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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Gardening Newsletter

May 17, 2019

Dear Friends,

Here is the 292nd 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. Email your thoughts to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your interest.

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

Enjoy!



VINES FOR SHADE . . . MEET YOUR WILDFLOWER NEIGHBORS!

By BRENDA BEUST SMITH

"If you are not killing plants, you are not really stretching yourself as a gardener."
-- J. C. Raulston, famed horticulturist

We are so blessed in this area with an abundance of gorgeous trees. But they, in turn, do cast a lot of shade. And, unfortunately, most flowers like a lot of (or at least some) sun.

When asked for suggestions of vines that bloom in shade, I have to be honest. In deep shade, not many. In fact, I couldn't think of any.

But most shade is not "deep." Most is filtered as sun rays penetrate through the leaf canopy at different times of day. Usually at least an hour or more of direct sun hits the spot at different times of the year.

The good news is, with our extremely intense sun with its reflected heat and rays, these few, even temporary, penetrations might be all a vine needs to at least deserves a chance.

I'd love it if you readers could add any of your success stories with vines not mentioned below. But first, couple of thoughts:

- Don't overlook the potential for blooming vines to be great groundcovers. Or to add color to nonblooming groundcovers used under trees, etc., where St. Augustine refuses to grow. Consider planting these in containers set into the groundcover.
- Groundcovers spread by producing spreading foliage that roots into the ground. Vines spread from a single base by producing tendrils that will also root if in contact with soil but which don't need to.
- Researching shade blooming vines online can be frustratingly confusing for us. Sweet autumn clematis, honeysuckle, wisteria and trumpet

creeper are frequently recommend as shade vines. But all four are now very invasive in our subtropical area. You've been forewarned!

- Expect vines to grow longer tendrils here than listed in descriptions if your sources is not based in the Greater Houston area.
- Many vines listed as annuals in nationwide lists will be perennial here if well mulched. Give them a chance to return in spring.
- Get to know your yard. The sun moves around the sky. Shade spots now might be sunnier in July.
- All these below attract butterflies, hummingbirds or both as well as other pollinators and thrive in a wide variety of soils. All benefit from a good organic mulch and (unless labeled evergreen) are all root-hardy which means will die back in cold and return in spring.
- Best bet: always first consult your local neighborhood nurseryman. He/she shares your growing environment, your challenges and has on hand good-for-you, often brand new, recommendations ready to try. Starting with him/her may make your search much easier than traipsing around town trying to find specific plants.

Since "shade" is so hard to define exactly, let's just say these below are worth trying. Don't buy dozens of plants until you know they work in your yard.



BLACK-EYED SUSAN VINE
(*Thunbergia alata*)

Listed as annual but usually perennial here, especially if well mulched. Flowers come in red, orange, yellow and white. Blooms summer-frost.



BLEEDING HEART

(*Clerodendrum thomsoniae*)

Over 400 species of these. Shop local source! Mine lived for decades on a fence that got only little morning sun. Blooms summer to fall.



BUTTERFLY VINE

(*Mascagnia macroptera*)

Named for seed pods, not flowers, both often on vine at same time. Pods last forever. Blooms heaviest in spring and fall, through to frost. Evergreen. Climbs easily up fence or trellis.



CLEMATIS

(*Clematis 'Jackmanii'*)

Unlike our invasive sweet autumn clematis, standard clematis usually require more cold than we have. Even so, my white 'Henryii' bloomed 5+/- years before dying. Look for varieties recommended for "Gulf Coast," like this Clematis 'Aotearoa'.

Let me know if you find one that works!



CONFEDERATE JASMINE (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*)

So fragrant, so beautiful. But needs a least a little sun. Also called star jasmine.



HYACINTH BEAN VINE

(*Lablab purpureus*)

Showstopper! Heavy vine, needs strong fence/ support. Plays well with morning glories.



CLIMBING HYDRANGEA*(Hydrangea petiolaris)*

Starts out looking like a shrub,
then sends out aerial rootlets.

Slow growing at first, then
speeds up. Lush foliage.

Magnificent, white lacecap
blooms in summer.

**DUTCHMAN'S PIPE VINE***(Aristolochia californica)*

A must for butterfly enthusiasts,
only host plant of pipevine
swallowtail butterfly. These
"pipes" are its flower. Not a
pleasant fragrance, but so
interesting! Blooms
winter/spring.

