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December 2, 2016

Dear Friends,

Here is the 183rd 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. . . .E mail your thoughts to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your interest.

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

Enjoy!

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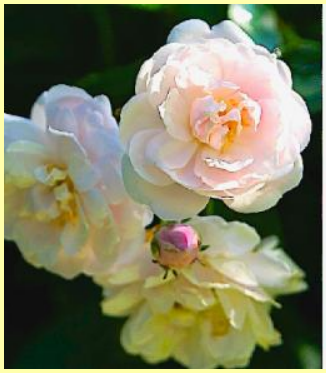
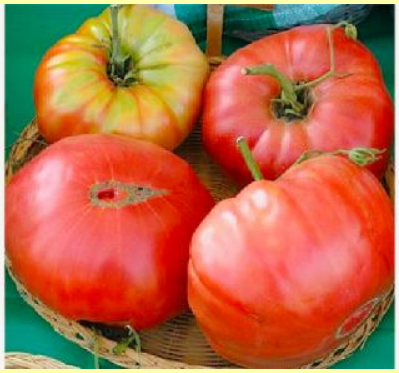




SHARED GARDENING CHALLENGES . . .
GREAT TIME TO ROOT . . . HORTICULTURE HEIRLOOMS

"Look deep into Nature, and then you will understand everything better."
-- Albert Einstein

By BRENDA BEUST SMITH

It occurs to me a definite symphysis is developing between:

- gardening advice for children,
- gardening advice for adults with challenges and
- gardening advice for lazy gardeners.

I've long thought horticultural therapy techniques are godsends to lazy gardeners. Any approach, tool, design or system that makes gardening easier for those who have trouble with bending, reaching, standing, stamina, etc., also reduces the overall workload.

Manna from heaven for lazy gardeners!

Now, kidsgardening.org completes a wonderful platonic ménage à trois.

"Create Overwintering Habitat with an 'Untidy' Garden" recommends "leave it messy!" -- Instead of a big school garden clean-up for coming winter.

Not a total mess, of course. Just keep in mind, KG says, "Nature doesn't always like neat and tidy."

True, among edibles, cutting back and composting fading plant debris does help break insect/disease cycles.

And, be aware, Virginia-based kidsgardening.org speaks to a nationwide audience -- only a small portion of which shares our 12-month growing season. Our edible and flower gardens should be active year-round.

But even subtropical landscapes include plants that go dormant. Dying foliage, developing seeds and "lifeless" branches provide food and shelter to many wildlife, especially in our subtropical climate:

- Many butterflies ride out cold months as chrysalis attached to dead plant stalks or leaves.
- Caterpillars shelter in leaf litter/seed pods, or as eggs attached to plant parts, in crevices or beneath tree bark

- Dried flower head seeds feed birds all winter long.
- Standing dead plants stems and other plant debris provides shelter from cold winds and predators.

Aimed at school kids . . . but music to the ears of lazy gardeners!

IF BLOOMS ARE SPARSE OR NONEXISTENT IN YOUR YARD NOW . . . just think of all the still-blooming-flowers readers have been reporting these past few weeks. To recap: bougainvillea, cassia, coral vine, esperanza (*Tecoma stans*), golden raintrees, marigolds, thryallis and turk's caps. From my yard I can add plumbago (white more than blue) and firespike.

Just because we may not notice developing seeds, lots of wildlife does -- especially during winter!
L to r, with their seeds below, Tecoma stans (esperanza, yellow bells), bougainvillea, plumbago and thryallis

This is a great time to plant these listed above and most garden shrubs. Cooler fall days, fewer bugs and even rainfall are ideal for encouraging healthy root spread. Wait til spring and our soil heats up so quickly, it's a little harder for roots to grow as efficiently.

It's also the perfect time to root cuttings, which brings up a recent email from Gloria in Pearland. She wants to know it's okay (not rude) to ask a neighbor for a cutting of a beautiful plant in her yard.

That, Gloria, totally depends on your neighbor. Most gardeners love to share. A few, however, like to be the only person in a neighborhood with a particularly spectacular specimen.

If it would make you more comfortable, is there another neighbor you can ask into which category this homeowner might fall?

If not, just ask. The worst she could do is say no. You might soften the query by complimenting the planting. Then, after some discussion about it, ask if, the next time they prune that plant back, could you have a cutting? Or a bulb when they multiply too thickly and thinning becomes necessary?

