

LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER



Jun-23-2023 | Issue 493

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Nature's Way Resources owner John Ferguson, "The Lazy Gardener" Brenda Beust Smith and Pablo Hernandez welcome your feedback and are so grateful to the many horticulturists who contribute their expertise

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NOTE: Apologies for copying column (slight rearrangements) from my LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE* - but will be back on target next week! --- Brenda



"We gardeners have focused on primping, prodding, and perfection to the detriment of bird, bees, and butterflies for far too long. As a whole, Americans are addicted to the impossible goal of creating a manicured, pristine lawn."

— GREG GRANT, noted Texas horticulturist, writer, conservationist ([Quote source](#))

GARDEN TOO 'HOT'? USE COLOR TO MAKE IT 'SEEM COOLER'

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

"HOT" COLORS MAY BE MORE FUN, but this might be a good time to add some coolants, especially on/around patios and other areas where you sit or entertain outdoors. So easy to add in pots!

White, of course, is at the top of "cool" colors, but also light pinks, violets, blues, and greens) appear to recede in the landscape. They not only have a calming, soothing effect, they also make smaller spaces look and feel bigger. Eg., I to r above: white roses, green/white caladiums, lavender salvias, pale

blue plumbago and pale pink geraniums.

Other tips:

- Masses are more effective for this purpose than single plantings or pots.
- Hot colors -- red, orange, strong pink, etc., make spaces look smaller, closer in. [More tips on getting the most out of colors you pick.](#)

Now, in July, you really should . . .

- Allow plants that want to go semi-dormant to conserve energy to do so! They should return when temperatures drop. Plant hot weather annuals around to hide dormant ones. DO NOT cut back. This might encourage weak new growth that, if it dies, will kill the whole plant.
- Evening wilting is normal, self-preservation, re. If they are still wilted in the morning, water.
- Renew mulches if getting thin in spots.
- Cut utility bills with vines on a trellis to shade the west side of your house.

This month, you also really should . . .

- Open tent caterpillar webs in trees. Birds will eat worms. Worms won't kill healthy trees.
- Water bulbs with greenery showing. Caladiums may disappear if not well watered now.
- Mist plants in early morning. Blast bugs off with a harder water spray.
- Drink lots of water yourself when you are working outside in the garden.
- Cut off rolled up canna leaf at the base and destroy it to kill the insect larva inside.
- Keep pecan trees well watered to protect developing pecans.
- Watch hibiscus for crimping leaves. Means getting too much sun.
- Ignore fairy rings that pop up after rains. These circular-growing mushrooms simply indicate there is plenty of organic matter in your soil. They'll go away.
- Use gray water (washing machine) on your plants, if possible.

If the spirit moves . . .

- Pinch tips of nonbudded branches on annuals/perennials to encourage bushier growth and more flowers. Keep spent blooms picked off all plants.
- Check plants for too-lanky growth from too much shade. They need more sun.
- Check azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas and magnolias for pale leaves due to too-alkaline soil. Use soil acidifier and/or mulch with oak leaves and pine needles.
- Mist and dust houseplants frequently to compensate for drying action of air conditioners.
- Check overhead shade now if azaleas didn't bloom well. They may need a little more sun.
- In the water garden, remove decaying leaves and spent blossoms.
- Divide overcrowded perennials like summer phlox.
- Start fall tomato*, pepper and eggplant in pots, summer squash and Swiss chard in ground.

***NOTE!** If you're not already a member of Urban Harvest & receiving their regular newsletter (missing GREAT bet!), at least click on this link and read

about why to start thinking Fall Tomatoes now:

urbanharvest.org/campaigns/26214-summer-2023-starting-fall-tomatoes

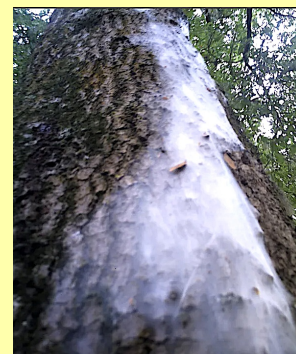
If you're really feeling energetic . . .

- Try rosemary and wormwood to deter snails; catnip, chamomile and wax myrtle for fleas.
- In shade, try firespike, jacobina, ruellia, hosta and toadflax.
- Try black-eyed Susan vine, coral vine, mandevilla, Mexican flame vine passionvine, trumpetvine.
- Remove crape myrtle seeds to prolong blooming period.
- Protect tree trunks and exposed roots from lawnmower nicks with loose plantings and/or mulch. Leave an open ring adjacent to the tree base.
- Attack powdery mildew on crape myrtles with a superstrong water spray early in the morning. Hit leaf undersides. Newer named varieties tend to be more mildew-resistant.
- Sometimes pinching spent bloom tips of Vitex will produce a second bloom period. Sometimes not.

