



November 1, 2013

Dear Friends,

Here is the 34th 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 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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Enjoy!

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Amaryllis, left, don't need to be dug for winter. No point in digging up caladiums, right

GREAT DON'T DO TIPS FOR LAZY GARDENERS AND AN APOLOGY TO GOLDENROD!

*"Procrastination is my sin.
It brings me naught but sorrow.
I know that I should stop it.
In fact, I will - tomorrow!"*
- Gloria Pitzer

One of my most favorite parts of my "Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD" is the monthly list of "What NOT to do this month." Sure most lazy gardeners will agree!

Those notes for November are well worth passing on. Not trying to sound pecksniffian, but new gardeners and new-to-this-area gardeners may not be yet in tune to our often strange weather patterns. They may actually think that serious winter's about to arrive.

Sorry, folks. We usually don't get "serious winter" until late January or early February.

"Usually" is the key word. Although the first real freeze "usually" occurs around the first week of December, it could happen earlier. Or later. Or never.

Actually, let's quote from both the LGG's October and November "Great Don't-Do Tips for Lazy Gardeners."

(We lazy gardeners may have overlooked some things NOT to do in October.)

* Don't get in a rush about moving plants inside for good. On average, the first actual freeze doesn't occur until the first week in December.

* Don't worry about "lifting" bulbs. Transplanted gardeners from northern regions often ask about this. No one here does that. The best bulbs for us, including amaryllis, can stay in the ground year-round.

* Don't try to dig and save caladiums unless you're just looking for some busy work. Some folks SAY you should do this. But I've never known anyone who actually DOES. Our heat takes a lot out of the caladium tubers, so often it's better to start with new ones every spring. A few will return, but don't count on them.

* Don't water plumerias after leaves fall off. Lots of folks now just leave them in the ground. The more winters they survive in the ground, the more they will survive in the ground.

(If we don't have a obscenely cold winter, they'll be fine. If we do, they'll die. But then, so will everything else.)

* Don't pick faded blooms off roses (or any plants). They need to go dormant now.

* Don't fertilize anything again until early spring.

* Don't panic if sown wildflower seed hasn't yet sprouted. They march to their own drummers. Now is the time to plant almost all our wildflower seed. As Wildseed's John Thomas says, seed-soil contact is the most important thing. So dance on your seed after you sow it. Fun activity for kids.

- * Don't mow down bluebonnets once they start sprouting. They look just like clover.
- * Don't fertilize container plants that will be moved inside for winter. They are going dormant.
- * Don't panic if azaleas and pink magnolias pop into bloom on warm, wet days. This is normal after hot, dry summers. Enjoy. (There's nothing you can do about it anyway!)

(Wait until you see what's blooming at Mercer right now! Will show you next week)

- * Don't panic if leaves of plants moved indoors suddenly drop off. They're adjusting to a new environment. Cut back watering. Mist frequently to compensate for loss of humidity.
- * Don't worry about protecting hardy shrubs like altheas and hardy hibiscus. They'll come back in spring. But everything will appreciate a good layer of mulch. Instead of sticking those raked-bagged fallen leaves out for the trash in the coming months, put them on the garden! This might make the difference between a shrub coming back and not coming back if we do have a very cold winter.

There now, don't you feel righteous?

Do notice the hibiscus blooms. They get smaller as the nights get colder. That's normal.

HAVE PITY ON THE POOR GOLDENROD!



GOOD GUY – GOLDENROD
(Pictured here with brown-eye sunflowers)



BAD GUY - RAGWEED
(ah-choo!)

This has to be one of the prettiest years ever for goldenrod, and bet no one is noticing.

Poor goldenrod. It's probably the most maligned flower abloom on Earth today. And it's all the fault of that

miserable ragweed.

Talk about a plant with the world's greatest publicist! And perhaps the world's smartest plant. Ragweed loves growing amid sweeping stands of goldenrod. That way, when passersby start sneezing, they immediately blame the main plant they see.

Ragweed pollen is what makes you sneeze. It's lightweight, wind-borne and the cause of great misery during allergy season.

Goldenrod does NOT cause allergies. Goldenrod has very heavy pollen, depends on butterflies and bees to spread its seed around. Pollen that doesn't adhere by direct contact with these legs, bodies and wings just falls to the ground, far away from your nose.

That's not to say ragweed's ancestors were created simply to drive man crazy from sneezing. In fact, this sunflower relative was once considered a food of the gods, hence the botanical name, (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*). It's said ancient Greeks believed anyone who ate ambrosia would become immortal. Native Americans used ragweed to treat poison ivy, relieve swelling and prevent infections.

