



November 13, 2015

Dear Friends,

Here is the 132nd 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. (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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BLOOMS SEEN AROUND TOWN . . . VINES OF CHOICE . . . RIGHT BULBS FOR FORCING

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Once upon a time - so a legend goes - the confederate rose shrub only produced snowy white blooms. One day, a fatally-wounded soldier fell on the flowering bush. He lay there for two days, bleeding so profusely soon every single flower was covered with blood. To honor the brave soldier, the confederate rose changed its blooms ever after, opening white and, over the course of two days, turning each flower first pink, then almost red before it dies and falls from the bush. And so it does to this very day.

I don't know if confederate roses (left above & below) are as beautiful all over as they are here in Aldine. But this has to be one of their best years ever. Don't think just because these *Hibiscus mutabilis* flowers only last two days that if you blink, you'll miss them. This bush is covered with flowers for a very long bloom period every fall.

This large bush (or small multi-stemmed tree) is a fall bloomer with few pests, roots easily from cuttings and, once established, is very drought-tolerant. Want to know more? Read Dr. Bill Welch's "[Hardy Hibiscus \(Including Confederate Rose, *Hibiscus mutabilis*\)](#)."



L to r: confederate rose, morning glory tree/shrub and cassia

APPARENTLY OTHERS ARE NOTICING GORGEOUS FLOWERS TOO . . .

* DALE PHILLIPS WANTED AN ID on a plant that turned out (center above) to be a morning glory tree (or shrub, depending on whom you ask). My niece & nephews, Mimi, Stuart and Jim McMurray, used to call it the "Dr. Seus Tree" because of its often erratic-branching habit and multiple morning glory-type pinkish-purple flowers if left unpruned. Key to success: EXCELLENT drainage.

In his email, Dale also marveled at how quickly his *Cassia* 'Worley Butter Cream' cuttings rooted and began forming buds. Cassias are definitely great lazy gardener plants. In my (mythical) "Awesome Plant Hall of Fame" is my own beloved-albeit-late cassia (above right). It's a painful story to recount so I'll just include this link: "[My Late Cassia](#)." (I killed it with mulch that wasn't completely decayed.)

* MARY FRANCES OLIN IS LOOKING FOR a hardy blooming vine (aka "put-in-and-ignore forevermore") for a difficult-to-water fence line in full sun. Now's the best time to plant vines. [Buchanan's Native Plant's](#) email newsletters had a great guide I saved: "[Avoid Getting Tangled: Choosing the Right Vines](#)".

Buchanan's recommends star jasmine, Dutchman's pipevine, Carolina jessamine, Rangoon creeper, mandevilla, coral honeysuckle, Mexican flame vine, coral vine and passionvine. Click on [link](#) for details.



Vines, l to r: coral vine, Rangoon creeper, Mexican flame vine, Dutchman's pipe vine

My incredibly hardy, decades-old coral vine (*left above*) made a really nice background for a particularly clever gift Bill and I received on our (*ta-da!*) 50th wedding anniversary. Longtime friends Don & Ron Megow patiently taped 50 Susan B. Anthony silver dollars to ribbons that were then attached to a gift box top which, when lifted up, turned into an eye-popping mobile. Not something to leave outside, tho!

One tip on all vines listed: Altho all will appreciate watering to get started and during droughts, once established they can pretty much be ignored. However! They must also have EXCELLENT drainage. No wet feet for extended periods during our spring and fall monsoons. Prolonged soggy soil first stops blooming. Then they might die. All can take full sun. Star jasmine, Dutchman's pipevine and Rangoon creeper can take some bright shade.



L to r, hyacinth 'Amethyst,' Narcissus 'Chinese Sacred Lily,' & Tulip 'Negritos'

* PAT WISNIEWSKI HELPED ME TAKE HOLIDAY BULB FORCING TO A HIGHTER LEVEL. Thanks, Pat! I never before worried much about specific varieties of amaryllis, hyacinths, narcissus and tulips when discussing forcing. Pat wanted recommendations of specific varieties best suited for this unique method

of triggering winter blooms indoors.

