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MAY 26TH, 2017

Dear Friends,

Here is the 207TH 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](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com). Thanks so much for your interest.

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*Redbuds, left, are spring-blooming trees/shrubs. Crape myrtles, right, are summer-blooming trees/shrubs*

## **REDBUD VS CRAPES . . . NO GRASS UNDER TREES?**

**By BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

This lecture title -- ***"Is Redbud the Next Crape Myrtle?"*** -- totally intrigued me. This is Dr. Dennis Werner's June 8 presentation at Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches.

Our native redbuds (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*) are gorgeous spring-blooming trees or shrubs, easily spotted in woods all over this area. Eastern redbud ([Cercis canadensis](#)) is, in fact, native throughout Central and North America.

And they've long been a focus for Dr. Werner, one of our nation's truly outstanding horticulturists, and a major research study at North Carolina State University. Was this a prediction? And/or a fun title to draw attention? If so, it sure worked!

I love "back stories." This catchy quip, it turns out, literally leaped out of a lively conversation between Dr. Werner and our own acclaimed Texas horticulturist Dr. David Creech, Stephen F. Austin State University Professor Emeritus and director of the SFA Gardens in Nacogdoches, home of the Pineywoods Native Plant Center where Dr. Werner will be speaking.

News of the proliferation of new redbud releases sparked the quip: *"Is redbud the next crape myrtle?"* Both agreed this teaser title would definitely draw the eye, given how popular crape myrtles are in home landscapes. Even if it's a bit of a stretch, it's hard to beat redbuds for spring sparkle.

**THURS., JUNE 8: IS REDBUD THE NEXT CRAPE MYRTLE by DR. DENNIS WERNER, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St., Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)**

In his presentation, Dr. Werner will explore the genus *Cercis*, progress made in 20 years of redbud breeding at NC State, and new trial selections. If you ask me, the perfect combination is to have both one of the new redbuds for spring color and some great crape myrtles for fabulous color the rest of the growing season!

### **FIRST, THOUGH, READER FEEDBACK:**

- Helen Mooty, Galveston County historian extraordinaire had a gardening question after last week's advice on leaving an open collar around tree trunks:

*I have removed planters surrounding my 40-year-old oak trees and am trying to get grass to grow around them (it won't). So now I know I can put in an "open collar" a foot wide and be OK!*

My added response:

Nothing is worth losing that oak. And nothing will make grass grow in the shady area under a tree.

Option: Put mulch under the tree. Insert pots of ivies, impatiens, wedelia, frog fruit . . . one of multiple choices available. Best to use just one or two of a wide variety. That way, you can always buy more of those you like and, even more important, that like you!

Improve their chances by slicing off the pot bottoms. Set on ground around tree. Pile enough leaves/pine needles up to hide pot so it looks like they're planted under there. The roots will co-mingle if you're patient.



Roots will (hopefully) grow downward slowly so don't compete with, or are killed off by, tree roots. Gradually new growth should spill out over the pot tops, setting new roots as it spreads. Keep well watered if it doesn't rain until you see new growth.

- DON DUBOIS responded to our caution about introducing potentially invasive "alien" plants into our area. He recommends the web site; [plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov), a USDA-funded interactive site.

AND NOW . . . ON TO REDBUDS VS. CRAPES!

\* \* \*

**Brenda's column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER**  
 is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener  
 Email questions, comments to her at [lazygardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)

\* \* \*



*L to r, Cercis Pink Pom Poms tree and close-up. Right, Cercis Whitewater*

## IS REDBUD THE NEXT CRAPE MYRTLE? By DENNIS WERNER

Dept. of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University

There are certainly many shared similarities between crape myrtle and redbud as it relates to the available genetic diversity that can be exploited in a breeding program, and the subsequent combinations of attributes and characters that can be combined in new cultivars.

For example, as regards leaf color variation, in crape myrtle there is of course green, purple more recently, and a gold leaf variant just described in China about 2 years ago. Similarly, green, gold, and purple are now found in redbuds.

Flower color diversity in crape myrtle is remarkable. But redbud is competitive in that arena also, with white, pink blush, purple, pink, reddish/purple, and magenta.

Although there is a compact form of redbud in commerce ('Ace of Hearts'), the dwarf forms of crape myrtle are much more diminutive as compared to standard types, so crape myrtle dwarf forms are much more dramatic and distinct than are redbud compact forms.



***Cercis canadensis* 'Rising Sun,' *Cercis* 'Merlot' (tree and leaves) and *Cercis* 'Ruby Falls' (tree and leaves)**

The major reasons that redbud will not be the next crape myrtle, if we use overall popularity and tree numbers sold as the criteria are:

1. Redbud is a spring flowering species, has a limited flowering time of about 2 weeks, and competes with scores of other spring flowering plants for market share. Crape myrtle, by virtue of its extended flowering in summer, has a unique niche with fewer flowering-tree competitors.
2. Redbud is typically a relatively short-lived tree, perhaps 20-30 years at best. Crape myrtle much longer in most cases.
3. Crape myrtle is much more broadly adaptable to various soil conditions and landscape settings. It can be grown successfully in less than ideal landscape settings (the strip between a sidewalk and highway) that rebuds often perform poorly in.
4. Redbuds do not tolerate winter injury, weed/turf competition, physical injury (weed eaters, lawn mowers) as well as crape myrtle. Although rebuds are more cold hardy, winter injury recovery is poor if a tree is damaged.
5. And lastly, the term "crape murder" has much more flair than "cercis murder"!!!!

