



January 8, 2016

Dear Friends,

Here is the 140th 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.

Please or sign yourself up to receive this newsletter by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" link just below. We will never sell or share our mailing list to protect the privacy of our subscribers.

Enjoy!

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



*Seen around town, these usually aren't blooming in January in the Greater Houston area (except maybe in Galveston & other points south): l to r, esperanza, plumbago, pink magnolia and firespikes*

**ONLY THING PREDICTABLE ABOUT OUR WEATHER IS  
ITS TOTAL LACK OF PREDICTABILITY - SO KEEP A JOURNAL!**

**BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

*Come gather 'round people / Wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters / Around you have grown  
And accept it that soon / You'll be drenched to the bone  
If your time to you / Is worth savin'  
Then you better start swimmin' / Or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a-changin'*

Bob Dylan - The Times They Are A-changin'

Driving down one of our neighborhood streets the other day, I saw an esperanza (*Tecoma stans*) covered with buds that were starting to burst into bloom. I was so surprised, but I don't know why. My firespikes are still in full flower, as is the plumbago. The pink magnolia is producing its beautiful tulip-shaped blossoms.

Normally all three of these hardies have, by now, either partially or totally dropped their leaves in anticipation of

winter dormancy -- a necessary stage if we're going to enjoy their normal spring/summer color display.

Then arrives an email from Carrie in Waller. Her azaleas are starting to bloom. What should she do? Well, Carrie, enjoy! Not much else you can do. Hopefully they will then go dormant enough to produce spring blooms as usual.

Most of us are familiar with azaleas blooming early -- in fact, newer varieties are hybridized to produce both spring and fall displays. And, of course, our usual winter annuals are going strong.

Sherri Harrah of [Plants for All Seasons](#) reports Amazon series of dianthus are so beautiful this year, 'Neon Cherry,' 'Neon Purple' and 'Rose Magic' can be seen in shopping centers and neighborhood entrances around town.

Staffers know immediately what customers want when they ask what are those BRIGHT BRIGHT flowers planted everywhere. Amazon dianthus are taller than regular varieties, reaching 18-32" with a solid layering of blooms. Here they should last through March and might still be going strong through May. All depends on the weather!!!

So . . . for those of you new gardening in to this area, just remember: The only thing predictable about gardening on the Upper Texas Gulf Coast is its total lack of predictability.



*Even if it does turn cold, these can handle it: l to r, Dianthus Amazon series' 'Rose Magic,' 'Neon Purple' & 'Neon Cherry.' At right, looking for great combos to include edibles? Interplant red lettuce with blue & yellow pansies.*

Mary Cummings of [RCW Nursery](#) says they have beautiful blooms on redbuds, banana shrubs, sweet olives, oleanders and azaleas. Definitely not a typical January!

Mary also noted RCW customers certainly are following the national trend toward planting more herbs and vegetables. Our winter favorites (snaps, pansies, dianthus, cyclamens, alyssum) are still popular. But she recommends interplanting them with winter vegetables and herbs.

For example, red lettuce mixed with yellow and blue pansies, or green onions as a background, frame or high center for other winter bloomers. Cut herbs, she points out, are so expensive. "Adding a few as filler plants would be an awesome way to stretch a budget, eat better and fill a hole in the garden."

Any other really-out-of-season bloomers in your gardens? Do share. Newcomers need to know this is okay but not normal.

If you're looking for an easy-to-stick-to New Year's Resolution, all this weather unpredictability makes journaling a much more valuable aid for both gardeners and nature lovers alike. And that's what Naturalist Tiffany McElweenie is addressing both in today's spotlight and in her Saturday, Jan. 9, 1-3pm class at the [Houston Arboretum & Nature Center](#), 4501 Woodway. The \$30 fee (\$20 members) covers up to 4 family members (\$5 per extra person).