**EVERGREEN WISTERIA (***Millettia reticulata*)

This is not our now-invasive
Chinese wisteria. It's not even a
true wisteria. Evergreen, fragrant
and a much more civilized vine.
You can see it by the Japanese

**THUNBERGIA
'MERCER BLUE'***(Thunbergia Battiscombei)*

Brilliant blue trumpet-shaped
flower with a yellow throat.

Starts out shrub-like but then
produces weak, vine-like stems.

Blooms spring/summer.

**RANGOON CREEPER***(Combretum indicum)*

Fast growing in moist areas.

Better kept on dry side. Very

showy and evergreen but give it
plenty of room to spread.

Blooms spring through fall. Also
called Drunken Sailor vine.

Sweet, fruity fragrance

**CROSSVINE***(Bignonia capreolata)*

The 'nice' cousin of our invasive
trumpet creeper vine found in
trees all over our area. Perennial
vine. Glossy green leaves turn
reddish after frost. 2-inch

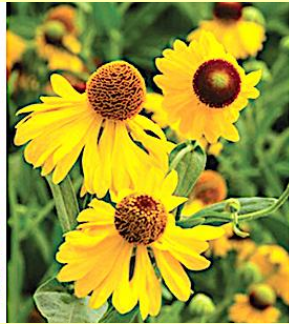
Garden in Hermann Park. Needs a trellis or fence. Flowers spring, summer, fall.

trumpet flowers are yellow, buff-orange, brick or red. Named varieties much more civilized!

* * *

DAYLILY SALE -- OOPS!: In last week's piece on Leon Payne's daylilies being available at the Lone Star Daylily Society Flower Show and Sale, I left out some info. Sale is 10-4. Show is 1-4. (Epiphany Lutheran Church, 5515 Broadway St., Pearland. lonestardaylilsociety.org, 713-882-9958).

* * *



Among the wildflowers blooming in Memorial Park are, l to r, p rairie parsley (*Polytaenia nuttallii*), purplehead sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*) and nodding lady's tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*)

HOW MANY OF OUR WILDFLOWERS NOW IN BLOOM CAN YOU NAME?

Above, the Memorial Park Conservancy gives us a quick ID lesson of just a few of the wildflowers blooming in that park right now. If you want to learn the names of more, MPC's Jack Smith will lead a free educational tour of Memorial Park's wild floral treasures 6-7pm, Tues., May 21. Meet at the park's Cullen Running Trails Center, 7575 N Picnic Lane. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Details: [Memorial Park 101](#)

* * *

EVENT NOTICES FOR CALENDAR MUST BE EARMARKED SPECIFICALLY FOR PUBLICATION IN THIS NEWSLETTER. NO EVENT NOTICES ARE PICKED UP FROM OTHER NEWSLETTERS OR GENERAL PR RELEASES.

**EMAIL information in our exact calendar format to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net
See Calendar for details. Always check to make sure submitted event IS published. If you don't see it, email me: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net**

Brenda's column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener.

**A PDF OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS POSTED AT
<https://www.natureswayresources.com/new.html>
We hope you will repost & share it with anyone and everyone!**

* * *

John's Corner . . .



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 84

More and more folks are growing their own fruits and vegetables. The reasons range from avoiding toxic pesticides to better quality, flavor and health benefits. Genetically modified crops are among the worst for our health and there is no labeling to tell us they are GMO. A short video on the dangers of GMO's can be found at: <https://www.brighteon.com/6034723760001>

The extremely toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos has already been banned by most countries due to the negative extreme health effects. The EPA, marching to the instructions of the toxic chemical industry, still allows it to be used. However, there is a growing movement to ban it at the state level. "This pesticide is a neurotoxin," California Environmental Secretary Jared Blumenfeld tells the Associated Press. Because the federal government has allowed its continued use, California is joining Hawaii, New York, Oregon, Connecticut, and New Jersey, which have all approved bans or have bills under consideration to remove chlorpyrifos from the market, in taking matters into its own hands. The California ban, or cancellation, could take up to two years to go into full effect.

Another development in California where a jury awarded a couple \$2 Billion in damages for Roundup causing their cancers. See the link below for more information. This is the third case to trial and Monsanto has lost all of them. Over 13,400 cases are still awaiting trial.
<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/BAY-DSJ-BCNJury-Awards-1B-to-Livermore-Couple-Claiming-Roundup-Caused-Both-to-Develop-Cancer-509867471.html>

Below is a link to a short video on how chemical companies (using Roundup as an example) manipulate regulators into approving dangerous chemicals so they can make a profit at the expense of our children, our health and the environment. <https://www.brighteon.com/6036612501001>

After reading a comment on Facebook a few weeks ago that all mulches are the same and talking with many customers, there is a very large lack of understanding in our society about mulches. For most gardening projects for use in our flowerbeds here is a quick summary from best to worst of the many types of mulches available in the market.