Native Americans also used goldenrod, as an antiseptic, astringent, to stop bleeding and to treat bee stings. Its many other herbal uses are still very popular today.

As one of the last blooming wildflowers of the year, goldenrod is especially valuable for migrating hummingbirds and butterflies. Theoretically, it should be in every habitat garden for this reason if for no other.

Sometime ago a wonderful dwarf version of goldenrod was marketed for home gardens. It was beautiful, easily thrived in our heat and drought, required no care whatsoever and bloomed with incredibly large brilliant yellow plumes.

No one would buy it.

Ragweed wins again.

* * *

NEED WHEN TO DO WHAT GARDENING HELP IN THE GREATER HOUSTON AREA? Brenda's "Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD" gives month-by-month reminders of when to to plant what, fertilize, prune, etc. \$20. Make checks payable to Brenda Beust Smith and mail to "Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD," 14011 Greenranch Dr., Houston, TX 77039. PDF file.

* * *

Need a gardening/environmental speaker for your group or school program? Brenda has list of dozens of great horticulture/ecology Upper Texas Gulf Coast area speakers, many of whom are free. Email her for a free copy or for criteria to have your name added as a speaker: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

Questions aimed at me can be emailed to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net (altho I'll get any you send to this newsletter as well).

ARCHIVES OF BRENDA'S COLUMNS:

Link to archives: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs172/1112503958110/archive/1112822112421.html>

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

JOHN'S CORNER

GREENSAND



Last week we started talking about soil amendments (Expanded Shale) and their role in the garden. Fall is one of the best times to work on improving one's soil and preparing new beds. Hence, for the next few weeks we will be talking about soil amendments.

Most of the soils around Houston tend to be very nutrient deficient. We are located far from any areas where the weathering of igneous rocks would release the required minerals and allow them to be deposited in our soil for plants to use. Historically, we also receive a lot of rainfall. The slight acidity of rain tends to make these minerals soluble and allows them to be leached out of the soil. The result is soils that are low in the minor and trace elements. This is why it is so important that we have lots of organic matter in our soils to feed the microorganisms. These guys will absorb the nutrients into their bodies and prevent them from leaching. As they eat each other the nutrients are released into the soil and the plant roots can get them. For example, fungus will form calcium oxalate crystals on their hyphae and store it into the soil until it is needed. Blossom end rot on tomatoes is an example of a calcium deficiency. Some weeds like Dandelions prefer soils low in

available calcium.

Traditionally, we were taught that plants can grow with only 16 elements. However recent research has shown that plants grown with a much wider assortment of nutrients have less disease and insect problems, use less water, taste better, have larger and more fragrant flowers, etc. The human body has 90 elements in it. If these elements are not in the soil then plants cannot absorb them, and we do not get them when we eat the plants and fruits, nuts, etc. Many health problems are the end result of this type of scenario.

There is an excellent lecture available on CD on the importance of trace elements. It is called "Dead Doctors Don't Lie", By Joel Wallach, DVM, N.D, (available at many health food stores or online). It explains why we have so many health problem associated with the lack of nutrients in our food supply. Almost all of Dr. Wallach's statements have been confirmed by other researchers since this lecture was recorded many years ago. This is a fun lecture to listen to, as Dr, Wallach has quite a sense of humor as he explains the importance of trace elements for both animal and human health.

So what does this have to do with greensand? For years many gardening books and horticultural publications talked about the importance of New Jersey greensand. However shipping it into Houston was extremely expensive as it can weighs over 3,000 pounds per cubic yard. About 10-15 years ago deposits of greensand were discovered in Texas and now it costs only pennies per pound! It is the most economical way of adding these nutrients to your soil.

As we all know seawater has almost all the elements known to mankind in it. Greensand is a naturally occurring mineral mined from ocean deposits from a sedimentary rock known as "Glauconite," hence it contains these nutrients. It is often an olive-green colored sandstone like rock found in layers in many sedimentary rock formations.

Origin of Greensand

Greensand forms in anoxic (without oxygen) marine environments that are rich in organic detritus and low in sedimentary inputs. Thus when greensand is exposed to oxygen, the complex minerals break down and the nutrients are released into the soil.

Greensand in our area is a dark greenish gray color when dry and turns almost black when wet. Greensand is a very heavy mineral with a density of approximately 90 pounds per cubic foot (over 1 ton per cubic yard). The minerals are normally released slowly over time but occur much faster in organic rich soils full of beneficial microbes (microbes produce organic acids as they break down organic matter which facilitates the release of the minerals for plant absorption).

