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March 22, 2018

Dear Friends,

Here is the 244th 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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LINDA GAY TO THE RESCUE OF CRAPE MYRTLES!

"I am officially forming an advocacy group for plant's rights. They can't speak, so I'm going to speak for them. My first mission...to stop Crape Murder!"

-- Greg Grant, Piney Woods Native Plant Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches
aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/stopthecrape.html

"Crape murder may never end, but that doesn't mean we have to accept it. That's why I'm once again asking you to report and shame the perpetrators of this heinous crime before the entire universe. When you spot a crape myrtle that has been savagely chopped into a grotesque monster, surreptitiously take a photo of it with your phone. Email the photo - together with your name and the town and state where you took the photo to me at facebook.com/slgrumpygardener. Let everybody see."

-- Steve Bender, Southern Living Magazine's Grumpy Gardener
southernliving.com/garden/grumpy-gardener/crape-murder-contest-2018

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

I KNOW MOST OF YOU HAVE NOW HEARD ABOUT "CRAPE MURDER"

and increasingly around town a small dent is being made in stopping this insidious torment of one of our most beautiful trees. But as always \$\$\$ rules. A lot of people are making a lot of \$\$\$ by severely "topping" these elegant, sculptural trees and spreading the erroneous word that this is actually a helpful, necessary practice. It is NOT, in either case.

Linda Gay is one of so many well-respected horticulturists decrying this practice and does so with such authority and true expertise, I'm simply turning my column over to her.

First tho, do have to let Don DuBois, one of the Mercer Botanic Gardens contributors, make one correction to his contributions to last week's Spotlight Article on the Flood Survivors which will be for sale at March Mart: *"The butterfly that uses the Frogfruit as a host plant is the Phaon Crescent, not the Texan Crescent. My apologies to you and your readers, some of whom will likely point out my error."* Actually, Don, no one has as yet, so let's cut them off at the pass!

Back to Linda Gay and crapes. Linda, longtime-now-former Director of Mercer Botanic Gardens, joined Houston's living library staff in 1985 and served as Director for her last for 11 years. Now semi-retired from numerous other horticultural leadership area posts, Linda periodically leads classes at The Arbor Gate in Tomball. Her continuing campaign to stop "Crape Murder" has lit up the pages of Facebook recently, and I asked her to share with our readers:





L to r, Linda Gay, correctly-pruned tree crape myrtles and 'Natchez' crape's gorgeous exfoliating trunk

IF YOU CAN'T STOP COMMITTING "CMurder" AT LEAST JUST STOP PLANTING CRAPE MYRTLES

by LINDA GAY
HORTICULTURIST & GARDENER

The way crape myrtles look in February and March is a travesty (a distorted representation of a tree) and a tragedy (an event causing great suffering destruction and distress). The way trees get brutally whacked and chopped by loppers and saws, **it would be better if we just stopped planting them!**



Tree crapes don't normally need pruning at all. Lopping them across the top, left, results in weak branch sprouts that can't support the new growth, resulting in problems later in the summer

HOW DID CRAPE MURDER GET STARTED? It was said removing seed heads in winter improved blooming. But it was so time consuming to snip so many tips, it was easier to just whack the whole thing back.

If your crapes are too tall, pull them out and plant shorter varieties. Tree crape myrtles rarely or never need pruning. Tree crape myrtles grow tall - 20-40.'

Crapes have been lovingly referred to as the Lilac of the South -- no fragrance but a very long summer bloom time, with wonderful exfoliating bark in late spring/early summer. As a kid, I loved to peel off the trunk to reveal a beautiful, velvety, cinnamon colored trunk. Leaves provide great fall color from yellow to orange to red if weather cooperates.

