



Dear Friends,

This is the 13th issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. This 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 cast of contributing writers who will chime in 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 .

Enjoy!

GARDENIA EXTRAORDINAIRE, FLORAL FRAGRANCE, ADDICTION WARNING, BURGLAR DETERRENT, FAVORITE WILDFLOWER

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH



Our whole yard is perfumed by this 'Rosedown' gardenia. I think I'd just lay down and die if anything ever happened to it.

Well, not really. But I would be sad as it holds a place of honor among my garden's "lares and penates."

Not only is it the only gardenia I've ever been able to keep alive, it recalls wonderful memories of Louisiana's [Rosedown Plantation](#) in [St. Francisville](#) where I bought it.

It was an honor to share the podium there one year with the great guys from the [Southern Garden History Symposium](#), one of the cutest of whom was Greg Grant.

Greg, who introduced many of the beautiful plants we now take for granted. is with the [Stephen F. Austin State University Pinewoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches](#). He had selected the cultivar 'Martha Turnbull' from from a batch of seedlings he grew from Rosedown, built by Martha and her husband.



I bought two of these gardenias, but one died. Planted them too close together. Lesson: always research the mature size of plants before putting them in the ground.

If you can't find this at your local nursery, Greg says they sell them at their annual Spring and Fall sales, both of which are well worth your time. Mark October 5, 2013, on your calendar. That's SFASU's Fabulous Fall Festival.

*The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.*
- Sonnet 54 by William Shakespeare

Fragrance in the garden is a somewhat lost treasure. Hybridization has focused on creating wonderful flowers on compact shrubs, the better to suit our steadily shrinking home landscapes.

Perhaps the most fragrant-conscious gardener I know is my sister Audrey. She's highly allergic to anything perfumed, so relies on flowers, mostly antique roses, for olfactory delights.

Her quick thoughts on antique roses/shrub roses-for-fragrance:

In order:

1. *Othello* (a [David Austin rose](#)).
2. *Madame Isaac Pereire* (a Bourbon that people think is a once bloomer but bloomed twice a year for me - I used to smell her through my closed bedroom window)
3. *"Lover's Delite"* (sic) (a found rose some people think is the same rose as no. 4)
4. *Fisherman's Friend* (David Austin)
5. *Griff's Red* (a [Griffith Buck rose](#))
6. *Monsieur Tillier* (an old Tea rose that is outstanding for making bouquets)

Three roses I had/have have the habit of "throwing" their scents into the air, which is so wonderful. In order:

1. *Sombrueil* (a David Austin rose)

2. *"Bobbie McKenna's Champney's Pink Cluster"* (According to Mike Shoup of the [Antique Rose Emporium](#), Champney had a lot of roses he simply called "pink cluster rose," that weren't that commercially interesting. Bobbie grew one that looks like a little sweetheart rose...sweet, but not spectacular. Mike has said he grows it "because it perfumes my front porch.")

3. *Marie Pavie* (a polyantha that I fell in love with when I went to the Antique Rose Emporium years ago. They had multiple bushes clipped like a short hedge and it scented the whole garden it bordered.)

These above are Audrey's recommendations. Now, let me give you a warning about antique roses. They're highly addictive.

Decades ago, before Audrey ever thought about putting trowel to soil, she had a problem with burglars zigzagging over the back fences in her neighborhood, checking to see if back doors were left unlocked.

I happened to have the most aggressive, nastiest-thorned rose I've ever met, Seven Sisters, on a fence. It never bloomed. She wanted something to discourage the fence-jumpers. I wanted to get rid of those "sisters." Solved both our problems.

But it never bloomed for her either. I recall asking Margaret Sharpe, Houston Rosarian Extraordinaire for advice for Audrey. A says I asked someone else. Whatever. The advice was to go out after dark and beat that sucker with a broom.

"Why at night?" I asked. "So the neighbors won't see you," was the reply.

It worked. I learned later that whacking plants of many kinds is a time-honored way of getting them to bloom/fruit. Makes the sap move or may even put the plant into survival mode. About to die, so better produce fruit/flowers in order to produce seed to continue the species.