The pH of greensand varies from slightly acidic to slightly alkaline depending on the source and has little effect on soils. For those that want a more technical explanation and references see the paper on Greensand on the Nature's Way Resources website at www.natureswayresources.com.

Uses of Greensand

Greensand has been used for over 100 years as a natural source of slow release fertilizer and soil conditioner. The slow release of potash and phosphate does not burn plants and the minerals improve the moisture holding properties of soil.

Greensand often has the consistency of sand but is able to absorb 10 times more moisture, making it a good amendment for use in agriculture and horticulture for many soils types. Greensand does not burn plants and helps the beneficial microbes to grow in the soil. It also has been found to be a good conditioner to help loosen heavy and tight soils and help bind loose soils.

Recommended application is 2-4 pounds of greensand per 100 square feet or 1 ton per acre. For potting soils 5-20 pounds per cubic yard can be beneficial. It is a good idea to repeat this every few years to replace the nutrients that have been used up or leached from the soil.

A field test by Rutgers University in a sandy loam soil with greensand applied in the row at the time of planting, found that the application of greensand increased the yield of potatoes by 16%.

The benefits of greensand, largely unexplained by scientific research are far more than a laboratory analysis would indicate. However numerous greenhouse and field studies have shown significant improvement in the growth of plants. Other studies have shown that the use of greensand improves the taste, color, nutritional value, the health of plants and the health of soils.

Note: The crushing process of the glauconite rock produces both greensand and rock. The rock can be screened to different sizes and used as a landscape rock. It gives a very different look than commonly used gravels, crushed granite or basalt. The green rock portion when used on pathways packs well, is black when wet and greenish grey when dry. The greenish grey color makes yellow flowered plants (daylilies, turnera, etc.) stand out and really "sizzle and pop".

FREE TREES!

CenterPoint Energy and Trees for Houston are in the process of giving away 2,500 3-5 gallon trees as part of the Energy Saving Trees program. Studies have shown that the right trees planted in the right place can save up to 30 percent through summer shade and slowing cold winter winds, and these trees will be available to Houston-area electric customers who agree to plant them in energy-saving locations. The program will run through October 18, 2013, while supplies last.

Available trees: Live Oak, Bald Cypress, Burr Oak, Cedar Elm, Chinkapin Oak, Drummond's Maple, Loblolly Pine, Mexican White Oak, Nuttall Oak, Overcup Oak, Pecan Tree, Shumard Oak and Water Oak.

If you are a CenterPoint Energy customer [click here](#) to register for a tree. Be sure to register before Friday, Oct. 18.

IN THE NEWS

Coastal Prairie Partnership Grant. Coastal Prairie Partnership is offering a small (\$250) grant to assist a school/teacher in furthering pollinator education at their school. If you know of a school or teacher who might be a good fit for this grant, please pass the information on. The grant deadline is December 1, 2013. Download <http://www.cechouston.org/CEC/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PPP-Pollinator-Grant-2013.pdf>

Stretching Your Dollars With Natives: <http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/video?id=9288588>

Mosaiculture: <http://myvirtualgarden2.blogspot.com/2013/09/mosaiculture-exhibition.html>

WEEKLY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

Fri. - Sun., Nov. 1 - 3: Antique Rose Emporium's 25th Annual Fall Festival of Roses. Free. Programs: Nov. 1 - 11am, Propagation by Glenn Schroeter; 1pm, Grow Roses by Judy Barrett; 2:30pm, Psycho Lighting by Linda Lehmusvirta; 3:30pm, Afternoon Tea. Nov. 2 - 11am, Grandma's Garden by Greg Grant; 1pm, Lawn Gone by Pam Penick; 2:30pm, Bulbs by Chris Wiesinger; 4pm, Fearless Gardening 101 by Felder Rushing. Nov. 3 - Behind Scenes Tour by Mike Shoup. Details: www.antiqueroseemporium.com

Sat., Nov. 2: 12 - 4:00 pm. Fall Rose Show of the Houston Rose Society. Note new meeting location: the Parish Hall of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd, Houston, Texas 77008. Free admission. www.houstonrose.org or Like us on Facebook.