So here we have a plant that give us an exceptionally long summer bloom period, great fall foliage (not many trees do that here) and a beautiful sculptured trunk **when allowed to grow naturally.**

Two types of crape are frequently planted:

- ***Lagerstroemia indica*** - small round leaves. Terribly susceptible to powdery mildew, a white powder that causes distorted leaves in spring and fall.
- ***Lagerstroemia hybrid*** (*indica* x *fauriei*). These National Arboretum hybrids are totally resistant to powdery mildew. They're often called Indian Tribe Hybrids. These are the result of Dr. Donald Egolf's research project started in 1959. The hybrid crape is easily distinguished from (*L. indica*) by its larger rectangle leaves, larger flowers and flower clusters and total resistance to powdery mildew

Familiar National Arboretum hybrids include:

- Muskogee - to 30' - light lavender - red orange fall color
- Tuscarora - to 20' - dark coral pink - red orange fall color
- Natchez - to 30' - white - cinnamon colored trunk - yellow to red to orange fall color
- Arapaho - 20-30' - true red - maroon tinged leaves
- Fantasy - 25-40' - white, fragrance emits a sweet nectar for bees, cinnamon trunk



L to r: 'Muskogee,' 'Tuscarora,' 'Natchez,' 'Arapaho.' and 'Fantasy'

If you do not have space for a 20'-30' tree, try a shrub or dwarf variety. Great ones include:

- Chickasaw - 1-3' shrub - light lavender pink
- Chica - 2-4' shrub - deep red
- Pokomoke - 3-5' shrub - deep rose pink
- Hopi - 5-10' large shrub - clear light pink
- Dynamite - 6-8' dense shrub - true red
- Acoma - 6-10' - white- semi- dwarf weeping habit
- Catawba - 8-10' - violet purple - dense shrub



*L to r above: 'Chickasaw,' 'Chica' and 'Pokomoke.'
Below: 'Hopi,' 'Dynamite,' 'Acoma' and 'Catawba'*



CRAPE MYRTLE TIPS:

1. Do not plant tall varieties in flower beds next to the house. Use tree crapes in the middle of the yard to provide summer shade on the west side of the house.
2. Crape Myrtles are either single trunk or multi-trunked. It can take a long time to turn a multi trunk into a single trunk, so purchase single trunk to begin with if that is what you need.
3. Plant ONLY hybrids with the large leaves to avoid powdery mildew in the spring and fall.
4. Crape Myrtles need at least 6 hours of DIRECT SUN for good, long summer bloom.
5. Watch for Crape Myrtle Asian Bark Scale, it turns the trunks completely black and must be treated systemically and topically. Severe pruning seems to attract these sucking insects.
6. Prune ONLY when trees are young to shape the tree by removing crossing and rubbing branches and dead wood.



Correctly pruned crape myrtles

If you have trees that have been chopped down to shoulder or waist height, remove it for it will never be beautiful again.

YOU be the teacher! Help educate those holding the chain saws and pruners to stop the horrible disfiguring of our beautiful sculptured trees.

And remember, NO pruning is necessary if the trees have never been pruned.

Have a great spring!!

* * *

Note: You can contact Linda at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net. I'll be glad to forward emails to her.

* * *

JOHN'S CORNER

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS #40

A paper in the journal, Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences, has found an unexpected role of large scale fires (grasslands or forest) whether man-made slash and burn or from lightning. The organic nitrogen from those fires is swept up into the atmosphere and then deposited on forests. In nature everything is recycled and not wasted.

Another mystery of nature is how some plants trap and eat insects. Research at North Carolina State has found that Venus Fly traps are pollinated by certain insect species and the Venus fly trap does not trap and eat these pollinators. How the plant distinguishes pollinators from dinner is unknown.

The United States Presidents Cancer Panel (USPCP) has found that of the over 80,000 chemicals in use only a couple hundred have ever been tested for safety. "Their 2010 report written by scientists and medical specialists in the field clearly states that environmental toxins, including pesticides, are the main causes of cancers". This report was published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute of Health, and the National Cancer Institute. I find it amazing that these independent groups find the chemicals toxic but the EPA, USDA, and FDA whom are run by presidential appointees from the companies that manufacture these dangerous chemicals find them safe.