Chances are good she will pop off a branch and hand it to you. Most gardeners will!

THIS IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO ROOT CUTTINGS. Strip off all leaves or all but one or two new ones at the tip. Everywhere a leaf came out above ground, a root will (hopefully!) come out below ground. For this reason, bury as many of the leaf nodes as you possibly can.

If you're lucky enough to get several cuttings, hedge your bets. Root some in water and some in the ground. Just be sure to keep fresh water in the jar.

Root in a pot or in the ground, in a shady area. In either, dig the hole deep enough to submerge as many of the leaf nodes as possible, leaving1/4-1/2 stalk above ground. Not necessary but helpful: upturn a clear jar, like a mayonnaise jar, over the exposed cutting. Glass is best, but plastic will work.

Water only to maintain a very thin, barely visible, moisture film. Water if sides are dry for several days. If you see a heavy film or actual drops, remove jar for a day or two. Over- and under-watering are one reason cuttings don't root. Usually in fall we have enough nicely spaced rain that this shouldn't be a problem.

Rooting's always a gamble. Don't take it personally if roots never form. Try again with new cuttings.

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN "HEIRLOOM" PLANT? In our Spotlight article below, Texas "homegrown" specialist Judy Barrett takes a look at the steadily growing interest in heirloom plants.

Some might even call the movement a "cause" or even a "revolution." triggered by concerns about new technology, discovery of intense flavors, amazing hardiness, worries about health and -- perhaps, the most fun reason of all -- the great stories of these treasures from the past.

Some heirlooms are easy to find in many nurseries, such as antique roses. Other heirlooms are available only from specialty shops or seed companies. Seed Savers Exchange (seedsavers.org) is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds and plants.

Not sure exactly what is meant by "heirloom"? Judy explains below. A well-known media host, author, editor and lecturer, Judy has been a prominent figure in Texas' organic gardening circles, especially through her "Homegrown" publications *(homegrowntexas.com)*

Judy was kind enough to include specific names of many heirloom plants, but sometimes that's not always easy. For example, when I asked about the dry land corn planted for generations by Native Americans she interviewed, she said even they didn't know the exact name. "All are Zea mays," she explained and, "are generally identified by the location where the corn is grown. For example Santo Domingo Posole, is grown at Santo Domingo pueblo in New Mexico."

L to r: Zea mays Corn and Judy Barrett's " *What Makes Heirloom Plants So Great?*"

Listen to Judy's warnings below about location. Not all heirlooms work in every garden. Do your research! Judy's Spotlight article is a peek into her book "***W hat's So Great About Heirloom Plants?***" (Texas A&M Press. 2010). Might want to consider this resource -- along with her other publications on growing vegetables, herbs, roses, and organic tips -- for gardeners on your Christmas gift list. Judy, who lives in the Austin-area town of Taylor, is in the process of revamping her well-known bi-monthly online magazine "HOMEGROWN: Good Sense Organic Gardening."

**Brenda's column in the free, emailed LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER is based on her 45+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener. To sign up: CLICK HERE*

LG&F GARDEN CALENDAR EVENTS submitted in our EXACT format will be copied & added to calendar right away. Any necessary re-typing/reformatting may take couple of weeks. See calendar for format. Always check the LG&F Newsletter Calendar to make sure your submitted event is listed! If not, let me know!*

* * *

"What makes a plant an heirloom is age accompanied by sturdiness."
-- Judy Barrett

Heirloom plants, l to r, 'Henri Martin' antique rose, 'Mortgage Lifter' tomato and 'Becks Big Buck Horn' okra, (Some photos by Judy Barrett)

PLANTS CAN BE ANTIQUES TOO!

by JUDY BARRETT
HomegrownTexas@yahoo.com

Like cut glass and quilts, old plants are treasure often passed from generation to generation. The renewed interest in heirloom plants is steadily growing. Gardeners remember with fondness flowers in Grandmother's garden or vegetables Grandfather harvested.

What makes a plant an heirloom is age accompanied by sturdiness. Heirloom plants have survived for generations, in spite of drought, unseasonable cold, too much rain, and too many bugs. Some heirlooms are specific to a place and conditions that exist there. Many Native American farmers grow a variety of corn grown on family lands for hundreds of years. This corn, has become specifically adapted to those conditions.