Redbud has a few advantages, but they are for the most part minor.

1. The primary species marketed in the U.S., *Cercis canadensis* is native. Certainly very important to many people.
2. The flowers are edible.
3. Redbud is an important species as a nectar source for our early spring pollinators (butterflies, bumblebees, blueberry bees, carpenter bees, and other early pollinator species).



Whether in the wild or in the garden, Ceris Applachia Red is a winner!

Dr. Dennis Werner can be emailed at [dennis\\_werner@ncsu.edu](mailto:dennis_werner@ncsu.edu). Or you can speak with him in person at:

*THURS., JUNE 8: IS REDBUD THE NEXT CRAPE MYRTLE by DR. DENNIS WERNER, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)*

## JOHN'S CORNER

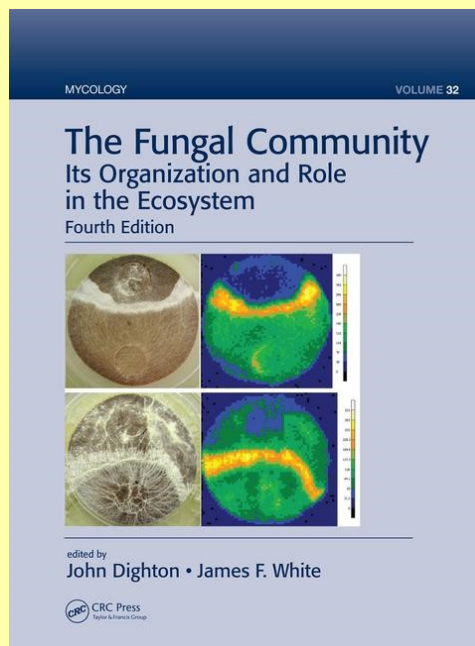


## BOOK REVIEW

The other day a customer stated that they had finished reading the new book "Teaming with Fungi" and were fascinated in how important fungi were as related to growing healthy plants. Hence, I was asked if there was a book where they could learn more. As it so happened, I recently finished reading a new and revised textbook on fungi that was far more detailed than I ever imagined a few weeks ago.

"The Fungal Community - Its Organization and Role in the Ecosystem", 4th Edition, John Dighton and James F. White, Editors, CRC Press, 2017, 597 pages, ISBN-13:978-1-4987-0665-0 (hardback)

This book is not for everyone but for professionals, serious gardeners, and students of the soil. It is 39 chapters each on a different aspect of fungi, the different species and what they do, how they grow, how they affect soil and plant growth. Having just been released this book is very up to date on all we know as a society about fungi and how important they are to our survival.



## NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

Since I am in the middle of a series on minerals, and what they do for soil, microbes, plants and animals, many readers might find this interesting.

There was an article in the April 1, 2017 issue of Science News on Climate Change and Nutrition from the Annual Review of Public Health in January and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Studies are showing that as the climate warms trace elements like selenium (Se), iron (Fe) and zinc (Zn) will not be held in the soil, and plants will absorb less of these minerals into our food supply. These nutrients are already deficient in most of the foods that are being grown worldwide and the deficiencies are predicted to get worse. Note: Soils with a high clay content and abundant organic matter do a better job of holding on to these nutrients.

Most plants use what is known as the "C<sub>4</sub>" pathway for carbon capture. Researchers looked at 41 species of cultivated crops and as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels rise nutrient absorption decreased. Over 2 billion people around the world are already zinc deficient and even a small change can drive hundreds of millions more people into deficiency.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014) reports that crop yields are also likely to decrease as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) increases.

A multi year study by the United Nations with dozens of scientists from all over the world has found that due to the reasons above, the declining nutrient density of our food, and many other reasons, the only way to feed our growing populations is to convert all of the world's agriculture to sustainable organic methods.

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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](mailto:lazygardener@sbcglobal.net)

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

SAT., JUN 3: PLUMERIA (FABULOUS FRAGRANT FANGIPANI) by GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER, 1-3 pm, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. GCMG event. Free. Pre-register: [galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com), 281-534-3413, [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html)

SAT. JUNE 3: TOMATO CONTEST, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Free. Entries: [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com)

MON., JUNE 5: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PRECINCT 2 OPEN GARDEN DAY 8:30 - 11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu)

TUES., JUNE 6: NABA - PHOTO DOCUMENTATION OF BUTTERFLY HOST PLANTS - YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT by DON DUBOIS, 7pm, Cockrell Butterfly Center, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Dr. Free. Butterfly Enthusiasts of Southeast Texas. [naba.org/chapters/nababest/](http://naba.org/chapters/nababest/)

THURS., JUNE 8: PROPOGATION & SEED SAVING, 6:30pm, Barbara Bush Memorial Library, 6817 Cypresswood Dr., Spring. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf) ; 281-855-5600

T HURS., JUNE 8: IS REDBUD THE NEXT CRAPE MYRTLE by DENNIS WERNER, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

THURS., JUNE 8: SOIL COMPOSITION + FERTILIZER + WATER = BEAUTIFUL ROSES by DR. DAVID REED,

7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillon, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston Rose Society event. Free. [houstonrose.org](http://houstonrose.org)

THURS., JUNE 8: BENEFICIAL INSECTS by DR. WILLIAM JOHNSON, 10am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Red Bluff Road. Free. Harris County Master Gardener Precinct 2 event. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu).