Nature journaling teaches you how to both create a notebook and record observations. This will benefit for both nature walks and progress (or lack thereof!) in a garden as well. Tiffany's Spotlight below is geared a bit more perhaps to nature recordings, the focus of her upcoming talk. Details: <http://houstonarboretum.org/events/nature-journaling/>

But all apply to your own garden. Since this is your journal, it doesn't matter what your sketches look like. Cell cameras and memos are a boon to journaling:

- \* Make notes and take pictures of the good, the bad and the ugly as you walk through the garden.
- \* Take pictures of the plant variety tag when you buy and of plants you see & like, but can't identify. (Send them to me and I'll be glad to try and identify them for you)
- \* Find some place to store all this info. I promise sometime in the future, you'd sure wish you had. \* Journaling is especially important if you're introducing children to gardening, even on a small scale. Have them start a notebook with drawings, etc.

If you have any journaling tips from your own experience, especially those "learned the hard way," do share: [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)

\* \* \*

Before we move on to Tiffany's Journaling Spotlight, however, want to make sure you have on your calendars:

\* Brazoria County Annual Fruit Tree Sale, which didn't make it into our Greater Houston Area Fruit Tree Sale Wrap-up last week. - SAT., FEB. 13: BRAZORIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE, 8am-noon, Brazoria County Fairgrounds, 901 South Downing Road, Angleton Texas. [txmg.org/brazoria/](http://txmg.org/brazoria/)

\* The 2016 Nancy Stallworth Thomas Horticulture Lecture will feature internationally-renowned environmental designer [Adriaan Gueze](#), who is creating the Master Plan for the Houston Botanic Garden. Free & open to public, Wed., Feb. 17, 10 am. Bagby Hall at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 717 Sage Rd. @ Woodway.

And now, grab your pad and pencils and, with Tiffany's help, keep records!

\* \* \*



## JOURNALING - YOU'LL BE SO GLAD YOU STARTED ONE

By **TIFFANY MCELWEENIE**  
NATURALIST, HOUSTON ARBORETUM & NATURE CENTER

### What is a Nature Journal?

Keeping a journal to document the world around us is a centuries old tradition. It's a way to jot observations, feelings, and thoughts about our relationship to the natural world. It can be a simple notebook, sketch pad, fancy leather-bound journal, or anything with pages.

The purpose of journaling is unique to the individual doing it. For some, it's a way to set aside time to connect to the natural world, reflect, and meditate. Research has even shown mental health benefits from journaling and walking in nature.

Making observations on the growth of plants, bird and insect sightings, and weather patterns can provide you with an invaluable resource for your own gardens. Your ability to notice small changes and patterns with a greater awareness will improve when journaling becomes part of your routine.

Observations can be made in different ways. Sometimes you may want to simply write, other times sketch, color with pencils, or even watercolor.

Just keep in mind that nature serves as the inspiration in this journal. Have an open mind when you first begin, and allow yourself to discover what draws your attention; it may not be what you expect!

Sketching allows you to look closely and make note of any small details you want to remember for later.

Write down thoughts that come to you, or feelings that your observations bring up. Collecting basic data about the date, time, season, and weather is valuable in long-term journaling. Adding color brings your page to life.

\* \* \*

Email Tiffany at [tmcelweenie@houstonarboretum.org](mailto:tmcelweenie@houstonarboretum.org)

SAT., JAN. 9: NATURE JOURNALING BASICS, 1-3pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway. \$30 for up to \$4 family members. <http://houstonarboretum.org/events/nature-journaling/>

**JOHN'S CORNER WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK**



## A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

**Thank you for recycling  
your Christmas Tree at the  
WCID 132 water plant!**

The WCID 132 invites our neighbors to participate in our annual Merry Mulching Christmas Tree Recycling Program. Strip all the ornaments, garland, tinsel, etc. from your tree (no artificial trees!) and bring it to the grassy dead-end area outside the water plant's fence (there will be a sign) 4107 Evening Trail, between December 26th and January 10th.

The mulch from the trees will be used throughout our Water Conservation Demonstration and Research Center. By recycling your Christmas tree, you will help preserve finite water resources, and keep your tree out of the landfill!

