



JULY 20, 2015

Dear Friends,

Here is the 116th 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 and John Ferguson. (John is 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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WISE WATERING . . . IS YOUR PLANT FOOLING YOU? . . . OR DO YOU HAVE THE WRONG PLANTS?

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

This intense heat may have us pouring more water than necessary on our plants.

It's hard to ignore drooping shriveled leaves. But they may not indicate thirst. They may be the plant's way of

protecting itself.

Wilting leaves are sometimes the plant's way of reducing loss of moisture. Surface space is reduced. Less evaporation can take place.

The plant is already in a weakened state. Its energies are focused on retaining as much water as possible. Overwatering at this point might do just the opposite of what you want it to do. It may further weaken the plant.

How do you tell the difference between intentional wilting and a cry for more water? It's hard, I admit.

If the wilting takes place in the hottest part of the day (3-5pm), wait until morning before watering. If the plant is fine early in the morning, then it was probably deliberate, intentional wilting.

If the plant is still wilted in the morning, then it might need water.

How you water during these heat spells is even more important. Overhead sprinklers can lose up to 50% or more of the water to evaporation during the day. Night can be almost as bad.

Even worse, unless you leave them on for hours, chances are they are only going to moisten the top soil layers. What happens then? Plants begin sending roots up into those top layers where the only available moisture can be found. The top layers dry out first. Roots growing in those upper layers will suffer heat far more quickly than those deeper in the soil.

If overhead sprinklers are your only choice, try to water as early in the wee hours of the morning as you can.

The best watering source these days is a soaker hose, aimed downward right at the base of the plant. A slow, steady flow - dribbles if you can - for an extended period. You want the water DEEP so roots to grow downward to reach moisture. Focus on that mental picture and it will help.

Do this deep watering once a week. Ideal is a hose laid next to the plant and allowed to dribble for an hour or so.

Get to know your plants and their water needs. Some, like those pictured here, will do fine on one good soaking every two weeks. Others need more. The more you water, the more dependent your plants will become on watering. So you need to see which ones can go the longest without and which won't. (In my yard, this is a sign from above that these plants don't belong in my garden.)

Above all, MULCH! Leaves and pine needles will do the job. So will purchased mulches. Mulch keeps soil cooler and helps it retain moisture. As the mulch decays, it will help replenish organic matter in the soil. A win-win all the way around. A few newspaper layers over the soil before you put the mulch on will help retard weeds.



Better yet, plant things that don't need regular watering. I am always so grateful for beautiful street-view plantings that help take the sting out of our often horrible traffic. A tip o' the towel to whoever created the beautiful planter combo at left above. Swing by the 1700 block of Binz to see this cheerful grouping of, left to right, blue plumbago, yellow lantana and coral fountain plant.

If you have recommendations of plants you can totally and completely ignore (water-wise) all summer, do share!



L to r: Smilax bona-nox, horseherb (stagger daisy) and common oxalis a weed by any other name...

* To Anna Wygrys' listing of noxious weeds last week

(<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs172/1112503958110/archive/1121587953437.html>), reader a gardener in the Heights wants to add smilax (*Smilax bona-nox*), left above. This thorny little green vine likes to set deep roots right next to treasured plants, and then wind its way up the borrowed stalks.

* Pam Hasker notes that stagger daisy is also known as horseherb (*Calyptracarpus vialis*) and sometimes the term "weed" is in the eye of the beholder. She uses it in low-growing groundcover in areas that don't get enough sun.

* I have to agree. I love the common pink oxalis, center above, that most gardeners consider invasive. They cover my gardens in the spring when other plants are just starting to come out. And then they disappear until next spring. Works for me!

TIPS O' THE TROWEL TO . . .

* **THE GARDENER IN THE 1700 BLOCK OF BINZ** responsible for this delightful planter trio at right above. Great choices for our hot, dry summers, l to r: blue plumbago, yellow lantana and orange coral fountain plant (*Russelia equisetiformis*).

* **URBAN HARVEST'S CHRIS LACHANCE** who has been named 2015 Educator of the Year by the national Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance.

* * *

GARDENING IS LIKE MAKING STEW. Every successful cook/gardener has his/her own recipe and they all taste good/work. And where you put your focus usually depends on very personal reasons, which is fine as long as you keep in mind our big picture, including our water challenges, which are only going to get worse as the shortages increase.