Great Don't-Do tips for really Lazy Gardeners

- Don't panic if oleanders lose some leaves now. It's normal. If a lot fall off, it could be a sign of overwatering. Trees also lose leaves now in reaction to the heat.
- Don't overwater azaleas and camellias. Some wilting is normal now at midday.
- Don't do any heavy fertilizing. Light feedings are okay.
- Don't touch white, stocking-like webs on tree trunks. These are beneficial bark lice.
- Don't mow the lawn too short or too often. Longer blades protect roots from the hot sun.
- Don't water bulbs with no greenery showing. They are dormant. Overwatering rots them.
- Don't plant flowers that need summer water in beds with bulbs that lose greenery now.
- Don't pinch back poinsettias and blackberries any more.
- Don't water in the evening if you can help it. Soil's VERY hot, more will be lost to evaporation. Morning's the best time. On the other hand, watering at the wrong time may be better than not watering at all.

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* * *

Brenda Beust Smith's column is based on her 40+ years as *Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener* Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com
-- Note: This column's gardening advice focuses **ONLY** on the Greater Houston area. Personal reports **MUST** include your area.

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* **BRENDA'S LAZY GARDENER GULDE** is no longer sold. However, free pdf copies available upon request at lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

ORGANIC PRACTICES FOR A HEALTHY LANDSCAPE CLASS IN SPANISH

OHBA



DATE FRIDAY, 06/23/23

TIME 5PM TO 8PM

AGENDA

- 5:00PM Welcome & Registration
- 5:45PM The Tour Starts with Carmelo & Irma
- 7:00PM Presentation by Carmelo Orellana + Dinner
- 8:00PM Conclusion



Carmelo Orellana



Irma Sanchez

"WESTCHASE EMBARKS ON AN ORGANIC PATH"

Come learn and experience Woodchase Park's adventure in organic practices, while understanding the importance of building gardens in a healthier, more economical way and as heal the soil and take care of the garden. Irma Sánchez and Carmelo Orellana will show you how to save time, money, water and effort and above all how to improve the environment in a healthy way!

PLACE
WESTCHASE DISTRICT

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PRÁCTICAS ORGÁNICAS PARA UN PAISAJE SALUDABLE CLASE EN ESPAÑOL

OHBA



FECHA VIERNES, 06/23/23

HORA 5PM A 8PM

AGENDA

5:00PM Bienvenida e Inscripciones
5:45PM El recorrido comienza con Carmelo & Irma
7:00PM Presentación por Carmelo Orellana + Cena
8:00PM Concluye



Carmelo Orellana



Irma Sanchez

LUGAR

WESTCHASE DISTRICT

DIRECCIÓN

10370 RICHMOND, PRIMER PISO,
HOUSTON, TX 77042

“WESTCHASE SE EMBARCA EN UN CAMINO ORGÁNICO”

Venga a aprender y experimente la aventura de Woodchase Park en prácticas orgánicas, mientras comprende la importancia de construir jardines de una forma más saludable, económica y como sanar el suelo y cuidar el jardín. Irma Sánchez y Carmelo Orellana te mostrarán cómo ahorrar tiempo, dinero, agua y esfuerzo y sobre todo como mejorar el medioambiente de una forma saludable!



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NATURE'S WAY RESOURCES



John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 244

I read an article this morning that gives another very good reason to use organic fertilizers besides the fact they work better, cost less, and cause no environmental damage.

According to the article, most artificial fertilizers are manufactured from natural gas which creates greenhouse gasses during their production and again more greenhouse gasses when they are used.

The article stated that almost ALL artificial fertilizers are manufactured in Russia and China since they have a surplus of natural gas and labor is very cheap. Hence, when one uses artificial (synthetic) fertilizers, one is supporting the economies and policies of Communist countries and communism.

White flies are often a problem in our climate. Bio-control is a very effective tool in dealing with these pests. The miniature wasp (less than 1/16 inch) *Encarsia Formosa* parasitizes over 15 species of white flies.

These tiny wasps crawl all over the leaf and when they find a whitefly nymph, they lay their egg in it or just suck its juices out. Each of these wasps lay about 10 eggs per day which mature and hatch in about three weeks. Produce Grower March 2023

Many of us like to grow citrus, especially lemons. Before winter storm Uri I had a large 20-year-old Meyer lemon tree that would produce hundreds of large lemons each year. My wife and I would juice lemons from our Meyer Limon tree for years. We would freeze the juice in ice cube trays and save it for hot summers to make lemonade.

