



November 20, 2015

Dear Friends,

Here is the 133rd issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. We really appreciate all of our readers hanging in there with us, sharing stories and inspiring us in so many ways.

Thanks so much!

This newsletter is a project of The Lazy Gardener, Brenda Beust Smith, John Ferguson and Mark Bowen. (John and Mark are with Nature's Way Resources). We also have a great supporting cast of contributing writers and technical specialists who will chime in and tweak away regularly. We would love to keep receiving your input on this newsletter . . . comments . . . suggestions . . . questions. . . Email your thoughts to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your interest.

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FORCING FOR THE HOLIDAYS . . . SURPRISE BLOOMERS!

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

*A wizard of the Merrimac, -
So old ancestral legends say, -
Could call green leaf and blossom back
To frosted stem and spray.
-- "Flowers in Winter" by John Greenleaf Whittier*

Since we don't have any wizards handy these days, if we want flowers in winter, best to apply a little force!

Last week, thanks to Dodie Jackson and Pat Wisniewski ([Right Bulbs for Forcing](#)), I learned about specific varieties of amaryllis, hyacinths, narcissus (paperwhites) and tulips that those-in-the-know say are best for forcing .

I've always looked at forcing like making stew - no adamant rules, just general guidelines best to follow.

Forcing is great fun - especially for children. A gamble that hopefully pays off with beautiful blooms, maybe fabulous fragrance, when the weather outside is cold and/or nasty. (*Darker-colored hyacinths and narcissus usually have a delicate, but definite, scent.*)

BUDDING BRANCHES - In areas with colder winters, gardeners also force branches (azaleas, bridal wreath, camellias, dogwood, and other early spring bloomers). We usually don't. Our spring hits in February and flowers appear while northerners still have months to go before those buds decide to open.

But if you have branches covered with buds, and a hard freeze is forecast (which will certainly kill buds), give it a try. Our first true freeze is usually the first week of December.

Cut branches long enough to have budded stalks above the vase rim. Lightly smash branch's cut end with hammer. Fill vase with warm water. Strip off all small branches & leaves that will be underwater. Set in vase, then store in a cool, dark corner until the buds start to open. Bring into light. Change the water regularly to keep it fresh.

BULBS - More reliable to force in our subtropical pocket. Start now for amaryllis, hyacinths, narcissus and tulips blooming amid holiday decorations. Don't get in a hurry. Follow directions below about taking them out of dark and into light.



Above, l to r, amaryllis, hyacinths, narcissus & tulips can all be forced in either water or pots using - (below, l to r) - pebbles, beads, etc. in shallow dishes, special forcing vase and in soil in pots. At right, below, good for amaryllis or tulips in water: a tall vase with a heavy weight base.



Amaryllis and paperwhite narcissus are easiest. These two bulbs can go right in the garden after forced blooms fade.

Tulips and hyacinths are one shot beauties - but well worth the effort. These **MUST** be refrigerated or set in a cold spot 4-6 weeks in order to bloom. You can do this either before or after potting or placing in vases over water. Some nurseries will sell bulbs labeled "pre-cooled" but they're hard to find. Better to plan on doing your own cooling. Failing to refrigerate will trigger "blasting," i.e., blooming too close to the bulb before stalks fully develop.

AMARYLLIS must have a very solid weighted vase or pot. Stalks may grow up to 2-ft. Nurseries carry special, heavy clear amaryllis-forcing vases. Keep the vase filled with water just below, but never touching, the bulb base.

Set in a cool, dark spot. Change the water once a week until roots reach about 2 inches. Then bring out into more light, turning the vase daily so the stalks will grow straight.

When forcing in soil, make sure only the lower, fatter bulb portion is submerged. The neck must be well above the soil. Soak the soil once, let it drain completely. Don't water again until green stalks appear. Put in a cool dark spot until green stalks appear. Then gradually bring out into brighter light, turning pot so the stalk grows straight.

Some say adding a tablespoon of gin or vodka to the water after stalks reach full height will help them to stand up straighter. After blooming, transplant bulbs into your garden. Don't cut off greenery. Bulbs use dying greenery to replenish themselves for future blooms.

PAPERWHITE NARCISSUS. These can be forced in pots, of course, but are most often forced in wide, shallow dishes filled with marbles, rocks or pebbles and filled with water. Again, make sure the bulbs are loosely balanced on the pebbles, and fill with water to just below, but never touching the bulb base.

It gets tricky changing water but usually that's not a problem. In central heat, water evaporates quickly and needs to constantly be replenished.

Once the paperwhites reach some height, try adding a tablespoon of gin (cheap will work!) to the water. Some say adding a tablespoon of gin or vodka to the water after stalks reach full height will help them to stand up straighter. After blooming, transplant bulbs into your garden. Don't cut off greenery. Bulbs use dying greenery to replenish themselves for future blooms.