Other heirlooms thrive in a variety of climates. ' Henri Martin,' for example, is an antique rose that tolerates both Texas heat and Minnesota freezes. This year the only tomato that flourished in my garden was 'Maine Tomato berry,' an heirloom native from Maine (sold for a while as a Texas wild tomato!).

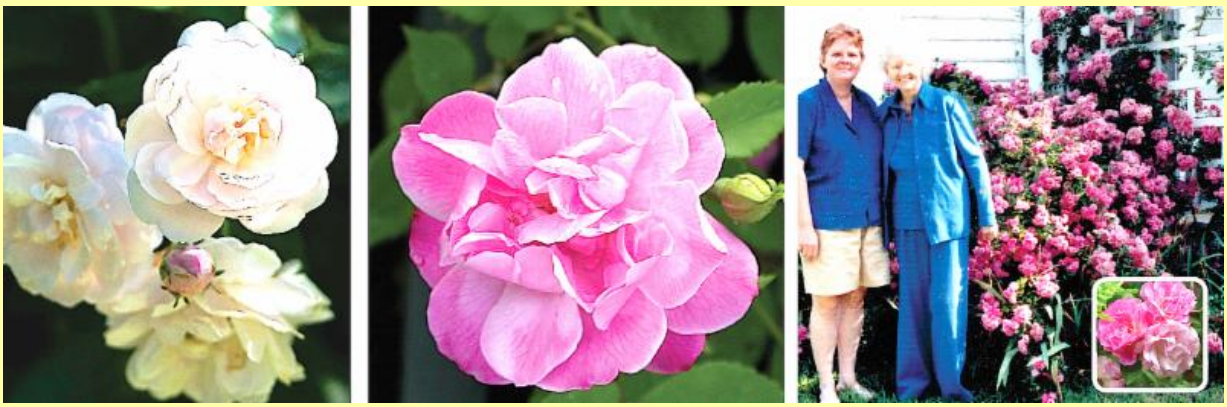
Generally, hybrid (new) plants favored by commercial growers produce earlier, bigger, longer-keeping fruit or flower. But to meet those needs, they often give up delicacy, fragrance, and flavor.

Old-fashioned plants have not been hybridized by plant breeders. They have naturally evolved, adapting to conditions in which they live. Usually they are natural hybrids whose ancestry is lost to the wind that bred them.

Heirloom varieties are available in many different kinds of plants, antique roses, annuals and perennial flowers, garden bulbs. In the right environment, they generally easy to grow, adaptable, and reproduce reliably.

The characteristic I particularly enjoy about heirloom varieties is their connectedness with people, the stories that are so rich in lore and humanity:

- Mortgage Lifter tomato, so called because the crop was so big and wonderful, the farmer was able to pay off the mortgage on the farm.
- Beck's Okra (Malcolm Beck, founder of Garden-Ville in San Antonio). This variety came to Texas from Germany via a smuggler who hid seeds in his boots all the way across the Atlantic. Malcolm Beck is often credited as being the Father of Organic Gardening in Texas.
- Blush Noisette and Parson's Yellow antique roses grew in Empress Josephine's garden.



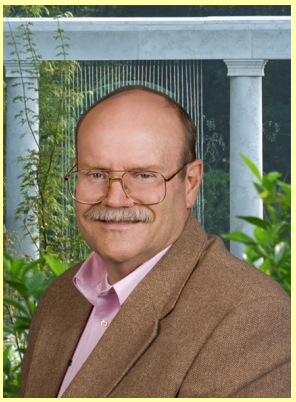
Antique roses, l to r, Blush Noisette 1814, Parson's Pink and ' Tausendschön' rose (with author Judy and her mother Stella.

An antique Tausendschön climbing rose grew on the back trellis at my Mother's house for as long as I can remember. The original rose is gone. Mother is gone. Even the house is gone, but I've still got the rose and it warms my heart each spring when it burst into joyous bloom. Tausendschön means Thousand Beauties

Almost every gardener has a plant or two that came from another's garden--and usually there is a story that goes with the plant. It is this melding of story and plant that I love--especially since these plants are almost always easy to grow, smell good, and are beautiful.

Email Judy at HomegrownTexas@yahoo.com.

JOHN'S CORNER



MINERALS - The Elements and What They Do Part 5

See the October 21, 2016 Newsletter for list of references and the Periodic Table.