Most amaryllis, hyacinths, narcissus and tulips can be forced. In fact, to be honest, I usually buy a dozen or so of the cheap boxed amaryllis & narcissus to give as Christmas gifts. Usually they work just fine, but sometimes they don't. It's always a gamble. Buying specific or at least higher quality bulbs is certainly a more reliable route to success.

I've always maintained my real expertise lies in knowing where the "real" experts are. So I contacted the Garden Club of Houston (sponsors of our annual fall Bulb Mart) and they sent me to member Dodie Jackson. Her recommendations:

- AMARYLLIS: 'Alfresco,' 'Susan,' 'Ferrari,' 'Dancing Queen' & 'Red Lion'
- HYACINTHS: 'Amethyst,' 'Blue Jacket,' 'Delft Blue' & 'White Pearl'
- NARCISSUS: 'Zivas,' 'Chinese Sacred Lily,' 'Erlcheer' & 'Inball'
- TULIPS: 'Negritos,' 'Worlds Favorite,,' 'Worlds Expression,' 'Worlds Peace,' 'Apeldoorn,' 'Golden Oxford,' 'Monte Carlo,' 'Monte Orange,' 'Orleans' & 'Ivory Floridale.'

Pat also wondered about sources. No way can I can keep up with individual inventories, so your best bet is to first call independent nurseries in your area. They're more likely than national chains to carry specific variety bulbs.

I did queried local nurseries for which I had email addresses to see if they carried any of the bulbs Dodie recommended above. These nurseries responded. They all carry a variety of bulbs including:

- * The Arbor Gate - 'Inball' narcissus (www.thearborgate.com)
- * At Plants for All Seasons, Hwy 249 location - 'World's Favorite' & Appledorn tulips, Delft Blue hyacinths and 'Ziva' narcissus (plantsforallseasons.com)
- * Mass Nursery - 'World's Favorite' & 'Appledorn' tulips, 'Ziva' narcissus, 'Delft Blue' hyacinths and 'Dancing Queen' amaryllis. (maasnursery.com)

Another option: mailorder nurseries. Try this: google bulbs by name (eg. "Narcissus Chinese Sacred Lily"). Bulb companies that carry this will come up in the websites listed. Just for this one, for example, I found several bulb companies, including [Brent & Becky Bulbs](#). Right now mark your calendar to check in mid-September for the date of GCH's 2016 Bulb & Plant Mart. It's usually in early October. It's our single best local source for a wide variety of bulbs.

If you know of any specific sources for any of the bulbs mentioned, do share. I did a quick email query of local nurseries for which I have email contacts.

Next week, I'll go into greater detail on forcing each of these bulbs.

NOTE TO NURSERIES. If you did not receive an email query from me, I probably don't have an email address for you. If you'd like to be included in these queries, email me at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

Brenda's column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER is based on her 45+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener. Brenda's gardening "book" - the Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD (a pdf publication) - is available wholesale to clubs as a fundraising item. Details: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

JOHN'S CORNER

"What Is A Healthy Soil"

(Part 3)

Continuing our discussion of what is a healthy soil we are going to discuss item #2 below.

1) Organic matter from almost fresh to totally decomposed in the form of humus (humins, humic and fulmic acids)



- 2) Minerals (nutrients, sand, silt, and clay)
- 3) Soil life (microbes and macrobes)
- 4) Air & water
- 5) Plant choices
- 6) Care for and do not destroy the health of the soil one has

For ease of discussion I am going to divide this topic into the elements or nutrients and the base materials that form all soils (sand, silt clay).

2) Minerals- The mineral requirement in a soil for healthy plant growth is a subject that is constantly being changed and expanded every year. First it was assumed that plants only needed NPK (nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), and potassium (K)) what are known as the "macro-nutrients". Later it was discovered that calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), and sulphur (S) were required. Over the last 25 years research has shown that zinc (Zn) and a little sodium (Na) were essential. Research over the last 10 years has shown that boron (B) is essential.