November 2: Saturday with the Master Gardeners - November 2, 2013
Garden Talk Topic "Fall Vegetable Gardening"

Sat., Nov. 2: Join the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners' in their 4 acres of demonstration gardens on Saturday, November 2nd and talk to the MG volunteers who design and maintain them. It's a great way to learn about gardening and plants well-suited to Fort Bend County. Park in front of the Agriculture Center located at 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg, 77471. Take one of the sidewalks back to the area behind the building where you'll find the gardens and Master Gardeners at work. Gardens will be open from 9:00-11:00 a.m. on November 2nd. Attend an informal garden talk on Fall Vegetable Gardening which starts at 10:00 a.m. in the Vegetable Garden.

Call 281-341-7068 or visit www.fbmj.com for more information.

Sat., Nov. 2: Use fallen leaves! Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Drive, Humble (www.hcp4.net/jones), 10 am, bring a plain white T-shirt and create a wearable item. Reservations required; can make starting Oct. 23.

Sat., Nov. 2: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Prairie Heritage Festival. featuring nature tours; real live owls, bats, bees, alligators, turtles, snakes & more; performers, food exhibitors, kids crafts and fun for the whole family, free admission, location: Seabourne Creek Nature Park, 3831 Highway 36 South, Rosenberg, for more info. visit www.coastalprairie.org or call 281-633-7042.

Sat., Nov. 2: Free Clinic, Birding Basics, 10:15 a.m. at both Cornelius Nursery locations, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2233 S. Voss, <http://www.calloways.com/clinics>

Sat., Nov. 2: La Marque: Master Gardener Gene Speller will present "The Chile Pepper Extravaganza - Seminar & Tasting" Saturday, November 2, 9 a.m.-noon, at Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main Street (FM 519), La Marque. The program will start with a period of observation and/or tasting of various chili pepper variety samples. Attendees are encouraged to bring in their own chili

peppers, especially any unusual or special varieties. Samples will need to be brought in plastic zip-lock bags with your name, the name of the pepper and "heat level" (Scoville units, if known). A presentation will follow with topics that include the background and origin of pepper plants; how to start from seed; culture and growing tips; recommended varieties; insect and disease control; and pepper uses & recipes. Peppers discussed come from all four 'heat' groups: mild, medium, very hot and extremely hot. For course reservations, call 281-534-3413, ext. 12 or email GALV3@wt.net.

Tue., Nov. 5: La Marque: Galveston County Master Gardener and Landscape Designer Karen Lehr will present "Landscape Design III -Design Principles" Tuesday, November 5, 6:30-8 p.m. at Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main Street (FM 519), La Marque. In this last in a series of three programs you will learn more design principles and how to organize your landscape plans and designs. For course reservations, call 281-534-3413, ext. 12 or email GALV3@wt.net.

Wed., Nov. 6: Gardening Daze begins, Wednesdays through Nov. 27, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Drive, Humble (www.hcp4.net/jones). Teri MacArthur leader, plant ID, weeding native flower beds at Center or help tend demonstration heritage vegetable garden in pioneer homestead. Details online or at (281) 446-8588.

Fri.-Sat., Nov. 8-9: Free Christmas display trends demonstrations at Cornelius Nurseries both days, 1200 N. Dairy Ashford and 2333 S. Voss Rd. Free programs: 10 am-Festive Wreath Making; 2 pm-Make the Famous Cornelius Bow; 4 pm-Create Christmas Centerpieces, Swags, Accents. Saturday only at Voss store: 11 am-1pm-Meeti Randy Lemon, KTRH GardenLine host. Details: www.corneliusnurseries.com.

Sat., Nov. 9: Native Prairie Plant-a-thon. Volunteers are needed to plant 2,500 native coastal prairie grasses and forbs. This event will help the park continue the restoration of 400 acres from farmland to native prairie habitat and reestablish the diverse wildlife that it once had. Located in northeast Harris County, Sheldon Lake Environmental Learning Center is visited by thousands of children and adults each year who take guided nature walks, study ecosystems, go fishing, experience pond ecology, and see alternative energy in action. Restoring this prairie will enhance the educational programs at the Learning Center. Come out and volunteer for the Native Prairie Plant-a-thon on November 9, 2013, from 8am-noon. Contact laura.babcock@tpwd.texas.gov or visit <http://www.cechouston.org/>

Sat. - Sun., Nov. 9 - 10: Peckerwood Garden in Hempstead, TX, Fall Open Days. Plant sales are from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Guided garden tours are at 1:00 & 3:00 pm. Tours are \$10.00. The garden is not wheelchair accessible and please, no young children. The Garden is only available through the guided tours. Peckerwood Garden is located at 20571 Hwy. 359 in Hempstead, TX. The phone number is 979-826-3232 and e-mail isinfo@peckerwoodgarden.org.

