



June 26, 2015

Dear Friends,

Here is the 113th issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. We really appreciate all of our readers hanging in there with us, sharing stories and inspiring us in so many ways.

Thanks so much!

This newsletter 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](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com). Thanks so much for your interest.

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## JULY 4TH COMETH. ARE YOU READY?

By **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

Know anyone who actually in-garden-plants ahead for July 4 blooms? I'd love to talk them for next year's column.

Probably this wasn't the best year to have tried. Recent floods/storms would probably have ruined or delayed bloom production.

Easier and faster to create are red/white/blue container plantings using whatever's in bloom at the nursery. Pack plants in tightly for more impact. Afterwards these can be moved into the garden for more spreading room. Above are some July 4 celebration container planting created by [Cornelius Nursery](#).

A few general tips that might help:

\* Check available containers and potential positions to determine what needs to be bought.

\* Safety is Rule #1. No easily tipped-over heavy pots around children or overly enthusiastic guests. Weights in

bottoms might help.

\* Dark colored pots absorb summer sun, heating soil. Light colors reflect heat.

\* If plantings in pot will be permanent, plan for future spread. Fill in between plants with live flowers at the last minute. This helps too if you can't find the right reds, whites & blues in actual blooming plants.

\* Drainage holes are a MUST in this area. Saucers are a good idea too, but set the pot itself on secure but slightly elevated risers, to ensure air flow under the pot. This keeps water from collecting and rotting lower roots.

\* Light-weight soil mixtures are best, especially those with water-soluble polymers that either come separately or mixed in with the soil. These will hold water in a format roots can access without robbing the soil of oxygen (which can happen when you overwater during the hot dry summer). If you can't find the polymers, get a small package of baby diapers. Cut them into small squares and mix these in the soil. Same thing.

Now it's time to go plant shopping. One trick professionals use is illustrated in the Cornelius container at top. Look for 3 different growth patterns: 1. upright (for the center), 2. midsize bloomers (to encircle the upright plant) and 3. vining growth to plant around the outer edges.

That's just a route, as the other two photos illustrate. It's your container, do what you like! A flag or two inserted in the arrangement will definitely make a statement.

**\* 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. For a free page of this month's TO-DO list, email Brenda at [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)**

Some thoughts on container-size colors:

White: blackfoot daisy, gaura

Reds: dwarf canna, cockscomb (Celosia),

Reds and whites: geraniums, gerberas, pentas, petunias, salvias, sedums, red shrimps, snapdragons, vinca, zinnias

Blues (these are the hardest. If you find some you like, grab them!): anise, blue daze, bluebells, lily of the Nile, pin cushion, rosemary, blue salvias, torenia

Remember too: very small forced-blooming versions of shrubs with the right color flowers will work for a short period in a container. These can always be transplanted into gardens after the holiday for more spreading room. Typical of those on which you might find forced flowers: white gardenias, hydrangeas, blue passion vine, Red Rocket russelia, plumbago, blue thunbergia vines.

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## READERS REPORT IN . . .



GREAT SHOTS FROM READERS:

\* PATTY SENDELBACH'S DAZZLE LILY GARDENS in the Champions area are some of the most spectacular I've ever seen. Hers, and Mercer Botanic Garden's plantings are proof of how well these relatively new-to-us bulbs do here. Dazzles are a L.A. Hybrid, an exciting relatively new cross between Asiatic and Longiflorum lilies. [More on 'Dazzle' LA Hybrids](#)

\* [JERRY'S JUNGLE GARDENS](#). Speaking of incredibly gorgeous plants, one of my most favorite people in the whole world is liquidating his spectacular collection of tropicals. I can't begin to tell you how many plants we now take for granted that were first introduced to us by Jerry through his incredible "jungle" (literally!) in the Aldine area (North Harris County). The first of a number of sales will be Sat., June 27, 9am-4pm, 712 Hill Rd. (832-431-7599). Limited parking so get there early. Bring your own wagon. Just a few of the plants Jerry will have available: gingers, dombeya, cordyline, amaryllis, pachypodium, palms, philodendrons, clerodendrons, succulents, cacti, cycads, euphorbias, and crinums.