Below, Baxter Williams is sharing his take on watering, especially on roses, in this week's Spotlight. Baxter is a multiple award-winning American Rose Society Master Rosarian and continual Houston Rose Society officer, who has been successfully growing prize-winning roses in his Pasadena garden (500+/- plants now) for almost 50 years.

Baxter has been instrumental in establishing and overseeing many rose gardens around town, including the All American Rose Garden that was such a treasure at the old Garden Center in Hermann Park, and AHS's official Gardens of American Rose Center in Shreveport, LA. *<http://www.rose.org/our-gardens/gardens-of-the-american-rose-center/>)

If you've never visited these gardens (so close!), you've missed a real treat. Houston Rose Society is the largest chapter in the nation. Email questions to Baxter at bxtwms@att.net

* For a free sample page of this month's TO DO chores from Brenda's "LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD" - a when-to-do-what gardening-book-on-CD (PDF file) for Greater Houston area gardens, email Brenda at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net





THEY WON'T WATER THEMSELVES!

by BAXTER WILLIAMS

Houston Rose Society (www.houstonrose.org)

The three most important additives for roses are water, water, and water.

If you haven't noticed, IT IS SUMMER! And the rains have come, and gone, and the plants need water. It's as simple as that.

Friends, for maximum bloom production put the water on the bushes any way that you can - on the flower bed mulch with a garden hose, or with an impulse sprinkler, or with a "whirly-gig" spinning rig, or an overhead oscillating sprinkler, or all of the above - again, any way that you can.

* Have you been told watering at night will cause a fungus? Wrong.

* Were you told that droplets of water on the leaflets will "burn" the plant? That's rubbish.

Do it early in the morning, or at noon, or in the heat of the afternoon, or evenings, or at night. Or go sophisticated and install an irrigation system.

To give you a reference point, a fully-foliaged Hybrid Tea rose needs approximately 5-gallons of water each week in July-September.

A top notch rose grower in Pasadena "plants" an empty cat food can at ground level in the rose bed, and when it is full that is just the right amount.

There are low-care varieties available, known as "Earth Kind" varieties, and how they are tested with no care except watering to prevent death during droughts. The Earth Kinds don't need as much water to not die, but they are so much healthier when given water.

NOTE: UPDATED LINK TO POPE'S ENCYCLICAL

John Ferguson's July 10, 2015 column on Pope Frances' Papal Encyclical on the environment include a link that has since been changed. The new link is:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

JOHN'S CORNER

WEEDS and HERBICIDES (Part 1)



Last December I attended a advanced soil conference up in Kansas City. The presenters were scientists from several major universities, the Center for Disease Control to the head of the USDA research station. The over whelming message is we have to change the toxic chemical methods we use in agriculture and horticulture if we are going to survive as a species. A couple days of the conference were spent on the problems both in horticultural and with health (animal and human) related to common herbicides. Since Round-Up is the most used herbicide we will start here.

Over the last few weeks we have seen additional countries like France, Netherlands, Sri Lanka and others continue to ban the sale and use of a herbicide called Round-Up. The active ingredient in Round-Up is a very toxic chemical called "Glyphosate".

A few weeks ago the World Health Organization declared Glyphosate a probable carcinogen. Research has been appearing for decades showing that Round-Up is related to many types of cancer and dozens of animal and human health issues. People and independent researchers have known the truth for years. As an article on the Alternet stated, *"Industry and government regulators have conspired to bury copious evidence for toxicity for decades."* At the conference in a side conversation with a USDA researcher (whom was retiring in a couple weeks) whom stated, "I can finally tell the truth without getting fired and what scares me the most is the inert ingredients found in Round-Up". Over the last decade or so I have collected dozens (hundreds?) of papers and a few books on the dangers and health problems caused by Round-Up. I have so much information that I am not even sure where to begin. Since this is primarily a gardening newsletter I will begin with the horticultural side and later discuss the numerous health problems and environmental destruction it causes.

