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July 19th, 2018

Dear Friends,

Here is the 258th 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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**THAT GARDENING HELP YOU NEED
MAY BE RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER**

***"If you want any business done for you,
you should ask a busy man to do it ..."***

-- The Rev. W. J. Kennedy (circa 1856) Inspector of Schools for Lancashire and the Isle of Man in Britain.

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

One could so easily paraphrase the Rev. Kennedy's famous quote into advice for creating a beautiful home landscape.

Look at your neighbors' yards. See which ones you like best. Get to know those gardeners.

Ask about which plants they are using and why. There may be exceptions, of course, but most gardeners are delighted to share not only advice, but maybe also plants that have proven a little TOO happy in their own yards.

Chances of "copying" a landscape are fairly nil. No two are ever going to be, or succeed, exactly alike.

A good example of the type of neighbor to ask: Flora Tiedt. Her backyard butterfly haven is so lush, it's really hard to believe she's only lived in this Anserra Estates (just west of Katy) for a little over 3 years.

The first advice Flora shares? **Get to know YOUR yard!**

I'll take that one step further. Become good friends with your garden!

So many frustrated gardeners have simply failed to do that one thing. Know exactly which areas are in shade and sun and when. Ditto for drainage patterns. Forget north, south, east, west. These orientations aren't that important here unless you're into exotics. Track your sun, shade and drainage. These are our key factors and they may change in different season.

Flora moved from an acre homestead in Magnolia (north of Houston) to a typical suburban-size suburban lot due west. And she cheerfully admits she did look out with a bit of dismay at "nothing but sand and weeds."

Gardening can be a solitary delight. But learning to succeed within a new ecology, especially one as capricious as the wide variety across Greater Houston, requires reaching out for ever new and exciting solutions to problems. My advice on the best places to shop: the sales our many local gardens and plant societies hold regularly (see Calendar below).

Flora also haunts local nurseries (Enchanted Gardens, The Arbor Gate and Plants for All Seasons are favorites) and learns from other gardeners, such as fellow members of Tomball Garden Club, Nottingham Country Garden Club and Friendship Garden Club (she's currently FCC President).

Flora's goal: plants that are gorgeous, but hardy. Twenty years ago, she admits, "I planted mostly annuals." But since then she's decided: "If a plant doesn't survive on it's own, I'll replace it with another plant that is hardy." (We agree on a LOT!)

But that doesn't reflect the study and time Flora puts into her gardening, including gardening books, area classes and keeping track of the [TEXAS SUPERSTAR](#) list of plants. And she's honest about making mistakes, like putting in plants that end up larger than the plants she put behind them.



Left to right, serpentine borders add depth to a smaller yard. Evergreen wisteria isn't invasive as Japanese wisteria is. Red montbretia stalks immediately draw the eye. Plumbago blends well with yellow europys (bush daisy)

To name just a few of her favorites: antique roses 'Old Blush' bottlebrush, buddleia, butterflyweed, duranta, ginger 'Dancing Ladies,' guara, montbretia, petunias 'Barbara Bush,' plumbago, Purslane oleracea, salvia 'Henry Duelburg,' snow-on-mountain, Turk's cap and evergreen wisteria.



Among Flora Tiedt's successes are, l to r, bottlebrush, buddleia with portulaca in the watering can, duranta and another portulaca.



Left, 'Barbara Bush' roses planted last year returned this year. Center, these butterflies eggs are transplanted to her butterfly house to protect them from predators. Right, Flora with friend Mary Alice Horne and Cheryl Fawvor, President of Nottingham Country Garden Club

Nottingham Country members, she says, first got her interested in helping to raise butterflies. She carefully watches for newly-laid monarch eggs on her many "attractor" plants and transfers them to a "butterfly house" her husband built, so they won't be eaten by insects and to protect the caterpillars from birds. Inside her "house" are four 3-gallon containers of milkweeds, ensuring plenty of food until the caterpillars become a chrysalis.

Talk about coincidence. As I worked on this column, two emails came in from two other gardening-for-butterflies enthusiasts and their plants covered with these jewels of nature.

* Sandra Nichols sent the pictures above of her "butterfly babies." So far she's released eight swallowtails from her milkweed. No monarchs yet, but they'll come.

* Dale Phillips reports releasing 20 swallowtails off his fennel plants, adding ". . . they ate entire plant then it looked like they sucked the green out of stems."

* * *

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

* * *



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS #53

On Thursday August 23rd OHBA (Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance) presents a Organic Landscape Professionals workshop. Come hear from and direct questions to some of the top Organic professionals in Houston! This all day education event is going to give you all the answers you need to take your business or knowledge to the next level. Register online today at:

<https://ohba.z2systems.com/np/clients/ohba/event.jsp?event=5>

We continue to learn that plants have chemical weapons to fight back against insects and disease if we let them. A new study published in Scientific Advances (May 16) has found that maize wafts out scents when being nibbled on by a caterpillar. These scents attract help in the form of tiny wasps that kill the caterpillar by injecting an egg that hatches and eats the caterpillar from the inside out.

Another study published in Scientific Advances (May 23) has found that the nutrient content of plants declines as carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere increase. These include B vitamins, proteins and minerals. Bible prophecies tell of famine in the end times, I wonder if it is a lack of food or just a lack of nutrients.

Scientists at the Swiss Federal Institute have discovered that trees scream (produce ultra sonic sounds that we cannot hear) when they are thirsty. They also found that fungi on the root systems of trees filter out heavy metals in the soil preventing them from harming the tree. Additionally, trees use the fungal network to communicate with other trees even of different species.

Trees are great filters to clean and cool the air. For every square yard of forest floor there are 27 square yards of leaves and needles that blanket the crown.

