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June 22nd, 2018

Dear Friends,

Here is the 255th 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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THINKING OUTSIDE THE "CUTTING" BOX ... GREAT RESOURCES ... TIP O' TROWEL TO OLEANDERS!

Who knows if and when Fukushima or Tokyo or any other place in the World one day need Oleander flower blooming just like Hiroshima and Galveston."

-- June Makino

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

I was delighted with reader responses with plants recommended for Becky to try in her "cutting garden" [May 31 newsletter](#). First, however, Marilyn R. in Conroe was a bit confused. "Why," she wondered, "would anyone need a separate garden for flowers to cut and bring inside? Why not just plant these in your regular gardens?"

Since we really didn't cover this in the May 31 article: some reasons for wanting good source of flowers that remain pretty long after being cut are quite varied.

- Cutting gardens have a certain *panaché*. They long have been *de rigueur* in landscapes of the rich and famous, almost from time immemorial, actually.
- Having your own year-round bloom supply for arrangements and/or gifts is certainly less expensive than purchased flowers.
- Retail blooming plants supplies are often limited and seasonal. With seed you can be assured of varieties you like best. The only caveat here is to ALWAYS check planting advice against a local source. Sometimes our subtropical pocket's planting times differ from what you'll see on the seed packet
- Cutting gardens are generally easier to maintain than landscape gardens, a side benefit of the usual planting style (see below). You don't have to worry so much about appearances.
- You're planting for flower production, not an overall lovely vista.
 - Flowers tend to be sown very close together which usually results in taller stems.
 - Bare spots are common when a particular bloom is "just what you want to use a lot."



Left, from a website for [church flower cutting gardens](#). Right, oh-so-difficult soil strips between walls & driveways are ideal for fun random seed plantings

But there's no reason why you can't combine the two. After all, it's YOUR landscape (within HOA dictates, of course, in some neighborhoods). So see if any of these tips also help with your regular gardens.

So, what flowers have readers recommended for Becky's cutting garden?

- **SUSAN SPEER** gardens primarily for flowers to cut.
 - **Indian Summer Rudbeckia**, a perennial, is her favorite. This year she also started more from seed but they aren't yet ready for picking.
 - **Purple coneflowers** come back with a vengeance, she says, and she loves cutting crape myrtle blooms as well.
 - Susan shared a warning that several years ago she divided her bird of paradise plants and they haven't bloomed since. This is probably because this plant likes to be rootbound, the stronger and tighter the root system is, the thicker the upper growth, the more it happily blooms.



L to r, 'Indian Summer' rudbeckia, purple coneflowers and bird of paradise

- **NANCY STUCKY** saves seed every year to ensure she'll have plenty more **larkspur**, **poppies (Pom Pom variety)** and **snapdragons** for cutting. Hers are planted in regular gardens and they return so successfully, they (and her roses) earned her Shenandoah Yard of the Month honors.



L to r, larkspur, pom pom poppies and snapdragons (all spring bloomers for us)

- **MARILYN O'CONNOR** reminds us not to overlook flowers produced by edibles. Her favorite gifts are "edible bouquets" delivered in glass Coke bottles. "So fun and it makes people smile!" she notes. Great for salads too.



L to r, Marilyn's edible cut flowers: flowering Italian oregano in back, society garlic flowers in middle with "Grandma's" yellow rose.

- **ANN J.** loves cut sunflowers. She buys packets of as many varieties as she can find. Oddly enough, she says some do better in some years; others in other years. Every year brings different results. She has a neat full sun spot between the garage and back fence, so the tall stalks can do their own thing and no one cares when they get pretty ragged looking.
- **DONNA YANOWSKI's** favorite cutting flowers are zinnias. She saves faded flowers in paper sacks to let them dry completely. At the end of summer, she pulls off the petals and saves seeds to plant around March. Usually they do come up pretty crowded and just lets them fight it out. Those she has tried to transplant do best when she keeps the dug seedlings in the shade for a few days.

* * *

IMPORTANT GARDENING/ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

- If you use a link to direct your members/readers to the LG&F newsletter, please update to this link <http://www.natureswayresources.com/lgarchive.html>. Thanks for helping to share our newsletter. We're thrilled when more gardeners see the newsletter for the first time. If they'd like immediate delivery, they can have it emailed directly to them by clicking the link at the top of the newsletter.
- Aimed at, and maintained for, club program chairmen. Both free: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net
 - **THE LAZY GARDENER'S SPEAKERS LIST** - maintained for club speakers/program chairmen. Always happy to add recommended speakers.
 - **PUBLICITY GUIDE** for club events. Tips & includes contacts for area plant societies, etc.
- **CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION HOUSTON ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS UPDATE.** Jam-packed, free, e-newsletter; a must for every Greater Houston Area citizen. [Most current issue.](#)

* * *



*Sophia Brandtner watercolor of the "Kewpie" oleander**

TIP O' TROWEL! GALVESTON'S OLEANDER Galveston's home base for the International Oleander Society (IOS) and has long been 'Mecca' for oleander enthusiasts worldwide -- a good description for the oleander's vast habitat now. Now Galveston's added additional kudos. Many of the isle's best known varieties are the basis for a new "American Collection" at the Oleander Haus in southeastern Austria. Included are varieties donated by Isle oleander specialists James Nicholas and Durell Nelson, as well as new varieties hybridized by [Galveston native] Bob Newding.