\* MINIATURE GARDENS are quite the vogue these days and more nurseries are carrying tiny plants. Left is a creation by Becky Stockrob and, at center, one created by Melanie Wiggins. I love the way tips on these gardens always start out: Use tiny plants. Well, duh!

If you have any other suggestion for folks who would like to try these, do share!

Most nurseries carry tiny plants now. Look for very small leaves. The bigger the leaves, the bigger the plants are likely to grow. But tiny leaves don't always mean small plants, so ask before you buy.

The only other important point: make sure your dish, pot, etc., has a drain hole. Don't want roots standing in water.

## JOHN'S CORNER



## MINERALS

I recently finished reading a couple books on minerals (elements) and what they do in nature, good or bad and how they are used. I became interested in the subject over 20 years ago when I was diagnosed as needing surgery to correct some problems in my elbow. After attending a lecture by a doctor, on the link between minerals in the soil and human health, I spoke with the doctor afterwards. He told me that I did not need surgery but that I had a mineral deficiency causing the pain and problems. I followed his advice and started taking some mineral supplements. In two weeks I was pain free. The doctor was Joel Wallach and he has a famous lecture on the subject recorded about 20 years ago titled, "Dead Doctors Don't Lie", By Joel Wallach, DVM, N.D., - It is an excellent lecture on nutrition, trace minerals and health (available on CD at many health food stores or online for \$2-3). It is a very informative lecture and he is also very funny and entertaining. Almost everything he says in the lecture has been confirmed by other researchers. There are now hundreds of human health issues that have been linked to poor nutrition and a lack of minerals. This puts our medical community at a tremendous disadvantage when they try to help us.

So what does all this have to do with gardening? We know that fruit and vegetable gardening has exploded in recent years as gardeners just want healthier and better tasting food that's not full of toxic chemicals. Most of our gardening books tell us that we can raise plants with only 16 minerals. Most of the minerals in the human body (or animals) comes from the food we eat. Some studies have found that there are 90 minerals in the human body. Some may only be found in parts per trillion but they are there. So the question is; if we get minerals from the food (plants) we eat and if they are not in the soil how can the plants get them? This means we do not get them and as a result the hundreds of health related problems occur. Hence we have a tremendous disconnect between how the plants are grown and our health. The two books I finished reading on every element (mineral) and how they are used are:

Nature's Building Blocks - An A-Z Guide to the Elements, by John Emsley, Oxford University Press, Revised and Updated 2011, ISBN: 978-0-19-960563-7

Trace Elements in Abiotic and Biotic Environments, Alina Kabata-Pendias and Barbara Szeke, CRC Press, 2015, ISBN: 13: 978-1-4822-1279-2

Over the years I have collected dozens of articles published in various journals on minerals as related to plant, human and animal health.

Over the next few weeks we will be talking about each element or mineral and what they do. Strictly speaking we will look at each element on the periodic table, however these elements are often absorbed and used when



they are combined with another element. When this happens they are generally called minerals. A common example is when sodium (Na) an element, is combined with another element chlorine (Cl) we get the mineral known as halite that we call table salt (NaCl).

## WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

### TO SUBMIT EVENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Find a similar event in our calendar below and copy the format EXACTLY.  
Then you can add additional information. Email to [lazy\\_gardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazy_gardener@sbcglobal.net)  
Not using our format will result in a delay in publication.  
Events will not be picked up from newsletters.

SAT., JUNE 27: JERRY'S JUNGLE GARDEN PLANT SALE (LIQUIDATION), 9am-4pm, 712 Hill Rd. Details: 832-431-7599

MON., JULY 6: OPEN GARDEN DAY AND PLANT SALE WITH HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS AT PRECINCT 2, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

WED., JULY 8: MONARCHS & MILKWEEDS, noon, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Free. Details: 281-443-8731; <http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer>

THURS., JULY 9: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING BY HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS. 6:30-8:30pm. Barbara Bush Library, 6817 Cypresswood Dr., Spring. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-green-thumb.pdf> 281-855-5600

THURS., JULY 9: ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL, 7:30pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church parish hall, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Details: [www.houstonrose.org](http://www.houstonrose.org)

SAT., JULY 11: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS ANNUAL MEETING. 9:30am-4pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Free. Details: 281-443-8731; <http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer>