Ever heard of "switching okra"? Same principle. That's one reason we had such incredible flowering trees the spring after the horrendous winds of Hurricane Ike.

The point is: A became so enamored with antique roses she joined the [Texas Rose Rustlers](#) and even served as Chairman at one point. So . . . be forewarned. (Google "Margaret Sharpe Antique Roses" for incredible growing advice.)

If, in spite of my warning, you'd still like to know more about antique roses or the Texas Rose Rustlers'

extraordinary activities, drop by the free Rookie Rustler meeting on July 13 at [Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens](http://www.mercerarboretum.com) in North Harris County. Log onto <http://www.texasroshttp://www.texasroserustlers.com> for updated details.



A FAVORITE WILDFLOWER

Coralbean is one of my most favorite wildflowers. It's in full bloom now on Bolivar Peninsula. An incredible hummingbird attractor, it does well in home gardens, with flower stalk heights reaching about 6 foot.

Best for back of bed, however. It does have thorns. Good for those fences a burglar might hop over! American Indians used *Erythrina herbacea* for many things including a tea tonic for stomachaches and (seeds/bark) a rheumatism rub. In Mexico, it's used as a rat or fish poison. In other countries the flowers are used in soups and meat patties. But they may have different varieties, so don't try this at home!

But as a garden plant, the fire engine red flowers are definitely eye grabbers!

NEED IMMEDIATE GARDEN ANSWERS?

I'll be joining Randy Lemmon this coming Sunday morning on his GardenLine radio call-in show on KTRH (740 AM) to talk about this exciting new newsletter and answer gardening questions. Do tune it and let your friends know. The call-in number is 713-212-KTRH (5874).

If you're part of any area horticulture events, be sure to add Randy's show to your publicity list, along with (of course!) our newsletter.

"THE LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE ON CD" - Specifically for Houston Area gardens - WHAT TO DO EACH MONTH - when to fertilize, prune, plant what where, best plants for sun, shade, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc. Based on Brenda's quirky 40+ year Houston Chronicle Lazy Gardener column. PDF format, print out only the month you need. \$20 total, checks payable to Brenda B. Smith. Mail to: Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD, 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039-2103.

For correspondence that is specific to Brenda, feel free to email her directly at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

June 8: 10 am. Tomato Contest. Judges will choose winners in the categories of largest fruit and best tasting fruit. Don't miss out on the fun! For more information: www.arborgate.com and click on Class Schedule. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, CHILDREN WELCOME!

June 8: 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The Plumeria Society of America Plant Sale. There will be a Gorgeous Bloom display of the flowers available, an 'Ask the Experts' table plus door prizes. For more information: www.theplumeriasociety.org. Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Rd 1 Seabrook, TX.

June 8: 10:15 a.m. Learn the naturally inspired colors of the Summer garden! Let us provide suggestions for plants that thrive in our Texas heat. This 10:15 a.m. clinic takes place both Cornelius Nursery locations. Learn more at <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>.

June 9: 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Introduction to Beekeeping. Lecture by John Berry at Wabash Antiques & Feed Store, <http://wabashfeed.com/eventcalendar.html>. Join us for a two-hour class meant to help you get started keeping bees. Topics covered included: honeybee biology and behavior, beekeeping history, and beekeeping equipment, including beehive parts and their functions.

June 9: American Hibiscus Society/Lone Star Chapter Show and Sale, 1-4 pm, Bellaire Community Center 7008 S. Rice, Bellaire, TX

June 10: 6:30 p.m. HUG's (Houston Urban Gardeners) next meeting will be at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 5911 Hermann Park Dr. Jim Bundscho will enlighten us on DIY drip irrigation system basics: putting a system together, parts, where to obtain, costs, maintenance and support. <http://www.houstonurbangardeners.org>

June 12: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens. Lunch Bunch. Wed., June 12, noon - 2 pm, Spring Creek and Harris County Precinct 4 Greenway Projects: Join Mike Howlett, greenway project manager, for an overview of the largest forested urban corridor in the United States, and discover the multitude of flora, fauna, and recreational opportunities that abound here. For more information: 281-443-8731 or www.hcp4.net/mercer.