A growing practice (pardon the pun) is using wastewater for irrigation of plants. A study published in the Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology and Food Technology showed that irrigating agricultural fields with waste water, may result in the hazardous build up of heavy metals (copper, lead, zinc, nickel, chromium and cadmium). The pesticides, agrochemical and chemical fertilizers are also known to be major sources of heavy metals. Comment: It amazes me that so many companies and government regulators think our food supply is a great place to get rid of toxic chemicals. The reasons to grow as much as possible of one's own food organically continues to increase.

A paper in Nature Ecology & Evolution found that weed resistance to herbicides is increasing faster than new more toxic products can keep up. These super weeds are reducing crop yields and lowering profits for farmers. The toxic chemistry rescue methods have failed miserably from agriculture to our back yards. It is time for people to wake up and only use the modern methods based on soil biology that we call "Organic". These modern methods give better results, at lower cost and do not have negative health and environmental consequences.

A few weeks ago the Dr. Mercola e-newsletter had a good article on the microbes in our guts and our immune system. When our microbiome falls out of balance or loses its diversity, it can impact many of the processes in our bodies and place one at risk for chronic disease. The result is we get sick and have major health problems. The biggest risk factors are antibiotics, heart burn pills, fluoridated and chlorinated water, processed and refined sugar, processed and refined foods, bioengineered foods like GMO's and agricultural chemicals, NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), stress, and pollution. The book "The Hidden Half of Nature - The microbial Roots of Life and Health", by David Montgomery and Anne Bikle explore the link between the soil microbiome and the human microbiome. David and Anne will be speaking at the OHBA educational event March 21 at the United Way on regenerative agriculture - healing the soil & human microbiome.

The organization, "The Truth About Cancer" had a recent paper on the element Iodine (I). Iodine deficiency has reached epidemic proportions worldwide over the last 20 years. The World Health Organization (WHO) now estimates that *two billion* people are now iodine deficient. The propaganda of our officials is "The issues of physical and intellectual development have been virtually eliminated through the iodization of salt". Several factors prevent this from being a true statement. First the RDA that was set in the 1940's was only enough to prevent goiters, not to maximize health. The amount of iodine in Americans' urine between the decade of the 1970's and the decade of the 1980's dropped by 50%.

Several things have happened since then. Health conscious individuals began avoiding commercial sources of salt because of the toxins used to make it. Today's table salt has harmful halides in it such as fluoride sodium bicarbonate added to it. Toxic chemicals like fluoride, chlorine, bromide and others prevent the body from absorbing iodine! If you remember from our study of the elements last year these halides are in the same chemical category as iodine and can replace it. Bread manufacturers have replaced iodine with bromide as a dough softener. Fluoride, chlorine and bromide are found in swimming pools that we expose our skin to. Another chemical called perchlorate that contains chlorine is now found in many products, and of course chlorine and fluorine is in our public water systems. A few symptoms of low levels of iodine are: swelling or soreness in the throat, weight gain, fatigue, muscle soreness, brain fog, mood disorders like depression or anxiety, hair loss, dry skin, several types of cancers, etc. The above coupled with a lack of iodine in our food supply from growing on nutrient depleted poor soils are a few of the reasons. Foods high in iodine include seafood, kelp, cranberries, strawberries, and green leafy vegetables. This is why more and more gardeners are growing their own organic vegetables on soils that have had trace minerals added to them so their plants can absorb them. Good sources of trace minerals are greensand, basalt sand, and granite sand that can be added to any soil to increase its fertility. Other products from the ocean like fish emulsion and seaweed products can also provide some iodine for the soil. The Microlife line of organic products includes Ocean Harvest (fish emulsion) and Super Seaweed that are both great products that I use personally.