Watch for the coupon in January and bring it by The Garden for a 5# bag of organic mulch with fertilizer additive. Start the recycling tradition! Mulch pick-up every Saturday in January with coupon. One per family please.



\* \* \*

## 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](mailto: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

SAT., JAN. 9: GROWING AVOCADO & PAPAYA BY JERRY HURLBERT, 9-11:30am; GROWING PEACHES IN GALVESTON COUNTY by Herman Auer, 1-2pm, AgriLife Extension in Carbine Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. 281-534-3413; reservations: [galv3@wt.net](mailto:galv3@wt.net). [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

SAT., JAN. 9: PREVIEW OF JAN. 16 URBAN HARVEST 2016 FRUIT TREE SALE, 9:30am-noon, United Way Community Resource Center; 50 Waugh Drive. 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale](http://urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale)

SAT., JAN. 9: NATURE JOURNALING BASICS, 1-3pm, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway. \$30 for up to \$4 family members. <http://houstonarboretum.org/events/nature-journaling/>

TUES., JAN. 11: GOSPEL OF LIVING SOIL BY BETSY ROSS, 10am, St. Basil Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free; Sugar Land Garden Club event. [Sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://Sugarlandgardenclub.org)

MON., JAN. 11: WHAT TO PLANT AND DO IN YOUR HOME GARDEN BY CHRIS RAIN, 6:30pm, Houston MultiService Center 1475 W. Gray. Free. HUG (Houston Urban Gardeners) event. [Houstonurbangardeners.org](http://Houstonurbangardeners.org)

TUES., 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](http://www.thewoodlandsgardenclub.org)

TUE., JAN. 12: FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE WOODLANDS AREA BY JOHN ROSS, 7 pm. South Regional Library, 2101 Lake Robbins Drive, The Woodlands. Free. A Woodlands G.R.E.E.N. event. <http://www.thewoodlandsgreen.org/>

SAT., JAN. 12: PREVIEW OF JAN. 16 URBAN HARVEST 2016 FRUIT TREE SALE, 6:30-9pm, , United Way Community Resource Center; 50 Waugh Drive. 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale](http://urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale)

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

WED., JAN. 13: KATY PRAIRIE CONSERVANCY GREAT GROW-OUT by JAIME GONZALEZ, 7:30pm, Cheri Flores Garden Pavilion, Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society event. [hcsstex.org/](http://hcsstex.org/)

THUR., JAN. 14: FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PREVIEW OF THE JAN. 16 FRUIT & CITRUS TREE SALE, 6:30-8:30pm, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Building B, 4310 Highway 36 South, Rosenberg. Free. 281-341-7068; [www.fbmg.org](http://www.fbmg.org)

THURS., JAN. 14: BED BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP, 7:30PM, CHERRIE FLORES GARDEN PAVILION,

1500 Hermann Drive, Houston 77004. Free. Houston Rose Society event. [houstonrose.org](http://houstonrose.org)

THURS., JAN. 14: HOW TO GROW OLIVES AND PRODUCE OLIVE OIL BY RANDY & MONICA BRAZIL, 10-11:30 am, Clear Lake Meeting Room, 5001 Nasa Parkway. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 event. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu)

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.fbmga.org](http://www.fbmga.org)

SAT., JAN. 16: COUSHATTA CAMELLIA SOCIETY SHOW, 1-4pm, First Christian Church Fellowship Building, 3500 N. Loop 336 W, Conroe. Don Marcotte, 936-661-1101. [funny-farm2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:funny-farm2@sbcglobal.net)

SAT., JAN. 16: FRUIT TREES - SELECTION, PLANTING, PRUNING, SPRAYING & CARE, 9-11am, Montgomery County Extension Office, Tom LeRoy Education Center, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. Master Gardener event. \$5. 936-539-7824, [mcmga.com](http://mcmga.com)

SAT., JAN. 16: WEDGE GRAFTING BY SUE JEFFCO, 9-11am; KITCHEN GARDENING BY MARY DEMENY, 1-3pm, AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. 281-534-3413. Reservations: [galv3@wt.net](mailto:galv3@wt.net). [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