HYACINTHS & TULIPS. Whether you do water or soil, both these will not bloom without a cooling period of 4-6 weeks. It's just too warm here. Use a hyacinth forcing base or a narrow neck jar. Balance the bulb on top, fill to just below bulb base, and set in refrigerator - not touching walls. This might cause water to freeze. Or plant in soil with 1/2 bulb above soil.

TULIPS are trickier because their vases/pots need to be larger. Use a large clear heavy vase filled 1/4 with marbles, pebbles, etc. Fill with water to just below the top of marbles, etc. Set bulbs inside, flat side out. This will create a outer frame of leaves with flowers in center.

In soil, you can double plant tulips for a longer bloom period. Put rocks, broken crockery in bottom around drain hole to ensure good drainage. Fill 1/3 pot with good potting soil. Set bulbs in with flat side facing pot edge (see above) and leave a bulb-width space between them. Into these blank spaces, put a small stick. Cover bulbs with soil another 1/3 deep, leaving sticks protruding from top. The pull out each stick and put a bulb in its place. That gives lower level bulbs room to sprout upward.

Set both water-forced and potted tulips in a dark corner on concrete in the garage or a place cooler but protected if you can think of one. They need 4-6 weeks of cooling to produce flowers.

When roots in water are about 2-3 inches long, or potted tulips are showing some green, gradually move them into brighter light, turning daily to make sure they don't lean toward the light.

If you don't have storage room in a cool spot for potted tulips, refrigerate them first 4-6 weeks in a paper or mesh bag. Don't allow them to touch refrigerator sides. Then plant them, setting them in a dark spot until foliage appears. Also keep away from fresh fruit which gives off gases as they ripen.

These are one-shot bloomers for us. The lack of adequate cold takes too much out of the tulips and hyacinths, and doesn't allow them to store nutrients needed for future blooms

A FEW MORE TIPS . . .

- * If stalks refuse to stand up straight, try carefully inserting bamboo sticks next to bulbs with ties to support foliage. Or, for a more interesting "stake," use small-leaved branches from your garden.

- * Never allow bulbs forced in water to dry out completely.

- * If a "cool, dark spot" is a challenge, find a dark corner inside that is away from heating draughts. Or set outside in a dark corner of the garage.

- * Don't overwater potted bulbs. Once bulbs are planted, set the pot in a bowl filled with water. Let it soak. Set the pot up, so water can drain freely out of the hole. Once it drains completely, don't water again until you see green sprouts. Once a week, do the submersion again. Let the pot drain completely out of the drain hole before setting it back on a flat surface.

NOTE: Tulips, hyacinths & crocus for in-ground plantings MUST also have this 4-6 cooling period before setting in the garden or they'll "blast, ie, bloom too soon on very short stems (they need cool to produce those tall stalks and complete flowers).

I'm curious to know what success you have had forcing other bulbs to bloom for holiday color. Do share!

* * *



L to r, Amaryllis 'Samba,' A. 'Dancing Queen,' A. 'Double Dream,' and A. 'Summertime.' Colorblends.com photos

FABULOUS NEW AMARYLLIS My friend Sally Ferguson, who has been with the bulb industry for decades, sent these pictures. I am so awed by how beautiful these are, wanted to share with you.

Amaryllis are a lazy gardener's dream. Every year for decades I gave my grandmother, Mimi Gracida, an amaryllis forcing kit (yes, those el cheapos sold in box stores). When the spectacular blooms (which she almost always got) faded, she'd give the huge bulbs back to me. My yard is full of amaryllis now.



Pink magnolia, left, and plumeria

TWO GREAT LAZY GARDENER PLANTS:

* Was totally awed the other day when I realized my pink magnolia, left above, is in full bloom. I'm not sure what triggered fall blooms in this normally-spring-flowering ornamental tree (or large shrub). Maybe heavy rains? But don't be shocked if this also happens to other spring bloomers. If this happens to you, do share. If they do, and you fear cold forecasts might kill the buds, try the branch forcing described above.

* I hope everyone who has, or wants to grow, plumerias caught Jill Carroll's article in Saturday's Houston Chronicle "[Say goodbye to your plumeria, at least during winter.](#)" Great article on this definitely lazy gardener plant. I only have two thoughts to add.

1. Some plumerias (above right, frangipani or Hawaiian lei flower) are still blooming, especially in southern areas of the Greater Houston area. And ...

2. I find more Houstonians are leaving plumerias in the ground year-round. This is definitely risky, especially the farther north you live and not something that Plumeria Society of America (PSA) members would do with their prize blooms. But the more winters these plants do survive in the ground, the deeper their root systems will be, the tougher the plant will become and the more likely it is to survive even more winters.

Jill's definitely right, if you don't like to gamble with plants, protect them. Even this is so easy. Just move potted ones indoors and ignore til spring. Don't water! Or pull them out of the ground, shake off all the soil, and store the bare stalks in the garage against a house wall.