11) Sodium (Na) - Sodium is a soft silvery white metal which is a member of the group one elements on the periodic table (far left column) called the alkali metals. It is the best tasting and most explosive of this group. It is found in igneous rocks at 23,600 ppm, in shale at 9,600 ppm, in sandstone at 3,300 ppm, limestone at 400 ppm, fresh water at 6.3 ppm, seawater at 10,500 ppm and soil at 6,300 ppm. In marine plants sodium

can reach 33,000 ppm and in land plants at 1,200 ppm, however both marine animals and land animals have 4,000 ppm.

When we think of sodium we are conditioned to think of sodium as the salt (sodium chloride, NaCl) is essential for life. It is interesting that sodium intake in the USA is 5-12 grams per day while in Japan whose lifespan is 4 years longer consumes 28 grams per day.

Sodium, chlorine, and potassium are three indispensible electrolytes that are intimately connected, and work together in our bodies. One of sodium's most important functions is the movement of electrical signals along nerve fibers. A lack of sodium can cause muscle cramps, brain swelling in infants causing death, and extremely low salt diets have led to death in adults. On the other side, too much salt can cause one to vomit. Salt is commonly used to preserve food as it kills bacteria and other microbes.

Salt is mentioned in the bible several times. In Jeremiah 2:22 it is mentioned as a cleaning agent (Na_2CO_3) that we call washing soda. In biblical times, salt was collected from areas where seawater had evaporated and it contained high levels of gypsum and other minerals. The ovens of the day were lined with this salt as it would absorb and store heat providing more even cooking. Over time the calcium in the gypsum would become more active after repeated exposures to the fire and react with the sodium chloride hence it would no longer taste salty (lose its flavor).

Pure sodium oxidizes rapidly when cut and exposed to oxygen and water vapor in the air hence it is covered with paraffin wax to prevent oxidation. It reacts violently when exposed to water releasing pure hydrogen, which may ignite into flames (sodium burns in air to form sodium peroxide (Na_2O_2)).

Sodium is a primary feedstock of the chemical industry. The metal is used in the production of airbags, bio-fuels, glass, and as coolant in heat exchangers. Sodium is used in street lights, as sodium makes a very efficient way to convert electricity into a yellowish light. When we combine sodium with water we get sodium hydroxide (NaOH) often called lye which is very caustic and is the active ingredient in Drano.
Sodium as common salt is found in several forms; salt from mineral deposits is called rock salt, and salt evaporated from seawater is sea salt and contains all the micronutrients in seawater. Most table salt has all the nutrients removed, and then is bleached by some process to make it white.

Gardening and Landscaping Problems Associated with Sodium (Na)

Sodium is the twelfth most common element found in plant tissue. It is involved with pH management, maintenance of balanced hormone and a plants enzyme system. In healthy plants, sodium affects the plants immune systems, which includes insect resistance, bacterial or fungal resistance and weed control. However, only small amounts of sodium are required.

Sodium influences plant growth in many ways but not fully understood. Sodium is rarely deficient in Texas soils. Hence, for gardeners, too much sodium will stunt growth or even kill most plants (think salt).

Perhaps the most important factor is in physiological relationship to plants, in association with potassium (K) as available potassium must exceed available sodium or problems will occur. If we look at the far left column of the Periodic table, we see that potassium (K) is directly below sodium (Na) which means it has very similar chemical properties. Therefore, in some species of plants like cactus and succulents, sodium will replace potassium.

Sodium combines with arsenic (sodium arsenate) which is a common ingredient in many pesticides. In the Houston area, many soil yards purchase worn out topsoil from along the highway 290 corridor from Northwest Houston to Hempstead and resell it to homeowners. This is where rice and cotton was grown for many years and arsenic compounds were used to defoliate the plants (made the cotton easier to pick). This

arsenic ends up in the topsoil and may combine with sodium from chicken or cow manure to form this toxic pesticide in one's soil.

Another problems gardener's face is when sodium in the soil is combined with carbon and water it forms sodium benzoate ($NaC_7H_5O_2$) a toxic chemical that kills microbes hence it is added to many foods. Sodium benzoate is linked to hyperactivity and attention deficient in children and it has been found to damage DNA.

As gardeners, when we have too much sodium in our soil it is saturated with the sodium ion, which prevents other, needed ions (nutrients) from being stored or absorbed by plants. Too much sodium can block calcium uptake by plants and increased levels of sodium can affect (prevent) the absorption of magnesium and potassium. This creates weaker plants that grow slower and are more susceptible to insects and disease.

