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NOVEMBER 20, 2017

Dear Friends,

Here is the 230th 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.

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Enjoy!

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HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR VEGGIE WINTER GARDEN? THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX & ONE LAST WORD ON FALL WINNER

"Creativity is intelligence having fun!" - - ALBERT EINSTEIN

By BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Most of the time, this column is aimed at experienced, knowledgeable or at least "really-want-to-know-more" lazy gardeners . . . we find these comprise the largest portion of our readership.

This column, however, is dedicated to those of you new to our area or new-to-gardening in this area.

The rest of the nation may be starting to tuck gardens away for the winter season. But here winter plantings are just getting -- or have already been -- started.

Nurseries are full of plants that will continue to bloom and/or produce almost-immediate edible harvests throughout our so-called winters.

True, sometimes we have deep cold spells. But they never last long enough for our soil to freeze. Heavy mulches and occasional covers will take care of most of our freezes. In truth, most are not nearly as hard on plants as our more frequent prolonged droughts and three-digit temperatures.

Serious Gardeners already have good stands started beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, lettuce, kale, kohlrabi, mustard and other greens, radishes, spinach, turnips and winter squash, to name just a few.

These need some cold, usually easily tolerate our fast freezes and become far less productive when temperatures start to rise in April.

With the exception of basil, most herbs are most productive here during the winter. And, if given a good winter start, many herbs will continue healthy and active longer, or even through, hot, dry summer months. Winter planting gives them a far stronger root system than if planted in March.

Ah, but there is a catch. The real key to success is selecting the right varieties for you specific area.

As always, two great places to turn for health and advice are:

- **URBAN HARVEST** - I don't have words enough to emphasize how helpful joining Urban Harvest would be for every Greater Houston area gardener. See for yourself at: urbanharvest.org
- **COUNTY AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICES/MASTER GARDENERS**

Master Gardener programs are usually free. More extensive courses workshops bring in the Big Guns from Texas A&M. Definitely a win-win opportunity for all gardeners, but especially those trying to understand our unique subtropical climate.

**Never been to your County AgriLife office or its Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens?
Check here: <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/contact/>**

Or . . . just browse through our calendar below.

Just don't be afraid to think outside the box when it comes to a winter vegetable/herb garden. It doesn't matter if you're growing on a balcony, a patio, a suburban landscape or big acreage. Too often the weather isn't that conducive to getting outside to weed, water, etc.

Maybe the solution is to bring the plants closer to your back door:



I just pulled these off the internet. Google "unique garden ideas," then click on Images. Just be sure to poke holes in the bottom of whatever you use to provide good drainage!

* * *

SPEAKING OF WINTER GARDEN DELIGHTS . . .

*** This just in. To me, camellias are the Grand Dames of winter gardens. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from local experts and buy plants they know will do well here:**

SAT.-SUN., DEC. 2-4: TEXAS CAMELLIA SHOW & SALE, 1-4pm, First Christian Church Gym, 3500 N. Loop 336 W., Conroe. Free. coushattacamelliasociety.com

*** Response to our recent discussions on Confederate roses has been a delight but not a surprise. ([Oct. 27](#) & [Nov. 6](#)). This has been the best fall display of these historic plants in a long, long time. Probably due to the severe shaking they received from Harvey.**

It's an ol' gardeners' trick: make a plant think it's going to die. Hopefully it will put out tons of flowers to produce seed to continue the genetic line. Ever heard of "switching okra"? Works on other plants too like fruit trees and roses.

[\(http://blog.chron.com/lazygardener/2009/09/no-blooms-try-beating-your-plant/\)](http://blog.chron.com/lazygardener/2009/09/no-blooms-try-beating-your-plant/)

But now for a mea culpa.

I mentioned a "variegated" Confederate rose. Senior moment, sorry! "Variegation" usually applies to foliage, not to blooms! I should have used the terms "double" (multiple petals) or "changeable flower colors". Locally-owned nurseries are the best place to find these for sale.



Some, but not all, Confederate roses (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) flowers bud out red, turn pink, and then white as they age, so you have all three colors on the bush at once. Some produce fascinating multiple petals and/or multi-color patterns.

Flower color changes are triggered by temperatures along with varying available light, soil pH, a change in soil micronutrients, to name just a few possibilities. Growers control some of these to create ever-newer and increasingly-exotic varieties. But other, more complex factors can overrule the best of efforts.

