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## November 09, 2018

Dear Friends,

Here is the 274th 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. (John is 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.

Please [click here](#) or sign yourself up to receive this newsletter by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" link just below. We will never sell or share our mailing list to protect the privacy of our subscribers.

Enjoy!

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## IT ISN'T NATURAL IF IT DOESN'T MOVE ... WHAT ABOUT BUTTERFLYWEED?

*"A light wind swept over the corn,  
and all nature laughed in the sunshine."*

-- THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL, by Anne Bronte (1848)

**BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

As far as my yard is concerned, the most important thing to me -- after color I can see from every room in the house -- is movement.

Birds feeding, hummers hovering, butterflies flitting, colorful leaves (now) falling, anything that shows life. Life is not supposed to be still.

Movement draws our eyes around the garden, helping us to intimately interact with our own private pieces of the natural world.



*Great ornamental grasses for Houston\* include, l to r, fountain grass, gulf muhly, lemon grass and dwarf maiden grass. New to grasses? Shop your local independent nursery first!*

It's easy to augment and emphasize natural movement in our yards:

- Ornamental grasses\* in among flower plantings not only dance to their own rhythms, they serve as beautiful frames and backdrops, making adjacent plants more vibrant than they might otherwise appear.
- Rustling seed heads are natural wind chimes.

- Plants with lower growing foliage that flower on tall narrow stalks also move easily with slight winds.
- Hardy salvias, crocosmia, lanceleaf coneflowers and 'Red Rocket' russelia attract butterflies as well. Salvias and russelia also pull in hummers.



*L to r, hardy salvias, crocosmia, coneflowers and 'Red Rocket' russelia*

- For more movement, include paper-thin or fern-like foliage plants such as pride of Barbados.
- Arrange vines so a few tendrils sway freely.
- Plant palms, clumping bamboos and ferns where breezes can create soft waves.
- Position fragrant plants in breezeways so scents will waft through the air.
- Pruning lower branches off tall shade trees will encourage more air movement underneath.
- Underprune large ornamental shrubs into small flowering trees to create a canopy easily moved by light winds.
- Wind chimes and other breeze-triggered devices add an auditory, enhancing the sense of movement.
- The sound of running water makes a garden more vibrant; actually seeing the cascading flow intensifies the experience.

*(\* NOTE: If you're new to ornamental grasses, protect yourself by first consulting a local independent nursery. You want varieties that do well in this area without becoming invasive.)*

**TRICKING THE EYE** - Movement is so beneficial, professional garden designers often use logistical tricks to create the illusion of flux and flow by drawing the eye around, even when everything is perfectly still.

- Continuous garden borders or paths of rocks, bricks or timbers pulls the eye along.
- Softly flowing borders suggest peaceful, restful motion.
- Jagged diagonals create more dynamic excitement.

**Color always draws the eye:**

- Keep bloom periods in mind when placing plants. Sprinkle spring bloomers around the yard, rather than clumping them all in one space, to keep eyes moving.



- **Want to get even more sophisticated about it? Watch how foliage changes as the sun passes overhead. Constantly changing patterns also create a sense of movement, even when there is no breeze at all.**

\* \* \*



*L to r, pride of Barbados, lantana and tropical/Mexican butterflyweed*

## BUTTERFLY WEED - TO CUT BACK OR NOT TO CUT BACK?

Speaking of "movement," now that monarchs are here, loving both our tropical and native milkweeds, questions about OE and tropical butterfly weed are popping up. Karen B. wants to know if it's true she needs to cut back her beautiful tropical weed? "Please tell me not!" she begged.

First, remember: The red/yellow/orange milkweed is usually called "butterfly weed." Or, nowadays, tropical milkweed, tropical butterfly weed, Mexican butterfly weed and or Mexican milkweed. It's a southern cousin of our native, more muted-colored milkweeds.

Recent studies of *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE), a protozoan parasite of monarch butterflies, indicate it travels with monarchs when they visit plants and becomes deposited on (almost all) milkweed leaves. Caterpillars hatch, eat leaves, ingesting parasites now linked by some to lower migration success and reductions in body mass, lifespan, mating success, and flight ability.

Nature, as she always does, creates a balance by programming our native milkweeds to die back in winter, killing the parasite so it doesn't become over-populated.

Now that habitat gardens abound with butterfly-attracting plants, retailers have trouble keeping up with demand.

Not that many of our native milkweeds were available for sale. On the other hand, their more vividly-colored southern cousin, which we call butterflyweed, was becoming more popular for retail sale.