Since variety names are important to so many of our more discriminating readers, among those with local roots in the international spotlight include Hardy Pink (Pink Beauty), Hardy Red, Harriet Newding, Mrs. Roeding, Petite Red (Little Red), Petite Salmon, Sealy Pink (East End Pink), Turner's Carnival, Martha Hanna Hensley, Professor Parlatore, Sorrento, Turner's Shari D, Turner's Trey Boy, Charles Newding, Firewalker, Robert Newding Agnes Campbell, Calypso, Casablanca, Ed Barr, Hawai'i (from Carolyn's back yard!), Kewpie, Mrs. Dyer, Pleasants Postoffice Pink, Turner's Tickled Pink.



Oleanders now in Austrian spotlight:: Martha Hanna Hensley, Sorrento, Firewalker, Calypso, Kewpie and Pleasants Postoffice Pink

In sharing this news with us, James Nicholas, who helped host a 2015 Oleander Haus visiting entourage, triggered an important memory. The quote below was in one of many letters send from serious oleander enthusiasts across the globe to the IOS, during a period of accolades highlighted by numerous gift presentations, including this beautiful Sophia Brandtner watercolor of the "Kewpie" oleander* (named for Kewpie Gaido. -- *My 'Kewpie Gaido' oleander was lost in Ike.*)

June Makino (then from Japan) reminded in her letter that the oleander was . . .

"...the first flower that grew in Hiroshima after the tragical nuclear bombs must have given the first courage to survive for people as well as in Galveston. This miracle flower brings us one of the most important message from God! Who knows if and when Fukushima or Tokyo or any other place in the World one day need Oleander flower blooming just like Hiroshima and Galveston."

Certainly gives one pause, doesn't it?

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 read past issues, go to natureswayresources.com

* * *

JOHN'S CORNER

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS #49

Last week we mentioned studies that have shown fluoride in our water systems is hurting the intelligence of our children. A report in Natural News titled "Pesticides Making America STUPID: Agricultural chemicals found to lower the IQ of children". Three different studies recently released, all reached the same conclusion that exposure to pesticides can have a significant long-term adverse effect on a child's brain. Exposure may come from the food we eat or products in our home to control roaches. These exposures lowers a child's IQ by up to 7 points. For example, the organophosphate family of pesticides are neurotoxins. In 2007 there were 33 million pounds of organophosphate pesticides applied in the USA. These pesticides were originally developed to be nerve agents hence it is no surprise that they have an effect on the brain.

Green roofs and green walls are becoming common place all over the world from the money saved by their usage to the environmental benefits to society. Mexico City with its 24 million inhabitants has one of the worst air pollution problems in the world. This 2 minute video shows how Mexico City is using a variation of green walls on their highways to help clean up the air.

<https://www.facebook.com/WeNeedThisbyattn/videos/214985299003343/>

A study of 13,000 soil samples across 20 European countries have found trees are dying or getting sick from malnutrition. This 10 year study led by the Imperial College of London and The Royal Botanic Garden published in the journal Nature (2018), has found that air pollution is killing beneficial fungi that are required for the tree to absorb nutrients. This has left forest vulnerable to pests, diseases, and stress from climate change. They also found in some plant/soil communities that there was an increase in parasitic fungi whom tolerate the pollution better.

Most people love our pets especially our dogs. Dogs are great pets and are used

for protection, sniffing out drugs or explosives, and other services. Studies in the journals, American Society of Horticultural Science and HortScience has found dogs are useful in sniffing our disease in plants long before symptoms appear. For example, they have been used to detect laurel wilt in affected avocado trees. Dogs can smell scents as little as 1-2 parts per trillion!

The Technical University of Munich has developed a biodegradable agent that keeps pests at bay without using poisons. They were inspired by the tobacco plant which produces the chemical cembratrienol in its leaves which protects itself from insect pests. They have developed bacteria to produce this chemical and when they are sprayed onto the leaves it repels insect pests, similarly to a mosquito repellent we use on us. (Science Daily, June, 2018)

The USDA's new proposed budget is \$20.4 billion however only \$35 million is spent on sustainable agricultural research and education (SARE). This is less than 0.17% of its entire budget. Acres USA, June 2018. However, the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) has recommended increased funding from \$20 million to \$40 million. Improvement, but still only a drop in the bucket compared to what toxic

chemical methods that are killing us receives.