Glyphosate has two main modes of action to kill plants. First it chelates major and minor nutrients and prevents plants and microbes from taking them up. These include phosphorus, potassium, iron, calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper, and others. This greatly weakens the weeds (plants) and slows or stops microbial activity as they need these nutrients also. It also chelates many enzymes of both plants and microbes and prevents them from working.

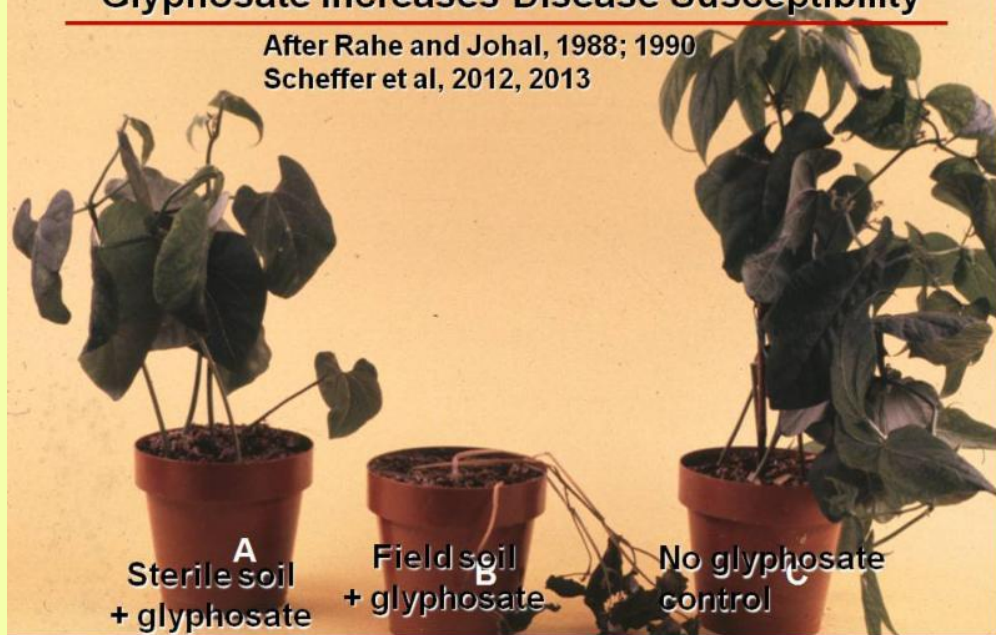
Secondly Glyphosate stimulates the rapid growth of soil pathogens! Some of these are Fusarium, Phytophthora, Pythium, Rhizoctonia, and dozens more (over 40 plant pathogens have been documented as stimulated by Glyphosate). Now the plant in its weakened state easily succumbs to the soil diseases and is killed. In addition it has been found that Glyphosate stimulate soil diseases to jump plant species that previously were not affected and increases the virulence of the disease.

This slide is courtesy of Dr. Don Huber , Purdue University:

Herbicide action is by soil-borne fungal pathogens

Glyphosate Increases Disease Susceptibility

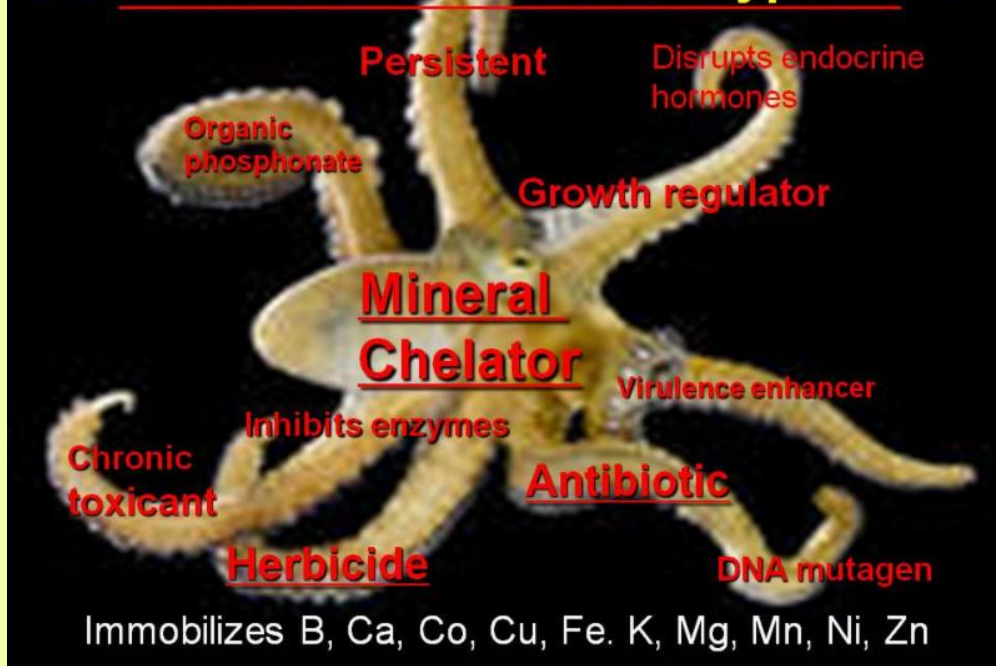
After Rahe and Johal, 1988; 1990
Scheffer et al, 2012, 2013