A few plants that require (or can tolerate) more sodium than others are carrots, barley, beets, wheat, and ryegrass.

Another major issue in our area is drainage and soil health. Sodium as an atom has a very large radius when exposed to water, which prevents clay soils from becoming loose, and friable (flocculating) thereby destroying soil structure. This effect prevents water from entering the soil whether from rain or irrigation.

For healthy landscapes, gardeners in Houston and along the Gulf Coast need to avoid using products that contain high amounts of sodium. Sodium damage is more common on heavy or clay soils than sandy soils.

Sources: poultry and cow manure, some wood and bark ashes, mushroom compost (spent mushroom substrate), some seaweed if not washed to remove excess salt,
Sewage sludge compost made from Biosolids,

12) Magnesium (Mg) - Essential to all life forms, has electrochemical, catalytic, and structural functions. It is one of the most common elements (7th) in the earth's crust at 2.33%. Magnesium is considered the first of the structural metals; as it is strong, light, relatively inexpensive, and easy to machine or work.

Magnesium is highly flammable and in small pieces, it lights easily with a match. It burns very hot hence is commonly used in campfire starters. It can be found is in racecars, airplanes, bicycles, fireworks, cameras, and luggage. Another use is in birthday candles that relight after being snuffed out.

Magnesium is found in igneous rocks at 23,000 ppm, in shale at 15,000 ppm, in sandstone at 10,700, in limestone at 2,700 ppm, fresh water at 4.1 ppm, saltwater at 1,350 ppm, soils at 5,000 ppm, land plants at 3,200 ppm and marine plants at 5,200 ppm, marine animals at 3,200 ppm, and land animals at 1,000 ppm.

Magnesium is an essential component of the chlorophyll molecule. If the magnesium atom in a molecule of chlorophyll is removed and replaced with an iron atom, it becomes hemoglobin!

Magnesium activates numerous enzymes and is used in human bone formation and in the production and transfer of energy required for protein synthesis. While it is rare, too much magnesium prevents bone calcification but a lack of magnesium allows calcium (Ca) to form kidney stones in our bodies.

A lack of magnesium is linked to asthma, anorexia, menstrual migraines, growth failure, ecg changes, neuromuscular problems (acts as neurorelaxant) , convulsions, depression, muscular weakness, tremors, vertigo, calcification of small arteries and malignant calcification of soft tissue, and constipation. Additionally in adults, a lack of magnesium is linked to hypertension, muscle cramps, and preterm contractions.
In children whom are magnesium deficient, they can suffer from constipation, asthma, anxiety, ADHD, migraines, tics, and seizures.

The December 2016 issue of Life Extension had several articles on the importance of Magnesium to our health. The majority of Americans (70-80%) are magnesium deficient and do not obtain enough from dietary sources leaving them vulnerable to disorders linked to this nutrient. Magnesium protects us against a whole series of degenerative disorders.

Magnesium is the 4th most abundant mineral in the human body and more than 300 enzymes require magnesium to function properly. Higher levels of magnesium in our bodies is associated with reduced risks of sudden cardiac death, stroke, type II diabetes, asthma, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, hypertension, lower rates of kidney disease, less risk of cognitive decline, healthier bones and teeth, osteoporosis and lower risk of migraine headaches. Adequate magnesium levels are also linked to increases in longevity. A lack of magnesium is associated with ADHD, bipolar disorder, depression and schizophrenia.

Humans that are magnesium deficient have a 76% risk increase of Pancreatic cancer and Pancreatic cancer risk increased by 24% for every 100 mg below the RDA.

Other studies found that for every 100 mg increase in magnesium intake the risk of developing type II diabetes decreased by 15%. Optimal RDA intake is 420 mg for males and 320 mg for females. Men with the highest intake of magnesium had a 50% less chance of contracting colon cancer.

Magnesium is often the limiting factor in bone development and maintaining bone density as low levels of magnesium directly leads to osteoporosis. A low level of magnesium accelerates the aging process at the cellular level and the risk of death from any cause in those 65 and older is significantly higher in those with lower levels of magnesium.

The US Academy of Sciences has estimated that adding calcium and magnesium to water would reduce the annual cardiovascular death rate by 150,000 in the United States. Note: Most bottled water does not contain magnesium except Adobe Springs mineral water contains 110 mg magnesium per liter.
Magnesium is used in almost every fertilizer made whether synthetic or organic and regularly applied to our fields.