In the long run, Nature always bats last! Maybe the spectacular Confederate roses are Nature's sympathetic way of helping us cope with the devastation of Harvey.

We can but enjoy the wonder of it all. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

*Brenda's column in the **LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER** is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener. To sign up for this free, weekly Greater Houston area gardening report or to read past issues, go to [www.natureswayresources .com](http://www.natureswayresources.com).*

JOHN'S CORNER

Book Review: WHITE WASH - The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science

"WHITE WASH - The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science", by Carey Gillam, Island Press, 2017, ISBN-13: 978-1610918329

Carey is a veteran journalist, researcher, and writer with more than 25 years experience covering corporate America, food, and farming. She was a former senior correspondent for Reuter's International news service.

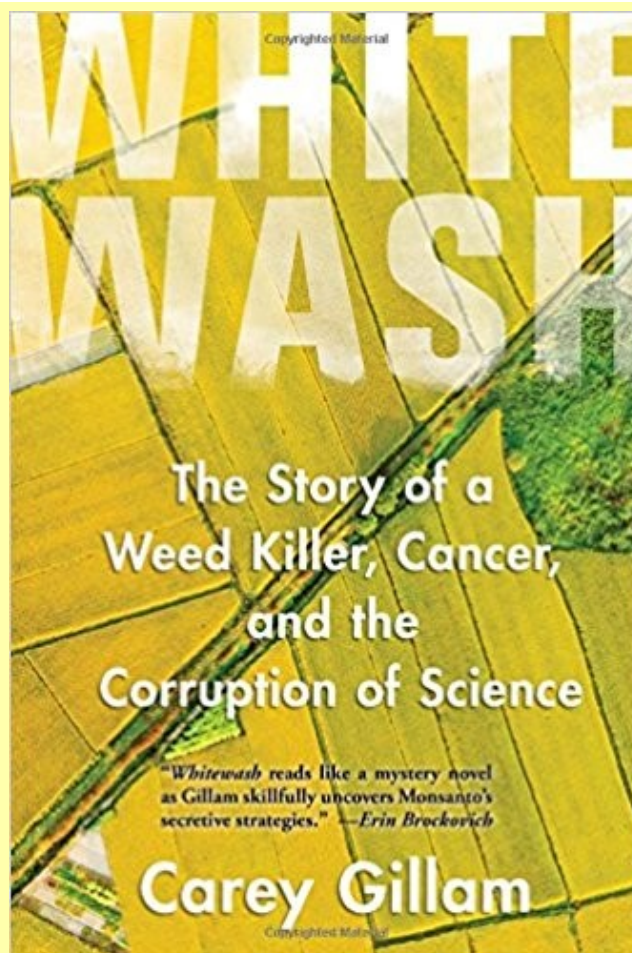
I am not even sure where to begin, as this book confirms many of the things I have learned over the last couple of decades on corruption in our government from the office of the President through the EPA, FDA, and USDA.

This book is about the politicians, government regulators, corporations, and many so-called scientists that are willing to sacrifice our children and families to many horrible health problems including cancer just so they can line their pockets with money. They worship the god of materialism or "mammon" and do not care who is hurt in the process.

This book is more like a mystery novel as Carey Gillam brilliantly uncovers the deception put on the people of the world by companies like Monsanto and the herbicide glyphosate. White Wash is a powerful expose that exposes the dangers of a very toxic chemical that is invisible and yet profoundly damages our bodies and the environment. This book is extremely well researched and documented. Carey's testimony to the European Parliament, lead them (unanimously) to recommend the ban of glyphosate products (Round-Up) in all of Europe.

As one of the testimonials on the cover stated, "This is a must read for anyone who wants the truth about what you may be putting in your body".

Note: Carey Gillam will be speaking in Houston in May 2018 at an OHBA (Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance) educational event.



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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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NO EVENTS ARE PICKED UP FROM NEWSLETTERS! SUBMIT WITH REQUEST FOR CALENDAR PUBLICATION

Events **NOT** submitted in **EXACT** written calendar format below may take 2+ weeks to be posted.