Mulch can be broken into three basic types based on its quality and usage which are: Biological, Commercial, and Industrial.

Biological – This is the highest quality mulch and therefore the most beneficial in improving soils, preventing disease, protecting plants, etc. It has a low

carbon-to-nitrogen ratio so it does not steal nitrogen and other nutrients from the soil which would weaken or stress plants making them more susceptible to insects and disease. It has been composted to kill weed seeds and pathogens. Composted “*native mulch*” and “*coarse screened compost*” are examples of this class of mulch. The bag will have holes in it so that air can enter allowing the beneficial microbes to breath and be kept alive. The composted ones in this class tend to be very fire resistant. This type mulch will typically sell retail for \$6-8 per bag (2 cubic feet).

Commercial – This is a middle to a low grade of mulch, made from tree barks (pine, hardwood, etc.) and is the most common. It includes single species mulches like cedar, redwood, cypress, etc. It will be in a sealed bag and may have a sour, stale or strong odor. It has a high carbon-to-nitrogen ratio and robs soil of nitrogen and other nutrients which can lead to increased insect and disease issues. Some types tend to float off in a heavy rain or develop unsightly molds and fungal mats. They may also attract fire ants or termites. These mulches tend to ignite and burn easily. This mulch will typically sell retail for \$4-6 per bag (2 cubic feet).

Industrial – This is the lowest grade of products called mulch. It is made from industrial wastes like old pallets, construction wood, used tires, etc. It is often chemically burned black with industrial hazardous waste and will sometimes rub off in your hand, and it is often dyed various colors. It may contain arsenic from CCA treated waste wood used to make it. It has a very high carbon-to-nitrogen ratio and robs nitrogen and other nutrients from the soil for a long time. It is often the source of many disease and pest problems, poor growth or even plant death. Additionally, it may be extremely alkaline and high in toxic salts. Most are very flammable and may contain toxic chemicals. This product will typically sell retail for \$3-4 per bag (2 cubic feet)

For a quick reference, the highest quality and the most beneficial mulch to soils and plants are at the top of the list below. As one goes down the list quality decreases, problems increase, and flammability increases. If one wants more detail go to our website where there is a detailed explanation of the good and bad of each of these type mulches.

www.natureswayresources.com/mulchcorner.html

Biological:

Native Mulch Aged (composted and coarse screened)

Compost – Leaf Mold (coarse screened)

Native Mulch Double Ground (Aged)

Pine Straw or leaves

Straw

Commercial:

Pine Bark Nuggets or Shredded Pine Bark

Hardwood Bark

Cedar

Redwood

Cypress

Industrial:

Ashen Mulches (Pine or Hardwood Bark chemically burned black)

Spent mushroom substrate (aka Mushroom Compost)
 Saw Dust or wood shavings
 Dyed mulch
 Rubber Mulch

Have You Tried . . .

INDIGOFERA

(Indigofera amblyantha)

Long, wisteria-like clusters of tiny lavender-pink flower cascades. Blooms spring through frost with breaks in hot summer. Small, slowly spreading shrub, ideal for mixed borders or foundation plantings. Effective as part of a naturalized planting or massed under large trees for an attractive and colorful ground cover. Semi-evergreen if lucky!



Carried by Nature's Way Resources. Or contact our new sponsor, Montgomery Pines Nursery in Willis, your independent neighborhood nursery or our other sponsors below for possible sources.

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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR EVENTS

GARDEN/PLANT EVENTS ONLY

*Events are in Houston unless otherwise noted. **No events** are picked up from newsletter, etc. Events must be submitted in exact format below to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net*

SAT. MAY 18: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAY, 9:30-11:30 a.m., AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. Free. Montgomery County Master Gardener event. 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

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

SAT., MAY 18: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY SHOW & DAYLILY & COMPANION PLANT SALE. 10am-4pm, Epiphany Lutheran Church, 5515 Broadway St., Pearland, Free, www.lonestardaylilysociety.org, 713-882-9958.