SAT. JULY 11: LEARN TO COMPOST BY JARED MCNABB, DANIELA OCHOA AND JOHN FERGUSON, 9:30am-noon, A Moveable Feast, 9341 Katy Freeway. Details: Texas Campaign for the Environment, Melanie Scruggs, [melanie@texasenvironment.org](mailto:melanie@texasenvironment.org)

TUES., JULY 14: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA QUARTERLY MEETING, 7pm, Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive in Hermann Park. Details: [www.theplumeriasociety.org](http://www.theplumeriasociety.org)

MON., JULY 14-16: MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMPS BEGIN. Details: 281-443-8731; <http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer>

WED., JULY 15: HIBISCUS BY MARTI GRAVES, 10am, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 event. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

THURS., JUL. 16: ARTIST BOAT: THE PRESERVATION OF COASTAL MARGINS THROUGH SCIENCE AND ART BY KARLA KLAY. 7-9pm. Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4505 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter event. Details: [npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/](http://npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/)

THURS., JULY 16: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING BY HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS. 6:30-8:30 pm. Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane. Free. <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-green-thumb.pdf> 281-855-5600

FRI., JULY 17: WHIMSICAL WIND ART (children), 9am-12:30pm, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Free. Details: [www.arborgate.com](http://www.arborgate.com) or 281-351-8851

SAT, JULY 18: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING BY HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS. 10am-Noon. Maude Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-green-thumb.pdf> 281-855-5600

MON., JULY 20: OPEN GARDEN DAY AND PLANT SALE WITH HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS AT PRECINCT 2, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

TUES., JULY 21; FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING BY HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS. 6:30-8:30pm, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-green-thumb.pdf> 281-855-5600

SAT., JULY 25: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Richmond. Details: [www.theplumeriasociety.org](http://www.theplumeriasociety.org)

SAT., JULY 25: URBAN HARVEST'S FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING CLASS, 9am-11:30am. \$45. Location TBA. Details: 713-880-5540 or [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org).

SAT., JULY 25: A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WEED CONTROL BY ANNA WYGRYS, 9-11am, Galveston County AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Email reservations: [galv3@wt.net](mailto:galv3@wt.net). Details: [www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston); 281-534-3413

TUES., JULY 28: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY AND SEMINAR: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING, 9-11:30am, 3033 Bear Creek Drive. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-open-garden-days.pdf>  
281-855-5600

TUES., AUG 4: ALL ABOUT HUMMINGBIRDS (children), 9am-12:30pm, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Free. Details: [www.arborgate.com](http://www.arborgate.com) or 281-351-8851

TUES., AUG. 11: SOIL FOOD WEB - LATEST ADVANCES IN SOIL BIOLOGY BY ELAINE INGHAM, Ph.D., 8am-4pm, Museum of Natural Science, 1 Hermann Circle. Organic Horticultural Benefit Alliance (OHBA) event. Fee, Register at: [www.ohbaonline.org](http://www.ohbaonline.org)

THURS., AUG. 20: PLANTING FOR THE HOUSTON TOAD AND OTHER LOCAL AMPHIBIANS BY Dr. CASSIDY JOHNSON. 7-9pm. Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4505 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter event. Details: [npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/](http://npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/)

TUES., OCT. 13: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA QUARTERLY MEET, 7pm, Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive in Hermann Park. Details: [www.theplumeriasociety.org](http://www.theplumeriasociety.org)

THURS., SEPT. 17: PREVIEW OF UPCOMING WILDSCAPES WORKSHOP PLANT SALE BY JOE BLANTON. 7-9pm. Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4505 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter event. Details: [npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/](http://npsot.org/wp/houston/activities/monthly-meetings/)

THUR.-SUN., OCT. 15-18: MASTER COMPOSTER PROGRAM, Green Building Resource Center, 1002 Washington Ave. Details: Steve Stelzer, 832-394-9050, [steve.stelzer@houstontx.gov](mailto:steve.stelzer@houstontx.gov)

SAT., OCT. 24: ROSEAPALOOZA, 10am educational program. Afternoon Rose Show. Bear Creek. Houston Rose Society Event. Details: [www.houstonrose.org](http://www.houstonrose.org).

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

**TO SUBMIT EVENTS:**

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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 periodic article contributor.

### **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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