The problem is, tropical butterfly weed, even in subtropical areas like ours, does not usually die back. Up here, many felt - and it was widely publicized - that this allows Oe to build up, endangering future monarchs.

I asked Marianna Trevino-Wright, executive director of the National Butterfly Center in Mission, TX, for her take on OE and cutting back (OUCH!) our beautiful tropical butterflyweed. Marianna's response:

***"We recommend cutting back tropical milkweed AFTER migration AND after the first BIG cold event, when temps will be in the 40s for several days..."***

***"Here is a link to the NABA article on Tropical Milkweed you may find useful:  
<http://nababutterfly.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Tropical-Milkweed.pdf>***

***"Much of the controversy about the curassavica is unfounded. The studies have been small and they do not account for the full lifecycle and all of the ways in which the OE spreads. Some of it is small population studies by citizens, with no controls, i.e. they don't know the provenance of the butterflies they catch and sample (could be breeder stock).***

***"And, in some cases, the scientists actually conduct the studies with breeder (commercially farmed) stock that may be defective or diseased. We tell people not to worry and not to demonize the tropical. It has too many benefits for the species!"***

\* . \* . \*

***A key phrase in Marianna's reply is ". . . temps will be in the 40s for several days."***

***That may happen this coming week. Tsk, tsk. Tropical butterflyweed is so pretty, it's hard to cut it back when it's in full bloom. Especially knowing we have monarchs that do winter-over here. On the other hand, who wants to risk infecting monarchs that winter-over?***

***Another fear - that our tropical butterflyweed is going to stop monarch from moving on down to Mexico - is preached by some and considered exaggeration by others.***

***So what should gardeners do?***

***As painful as it may be, listen to Marianna and the majority of experts. When we have four-plus nights in the 40s, cut your tropical butterflyweed to the ground.***

***This won't kill it. Remember that these plants ARE root hardy. Cutting it back mimics what's happening to many plants, as their energies are concentrated in the root system. When the plant returns in spring, chances are they'll grow even bigger, prettier, and more lush growth than they did this year.***

***But, be aware, this advice might change in the future. Tropical butterflyweed, now native to points southward, is gradually moving northward as a result of our climate changes.***

***In the meantime, if you have a chance to buy and put in native milkweeds, do it. The more of these plants that are purchased, the more incentive for growers to get them to the retail market!***



***Antelope Horn Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*), Swamp Milkweed or Pink Milkweed (*A. incarnata*) and Texas (or white) milkweed (*A. texan*). Don't know where to buy natives? Try:***

<https://npsot.org/wp/houston/files/2018/09/Sources-of-Native-Plants-2018.pdf>

**DON'T FORGET TO CHECK "LG&F CALENDAR" AT END  
OF NEWSLETTER FOR MORE GREAT UPCOMING EVENTS!**

**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 find past issues and/or download PDF copies, go to [www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)**

\* \* \*



## NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 67

In the November 2018 issue of Life Extension there is an article on Basil which is classified as a super food. I always plant some basil for the fragrance as I just feel good when I smell it, and my wife uses a little in cooking. Basil also has strong anti-bacterial properties and helps fight even drug resistant varieties of bacteria like *Enterococcus*, *Staphylococcus*, and *Pseudomonas*. A study in 2012 found that basil helped ease symptoms from tuberculosis due a synergistic effect of the various compounds in basil. A 2013 study found that basil could help with several types of cancer via several modes of action. These are all good reasons to add basil to our gardens each spring.

As gardeners we all know how soft a growing root tip can be, or how easily a fungal hyphae strand in our soil tears apart. Have you ever wondered how root tips will grow into concrete or how a fungal hyphae will grow into solid granite if they are so soft and fragile? I finished reading a textbook a few weeks ago that has an explanation of how this is done by roots and fungi ("*Radical Mycology - A Treatise On Seeing and Working With Fungi*" by Peter McCoy, 2016, Chthaeus Press, ISBN 978-0-9863996-0-2). The explanation presented is that fungi and root hairs have the ability to form a different phase of water called the exclusion zone (EZ) in their tissues. At the microscopic level water molecules will layer up in a form a few molecules thick and become harder and stronger than steel. This physical change in the water molecules of the root tip along with the chemical action allows fungi and roots to penetrate the hardest

substances. Being a scientist and never having never heard of this effect before I ordered and read a book called "The Fourth Phase of Water - Beyond Solid, Liquid, and Vapor" by Gerald Pollack, 2013, Ebner & Sons Publisher, ISBN 978-0-9626895-4-3. Dr. Pollard is with Washington State University and has spent decades studying water. The book is about all the research on this effect called the Exclusion Zone (EZ) and how it is used in science and nature, where it explains many effects seen by other researchers that have never been explained. The book is easy to read with lots of photos for those whom love science. For gardeners it explains why water dropped onto the leaves of certain plants curl up and form into balls that just roll off the leaves. This effect also explains why some mulches (or low quality compost) become hydrophobic (water haters) and prevent water from entering the soil even after a hard rain.