I was reading an article in Science News about how researchers have confirmed the old wife's tail that drinking lemon juice prevents kidney stones. The juice had small sacs of nutrients that prevented the formation of calcium oxalate crystals that form kidney stones.

Another benefit of lemon juice is that when mixed into drinking water, tea, etc. it quickly allows the toxic fluoride in water systems to be released to the atmosphere.

In this heat wave a glass of homegrown lemonade over crushed ice would sure taste good.

We often wonder why we as a people are far sicker than our forefathers. I recently read a statistic from the EPA that stated **three billion pounds** of toxic chemicals were released into our environment in 2021. No wonder the EPA is nicknamed the **Enhanced Profit Agency**.

The EPA also found that Texas is the number one state for discharging toxic pollutants into streams, rivers, and lakes (over 16.7 million pounds in 2020).

The biggest polluter in the state was a chicken supplier owned Pilgrim's Pride Corp. When one purchases organically raised chickens (or raise your own), you are not supporting these factory farms that pollute our waters.

The results of the 40 year long Farming System Trials by the Rodale Institute has found that organic management matches or outperforms conventional toxic rescue agriculture.

Yields - organic systems produced yields that matched or exceeded conventional systems. In extreme weather conditions from flood, drought, etc.,

organic significantly outperformed conventional systems.

Water - water infiltration is significantly faster under long-term organic management

Soil – soil health continued to increase over time in organic systems compared to conventional systems where it stayed the same or declined.

Most of us love chocolate which come from the cacao plant (*Theobroma cacao*) which translate to “food of the Gods.” However, this plant is a hyper accumulator of the toxic metal cadmium (Cd).

We have discussed in the past that many artificial fertilizers, sewage sludge, etc. when used to grow crops are a major source of this toxic element. These products are often used for fertilization in cacao growing areas as they are cheap.

A study published in the journal *Frontiers in Environmental Science* (2022) found that compost can curb the cadmium uptake by the plant. The research suggests that the more mature composts (longer composting timeframes) had higher levels of humic and fulvic acids. Another reason to purchase organic chocolate often fertilized with compost.

Recently there was an article on a group of microbes called ciliates. The researcher found that a single celled pond dweller ciliate, in the family *Halteria* are virovores.

These good microbes eat and can survive on a virus only diet. In the lab **each *Halteria* ciliate ate between 10,000 to over one million viruses daily.**
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2023)

Roundup Update #13:

- A study in Mexico found that GM (Genetically modified) soy beans which tolerates high levels of the herbicide glyphosate harms the pancreas, confirming earlier animal studies.
- Another study in *Environmental Health News* (EHN) found that children that were exposed to glyphosate herbicides, were more likely to have a group of symptoms in early adulthood that increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, fatty liver disease, and stroke.
- A paper in *Environmental Health Perspectives* by UC Berkeley School of Public Health found the same correlation and included cardiovascular disease.
- The CDC (Center for Disease Control) finds the toxic weed killer in 87 percent of the children tested in the US.
- A study by researchers at Cambridge University found that glyphosate disrupts the human gut micro-biome. The study found that Roundup and to a lesser extent glyphosate itself caused an increase in fermentation activity which led to an increase in acetate and lactate, resulting in acidification of the microbial environment. They also found that ammonium production was substantially increased by Roundup as

compared to glyphosate by itself. Ammonium production promotes colon cancer.

- Due to the mounting evidence of health and environmental damage caused by GM corn, Mexico is banning GM corn from being grown or imported. The goal is to phase out GM corn and the herbicide glyphosate by 2024.

Note: Many politicians and the USDA is fighting Mexico's right to protect its citizens.

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

PLEASE READ! CALENDAR SUBMISSION RULES

- Use **ONLY** this (3-line max) format & style for notice
DAY, DATE: TITLE by NAME (if talk), time, address, Fee/free.
Sponsoring group (if not in title). website/phone (NO MORE!)
- Only events submitted specifically for LG&F calendar are used
- No events picked up from flyers / NO PDFS! TYPE IN EMAIL
- Submit: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com. Check published entry!

