as well as the composting toilets. It was estimated that a single person could supply enough urine to fertilize 6,300 tomatoes plants per year (Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry).

A new area of research around the world is on bio-fertilizers which are microbes that fix and provide nutrients to plants (future article). Studies have shown that wood ash stimulates bacteria like Bacillus and Azotobacter and the ash works better than limestone increasing their effectiveness.

Many plants love having wood ashes applied to them while others do not. I found a website that has a list of plants that like wood ashes (or do not):
<http://askville.amazon.com/types-outdoor-garden-plants-wood-ashes-added-soil/AnswerViewer.do?requestId=30317496ww>.

OTHER USES:

Another use for the wood ash is to place in bowls where birds can access them. They will take a dust bath that helps them control insect on them.

When dry wood ash is often used to repel certain garden pests like slugs and snails that become dehydrated when they touch it. They also do not like the chemical salts in the ash or the abrasiveness. After wetting it quickly becomes ineffective.

For years many folks have used ash mixed with water as a cleaning agent since it is abrasive. For years many people used this to polish their silver. In third world countries people still use ash to clean their dishes and add to their food to increase its nutritional content.

I have read that folks up North apply wood ashes to their slippery sidewalks in winter. It both gives extra traction and chemically it contains salts, which causes ice to melt quicker.

Others have reported that just a little ash mixed with water is a great way to control unwanted algae.

Wood ash with a high char content can be very effective in odor control from smelly shoes to helping out a pet that has been sprayed by a skunk. It will also help control odors with a out-of-balance compost pile.

NOTES:

Do not use ash from treated wood, painted wood, creosoted wood or burning trash or cardboard as these products contain many chemicals that are toxic to plants and humans.

Wood ash if applied with synthetic fertilizers such as ammonium sulfate, ammonium nitrate or urea will produce ammonium gas which is toxic.

If one keeps their wood ashes dry, then they will keep indefinitely.

Ash from solid waste incinerators or from burning of coal is toxic (not a wood ash).

SUMMARY:

Wood ashes are another organic tool in a gardeners toolbox and is a great way to supply phosphorous, potassium and calcium to our soils, correct acidity problems or just help out in a compost pile.

PROS:

- good source of phosphorous, potassium and calcium
- inexpensive (free)
- good availability
- nutrients rapidly available
- easy to use
- often used in compost piles as a calcium and phosphorus source
- renewable resource
- good for lime loving flowers (clematis, Hydrangea, etc.)
- good for almost all bulbs
- pest repellent
- very alkaline hence good to correct acidic soils
- low in heavy metals

CONS:

- not available commercially
- may be dusty (wear a mask)
- not a complete fertilizer
- due to its alkalinity too much can cause nutrient tie-up problems
- not good for seeds
- nutrients will leach if applied during a heavy rain

BOOK REVIEW:

I find one of the benefits of the winter and holiday season from Thanksgiving through January is that gardening slows down. As a result I get caught up on my reading from numerous books, research

articles and other materials. I also get to attend conferences like "The Advanced Soil Science Conference" back in December in Kansas City. There were experts from the USDA research group, medical doctors and researchers from several universities. Over the next few weeks I will be sharing what I have learned this winter season with our readers.

"The MYTHS of SAFE PESTICIDES", Andre Leu, 2014, Acres USA Publications, ISBN: 978-1-60173-084-8

Andre Leu is president of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM), the world umbrella body for the organic sector. He has over 40 years experience in all areas of organic agriculture.

This is the best book I have read in a long time that covers pesticides and what they are doing to our health, our children's health, to our pets and to the environment.

The book is broken into five parts and looks at each of the major propaganda myths put out by public relation firms that represent the toxic chemical industry:

- 1) The "Rigorously Tested Myth"
- 2) The "Very Small Amount Myth"
- 3) The "Breakdown Myth"
- 4) The "Reliable Myth"
- 5) The "Pesticides are Essential Myth"

Andre presents a well documented summary of all the medical and environmental research that has been published in peer reviewed journals in a easy to read and understand format. It is very up to date and presents information that the popular press will not tell you. For example one of the studies on Glyphosate (active ingredient in the Round-Up herbicide) at residual levels commonly found in people, induced human breast cancer cells to multiply five to thirteen times faster!

This book is an excellent reference to help us understand how we have been lied to by companies that manufacture these toxic chemicals and their puppets at the EPA, USDA and many land grant agricultural universities.