There are about 90 elements naturally found in the earth's crust and seawater hence we still have dozens of elements to go.

What about aluminum (Al)? The synthetic fertilizer industry says it is not required by plants. However when plant tissue is chemically analyzed it is present in small amounts. Other tests have shown that some plants grown in soils without aluminum will die, while others tests have shown plants without aluminum are disease prone and are subject to higher rates of insect damage.

What about cobalt (Co)? Most agricultural scientists say it is not required by plants. However, the vitamin B-12 molecule which regulates the immune system of mammals (including humans) and it is essential for hemoglobin formation and for the prevention of nerve degeneration is built around a cobalt atom. For us as people whom consume food to obtain minerals, the mineral must be in the food we eat. This means it has to be in the plants, which means it has to be present *and available* in the soil for microbes to build the B-12 molecule. NO cobalt in the soil means NO vitamin B-12 in our food. Recently it has been discovered that Cobalt is needed in legumes for nodule formation and nitrogen conversion, seeds started without cobalt will not grow into a viable plants. It has also been found in the bodies of microorganisms that live in the soil. Is it important?

How about Selenium (Se)? This element is not generally thought of as a plant nutrient. However it is important in protecting humans against chronic degenerative diseases, as it is required in the production of powerful antioxidants such as vitamin E and glutathione peroxidase. Medical studies have found that America's "Stroke Belt" runs right across America where selenium content in soils is low. Is selenium important? - You bet it is.

How important are these other minerals? Studies have shown that people who live in igneous areas with highly mineralized soil and water, the Hunza's, the Vilcabamba's, etc. have life spans averaging 127 years old, without the aid of medical technology. Current theory, confirmed by animal tests, indicates the presence of all the trace minerals in the water and soil where they live which allows the human body to work more efficiently to repair itself, prevent disease, and slow down the aging process.

The message I want to leave with you is that, "We as scientists do not really know for sure what is important and what's not". As a result, modern soil scientists researching organic and biological methods take the position of having all the possible minerals be present in the soil and then let the plants and microbes take what they want and need. Sort of like when we go to the cafeteria to eat, we have dozens of items to choose from, but we only take a few, and different people take different things based on what they need (what they are hungry for).

These trace minerals are found in granite and basalt sands, products from the ocean (seaweed and fish emulsions), green sand or glauconite and a few other mined products that were all discussed in detail in previous newsletters and are available on the website.

We have talked about humus and minerals which play extremely important roles in the soil, but typically compose less than 10% of the total volume of the soil. The remainder of the soil consists of sand, silt and clay particles. These are technically minerals which are called silicates; an example is the feldspars that have quartz (SiO₂) as their basic building block. Of these, clay is the most important and valuable in horticulture and agriculture. Clay contains nutrients, it helps the soil hold onto other nutrients (high cation exchange capacity or CEC) which prevents leaching, and helps hold water.

Clays are the smallest of soil particles, they have high nutrient and water retention capability, and they help bond larger soil particles together. However, a high percentage of clay can make the soil difficult to work, shrink and swell as water content changes; they become slippery when wet, very hard when dry, and have very poor aeration. Clay particles are so small that it might take a hundreds or more to be the size of a silt particle. When wet and rubbed between ones fingers, clays feel smooth and slippery.

Silt particles are also made of quartz minerals that are between clay and sand in size and properties, important in loam soils but not important by themselves. If one rubs a silt soil between their fingers in feels like talcum powder.

Sands are the coarsest of all soil particles and made almost exclusively of quartz minerals. Sandy soils are well aerated, they drain rapidly, and the looseness is ideal for root growth; however moisture and nutrient retention are very poor.

Each soil component has good and bad points so how do we as gardeners overcome this problem? We use, find or make, what is called loams which are soils that contains equal amounts of clays, silt, and sand, plus some organic matter. Is this the ideal garden soil?

Pretty close. It is easy to optimize soil conditions from here for a given plant. For example the brassica family (cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, etc.) prefers a slightly alkaline soil with a higher percentage of clay. This contrasts with peppers and tomatoes that prefer slightly acidic soils high in silt and sand with less clay. However, both plant groups grow better in soils high in humus and both will grow fine in opposite conditions if there is enough good quality organic matter (quality compost) mixed in.