Jill gives more good advice and points out PSA is based in Houston (not Hawaii!). PSA's annual sales always offer the widest variety of plumerias perfect for us and are the best place to get advice from those who know our area. Become a member! www.theplumeriasociety.org

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



JOHN'S CORNER

"What Is A Healthy Soil"

(Part 4)

Continuing our discussion of what is a healthy soil we are going to discuss item #3 below.

- 1) Organic matter from almost fresh to totally decomposed in the form of humus (humins, humic and fulmic acids)
- 2) Minerals (nutrients, sand, silt, and clay)
- 3) Soil life (microbes and macrobes)**
- 4) Air & water
- 5) Plant choices
- 6) Care for and do not destroy the health of the soil one has

3) Soil life - This is the 3rd major portion of a healthy soil and the most frequently neglected and most easily destroyed. One pound of healthy soil, barely a double handful, will contain over **9 billion microbes**. Not million but billion and some studies are now suggesting trillions of microbes in a pound of real healthy soil!

As these microbes live and grow they break down silicate minerals releasing the nutrients. Many of these have the ability to obtain nitrogen from the air which is assimilated into their bodies in the form of proteins, enzymes, amino acids, vitamins, etc. all beneficial to plants, wildlife and ultimately humans.

The microbes consist of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, microarthropods, and many others. Microbes turn dirt into soil. They give the soil body and texture as well as the feel and smell of healthy soil. Microorganisms break down detritus into useful soil products like humus. Microorganisms help hold soil aggregates together, creating channels through which plants roots grow, soil animal's move, and water percolates.

Microbes protect roots from pathogens; mycorrhizal fungi have been shown to benefit plants by: enhanced nutrient absorption, increased drought tolerance, improved transplant survival, and reduced susceptibility to root diseases. Mycorrhizal fungi increase the length and mass of root systems enabling the plant to absorb nutrients better, they also convert nutrients in to a form easier for plants to use and absorb. As the root mass and size increase moisture can be absorbed from a much larger area giving plants greater drought resistance. Several species of fungus, traps, attacks and destroys parasitic nematodes.

Over 1,400 species of nematodes have been identified and only 20 are bad for plants. Most species of nematodes are beneficial, some species attack and feed on pest larva in the soil such as grub worms, fleas, ticks and even fire ants while others help cycle nutrients.

Researchers have discovered a group of fungi that protect lawn grasses from pests. The fungus is called endophytes and lives in a symbiotic relationship that benefits both plant and fungus. The fungi produce toxins that are harmless to the grass (and humans) but repel chinch bugs, sod webworms and other surface feeding insects. Research at Rutgers University indicates that grass plants inoculated with endophytes are more vigorous, and able to stand drought and weed invasions better.

In addition to the army of microbial workers we also have the macrobes. These include earthworms, beetles, centipedes, ants, arthropods, burrowing frogs, etc. These animals churn and till the soil increasing the porosity and tilth. This burrowing action has been found to stimulate root growth in most plants. Of this group earthworms are the most valuable and a gardener's best friend. I will discuss the benefits of earthworms in detail in a future article.

* * *

WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

TO SUBMIT EVENTS - PLEASE - USE OUR FORMAT!

Find a similar event in our calendar below and copy the format EXACTLY.

Then you can add additional information. Email to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.

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

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

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THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!

THURS., NOV. 19: CITRUS & HOMEOWNERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY MONTE NESBITT, 6:30-8:30pm, AgriLife

Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. 281-534-3413; galv@wt.net, www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

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

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

TUE., DEC. 1: Film Screening - Symphony of the Soil. 6pm. OHBA Event hosted by The Houston Museum of Natural Science, <https://store.hmns.org>

WED. DEC. 2: Our Garden and Our Health, John Ferguson, 9-11am, Gardeners By The Bay Garden Club, University Baptist Church, 16106 Middlebrook Drive, Houston, Texas 77059, Roemehl Dewey, 281-352-7149.

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

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

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

MON., DEC. 7: PAM DUBE, SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF FLORAL DESIGN, 10am-noon, Amegy Bank Community Room, 28201 SH 249, Tomball. Free. Tomball Garden Club event, tomballgardenclub@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

MON., JAN. 4: GROWING CITRUS BY BETH HOUSE, 10am-noon, Amegy Bank Community Room, 28201 SH 249, Tomball. Free. Tomball Garden Club event, tomballgardenclub@gmail.com

THURS., JAN. 7: IS YOUR STYLE IN YOUR GARDEN? BY MARGARET SINCLAIR, 9:30am, Municipal Utility Building #81, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr., Katy. Free. Nottingham Country Garden Club Program. nottinghamgardenclub.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. txmng.org/wallermg

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<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 11/28/15.

COUPON: Nature's Way Resources. 30% off all trees & shrubs including fruit trees, shade trees, antique roses and much more. (Offer good for retail purchases of this product by the cubic yard at Nature's Way Resources (101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX). Expires 12/31/15.