After that point, if your event does not appear, please email us. Adult gardening/plants events only

Submit to: 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!**

TUE., NOV. 21: BROMELIADS IN PASTELS by MARY CINOTTO AND JOHN EDMONSON, 7:30pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 W Gray. Free. Bromeliad Society / Houston event. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

WED., NOV. 29: SOIL FOOD WEB - HOW AND WHY ORGANIC METHODS WORK TO SAVE TIME & MONEY by JOHN FERGUSON. 6pm, McGovern Centennial Gardens, Hermann Park Conservancy, 1700 Hermann Drive. Daniel Millikin, 713-360-1469

SAT.-SUN., DEC. 2-4: TEXAS CAMELLIA SHOW & SALE, 1-4pm, First Christian Church Gym, 3500 N. Loop 336 W., Conroe. Free. coushattacamelliasociety.com

SAT. DEC 2: TURNING DIRT INTO SOIL by JIM GILLIAM, 1-3pm; AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

TUE., DEC 5: CITRUS SEMINAR & TASTING by MONTE NESBITT, 6:30pm; AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

FRI., DEC. 8: 'HOLLY JOLLY' LUNCHEON GALA. SPEAKER: BILL MCKINLEY. 9 am, White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine. Tickets \$30. Houston Federation of Garden clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

SAT., DEC 9: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEED by IRA GERVAIS, 9-11am; JOURNEY OF TWO FRUGAL MASTER GARDENERS: IN THE BEGINNING - PROPAGATION by NANCY LANGSTO & BRENDA SLOUGH, 1-3pm; AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SAT., DEC. 9: CITRUS TASTING, 9am-noon, AgriLife Extension office, 21017 CR 171 Angleton. Free. Brazoria County Master Gardener event. txmg.org/brazoria; 979-864-1558; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazoria.

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

THURS., JAN. 4: BEGINNINGS OF ENCHANTED GARDENS & THE LENDERMAN FAMILY by DENISE LOPEZ, 10 am, MUD Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr, Katy. Free, Nottingham Country Garden Club event. ncgctx.org

FRI., JAN. 12: A CAMELIA COLLECTION - RESTORING IMA HOGG'S CAMELIA COLLECTION AT BAYOU BEND by BART BRECHTER. 10 am. White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine, Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

SUN., JAN. 28: AVOID STARVATION: DEVELOPING THE RIGHT FEEDING PROGRAM FOR PLANTS AND FACTORS THAT MAKE FERTILIZERS INEFFECTIVE by GAYE HAMMOND, 2-3pm. Klein United Methodist Church, Christian Life Center, 5920 FM 2920, Spring. Free. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com

FEB 17, 2018: SPRING PLANT SALE PRE-SALE PRESENTATION, 8-8:50am; SPRING PLANT SALE, 9am-1 pm, Location: Galveston County Fairgrounds, Jack Brooks Park-Rodeo Arena, Hwy 6 and Jack Brooks Rd, Hitchcock. 281-309-5065.

SUN., FEB. 25: DAYLILY BLOOM DESCRIPTION by JEANNIE MALLICK, 2pm-3pm. Klein United Methodist Church, Christian Life Center, Room #C112, 5920 FM 2920, Spring, TX 77388. Free. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. www.cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com

MON., FEB. 26: SOIL FOOD WEB & COMPOST AND MULCHES, 9am-noon, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Texas Gulf Coast Gardener program. Register: Jennifer L. Garrison, 713-274-4160

FRI., MAR.9: THOSE ADDORABLE HUMMERS by SUE HEATH. 10 am. White Oak Convention Center., 7603 Antoine. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SUN., MAR. 25: STEWARDSHIP OF THE SOIL by JOHN FERGUSON, 6pm, Sunday Evening Conversations on Creation Webinar, Lisa Brenskelle, brenskelle@aol.com

SUN., MAR. 25: HIBISCUS CARE by MARTI GRAVES, 2pm-3pm. Klein United Methodist Church, Christian Life Center, Room #C112, 5920 FM 2920, Spring, TX 77388. Free. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. www.cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com

FRI., APRIL 13: THE WORLD OF SEED by ANGELA CHANDLER. 10am., White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine, Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

MON., MAY 14: INTRODUCTION TO THE SOIL FOOD WEB by JOHN FERGUSON, 6:30pm, University of Houston at Clear Lake, Forest Room on East of Bayou Building. Native Plant Society of Texas at Clear Lake Martha Richeson, 713-962-7747

FRI. MAY 11: HONEY BEES - JAMES AND CHARI OF BLUEBONNET BEEKEEPERS. 10am. White Oak Convention Center, 7603 Antoine. Free. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

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

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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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