June 15: 10:15 a.m. Cut Flower Gardening Clinic at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss; <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

June 17. Open Garden Day. A Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 event. Hours are from 8:30 am - 11:00 am. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions and present programs from 9:30 am - 10:30 am. For Children - "Butterflies" & For Adults - "Irrigation for your Home Gardens." Where: Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff, Houston, TX 77034. FREE. <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

June 19, 10 am. Master Gardener Lecture Series. Suzy Fischer will be speaking on "Edible Landscape". She is a founding and current board member of Urban Harvest. Her mission is to promote healthy communities and sound nutrition by educating the public. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Where: The Meeting Room at Clear Lake Park (on the lakeside), 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook, TX 77586. <http://hcmga.tamu.edu>

June 19: 9:30 a.m. Callie's Kids Story Corner: The Prince/Princess and the Pea, at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss; <http://www.calloways.com/callieskids> Free.

June 25: 4 - 7 p.m., OHBA Summer Plant Series. Location: United Way, 50 Waugh Dr Houston, TX 77007. Speaker 1: Chris Wiesinger, President and Owner of The Southern Bulb Co. Topic: The Bulb Hunter: A Photographic Journey. Through a beautiful photographic journey Chris will describe his efforts to find rare bulbs and how best to use them in your landscapes to create magnificent beauty. Speaker 2: Mike Alexander,

Danny Yarbrough & Casey Sherwood of New Nurseries. Topic: New & Underutilized Plant Varieties for Houston. Register today at: <http://summerplantseries.eventbrite.com/> .

June 26: 7:30 p.m. Program: "Star Cactus (*Astrophytum asterias*). A bedroom for bees and a cupboard for conies" presented by Anna Strong. Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive www.hcsstex.org.

July 12: 11a.m. Brazoria County Master Gardeners, Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: composting (back yard and small scale), for more information contact Dana Morisse-Arnold (979) 864-7713.

July 17, 10 a.m. Harris County Master Gardeners, Pct. 2 at Clear Lake Park, speaker: John Ferguson, topic: health and the environment, for more information contact Edie LeBourgeois at (281) 998-7660.

July 20th: 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The Plumeria Society of America Plant Sale. There will be a Gorgeous Bloom display of the flowers available, an 'Ask the Experts' table plus door prizes throughout the day. Arrive early for best selection. For more information: www.theplumeriasociety.org. Location: Fort Bend County Fairgrounds 3350 Hwy 36S--Rosenberg, TX.

July 27: 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Annual Summer Color Conference and Plant Sale. Splash into summer with this one-day immersion into perfect solutions for creating a glorious garden that thrives in Houston's summer heat! Reservations required. Speakers: Ceil Dow, avid enthusiast and ginger expert will speak on the gingers she loves, Chuck Bybee from JIL Greenhouses (a wholesale nursery) will present Bedding Plants and Annuals that are good for Houston summers and Norm Arnold of Glorious Gardens will present Landscape Designs that bring out color. Visit <http://themerchersociety.org/events-programs-2/summer-color-symposium/> for more information. Fee.

August 17: The Texas Master Naturalist Fall 2013 Training Session begins on August 17, 2013, and runs through October 30, 2013. Classes are on Tuesday evenings and field trips are on Saturdays. For more details, email training.officer@txgcmn.org, or you can visit the website of local chapters:

- [Heartwood](#) (Conroe area)
- [Coastal Prairie](#) (Rosenberg)
- Cradle of Texas (Brazoria County): training to start early 2014
- [Galveston Bay Area](#): training to start Spring 2014
- [Gulf Coast](#) (Houston)
- [Mid Coast](#) (Matagorda County & south):

Submit calendar items to lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the sponsoring organization. Please note: "garden calendar request" in the subject line.

Need speakers for your group? Brenda's "Lazy Gardener's Speakers List" of area horticultural/environmental experts is available free for the asking. Email your request to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

BLOOMIN' & BOOMIN' - BUFFALO BAYOU PARK

From Shepherd Dr. to Sabine St., Houstonians are in for a visual delight as the landscape will explode with desirable native plantings in meadows, lawns, rambles, wetlands and to the water's edge. Hardy perennial beds will add color along with native flowering trees to enhance a fountain-centered seating area.