SAT., JUNE 10: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Bay Area Community Center 5002 E Nasa Pkwy, Seabrook. Free. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org); 281-438-3653

WED., JUNE 14: CARNIVOROUS PLANTS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., JUNE 15: PROPOGATION & SEED SAVING, 6:30pm, Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf); 281-855-5600

THURS., JUNE 15: "WATER U DOING HOUSTON?" - WATER CONSERVATION/HARVESTING & RAIN GARDEN by Daniel Cunningham, 6:45-8:30pm, Houston Arboretum, 4502 Woodway Dr. Free. Water University, Texas A&M AgriLife; Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston event. [npsot.org/houston](http://npsot.org/houston)

SAT., JUNE 17: PROPOGATION & SEED SAVING, 10am, Maud Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd. Katy. Free. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf); 281-855-5600

SAT., JUNE 17: FUN WITH FERNS, 10am-noon, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. \$40. Register: 713-274-4166.

MON., JUNE 19: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PRECINCT 2 OPEN GARDEN DAY 8:30 - 11am, Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu)

TUES., JUNE 20: PROPOGATION & SEED SAVING, 6:30pm, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale. Free Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. [hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf](http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/docs/2017-green-thumb.pdf); 281-855-5600

WED-THURS., JUNE 21-22: CULTIVATING THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WORKSHOP, 8am-3pm, Gregory Lincoln Education Center, 1101 Taft St. \$50. Urban Harvest event. 713-880-5540; [urbanharvest.org](http://urbanharvest.org)

SAT, JUNE 24, REPOT YOUR 'SPECIALTY PLANT' WORKSHOP by LINDA GAY, 10am. The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. Supplies fee. [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com)

TUES., JUNE 27, HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY & PROPOGATION & SEED SAVING SEMINAR, 9-11:30 am, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register: [ogd.harrishort@gmail.com](mailto:ogd.harrishort@gmail.com)

SAT, JULY 1: BUILD YOUR OWN SUCCULENT GARDEN OR REHAB YOUR CURRENT by LINDA GAY, 10am Supplies fee. The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com)

THURS., JULY 6: STROLLER STROLLS, 9-10am, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160

SAT. JULY 8, CREATE YOUR OWN JUNGLELOW, USING BEAUTIFUL TROPICAL PLANTS THAT CLEANSE YOUR INDOOR SPACE by LINDA GAY, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com)

SAT., JULY 8: ALL ABOUT GINGERS, 10-11am, Buchanan's Native Plants, 611 E 11th. Free. 713-861-5702; [buchanansplants.com/events](http://buchanansplants.com/events)

TUES., JULY 11: GROWING PLUMERIAS, 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org); 281-438-3653

THURS., JULY 13: A BRIGHT SPOT IN THE HEART OF TYLER by GREG GRANT, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

SAT. JULY 15: PATIO, PORCH AND POOL CONTAINER GARDENING by LINDA GAY, 10am, The Arbor Gate, 15635 FM 2920, Tomball. [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com)

SAT., JULY 22: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 TX-36, Rosenberg. Free. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org); 281-438-3653

THURS., AUG. 10: THE GREATER ATLANTA POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP: A MODEL OF URBAN POLLINATOR CONSERVATION by JENNY CRUSE SANDERS, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

THURS., SEPT. 14: FROM OVER THE TOP TO DOWN UNDER, ADVENTURES IN HORTICULTURE by GEORGE HULL, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

THURS., SEPT. 21-24: MASTER COMPOSTER TRAINING, Green Building Resource Center, 1002 Washington Ave. \$40. Green Building Resource Center. Register: 832-394-9050; [steve.stelzer@houstontx.gov](mailto:steve.stelzer@houstontx.gov); [codegreenhouston.org](http://codegreenhouston.org)

SAT., OCT. 7: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FALL PLANT SALE, Bear Creek Garden, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. 281-855-5600

TUES., OCT. 10: GROWING PLUMERIAS, 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event, [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org); 281-438-3653

THURS., OCT. 12: MOORE FARMS BOTANICAL GARDEN: A GERMINATING SUCCESS by REBECCA TURK, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 12-14: 2017 BULB & PLANT MART. Garden Club of Houston event.

THURS., NOV. 9: MAGNOLIAS: QUEEN OF THE GARDEN by ANDREW BUNTING, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

THURS., DEC. 14: THE YEAR IN REVIEW by DAVID CREECH, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St, Nacogdoches. 936-468-4404 or [sullivanfa@sfasu.edu](mailto:sullivanfa@sfasu.edu)

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## 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.



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