Conversely it helps explain why and how organic methods in gardening, horticulture and agriculture that are good for people and the planet.

This book is highly recommended for anyone whom wants to have a healthier lifestyle and protect their families.

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. 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. eservations required at 281-534-3413. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

Sun., Jan. 11: Citrus Tasting by Dianne Norman, 1:30-3:30pm, Wabash Feed & Garden Store, 5701 Washington Ave. Free. Details: wabashfeed.com

Mon., Jan 12: Creating a Sustainable Community by Jim Ohmart & Eileen Hatcher, 6:30pm, Houston's Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Free. Houston Urban Gardeners event. Details: www.houstonurbangardeners.org

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

Thurs., Jan. 15: Compost-Why & How. 6:30pm. Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Ln., Harris County Master Gardener event. Free but registration required at 281-855-5600.

Thurs., Jan. 15: Attracting Bluebirds to Your Garden by Linda Crum, 7-9 pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway; free. Details: www.npsot.org/Houston

Sat., Jan. 17: Compost-Why & How. 10am. Maude Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free but registration required at 281-855-5600.

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 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

Tues., Jan. 20: Compost-Why & How. 6:30pm. Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free but registration required at 281-855-5600.

Wed., Jan. 21: Citrus and Fruit Trees for the Houston Area by Heidi Sheesley (preview of trees available at Feb. 14 Harris County Master Gardener Sale), 10am, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/>

Wed., Jan. 21: Sociohorticulture - The Holistic Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 7-8:30pm, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Free. Register at www.nnmd.org.

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 Master Gardeners Fruit and Nut Tree Sale, 8am: presentation. Sale: 9am-1pm, Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe. Bring your wagon. Details: www.mcmga.com or 936-539-7824.

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. AgriLife 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

Thurs., Jan. 29: The Soil Will Save Us by Kristin Ohlson, 4-8pm, United Way Building, 50 Waugh Dr. Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance (OHBA) event. \$75. Details/registration: OHBAonline.org.

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

Thurs., Feb. 5: 30th Annual Fort Bend Vegetable Conference, 8am-3:30pm, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Buildings B&C, 4310 Hwy 36 S, Rosenberg. \$25 (\$20 before Jan. 26). Sponsored by Fort Bend, Austin, Brazoria, Colorado, Galveston, Harris Waller and Wharton Counties. Details/registration: agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend or 979-845-2604.

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://thewoodlandstowndship-tx.gov> or 281-201-3800

Sat., Feb. 7: Starting Transplants for Your Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. \$20. Near Northwest Management District event. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

Sat., Feb. 14: HarrisCounty Master Gardener Fruit Tree Sale, 9am-1pm, Campbell Hall, Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7600 Red Bluff Rd., Pasadena. Details: hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx

Sat., Feb. 14: Make Your Garden Grow - Really! by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Near Northwest Management District event. \$20. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

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

Sat., Feb. 21: Composting for the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Near Northwest Management District event. \$20. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

Sat., Jan. 24: Montgomery County Master Gardeners Fruit and Nut Tree Sale, 8am: presentation. Sale: 9am-1pm, Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe. Bring your wagon. Details: www.mcmga.com or 936-539-7824.

Tues., Feb. 24: Harris County Master Gardeners Open Garden Day, Spring Vegetable Gardening: 9am- noon: 10am adult workshop, children's activities. Free. AgriLife 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.

Sat., Feb. 28: Soil Management for the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Near Northwest Management District event. \$20. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

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

Mar. 7: Pest ID and Management in the Home Garden Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Near Northwest Management District event. \$20. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

Sat., Mar. 14: Growing Vegetables in Containers Garden by Dr. Joe Novak, 9-11am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine. Near Northwest Management District event. \$20. Details/registration: www.nnmd.org or 713-895-8021.

Sat.-Sun., Mar. 14-15 Galveston Home & Garden Show, Convention Center, 56th street at Seawall Blvd. Horticulture speakers: Saturday 10:30am-Rainwater Harvesting-Jim Jahnke; 11:30-Tree Conservancy-Priscilla Files; 1-Roses-Baxter Williams; 2:30-Lazy Gardening-Brenda Beust Smith. Sunday 11:30-Growing Peppers-Gene Sepler; 12:30-Plumeria-Loretta Osteen. Other speakers, fees, hours: www.galvestonhomeandgarden.com.

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.



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