So why do we not have enough magnesium in our diets?

1) Many common drugs deplete the body of magnesium of which the proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) which are drugs used by millions of Americans for heartburn relief are the most notorious and widespread.

2) Soft drinks use phosphoric acid that depletes our bodies of magnesium. It is also used in many food items.

3) Typical grain refining removes 80-95% of total magnesium that was in the grain. This is another reason to purchase organic whole grain breads.

4) Genetically modified foods (GMO's) commonly have 10 times the amount of Round-Up on them as conventionally grown food. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Round-Up. Glyphosate was originally patented as a mineral chelater to tie-up and clean mineral scale out of pipes. One of the minerals it binds strongest to is magnesium preventing the body from absorbing it even if it is present in our food. To make the problem worse farmers not only use Round-Up for weed control spray they also spray their grain crops (wheat, etc.) with Round-Up to dry them out to help make the crop easier to harvest adding even more glyphosate to our food supply. Glyphosate contaminates our food supply and occurs in the highest amounts on genetically modified crops of which corn is the worst (up to 10 times the amount than non-gmo corn) and

on grain crops like wheat. Over 300 bodily functions require magnesium hence magnesium deficiency is a major risk factor for cancers of all types. "The Truth About Cancer", T. Bollinger, 2016, Hay House Publishing, ISBN: 978-1-4019-5223-5

Gardening and Landscaping Problems Associated with Magnesium (Mg)
One of the growing reasons more and more gardeners are raising their own vegetables and fruits is the lack of essential nutrients in our food and the chemical contamination in them that is making us sick. Normally, d ietary magnesium is related to the amount of magnesium in the soil and to a lesser degree the mineral content of the water one drinks. However, the contamination of our food supply prevents adequate absorption even if the magnesium was present.

A magnesium deficiency for plants the leaves become thin, lose their green color from between veins on older leaves, it typically starts out from the bottom of plant and moves up, and leaves tend to curve upward. Depending on the species of plants there may be yellowing of leaves or reddening of leaves. Note: Too much potassium competes with absorption of magnesium into plants and cause deficiencies.

Magnesium aids in the formation of plant fats, oils, and starches in plants as well as being required for the chlorophyll molecule. It is involved with pH management, maintenance of balanced hormone and enzyme systems, healthy plants (immune systems from insect resistance, bacterial of fungal attack to weed control)

P ound for pound, magnesium will raise the pH of the soil 1.4 times as much as calcium, however, excessive magnesium will cause phosphorous, potassium, and nitrogen deficiencies. Healthy soils will have five times more calcium than magnesium.

E xcessive magnesium in the soil can combine with aluminum to form toxic substances, which can enter the food chain and cause health problems. Excessive magnesium will cause the soil to crust, which reduces aeration, it releases soil nitrogen to atmosphere, and create phosphorous and potassium deficiencies by mineral tie up. This can lead to anaerobic decay forming alcohols in the soil (only 1 ppm alcohol can kill a plants root). A large imbalance in soil of the calcium to magnesium ratio (Ca:Mg) permits organic residues not only to decay into alcohol (a sterilant) but into formaldehyde (a carcinogen and preservative). This is why applying Epson salts to our gardens often cause more problems than it fixes.

Sources: compost, native mulches, Sul-Po-Mag mineral supplement, Epson salts (magnesium sulfate), plant residues, dolomite (a type of limestone with much higher magnesium levels).

* * *

WEEKLY GARDENING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR

PLEASE READ BEFORE SUBMITTING AN EVENT TO THIS CALENDAR.

Events NOT submitted in the EXACT written format below may take two weeks or longer to be reformatted/retyped. After that point, if your event does not appear, please email us. Sorry, no children's programs. - Submit to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

IF WE INSPIRE YOU TO ATTEND ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE TELL SPONSORS YOU HEARD ABOUT IT IN
T HE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

SAT. DEC. 3: THE ARBOR GATE CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE, 2-6pm, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. 281-351-8851. Free; register: arborgate.com

SAT., DEC. 3: GROWING CITRUS IN HOUSTON & S.E. TEXAS, 9:30-11:30am, Houston Museum of Natural Science. $45. Urban Harvest event. 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org