Note: In the sterile soil with no soil pathogens present in the soil the plant was not killed only weakened due to nutrient tie-up. When the field soil with microbes (both good and bad) was used that allowed pathogens to grow the plant was killed

This slide is courtesy of Dr. Don Huber , Purdue University

Some Characteristics of Glyphosate



A few other side effects of using Round-Up are:
- as microbial activity declines then soil structure also declines

- less air and water in soil leads to secondary problems
- eliminates the bacteria that control human pathogens like salmonella
- causes a reduction of plant growth hormones (auxins - 96%, gibberellic -32%, etc.)
- the soil pathogens can easily spread to areas adjacent to where Round-Up was applied and cause problems for years (see slide below)

This slide is courtesy of Dr. Don Huber , Purdue University

Some SYMPTOMS of Glyphosate Damage

(Sub-herbicidal depending on rate and exposure time)

- ✓ Low vigor; stunting, slow growth
- ✓ Leaf chlorosis (yellowing) - complete or between the veins
- ✓ Leaf mottling - sometimes with necrotic flecks or spots
- ✓ Leaf distortion - small, curling, strap, wrinkling, 'mouse ear'
- ✓ Abnormal stem proliferation ('witches broom')
- ✓ **Bud, fruit abortion**
- ✓ Retarded regrowth after cutting (alfalfa, perennial plants)
- ✓ Lower yields, lower mineral value
- ✓ Predisposition to infectious diseases - **NUMEROUS!**
- ✓ Predisposition to insect damage
- ✓ Induced abiotic diseases - drought, winter kill, sun scald
- ✓ Root stunting, poor growth, inefficient N-fixation and uptake
- ✓ **Bark cracking**

after Univ. of Hawaii; Univ. of Connecticut, Ohio State University

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 lazygardener@sbcglobal.net
Not using our format will result in a delay in publication.
Events will not be picked up from newsletters.

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

TUES., JULY 21: BIRDS & BEES CAMP (CHILDREN), Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Through July 23. Details & registration, 281-443-8731 or visit www.hcp4.net/Community/Parks/Mercer

SAT., JULY 25: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Richmond. Details: 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.

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. Details: 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

SAT., AUG. 1: BACKYARD GARDENING - STRAWBERRIES BY ROBERT MARSHALL, 9-11am, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Master Gardener event. Reservations to galv3@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston; 281-534-3413

SAT, AUG. 1: CONSTRUCTING THE HOME VEGETABLE AND FRUIT GARDEN, 9-11:30am, University of St. Thomas, Strake Hall, Room 207, 3918 Yoakum Blvd., \$45. Urban Harvest event. Details: [713-880-5540](tel:713-880-5540) or www.urbanharvest.org.

MON., AUG. 3: OPEN GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE WITH HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS AT PRECINCT 2, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

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

SAT., AUG. 8: THE GREAT PEPPER EXTRAVAGANZA - SEMINAR & TASTING, 9am-noon, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Master Gardener event. Reservations to galv3@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston; 281-534-3413

SAT., AUG. 8: PROPAGATE YOUR OWN PLANTS, 9-11:30am, University of St. Thomas, Strake Hall, Room 207, 3918 Yoakum Blvd., \$45. Urban Harvest event. Details: [713-880-5540](tel:713-880-5540) or www.urbanharvest.org.