* * *

WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

TO SUBMIT EVENTS - PLEASE - USE OUR FORMAT!

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 other newsletters.

If we inspire you to attend any of these events, please let them know you heard about it in

THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!

SAT., NOV. 14: PRUNING/PREPARING FRUITING TREES & VINES FOR WINTER BY BILL ADAMS, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Free. arborgate.com; 281-351-8851

SAT., NOV. 14: EDIBLE LANDSCAPES. 9-11am, Houston Museum of Natural Science, Moran Hall, 5555 Hermann Park Dr. \$45. Urban Harvest' event. 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org

SAT., NOV. 14: 43rd ANNUAL HERB FAIR, 9am-2pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray., Free. Herb Society of America/South Texas Unit event. www.herbsociety-stu.org

SAT., NOV 14: TREE SALE, 8 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Kingwood Garden Club, Kingwood Library, 4400 Bens Branch Rd, Kingwood. Free. 281-414-7134. kingwoodgardenclub.org

SAT., NOV. 14: HERBS IN THE GARDEN BY CINDY CROFT, 1-3pm, AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. 281-534-3413; galv@wt.net, www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

SAT., NOV. 14: PRUNING & PREPARING FRUITING TREES & VINES FOR WINTER BY BILL ADAMS, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Reservations: arborgate.com; 281-351-8851

SAT., NOV. 14: AWAKING THE DREAMER, CHANGING THE DREAM, 9am-3pm, Houston Green Building Resource Center, 1002 Washington Avenue. RSVP required: 832-394-9050; steve.stelzer@houston.tx.gov, greenhouston.tx.gov/gbrceducation.pdf

MON., NOV. 16: THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE RIGHT JOB WITH TRICIA BRADBURY, 6:45-8pm, Brightwater Clubhouse, 2410 Brightwater Dr., Missouri City. Free. Brightwater Garden Club event. brightwatergardenclub.com; 281-403-9269

MON., NOV. 16: OPEN GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners Precinct 2 event. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., NOV. 17: THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE BY WILLIAM HALDIK, 10am, St. Basil Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land; 10 am; free; Sugar Land Garden Club event. Sugarlandgardenclub.org

THURS., NOV. 19: CITRUS & HOMEOWNERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY MONTE NESBITT, 6:30-8:30pm, AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. 281-534-3413; galv@wt.net, www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

THURS., NOV. 19: NATIVE PLANT & SEED SWAP AND POTLUCK DINNER, 6:30-9:00pm, Houston Arboretum in Memorial Park, 4501 Woodway Dr, Houston. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas-Houston Chapter event. nphouston1@gmail.com, <http://npsot.org/wp/houston/>.

TUES., NOV 24: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY & SEMINAR: HOLIDAY PLANT CARE, 9-11:30am, 3033 Bear Creek Dr.. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2015-open-garden-days.pdf; 281-855-5600

SAT., DEC. 5: CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE, 3-7pm, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Free. arborgate.com; 281-351-8851

SAT., DEC. 5: GROWING CITRUS IN HOUSTON, 9-11am. University of St. Thomas, 3918 Yoakum Blvd. \$45. Urban Harvest event. 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org

SAT., DEC. 5: HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE, 10am-4pm, Buchanan's Native Plants, 611 East 11th Street, free, buchanansplants.com/calendar/events

SAT., DEC. 5: BACKYARD BASICS: FRUIT AND NUTS, 9-11am, Extension Office, 1402 Band Rd., Rosenberg. \$15. Fort Bend AgriLife Extension Service/Fort Bend Master Gardener event. Registration: 281-342-3034, fortbend.agrilife.org/backyard-basics

WED., DEC. 9: CHRISTMAS CRAFTS USING NATURAL PLANT MATERIALS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

FRI., DEC. 11: A WARM GARDENING WELCOME BY BARBARA BAKER, 10:15 am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Drive. Tickets required. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., DEC. 12: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEED (PART 1 OF 3) BY GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9-11:30am, AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Reservations to galv@wt.net. 281-534-3413; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

SAT., DEC. 19: CHRISTMAS GARDENS BIRD COUNT, 8am, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register at 713-274-4160.