I was listening to a local gardening show the other day and the caller had removed their concrete patio to plant grass and they had a lot of nutsedge growing. The host of the show patiently tried to explain that compaction (as under a concrete slab) favors the growth of plant species like nutsedge. The caller had difficulty understanding where the nutsedge seed came from as the dirt had been covered for many years. The stabilized sand often used under concrete is often full of nutsedge seeds and these seeds can remain viable for decades. So have you ever been asked "How long can seeds survive?" The seed of the South American herb achira (*Canna* sp.) from an ancient Indian necklace that was dated 550 years old has germinated and is growing fine. A 1,300 year old Lotus seed has been germinated and grown successfully. A 2,000 year old date palm seed has also been grown successfully. The longevity winner is seeds that were frozen in Siberian permafrost which have been thawed by Russian scientists and germinated that are over 30,000 years old.

A major new study published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine of over 70,000 adults (78% women) and an average age of 44 years, found that those whom regularly ate organic food for just 5 years had 25% fewer cancers than those whom did not. The most frequent consumers of organic foods in the study had 76% fewer lymphomas, 86% fewer non-Hodgkin's lymphomas and a 34% reduction in breast cancer that develop after menopause. I wonder what the results would have been if they had eaten organic foods for 20 years or more?

The organic food movement was a \$45 billion industry last year and is rapidly growing. More and more people have found out it is far less costly to eat organic foods and be healthier, rather than pay hospitals, insurance and pharmaceutical companies.

For those interested in preventing cancer, The Environmental Working Group has just published this year's lists on the foods most contaminated with toxic and cancer causing chemicals and the least contaminated foods we purchase. They call it the "Dirty Dozen" which is the produce that has the most toxic chemicals on them and the "Clean Fifteen" which have the least. One can download or view the guide at <http://www.EWG.org/FoodNews>

\* \* \*



# 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**

**FRI., NOV. 9: THE PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS - TEXAS' STATE PLANT by LILIANA CRACRAFT, "**, Speaker Liliana Cracraft. 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Free. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)

**SAT. NOV 10: WHAT IS A GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER? by DIANE SCHENKE, 9-11am; EVALUATING YOUR SOIL'S HEALTH by JIM GILLIAM, 1-3 pm., AgriLife Extension Bldg, Carbide Park, 4102 Main (Hwy 519), La Marque. Master Gardener events. Free but register:[galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com), 281-309-5065, [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html)**

**SAT., NOV. 10: HOW TO GROW FRUIT TREES AND CITRUS by DIANNE NORMAN, 1-2pm, Wabash Feed and Garden 4537 N. Shepherd. Free. [Wabashfeed.com](http://Wabashfeed.com) & 713-863-8322**

**SAT., NOV. 10: FALL GARDEN CELEBRATION by FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, 12pm, Extension Service Office Demonstration Gardens, 1402 Band Rd, Rosenberg. [fbmg.org](http://fbmg.org); 281-341-7068; [FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu)**

**SAT., NOV 10: EL PRIMER TOUR EN ESPANOL, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. FREE. Garden Conservancy event. [peckerwoodgarden.org](http://peckerwoodgarden.org), 979-826-3232; [eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org](mailto:eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org)**

**TUES., NOV. 13: CREATIVE HOLIDAY IDEAS FROM YOUR GARDEN by Betty Lahiri, 9 am, Shenandoah Municipal Complex, 29955 I-45 North, Shenandoah. Free. The Woodlands Garden Club event.**

**WED., NOV. 14: SUCCULENT DESIGN, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160**

**FRI., NOV. 16: HOUSTON URBAN TREE CONFERENCE, 8:15am-3pm, Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd.. \$45. Register: [houston-urban-tree-conference.eventbrite.com](http://houston-urban-tree-conference.eventbrite.com)**

**SAT., NOV. 17: EDIBLE LANDSCAPES, 9:30am-11:30am., Houston Museum of Natural Science, Moran Conference Room, 5555 Hermann Park Dr. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar](http://urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar)**