SAT., DEC 3: HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE, 10am-4pm, Buchanan's Native Plants, 611 E 11th. Free. 713-861-5702; buchanansplants.com/events

SAT., DEC. 3: FRUIT TREES by SCOTT SNODGRASS, 10am, Enchanted Forest, 10611 FM1750; 2pm, Enchanted Gardens, 6420 FM359, both Richmond. Free. myenchanted.com

SAT., DEC 3: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEEDS by IRA GERVAIS, 9-11:30 am, & SOIL HEALTH & EVALUATION by JIM GILLIAM, 1-2:30 pm, AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Free, but pre-register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com; 281-534-3413; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

C.L. United Methodist Church at 16335 El Camino Real. Gardeners By The Bay event. Free. 281-474-5051

FRI., DEC. 9: HOLLY-JUJAH by JIM JOHNSON, 10am, White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine. $25 advance sale only. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs eve nt. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., DEC. 10: WINTER AT MERCER BOTANIC GARDEN, 9am-noon, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT., DEC. 10: CITRUS FEST & Q&A BY DR. BOB RANDALL, 8:30AM-NOON, URBAN HARVEST FARMER'S MARKET, 3000 RICHMOND AVE @ EASTSIDE. URBAN HARVEST EVENT. 713-880-5540, URBANHARVEST.ORG.

SAT., DEC. 10: CIITRUS TASTING EVENT by BRAZORIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, Agrilife Extension, 21017 CR 171. Free. 979-864-1558; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazoria.

MON., DEC 12: CITRUS SEMINAR & TASTING by MONTE NESBITT, TX A&M Extension Specialist, 6-8 pm, AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Free, but pre-register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-534-3413, www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

WED. DEC. 14: CHRISTMAS CRAFTS USING NATURAL MATERIALS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens , 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT., DEC 17: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. $10. Garden Conservancy event. peckerwoodgarden.org , 979-826-3232; info@peckerwoodgarden.org

SAT., DEC. 17: CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 8am, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: albbarr@comcast.net.

MON., DEC. 19: STORYTIME IN THE GARDDEN, 10:30 am- 11:30 am, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

MON., DEC. 19: WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER TRAINING REGISTRATION DEADLINE. 9am-4pm Saturday classes starting Jan. 14. $160. Waller County Extension Office. txmg/org/wallermg; wallermgardener2013@gmail.com; 979-826-7651

THURS., JAN. 5: SOILS, FERTILIZERS & OTHER ORGANIC LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS by LOUIS BENNETT, 10am, MUD Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr, Katy. Free, Nottingham Country Garden Club event. nottinghamgardenclub.org

WED., JAN. 11: EXPLORING THE PRIMEVAL FLORA OF NEW CALEDONIA, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., JAN. 12: BACKYARD ROSE HYBRIDIZING by JOHN JONS 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavilllon, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Houston Rose Society event. houstonrose.org

FRI., JAN. 13: PENNY WISE / POUND FOOLISH: WHEN & WHY TO HIRE A LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL by RITA HODGE, 10am, White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

MON., JAN. 16: STORYTIME IN THE GARDEN, 10:30-11:30 am, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

MON., JAN 23-FEB. 27: TEXAS GULF COAST GARDENER TIER III: THE ART OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN, 9am-3pm. Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. $250. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT. JAN. 28: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FRUIT & NUT TREE SALE, 8 am presentation, 9am-noon sale, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. 936-539-7824; mcmga.com

WED., FEB. 8: MICROGREENS, noon - 2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

FRI., FEB.10: FLORAL DESIGN INSPIRED BY ART by HOUSTON DESIGNING WOMEN, 10am, White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., FEB 18, 2017: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SPRING 2017 PLANT SALE, 9 am-1 pm with pre-sale seminar 8-8:50 am, Jack Brooks Park Rodeo Arena, 10 Jack Brooks Rd and Hwy 6, Hitchcock, TX 77563 (Galveston County Fairgrounds)

MON., FEB. 20: STORYTIME IN THE GARDEN, 10:30-11:30 am, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT., SUN., MAR. 4-5: SPRING BRANCH AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB 37TH ANNUAL SHOW & SPRING SALE, Sat. Show 1-5pm, Sale 9am-5pm; Sun. Show & Sale, 10am-3pm; workshop Sat. & Sun. 1pm, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Park Dr. Free. 281-748-8417, kjwross@yahoo.com

If we inspire you to attend any of these events, please let them know you heard about it in . . .
THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!