SUN., MAY 19: WEST TEXAS FERNS AND OTHER PLANTS by MICHAEL EASON, 2pm, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. Free. Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society event. tgcfernsoc.org

TUES., MAY 21: BROMELIADS OF ECUADOR by CRISTY BRENNER, 7pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Free. Bromeliad Society/Houston event.

bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

TUES., MAY 21: WATER CONSERVATION, 6:30-8:30pm, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 930 Corbindale, Houston. Free. Harris County Master Gardener event. 713-274 0950; hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., MAY 22: ARIZONA CACTUS ODYSSEY by DAVID VAN LANGEN, HCSS member, 7:30 pm, at the Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. FREE. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society. Houston Cactus and Succulent Society

WED., MAY 29: SUMMER VEGETABLE PLANTING CLASS, 6-7pm, McGovern Centennial Family Gardens, 1500 Hermann Dr. \$20. Urban Harvest event. Register: 713-880-5540, urbanharvest.org/education/classes/

SAT, JUNE 1: BRAZOSPORT DAYLILY CLUB PLANT SALE, 9am-2pm, Lake Jackson Civic Center, 333 Highway 332, Lake Jackson. Free. 281-413-4844.

SAT. JUNE 1: PLUMERIA PROPAGATION WORKSHOP by LORETTA OSTEEN, 11 am-1 pm. Master Gardener Discovery Garden, Carbide Park, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SUN, JUNE 2: LONE STAR CHAPTER AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY HIBISCUS SHOW & PLANT SALE, 1-4pm, Condit Elementary, 7000 S. 3rd. St., Bellaire. Free. lonestarahs.org

SAT., JUNE 8, BRINGING BEES TO YOUR GARDEN, 8-10am, & OTHER POLLINATORS BESIDES BEES, 10:30am-12:30pm. AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe. \$5 each/\$8 both. Montgomery County Master Gardener event. 936-529-7824 or mcmga.com

SAT., JUNE 8: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-3pm, Bay Area Community Center, 5002 E Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

SAT. JUNE 8: ASK A MASTER GARDENER PLANT CLINIC by Galveston County Master Gardeners, 10 am-1 pm. Keyworth's Hardward Store, 2209 FM 517 Rd E, Dickinson; GARDENING 101 by KAROLYN GEPHART, 1-3 pm. Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy St, Galveston. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

WED., JUNE 12: BEHIND SCENES AT A BOTANIC GARDEN, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., JUNE 13: USING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR THE JOB by Bob Patterson 7:00pm, Cherie Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston 77004. Houston Rose Society event. Free. houstonrose.org

SAT. JUNE 15: PASSION FOR PLUMERIA by LORETTA OSTEEN, 1-3 pm. AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Free. , but Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

THURS., JUNE 20: JUST ENOUGH LATIN TO GO PLANT SHOPPING by CAROL CLARK, 6:45-8:30pm; Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. npsot.org/houston

WED., JUNE 26: CSSA VIDEO "PROPAGATING PLANTS & CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIPS," 7:30 pm, at the Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. FREE. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society. www.hcsstex.org

SAT. JUNE 29: RAINWATER HARVESTING by NAT GRUESEN, 9-11 am, AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

TUES., JULY 9: GROWING PLUMERIAS, 7-9pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org

WED., JULY 10: TREE IDENTIFICATION. Noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT., JULY 13: TROPICAL SYMPOSIUM, 8:30am-4pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Fee. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., JUL. 18: VIRTUALLY WILD! TEXAS – CONNECTING STUDENTS DIGITALLY by JAIME GONZALES, 6:45-8:30pm; Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. npsot.org/houston

SAT., JULY 20: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SHOW & SALE, 9:30am-pm, Bay Area Community Center, 5002 E Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

WED., AUG. 14: BIRDS OF A FEATHER IN YOUR GARDEN, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SUN., SEP. 22: TIDBITS FROM 50 YEARS WITH DAYLILIES by Hershale Theilen, 2-3pm. Klein United Methodist Church, 5920 FM 2920, Spring. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. Free. cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com

TUES., OCT. 8: GROWING PLUMERIAS, 7-9pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org

SAT. DEC. 14, 2019: CHAPPELL HILL GARDEN CLUB CHRISTMAS HOME TOUR, 10am-5pm., Chappell Hill. \$20 advance/\$25 tour day. 713-562-6191; 979-337-1200

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

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BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS**

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us at 936-273-1200 or send an e-mail to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com



www.bartlett.com



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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