**THU., NOV 17: FRIENDS OF PECKERWOOD GARDEN noon- 4 pm. Free? Garden Conservancy event. Register: [peckerwoodgarden.org](http://peckerwoodgarden.org), 979-826-3232; [eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org](mailto:eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org)**

**SUN., NOV 18: GROWING FROM SPORE PART TWO - BABY FERNS by DARLA HARRIS & PATRICK HUDNALL, 2pm, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. Free. Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society event. [tgcfersoc.org](http://tgcfersoc.org).**

**TUES., NOV. 20: GOT TREES & GRASS & WEEDS? by DEBORAH BIRGE, 10am; St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. Sugar Land Garden Club event. [sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://sugarlandgardenclub.org)**

**TUES., NOV. 20: BLUE RIBBON WINNER-UNDERSTANDING CRITERIA FOR TOP HONORS IN CONTAINERS by SUZANNE MILSTEAD, 7pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 W Gray. Free. Bromeliad Society / Houston event. [bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)**

**SAT., NOV 24: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. [peckerwoodgarden.org](http://peckerwoodgarden.org), 979-826-3232**



**SAT., DEC. 1: Starting a Community or School Garden Workshop. 8:30am-2:30pm. University of Houston Downtown, Room A625, 201 Girard St. \$20. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar](http://urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar)**

**SAT., DEC 1: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEEDS by IRA GERVAIS, 9-11am; SMALL TREES, SMALL YARDS by MARIE LEAL, 1-3pm. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: [galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com), 281-309-5065. [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html)**

**TUES., DEC 4: CITRUS SEMINAR & TASTING by MONTE NESBITT, 6-8pm; Free. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: [galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com), 281-309-5065. [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)**

**SAT., DEC. 8: HOLIDAY IN THE GARDENS, 11am-5pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160**

**SAT., DEC.8: INSECTARY GARDENS - NATURE'S PEST CONTROL, 9:30am-11:30am. The Houston Museum of Natural Science, Moran Conference Room, 5555 Hermann Park Dr. \$30. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540, [urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar](http://urbanharvest.org/classes-calendar)**

**SAT. DEC 8: GARDEN JEWELS - HUMMINGBIRDS by DEBORAH REPASZ, 1-3pm; Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: [galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com), 281-309-5065. [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html)**

**WED., DEC. 12: WINTER COLOR, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160**

**FRI., DEC 14: WINTER WONDERLAND LUNCHEON GALA, speaker: BILL McKINLEY. 10am, Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. \$30. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)**

**FRI., DEC. 14: WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER TRAINING PROGRAM REGISTRATION DEADLINE. Begins Thurs. Jan. 17. \$160. [txmg.org/wallermg/training](http://txmg.org/wallermg/training)**

**SAT., DEC 22: PECKERWOOD GARDEN OPEN DAY, 10am-2pm tours, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$10. [peckerwoodgarden.org](http://peckerwoodgarden.org), 979-826-3232**

**FRI., JAN.11: THE HISTORY OF THE PEGGY MARTIN ROSE by PEGGY MARTIN, 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Free. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)**

**SAT-SUN., JAN. 12 -13: 45th ANNUAL CAMELLIA SHOW & SALE, 1-4pm, First Christian Church, 3500 North Loop 336 West, Conroe. Free. Coughatta Camellia Society. [coughattacamelliasociety.com](http://coughattacamelliasociety.com)**

**FRI., JAN. 25: MONARCH TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.**

**SUN., JAN. 27: THE SECRET LIFE OF SOIL- FEED YOUR SOIL & IT WILL FEED YOUR PLANTS! by SHERRI HARRAH, 2pm, Klein United Methodist Church, 5920 FM 2920, Spring. Free. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. [cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com](http://cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com)**

**FRI: FEB. 8: PLANT SALE and speaker CORRIE TEN-HAVE, 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Free. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)**

**FRI: MAR. 8: NATIVE PLANTS ARE BEAUTIFUL TOO! by Linda Gay, 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Free. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)**

**SAT, Mar 2: VEGETABLE & HERB SALE with THE GUNTER SISTERS, JUDY BARNETT & WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-Noon, Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead. Free. [txmg.org/wallermg/events](http://txmg.org/wallermg/events)**

**SAT., MAR. 16: MARCH MART PLANT SALE, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.**

**FRI: APR. 11: PLANT SALE and REFUGEES FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM by MARGARET PICKELL. 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Free. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](http://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)**

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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**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](mailto: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 Pablo Hernandez 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.

### 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 and quality control.

Pablo helps this newsletter happen from a technical support standpoint.



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