Centering the new horticultural treasure will be a garden area surrounding Lost Lake on the Park's west side. In case you missed the big story in the Chronicle, click on Kathy Huber's article: "Buffalo Bayou Park: a Green Urban Gem in the Works" "[Buffalo Bayou Park: a Green Urban Gem in the Works](#)" for more details.

A special trip o' the trowel to these folks for their underwriting and support of this wonderful project: Buffalo Bayou Partnership (the prime mover), SWA Group, Boston's Reed Hilderbrand, Katy Prairie Conservancy, The Wortham Foundation, the Garden Club of Houston and River Oaks Garden Club.

Get a head start on what's happening now. Download a free fold-out Buffalo Bayou Trail Map of the total 10-square miles of the area of focus from Shepherd Drive (where Buffalo Park begins) to the Port of Houston's Turning Basin and the Ship Channel. Available at [BuffaloBayou.org](#). (METRO is the map underwriter.) -- Brenda Beust Smith

MULCH CORNER

BY JOHN FERGUSON

This week I had a customer ask me why we recommend organic mulches over shredded tires or gravel. These have their place and will be discussed in future articles.

Why Organic Mulches:

Organic mulches offer the most benefits, often at lower cost, and improve the fertility and health of the soil.

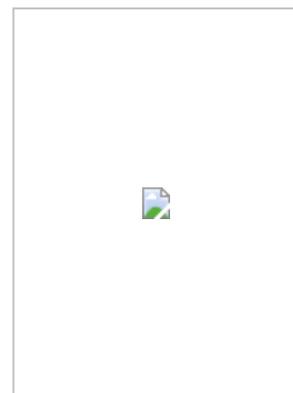
A three inch layer of organic mulch can lower soil temperature about 25-30°F which reduces plant stress and water requirements. Bare soil can easily reach 100-135 °F which speeds evaporation and dries out the soil, stresses the plant resulting in wilting, causes insect and disease problems and in most plants eventual death.

The higher soil temperature reduces a plants roots ability to absorb moisture (even if it is there) and the higher temperature kills beneficial microbes that help feed, water and protect the plant's roots. In addition, soil nitrogen (N) decreases as soil temperatures increase. For every 100°C increase in soil temperature, soil nitrogen (N) will decrease 2-3 times.

Studies in Austin and San Antonio Texas during the 1990's found that lawns mulched with 1/2 inch of compost each year, saved \$50-\$200 per month on their water bill. See photo below.

Plants grown in organically enriched soils suffer far less disease and insect problems than plants grown with synthetic chemicals. Thus good organic mulch helps build up the soil, naturally increasing a plants pest and disease resistance.

Two studies from Ohio State University have confirmed that plants grown organically in organically enriched soil suffer far less disease and insect problems than those grown with synthetic chemicals. Therefore good



organic mulch helps build up the soil, naturally increasing a plants pest and disease resistance.

USDA studies on several species of plants have found that mulched plants were often 3 times as large and produced 3 times the yield of un-mulched plants after several years.

In January of 2011 the yard on the right went organic using leaf mold compost as a mulch and the Microlife organic fertilizer. Both yards were under water restrictions during the severe drought. The photo was taken by T. Polk, owner of Mother Nature Landscapes, whom did the work.



Tip Of Week: Volcano Mulching

Since we have been discussing mulches it seems time to discuss the practice of piling mulch up on the trunk of a tree that is commonly called "volcano mulching". It is very harmful to the tree and this practice is illegal in many states!

A tree has two types of bark on it. The first is the rough bark that is above ground. It is naturally resistant to fires, insects, and microbial degradation and is designed to protect the tree in a dry environment since it is above the ground. The other type of bark is on the roots and tends to be smoother, thinner, and built to survive in a moist environment (e.g. the soil).