Conifers forests also produce terpenes that rise into the air and causes moisture in the air above them to condense, which then forms clouds (reduces heating from sunlight) and eventually rain. This helps create the conditions they love which are cool and moist.

I finished reading an interesting book the other day titled "Weird Math". In there was an explanation (theory) of why cicada (*Magicicada septenecim*) has a 17 year life cycle and another cicada species (*Magicicada tredecim*) has a 13 year life cycle. Both 13 and 17 are prime numbers which in math have special properties. It seems that as the cicada species evolved the predator species that eat them have a shorter and different life cycle in terms of years. By having an unusual time of life cycle it ensured than when the predators emerged there were no cicadas to eat hence the predators died out. We are just beginning to understand how mathematics is applied in nature. One of the first examples is how fractals could define the shape of a coastline. Geometric progression maps how bacterial populations increase under ideal conditions. I predict that scientist will discover additional mathematical relationships in nature in the coming years.

Demand for organic foods and products continues to grow rapidly. A report from the Organic Trade Association found that there was a 6.4% increase in sales of organic products reaching \$45.2 Billion in just the food sector alone. "Demand for organic food is flourishing as consumers seek out nutritious and clean food for the health of their families and the environment".

A study in the Journal HortScience (June 2018) has found that applying *Trichoderma sp.* based bio stimulants (which are one of the most effective plant-growth promoting fungi), to melons increased the quality of the melons and resulted in significantly larger crops.

A new study from the Harvard Medical school confirms other research that show blueberries and strawberries have cardio-protective effects. Blueberry consumption has been linked to lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, and urinary tract infections. Strawberries support the brain, eyes, muscles, joints and immune system. In our area both of these plants grow very well, and by growing them yourself organically you prevent exposing your family to the high amounts of toxic pesticides used by conventional growers. Plus organic home grown just taste better!

Research continues to mount on the importance of quality fat in our diet. Nuts in general are a good source of these fats IF they have not been roasted (fried) in vegetable oil. This frying at high temperatures exposes one to acrylamides which is believed to be a carcinogen. Hence always buy raw organic nuts to get the maximum benefit. Studies have found that walnuts, macadamias, and pecans have the highest beneficial fat levels. If you have trouble digesting nuts, soaking them overnight in water allows the troublesome plant compounds to break down making them easier to digest.

* * *

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

THURS., JULY 19: UNLOCKING HIDDEN TREASURES: FINDING NEW USES FOR OLD PLANTS by DALE KRUSE, 6:45 - 8:30 pm; Houston Arboretum, West Loop N access road before Woodway Dr. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter event. npsot.org/houston

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

THURS., July 19: RABBITS & CHICKENS BY THE GARDEN by STACIE VILLARREAL, 6-8pm; Waller County Extension Office, 846 6th Ave., Hempstead. \$15. Waller County Extension Office event. \$15. Register: 979-826-7651

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

SAT., JULY 21: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-3pm Bay Area Community Center, 5002 Nasa Road 1 Seabrook. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

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

THURS., July 26: POLLINATORS & PLANTS by NORA KNOWLES, 6-8pm; Extension Office, 846 6th Ave., Hempstead. \$15. Waller County Master Gardener event. Register: 979-826-7651; wallermgardener2013@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).

SAT., AUG. 4: HANGING BASKET CLASS CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$25. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

THURS., AUG. 9: MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM IN THE COMMUNITY by PAUL WINSKI & BRANDI KELLER, w/PLANT SALE, 10-11:30am, Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Center Building, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Pasadena. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., AUG. 9: WATER, THE NECESSARY INGREDIENT by BAXTER WILLIAMS, 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillon, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston Rose Society event. Free. houstonrose.org.

THURS., AUG. 9: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING - 6:30-8:30pm, Barbara Bush Library, 6817 Cypresswood Dr., Spring. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

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

THURS., AUG. 16: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING - 6:30-8:30pm, Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

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

SAT., AUG. 18: PLUMERIA CLASS CLASS by JIM MAAS & LORETTA OSTEEN, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$25. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT. AUG 18: BONSAI by CLYDE HOLT, 9-11 am, \$25; URBAN SMALL BACKYARD GARDENING by HERMAN AUER, 1-2:30pm, free; and PROPAGATING TOMATO PLANTS USING CUTTINGS, 2:30-3pm, free, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy. 519), LaMarque. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SAT., AUG. 18: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING - 10:30am-12:30pm, Maud Smith Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., AUG. 20: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY w/PLANT SALE, 9-11am, Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Center Building, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Pasadena. Free. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

TUE. AUG 21: GARDENING BY THE SQUARE FOOT by JOHN JONS, 6:30-8pm; Galveston County AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065; aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

TUES., AUG. 21: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING, 6:30-8:30pm, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274-0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., AUG. 25: FALL & WINTER VEGETABLE GARDENING CLASS by JIM MAAS, PAT CORDRAY & PAUL NESRSTA, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$40. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

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: wallerimgardener2013@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: MINIATURE FAIRY GARDEN CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$40. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

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

SAT., SEPT. 22: GARDENING FOR BIRDS & HUMMINGBIRDS CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$40. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., SEPT. 29: HANGING BASKET CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$25. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., OCT. 6: HIBISCUS CLASS WITH GRAFTING by JIM MAAS & JOE MILLER, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT, OCT 20: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS FALL CUTTING EXCHANGE, United Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2038 FM 3171, Schulenburg. Free. texasroserustlers.com/events/

SAT., OCT. 27: FRUIT TREE CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$25. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., NOV. 3: MINIATURE FAIRY GARDEN CLASS by JIM MAAS & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Road, Seabrook. \$40. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

**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
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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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Click the "Like" button.