A study published in the journal Food Science & Nutrition confirms other studies that have shown that dairy products (milk, cheese, butter) from grass fed beef are of much higher quality than products from feedlots where the cows were fed grain and GMO contaminated feed. They found the organic milk was perfectly balanced between Omega 3's and Omega 6 fatty acids. The organic milk from grass fed cows also had a lot more CLA (conjugated linoleic acid) which helps protect our brains from

dementia. While raw milk has the most of these good fats, the pasteurization process required by the USDA destroys a lot of the benefits.

Another article in Dr. Mercola's newsletter mentions the "farm effect" where children raised on a farm have less allergies than those who were not. European children whom consume raw milk have stronger immune systems with more "T" cells which help with allergies and asthma. The Amish which regularly drink raw milk, are among the least allergic populations in the world.

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE READ BEFORE

SUBMITTING AN EVENT TO THIS CALENDAR.

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

DO NOT CREATE LINKS IN YOUR SUBMISSION!!! WE WILL DO THAT.

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., MAR. 24: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER HERB, PERENNIAL & PEPPER SALE, 9am-1pm, free program: 8am, Campbell Hall, Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7600 Red Bluff Rd, Pasadena. Genoa Friendship Gardens event. hcmga.tamu.edu/public/pubSales.aspx

SAT. MAR 24: BENEFICIALS IN THE GARDEN by DR. WILLIAM M. JOHNSON, 1-3pm, AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com , 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SAT., MAR 24: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232; eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org

SAT., MARCH 24: MEMORIAL NORTHWEST LADYBUGS GARDEN CLUB ANNUAL PLANT AND TREE SALE, 9am-2pm, Memorial Northwest Community Center, 17440 Theiss Mail Route Road, Spring, mnwhoa.org.

SAT. MAR. 24: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER SPRING PLANT SALE, Program 8am, sale 9am-noon, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. 936-539-7824; www.mcmga.com

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

SAT., MAR. 24: GARDEN VILLAS GARDEN CLUB ANNUAL PLANT & GARDEN ACCESSORIES SALE, 9am-1pm, Community Center, 6720 S. Haywood. Free. bburns50@aol.com; 713-545-2926

SAT., MAR. 24: CYPRESS CREEK DAYLILY CLUB SPRING PLANT SALE, 9:30am-3pm. Klein United Methodist Church, 5920 FM 2920, Spring, Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.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

WED., MAR. 28: NATURE'S WAY RESOURCES HORTICULTURAL TOUR, 10:15am-4:30pm, Senior Adult Botanic Bus Trip, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. \$1. Register: 713-274-4160

WED., MARCH 28: "PRACTICUM ON RAISING SUCCULENT PLANTS" by JOSIE WATTS, Houston Cactus & Succulent Society, 7:30pm, Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. Free. hcsstx.org.

THURS., APR. 5: HISTORY OF MERCER ARBORETUM by JACOB MARTIN, 10 am, MUD Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr, Katy. Free, Nottingham Country Garden Club event. ncgctx.org

FRI., APR. 6: SOILS by JOHN FERGUSON, Liberty Garden Club, Ellen Gossett, (409) 350-1109

SAT., APR. 7.: WHITE OAK GARDEN SPRING PLANT SALE, 10am-2pm (or sell-out); SALE PREVIEW by HEIDI SHEESLEY, 9am, White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr. Free. nnmd.org

SAT., APR 7: SPRINGTIME ACROSS THE CREEK AT PECKERWOOD GARDEN, 10am, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$15. Register: eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org; peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232

THURS., APR. 12: SAVE THAT ROSE FOR NEXT WEEK by Diane Sommers 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillon, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston Rose Society event. Free. houstonrose.org

THURS., APR. 12: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SATELLITE OPEN GARDEN and DAY COYOTES IN OUR AREA by Jason Naivar, 10-11:30am, Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Center Building, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Road. Free

THURS., APR. 12: BEGONIAS; PROPAGATING & POTTING by CHERYL LENERT. 10am-1pm. Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet @Hillcroft. Free. Houston Area Daylily Society. Event 281-723-7409

SAT., APRIL 14: COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER SPRING PLANT SALE, 8:30am-noon, & GARDEN FESTIVAL, 8:30-4pm, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive. hmns.org, 713-639-4742.