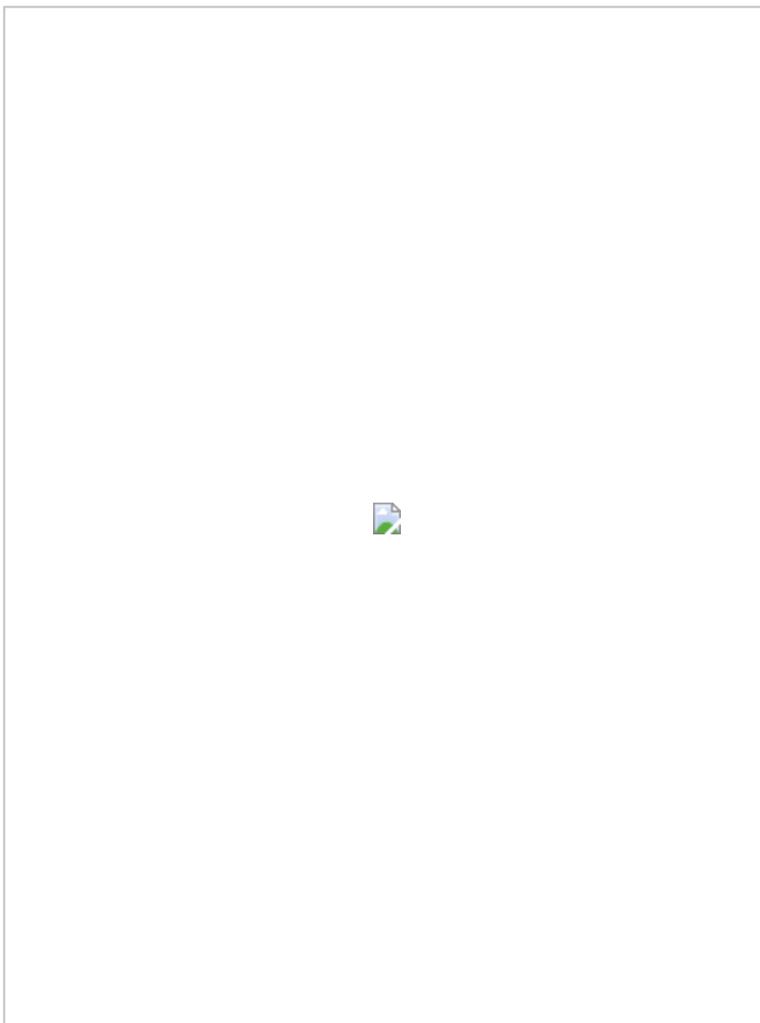
When one places a pile of mulch around the root flare and trunk of the tree, it creates a moist environment that the bark cannot withstand for a long period of time. The bark softens from the moisture and is attacked by all sorts of life from insects and disease to rodents that can now eat the bark.

Corrupt or ignorant landscapers like to do this as trees slowly weaken from the stress over time. As the tree weakens it may develop disease or insect problems. The landscaper then can sell the customer a "treatment" for the problem as they now earn extra money. This may go on for a year or two and then the tree eventually dies. Now the landscaper can sell you a replacement tree and collect hundreds of additional dollars of your money.

Hence when mulching always make sure the flare and truck of the tree ARE NOT covered with mulch (or soil).

When choosing a landscaper always ask them to show you pictures of their work. If they have mulch piled around the trunk choose someone else to do your work.

The picture below is from Howard Garrett showing a tree that has died from having its trunk covered. Notice how the bark has rotted away.



GOT GARDENING QUESTIONS?

Be sure to check out our gardening blog at www.lazygardenerandfriends.com to get your gardening questions answered and to interact with other gardeners.

IN THE NEWS:

Bayou Planting Guide helps your garden grow: Five foolproof plants that thrive in the Houston climate <http://houston.culturemap.com>

Launch of U.S. Food Waste Challenge - <http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/index.htm>



<http://natureswayresources.com/>



Wabash
Antiques & Feed Store
Houston's Organic Gardening Headquarters

<http://wabashfeed.com/>



<http://www.arbortgate.com/>

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!



Save 20%: Redeem this coupon for a big discount on Nature's Way Resources Native Aged Double Ground Mulch(<http://natureswayresources.com/products.htm>). Please note: this offer is for bulk material (by the cubic yard) purchases by retail customers only at Nature's Way Resources, located at 101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX.

Offer Expires: 7/1/13