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

TUES., AUG. 11: ADVANCES IN SOIL BIOLOGY BY DR. ELAINE INGHAM, 8am-4pm, Houston Museum of Natural Sciences, 1 Hermann Park Circle. Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance (OHBA) & Houston Museum of Natural Sciences event. Register: www.ohbaonline.org or facebook.com/OHBAonline

THURS., AUG. 13: WATERING SYSTEMS BY BAXTER WILLIAMS, 7:30pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church parish hall, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Details: www.houstonrose.org

SAT., AUG. 15: STARTING A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL GARDEN WORKSHOP, 8:30am-2pm, University of St. Thomas, Robertson Hall, Room 116, 3918 Yoakum Blvd., \$20. Urban Harvest event. Details: [713-880-5540](tel:713-880-5540) or www.urbanharvest.org.

MON., AUG. 17: OPEN GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE WITH HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS AT PRECINCT 2, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

WED., AUG. 19: BEGONIAS BY TONY COLLINS, 10am, Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2. Details: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>

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/

SAT., AUG. 22: THE PATIO GARDEN BY TOM LEROY, 9-11am, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Master Gardener event. Reservations to galv3@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston; 281-534-3413

SAT., AUG. 22: RAINWATER HARVESTING FOR HOMEOWNERS, 9-11:30am, University of St. Thomas, Strake Hall, Room 207, 3918 Yoakum Blvd., \$45. Urban Harvest event. Details: [713-880-5540](tel:713-880-5540) or www.urbanharvest.org.

SAT., AUG. 25: STARTING A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL GARDEN WORKSHOP, 8:30am-2pm, University of St. Thomas Robertson Hall, Room 116, 3812 Yoakum Blvd. \$20. Urban Harvest event. Registration required. Details: www.urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar or 713-880-5540.

SAT., AUG. 29: SUCCESSFUL FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING BY LUKE STRIPLING, 9-11:30am, Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Master Gardener event. Reservations to galv3@wt.net. Details: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston; 281-534-3413

SAT., AUG. 29: ALL ABOUT HERBS, 9-11am, University of St. Thomas, Strake Hall, Room 207, 3918 Yoakum Blvd., \$45. Urban Harvest event. Details: [713-880-5540](tel:713-880-5540) or www.urbanharvest.org.

TUES., SEPT. 1: PRE-ORDER BULB DEADLINE FOR THE OCT. 1-3 2015 BULB & PLANT MART. Details: www.gchouston.org, 713-683-9450 or cgerikson99@gmail.com.

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/

MON.-TUES., SEPT. 21-22: LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL COURSE III, George HW Bush Presidential Amphitheater, College Station. \$145 by Sept. 1; \$165 after. Texas Garden Clubs, Inc./AgriLife Extension Service/Bush Library event. Registration/details: texaslandscapedesignschool@gmail.com or Michele Wehrheim, 313-649-1067

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 1-3: 2015 BULB & PLANT MART, St. John the Divine Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Free. Garden Club of Houston event. Details: www.gchouston.org.

SAT.-SUN., OCT. 3-4: SPRING BRANCH AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB ANNUAL FALL SALE, 10am-4pm Sat.; 10am-3pm Sun. Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. Free. Details: Karla Ross, 281-748-8417, kjwross@yahoo.com.

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

THUR.-SUN., OCT. 15-18: MASTER COMPOSTER PROGRAM, Green Building Resource Center, 1002 Washington Ave. Details: Steve Stelzer, 832-394-9050, steve.stelzer@houston.tx.gov

SAT., OCT. 24: HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY'S ROSE-A-PALOOZA, Harris County AgriLife Extension Center, 3033 Bear Creek Drive. 10am educational programs; noon - Rose Show. \$30. Details: www.houstonrose.org; suzzieq1971@gmail.com; gayeh@LPM-triallaw.com

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:

Find a similar event in our calendar below and copy the format EXACTLY.
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Not using our format will result in a delay in publication.
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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.

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.



COUPON: Nature's Way Resources. 20% off our: Native Soil

Mix. <http://natureswayresources.com/products.html> . (Offer good for retail purchases of this product by the cubic yard at Nature's Way Resources (101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX). Expires 07/26/15.