SUN., APR. 22: DEADLINE TO REGISTER for APR. 28 35TH ANNUAL HERBS, HIVES & HONEY HERB DAY, 8:45am-3pm. \$50. Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit event. Register: herbsociety-stu.org.

SUN., APR. 22: DEADLINE TO REGISTER for APR. 28 35TH ANNUAL HERBS, HIVES & HONEY HERB DAY, 8:45am-3pm. \$50. Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit event. Register: herbsociety-stu.org.

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

SAT., APR 14: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232; eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org

SAT., APR. 14: BROMELIAD SALE, 9am-3 pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 W Gray. Free. Bromeliad Society / Houston event. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

SAT., APR. 14: BRAZORIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER SPRING PLANT SALE, 8am-noon, B.E.E.S. 799 Hospital Drive Angleton. txmg.org/brazoria, 979-864-1558

SAT., APR. 21: HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY ANNUAL SPRING SHOW, Noon-4pm, Memorial City Mall, 303 Memorial City Way. Houston Rose Society event. Free. houstonrose.org

SAT., APR 21: PECKERWOOD GARDEN, 7pm, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. Register: eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org. peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232

SAT., APR. 21: ARMAND BAYOU NATURE CENTER PARTY FOR THE PLANET, 8500 Bay Area Blvd., Pasadena. Register: abnc@abnc.org; 281-474-2551

SAT., APR. 21: EDIBLE LANDSCAPES, 9:30-11:30am, Houston Museum of Natural Science. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

WED., APR. 25: PECKERWOOD GARDENS TOUR, 8:15am - 4:30pm, Senior Adult Botanic Bus Trip, Mercer Botanic Gardens,

22306 Aldine-Westfield. \$1. Register: 713-274-4160

FRI., APRIL 27: INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY FESTIVAL KICK-OFF LUNCHEON, 11:30am-1pm; Hotel Galvez, Galveston. \$35. Register islandtime8@gmail.com

SAT., APRIL 28: OLEANDER FESTIVAL & GRAND OLEANDER SALE, 10am-4pm, Moody Mansion grounds, 2618 Broadway, Galveston. Free. Lydia Miller 409-770-4312 lmiller4511@att.net.

SAT., APR 28: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232; eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org

SAT. APR 28: GROWING CUCUMBERS, SUMMER SQUASH, CANTALOUPE & OTHER CUCURBITS by HERMAN AUER, 9-10:30 am; Galveston County Bayside Community Center, 4833 10th St., Bayside Park, Bacliff. Master Gardener event. Free. Register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065. aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

TUES., MAY 8: PLUMERIAS!, 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, Hermann Park Conservancy, 1500 Hermann Dr. Plumeria Society of America event. Free.

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. houstonfederationgardencclubs.org

SAT., MAY 12: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING, 9:30am-11:30am, Houston Museum of Natural Science. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

SAT., MAY 19: STARTING A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL GARDEN WORKSHOP, 8:30am-2:30pm, University of St. Thomas. \$20. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

SAT., JUNE 9: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Bay Area Community Center, 5002 Nasa Road One, Seabrook. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

SAT., JUNE 9: LOW VOLUME IRRIGATION (HMNS), 9:30-11:30am, Houston Museum of Natural Science. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

TUES., JULY 10: PLUMERIAS!, 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, Hermann Park Conservancy, 1500 Hermann Dr. Plumeria Society of America event. Free.

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

THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
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IF WE INSPIRE YOU TO ATTEND ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE TELL SPONSORS 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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