MON., DEC. 21: OPEN GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE, 8:30-11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners Precinct 2 event. hcmga.tamu.edu

FRI., JAN. 8: PERSONALIZING YOUR GARDEN FOCAL POINTS BY DARNELL SCHREIBER, 10:15am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Drive. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

TUE., JAN. 12: FOREST ECOLOGY / TREE CARE BY JOHN ROSS. 9 am. South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. Free. Woodlands Garden Club event. www.thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

WED., JAN. 13: TOP BAR BEEHIVES BY DEAN COOK. Noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

THUR., JAN. 14: FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PREVIEW OF THE FRUIT & CITRUS TREE SALE, 6:30-8:30pm, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Free. 281-341-7068; www.fbm.org.

SAT., JAN. 16: FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ANNUAL FRUIT & CITRUS TREE SALE, 9am-1pm or sold out, Fort Bend County Fairground Barn-H, 4310 Highway 36S, Rosenberg. 281-341-7068; www.fbm.org

MONDAYS., JAN. 25-FEB. 29: TEXAS GULF COAST GARDENER, TIER III: THE ART OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN. 9am-3pm. Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. 713-274-4160

SAT., JAN. 30: WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL FRUIT & NUTTREE SALE (and presale pickup), 10am-2pm, 850 Bus 290 N. Hempstead. txmg.org/wallemg

TUE., FEB 9: SHADE BARDENING BY GUDRUM OPPERMAN. 9 am. South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. Free. Woodlands Garden Club event. www.thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

WED., FEB. 10: SPRING INTO YOUR LAWN - ORGANIC LAWN CARE & SPRINGTIME PREP BY BOB DAILEY. noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

FRI., FEB. 12: THE HOLISTIC GARDEN, BY DR. JOE NOVAK, 10:15am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Drive. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., FEB. 20: FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PREVIEW FOR THE VEGETABLE- HERB PLANT SALE, 9-11am, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Free. 281 341-7068, www.fbm.org

SAT. FEB. 27: FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ANNUAL VEGETABLE-HERB PLANT SALE, 9am-noon, Fort Bend County Extension Office, 1402 Band Rd., Rosenberg. 281 341-7068, www.fbm.org

TUES., MAR. 8: EASTER FLORAL DESIGN CONCEPTS BY TONY HUFFMAN. 9 am. South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. Free. Woodlands Garden Club event. www.thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

WED. MAR. 9: MARCH MART VOLUNTEER TRAINING, 10:30-11:30am, MARCH MART PREVIEW OF SALE PLANTS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

FRI., MAR. 11: BULLET PROOF VIBURNUMS FOR THE GULF SOUTH BY DR. DAVID CREECH, 10:15am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

WED. MAR. 12: MARCH MART VOLUNTEER TRAINING, 9:30-10:30am, and MARCH MART PREVIEW OF SALE PLANTS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

FRI.-SAT., MAR. 18-19: MARCH MART, 8am-4pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 2206 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

TUE., APR. 12: PLANT PROPAGATION TECHNIQUES. 9 am. South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. Free. Woodlands Garden Club event. www.thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

FRI., APR. 9: XPLORING CREATIVITY BY LILLIAN RICO, 10:15am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Drive. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

FRI., MAY 13: NIGHT SOUNDS - TWILIGHT WALK THROUGH THE GARDEN BY DEBBIE BANFIELD, 10:15am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs; houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

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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.



COUPON: Nature's Way Resources. 20% off our: Garden Mix Light Plus. <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 11/21/15.

COUPON: Nature's Way Resources. 30% off all trees & shrubs including fruit trees, shade trees, antique roses and much

more. (Offer good for retail purchases of this product by the cubic yard at Nature's Way Resources (101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX). Expires 12/31/15.