PLEASE READ BEFORE SUBMITTING AN EVENT FOR THIS CALENDAR.

Events NOT submitted in the EXACT written format below may take two weeks or longer to be reformatted/retyped. After that point, if your event does not appear, please email us. Sorry, no children's programs. - Submit to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

IF WE INSPIRE YOU TO ATTEND ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE TELL SPONSORS YOU HEARD ABOUT IT IN
T HE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

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ADOPTABLE DOG OF THE MONTH

DIESEL

Diesel was abandoned by his owners when they moved, and he ended up at Montgomery County Animal Shelter.

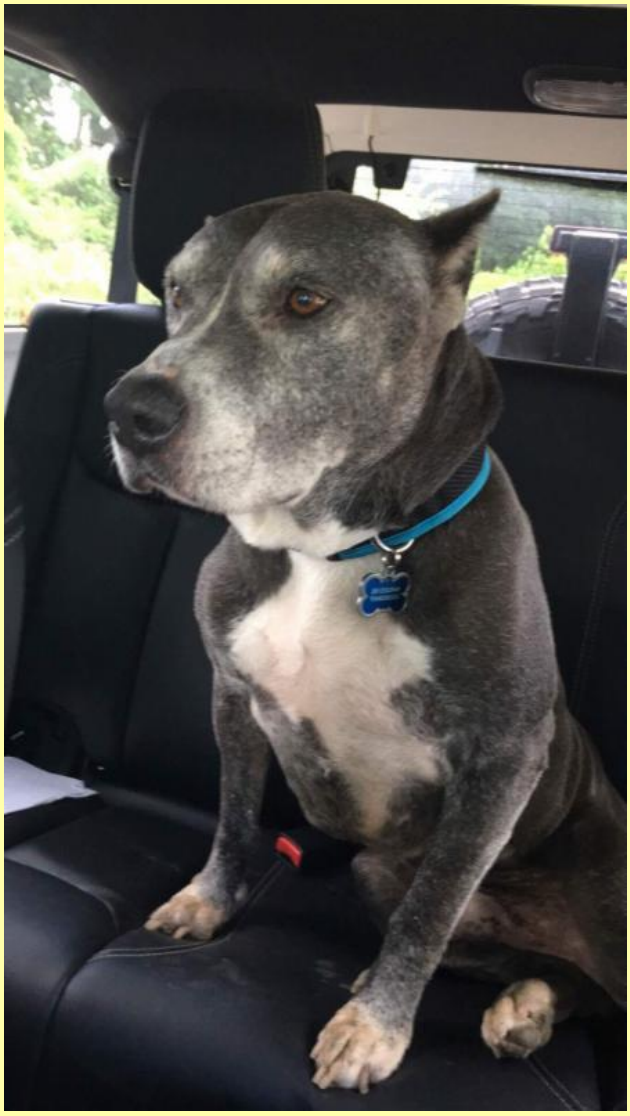
Diesel is a American Blue Pittbull Mix and is thought to be about 10 years old.

He knows basic commands- is housebroken and crate trained- loves everyone he meets... Loves bones, treats and squeaky toys- even likes a nice jog. He has a good amount of life to live and would love to have somewhere to spend it. If he has siblings- they have to be female.

Diesel loves to play and socialize and is so much fun to have around.

He is fixed and has all of his shots.

If interested in adopting Diesel, please reply to this newsletter and type "Diesel" in the subject line. Diesel is not at the shelter currently. He is in foster care.



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 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

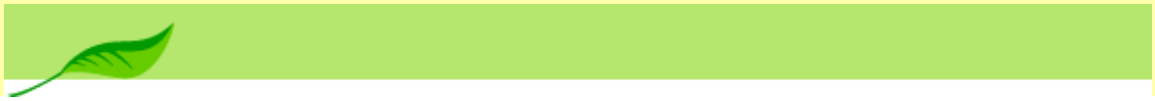
Mark is a native Houstonian, a horticulturist, certified permaculturist and organic specialist with a background in garden design, land restoration and organic project management. He is currently the general manager of Nature's Way Resources. Mark is also the co-author of the book *Habitat Gardening 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 Garden Mix Lite Plus. **(Offer good for bulk retail purchases only of this product at 101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe TX only. Expires 12/15/16**

Confirm that you like this.

Click the "Like" button.