Mon., Nov. 11: The next meeting of HUG (Houston Urban Gardeners) will be Monday, Nov 11, 6:30 PM at Houston's Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Marcella Murff will speak on: What to Plant and Do Now in your home garden. If you want to learn more about Veriditas, they are having an Open House Nov. 2., <http://www.houstonurbangardeners.org/>

Mon., Nov. 11 & Thurs., Nov. 21: Fall Lawn Care and How to Evaluate a Home Sprinkler System by Robert (Skip) Richter and Paul Winski, free, at the Glazier Education Center, 16600 Pine Forest Lane (one intersection south of Clay and Hwy. 6). Two identical one hour demonstrations: Nov. 11 at 1 p.m. and Nov. 21 at 10 a.m. Additional information: 281-855-5600, richter@ag.tamu.edu

Wed., Nov. 13: Humble: Brenda Beust will present "The 10 Commandments of Lazy Gardening" noon-2 p.m., Wednesday, November 13, at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic, located one mile north of FM 1960 at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Learn how to enjoy the garden with less effort. For more information, call 281-443-8731 or visit <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/>

Thur., Nov. 14: 7:30 p.m. "Patsy's Fool-proof method for Growing Roses from Cuttings" will be the topic of the Houston Rose Society Meeting. Note new meeting location: the Parish Hall of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd, Houston, Texas 77008. Entrance to parking lot is on W 19th Street near Yale St. Our speaker is Patsy Williams, Master Rosarian and Horticulture Judge who will share her time tested technique for rooting rose cuttings. Free admission. www.houstonrose.org or Like us on Facebook.

Sat., Nov. 16: 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m: Home Landscape Series Water Conservation Workshop. The public is invited to a workshop that will cover many practical steps that homeowners can take to reduce water use in the landscape and maintain a healthy landscape with plenty of curb appeal. Location: Katy High School at 6331 Highway Blvd. Participants will have hands-on learning opportunities involving irrigation system components, including converting to a drip system and understanding the controller, and assistance in assembling their own take-home rainwater collection barrel. Workshop topics include landscaping to conserve water, irrigation efficiency, managing water supplies, and rainwater harvesting methods. \$25 fee. www.fbmj.com or call Brandy Rader at 281-633-7029.

Sat., Nov. 16: Great Galveston Tree Giveaway - for Galvestonians only - at 2601 Ball St. (behind City Hall). 1,500 shade trees will be given away from 8 a.m.-noon (or when all are gone). Included will be oak trees, the #1 survivor of Ike's poisonous surge. Residents must bring a utility or water bill to verify island address. Details on this and a Nov. 10 luncheon at Moody Mansion to help celebrate the Nov. 10-26 Arbor Week In Galveston can be found at www.galvestonislandtreeconservancy.org or by emailing Karla Levy at karlalevy@aol.com, or Priscilla Files at TreesForGalveston@yahoo.com.

Mon., Nov. 18: Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 will host Open Garden Day on Monday, Nov. 18 at their Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions. Hours are 8:30 am - 11:00 am with a program on dividing Overwintering Tropicals at 9:30 am. Free and open to the public. Children invited!
<http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/> , 281 855 5600

Thur., Nov. 21: Forest Fungi Walk, 1-3 p.m., Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center, 20634 Kenswick Drive, Humble (<http://www.hcp4.net/jones/>) or 281-446-8588.

Wed., Dec. 11: Humble: Casey Scribner and Brooke Judice of Trees for Houston will present "Trees in Urban Areas" noon-2 p.m., Wednesday, December 11, at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic, located one mile north of FM 1960 at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Scribner and Judice will offer information about the importance of trees in an urban environment, recommended trees for our area, plus tips for how to plant and take care of them. For more information, call 281-443-8731 or visit <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/>

Submit calendar items to lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the sponsoring organization. Please note: "garden calendar request" in the subject line. We list calendar items up to two months ahead of time.

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.

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.

In addition to her position as Production Editor on the Garden Club of America's magazine and her freelance writing career, Brenda's latest venture is "THE LAZY GARDENER'S & 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 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 the editor.

PABLO HERNANDEZ

Pablo Hernandez is the special projects coordinator for Nature's Way Resources. His realm of responsibilities include: serving as a webmaster, IT support, technical problem solving/troubleshooting, metrics management, quality control, and he is a certified compost facility operator.

Pablo helps this newsletter happen from a technical support standpoint.



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