WED., JUNE 28: CACTUS AND SUCCULENT CONSIDERATIONS by **DAVE THOMAS**, 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. [*Houston Cactus and Succulent Society*](#)

SAT., JULY 8: AMAZING SUCCULENT PLANTS by **PATRICIA MARTIN / STEVEN BRUEGGERHOFF**, 9-11am, Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office, 4102-B Main St. (FM 512) La Marque. galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture

TUES., JULY 11: HOW TO GROW PLUMERIAS 6:30-9pm, Cherie Flores Garden Center 1500 Hermann Park Dr. Plumeria Society of America event. Free. theplumeriasociety.org, 281-796-7185

THURS., JULY 13: TRUSTED ROSES (in person & virtual) by **A.R.T.S (R)**, 7-9pm, St Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. meet.goto.com/334990021

SAT. JULY 15: NATURAL PEST CONTROL by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30-11:30am, ZOOM Live Class, Urban Harvest event, urbanharvest.org/stec_event/natural-pest-control/

SAT. JULY 22: PREPARING FOR FALL ORGANIC GARDENING by **BOB RANDALL, & CAROL BURTON**, 9:30-12:30pm, ZOOM Live Class, Urban Harvest event, urbanharvest.org/stec_event/preparing-for-fall-organic-gardening/

SAT., JULY 29: BEAUTIFUL BLOOMING GINGER by **STEVEN BRUEGGERHOFF**, 9-11am, Extension Office, 4102-B Main St. (FM 512) La Marque. Galveston Cty Master Gardeners event. galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture

SAT., AUG. 5: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW AND SALE, 9am-1p. pm, Bay Area Community Center 5002 Nasa Road 1, Seabrook. Free. theplumeriasociety.org; 281-796-7185

LOOKING AHEAD . . .

THURS., AUG. 10: LEARN HOW TO PLANT BIRD-FRIENDLY SPACES , noon-1pm, The Water Works, \$10. Buffalo Bayou Partnership Lunch and Learn event. Register: <https://buffalobayou.org/event/lunch-learn-bird-friendly-spaces/>

FRI., AUG 18: LANDSCAPE SUCCESS - TREES FOR SMALL LANDSCAPES (virtual) by **FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS** , 2-3:30pm, Register: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

SAT., AUG. 19: GROWING IN CONTAINERS , by **ANGELA CHANDLER** , 9:30-11:30am, ZOOM Live Class, Urban Harvest event, urbanharvest.org/stec_event/growing-in-containers/

FRI.-SAT., SEPT. 8-9: SUMMER SUNDOWN PLANT SALE (VIRTUAL), Noon-Noon, Galveston County Master Gardeners event. txmg.org/galveston/

SAT., SEP 9: GROW YOUR OWN - COMPOSTING by **FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS** , 9-10:30am, Register: [Grow Your Own RSVP Form - Fort Bend \(agrillife.org\)](#)

FRI., SEPT. 15: LANDSCAPE SUCCESS - FALL IS FOR PLANTING (virtual) by **FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS** , 2-3:30pm, Register: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

THURS-SAT. OCT. 12-14: THE GARDEN CLUB OF HOUSTON BULB & PLANT MART , 5-7pm Thurs;, 9am-3pm Fri., 9am-1pm Sat., The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Free. gchouston.org

SAT.-SUN., OCT 14-15: 2023 SOUTHWEST BROMELIAD GUILD SHOW & SALE , Show — 2-5pm Sat. & 11am-3pm Sun., Sale — 9am-5pm Sat. & 11am-3pm Sun., Holiday Inn, 18530 State Hwy 249. Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

FRI., NOV 17: LANDSCAPE SUCCESS - WINTER PROTECTION (virtual) by **FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS** , 2-3:30pm, Register: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Don't see your submitted event? Email lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

JUST KNOW: Events not submitted in our EXACT format

usually take a lot longer to get into the calendar.

See top of calendar for required format.

* * *



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

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Saturdays 7-9am • SportsRadio 610



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 -- started in the early '70s as a fun side-project to reporting -- it became ranked as the longest-running, continuously-published local newspaper column in the Greater Houston area. The name, she says, is not just fun, it's true.

Brenda's gradual sideways step from 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 which morphed into her **Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD**, which she now

emails free upon request.

Brenda became a Harris County Master Gardener and, over the years, served on the boards of many Greater Houston area horticulture organizations. She hosted local radio and TV shows, most notably a 10+-year Lazy Gardener specialty shows on HoustonPBS (Ch. 8) and her call-in "EcoGardening" show on KPFT-FM.

For over three decades, Brenda served as Assistant Production Manager of the **GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA'S "BULLETIN"** magazine. Although still an active broad-based freelance writer, Brenda's main focus now is **THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER** with John Ferguson and Pablo Hernandez of Nature's Way Resources.

A native of New Orleans and graduate of St. Agnes Academy and the University of Houston, Brenda lives in Humble, TX, and is married to the 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 is the co-author of the book ***Organic Management for the Professional.***

For this newsletter, John contributes articles regularly and is responsible for publishing it.

PABLO HERNANDEZ

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

Pablo helps this newsletter happen from a technical support standpoint.



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