SAT., JAN. 16 - URBAN HARVEST 2016 FRUIT TREE SALE – 9am-1pm (or sell-out), Rice University Stadium; 5600 Greenbriar Dr. 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale](http://urbanharvest.org/fruit-tree-sale)

MON., JAN. 18: 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. Free. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu)

TUES., JAN. 19: GARDENING BY THE SQUARE FOOT BY JOHN JONS, 6:30-8 p.m., at Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. 281-534-3413. Reservations: [galv3@wt.net](mailto:galv3@wt.net). [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)

THURS., JAN. 21: WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER 2016 INTERN TRAINING PROGRAM BEGINS. Registration (\$160; Jan. 11 deadline). [www.txmga.org/walleimg](http://www.txmga.org/walleimg).

THURS., JAN. 21: PLANTING AND PRUNING: FRUIT TREES by ROBERT "SKIP" RICHTER, 6:30pm, Harris County AgriLife Extension auditorium, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Free. Gulf Coast Fruit Study Group event. Diana Groce, 281-855-5600

SAT., JAN. 23: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FRUIT AND NUT TREE SALE, 8am program, 9am-noon sale, Montgomery Co. Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. 936-539-7824, [mcmga.com](http://mcmga.com)

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. [txmga.org/walleimg](http://txmga.org/walleimg)

SAT, JAN. 30 HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL FRUIT & NUT TREE SALE & LECTURES, 9am-1pm (or sell-out), Bear Creek Park; 3033 Bear Creek Dr. 281-855-5600; [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx)

SAT., FEB. 6: COUSHATTA CAMELLIA SOCIETY SHOW, 1-4pm, Katy and E. Don Walker, Sr. Education Center, 1400 19th St., Huntsville. Don Marcotte, 936-661-1101. [funny-farm2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:funny-farm2@sbcglobal.net)

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

THURS., FEB. 11: ROSE PRUNING DONE RIGHT, 7:30pm, Cheri Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr.. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Details: [www.houstonrose.org](http://www.houstonrose.org)

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](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)

SAT, FEB. 13: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER, PRECINCT 2, ANNUAL FRUIT TREE & TOMATO SALE, Pre-Sale Talk: 8am; Sale: 9am-1pm (or sell-out). Pasadena Convention Center; 7902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX 77507 281-855-5600; [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubSales.aspx)

SAT, FEB. 13: BRAZORIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE, 8 AM - 12 PM, Brazoria County Fairgrounds, 901 South Downing Road, Angleton. [txmga.org/brazoria/](http://txmga.org/brazoria/)

TUES., FEB. 16: NEWEST RESEARCH ON BUTTERFLY GARDENING BY NANCY GREIG, 10am, St. Basil Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free; Sugar Land Garden Club event. [Sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://Sugarlandgardenclub.org)

WED., FEB. 17: MASTER PLAN FOR THE HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN BY ADRIAAN GUEZE / 2016 NANCY STALLWORTH THOMAS HORTICULTURE LECTURE, 10am, Bagby Hall, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 717 Sage Rd. at Woodway. Free. Garden Club of Houston event. [gchouston.org](http://gchouston.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.fbmga.org](http://www.fbmga.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.fbmga.org](http://www.fbmga.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](http://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](http://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.

TUES., MAR. 15: CREATING FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS FROM YOUR GARDEN BY AMY NEUGEBAUER, 10am, St. Basil Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free; Sugar Land Garden Club event. [Sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://Sugarlandgardenclub.org)

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](http://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](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)

TUES., APR. 19: MILLENNIAL GARDENING BY DEE NASH, 10am, St. Basil Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free; Sugar Land Garden Club event. [Sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://Sugarlandgardenclub.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](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.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!**

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**Not using our format will result in a delay in publication.**  
**Events will not be picked up from newsletters.**

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE  
POSSIBLE BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS





<http://natureswayresources.com/>

## 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 01/15/16.

**COUPON: Nature's Way Resources. 30% off Pears & Pomegranates.**

(Offer good for retail purchases of this product (101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX). Expires 01/30/16.