EWG's (Environmental Working Group) 2018 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce™ is now available. Go to the website and enter your email address to get a downloadable version of the Clean Fifteen™ and Dirty Dozen™ lists to help you make better choices for yourself and your family, and reduce exposures to toxic pesticides. You'll also receive EWG's exclusive email updates, tips, action alerts and promotions to support our work. <https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/>

The company Mycorrhizal Applications has a new website with an expanded "how it works section" to help users understand the science of mycorrhizal fungi and how they help plants grow. <https://mycorrhizae.com/>

The New York Academy of Medicine and The American Farmland Trust released a new study on economics and the health of college students. They found if the

State University of New York (SUNY) were to allocate 25% of its food budget toward locally grown and minimally processed foods it would create \$54 million of economic activity in New York. The side benefit is the students would receive healthier and better tasting food. <https://www.farmland.org/press-releases/new-report-finds-significant-opportunity-for-suny-to-grow-support-for-local-farms-and-health-of-college-students>

A recent paper in Natural News titled "These foods KILL cancer cells better than chemotherapy" listed the following: green tea, ginger, turmeric (curcumin), and grapes. The website GreenMedInfo has compiled a list of 25 such foods. Organically grown foods always work best since they do not have cancer causing chemicals in and on them.

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**DON'T SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION EVENT LISTED? DID YOU SEND IT IN?
NO EVENTS ARE PICKED UP FROM OTHER NEWSLETTERS, MASS RELEASES, OTHER PUBLICATIONS, ETC.**

**Events *NOT* submitted in *EXACT* written calendar format below may take 2+ weeks to be posted.
Adult gardening/plants events only -- If you don't see your submitted event, email us**

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**

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

WED., JULY 11: PUTTING WETLANDS TO WORK IN YOUR HOMETOWN, noon - 2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens West Side Arboretum Pavilion, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., July 12: HUGELKULTUR GARDENING by MARY KARISH, 9-10 am; Waller County Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead 77445. Waller County Master Gardener event. Free. RSVP wallermgardener2013@gmail.com, 979-826-7651 X 3068

THURS., JULY 12: BEGONIAS by Tony Collins & Plant Sale, 10-11:30am, Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Center Building, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Pasadena. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JULY 12: RAISED BEDS, DRIP IRRIGATION & RAIN BARRELS, 6:30-8:30pm, Barbara Bush Library, 6817 Cypresswood Dr., Spring. Harris County Master Gardener event Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JULY 12: HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND SUMMER CELEBRATION 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillon, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. houstonrose.org

SAT., JULY 14: WATER & YOUR YARD-BASICS, 8-10am, & WATER & YOUR YARD-ADVANCED, 10:30am-12:30pm, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd. Conroe. \$5/session; \$8 both. Montgomery County Master Gardener event. 936-539-7824; mcmga.com

SAT. JULY 14: IRISES FOR THE GULF COAST GARDEN by MONICA MARTENS, 1-3pm, AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Free., Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065. aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

MON., JULY 16: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE, 9-11am, Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Center Building, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Pasadena. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., JULY 17: A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WEED CONTROL, 6:30-8pm; AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Free., Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065. aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

TUES., JULY 17: RAISED BEDS, DRIP IRRIGATION & RAIN BARRELS, 6:30-8:30pm, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale, Houston. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JULY 19: RAISED BEDS, DRIP IRRIGATION & RAIN BARRELS, 6:30-8:30pm, Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane, Houston. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., JULY 21: MONARCHS ON THE MOVE, 10am-noon, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. \$40. Register: themercersociety.org/events

SAT., JULY 21: RAISED BEDS, DRIP IRRIGATION & RAIN BARRELS - 10:30am-12:30pm, Maud Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., July 21: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING, 9:30am-noon, Houston Museum of Natural Science, Moran Conference Hall, 5555 Hermann Park Dr. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

TUES., JULY 24: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY, 10-11:15am, Weekley Community Center, 8440 Greenhouse Rd., Cypress. Free. Register by July 22: ogd.harrishort@gmail.com

FRI., JULY 27: HOUSTON FOOD PRODUCTION CONFERENCE, 9am-3:30pm, University of Houston Downtown, 201 Girard. Harris County Master Gardener event. \$50 (\$30/students).

FRI., AUG., 10: GREATER HOUSTON ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT. Citizens' Environmental Coalition event. cechouston.org

SAT., AUG. 11: WASTE NOT, WANT NOT . . . BOKASHI AND VERMICOMPOSTING, 9:30-11:30am. University of Houston Downtown, 201 Girard St. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

SAT., AUG. 18: THE ART OF KOKEDAMA: JAPANESE GARDENING, 10am-noon, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. \$40. Register: themercersociety.org/events

THURS., SEPT. 6: ROSES by GAYE HAMMOND, 9-10 am; Waller County Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead. Free. Waller County Master Gardener event. RSVP: wallermgardener2013@gmail.com, 979-826-7651

SAT., SEPT. 8: BASIC ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING, 9:30am-noon. Houston Museum of Natural Science, Moran Conference Hall, 5555 Hermann Park Dr. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540; urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar

SAT., SEPT. 15: TERRARIUM TIME, 10am-noon, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. \$40. Register: themercersociety.org/event

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

THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!

& please patronize our Newsletter & Calendar sponsors below!

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 ***THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER***

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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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