



Gardening Newsletter

Oct 3, 2019

Dear Friends,

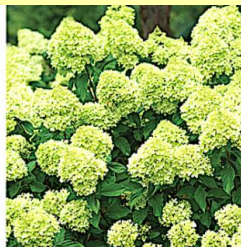
Here is the 311th issue of our weekly gardening newsletter for Houston, the Gulf Coast and beyond. We really appreciate all of our readers hanging in there with us, sharing stories and inspiring us in so many ways.

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!



LOOKING DEAD NOT BE SAME DEAD-DEAD . . . FLOWER COLORS

*"I merely feel emptiness. A hollow of
dead brush where flowers used to bloom"*

-- Suzanne Collins, "The Hunger Games - Mockingjay"

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Suzanne phrased it beautifully -- even though she wasn't writing about my garden -

- the feeling I get when one of my plants looks like it's giving up the ghost.

But, traditionally this is the season for many plants to look like they're dying. Hopefully miracles are right around the corner.

Already I can see green shoots (amid the brown) on plants that, I'm hoping, simply decided to go dormant rather than fight our nonstop blistering heat and recent waves of drought interspersed with monsoon floods. They -- far better than we -- appreciate that Mother Nature always bats last.

Several emails from readers asked about their "*Are-these-dead?*" plants. Even Christine York's dwarf ruellia (Mexican petunia, left) has her worried. I didn't think anything short of an actual fire would stop this one. Even then, it will probably re-sprouts from persistent roots.



Be patient. Give them a chance now that it's getting cooler. If your fingers itch to DO SOMETHING!, pinch off dead leaves/stalks. Several good things can come from this:

- Better the plant should use it's probably-by-now limited energy resources to keep its roots healthy for, hopefully, more growth in coming months
- Dead leaves accumulating on stalks might send signals to the plant that it's time for a deep winter-type, rather than a temporary dormancy
- Pruning often triggers a new growth spurt, maybe stimulating more flower production as temperatures become more civilized
- Pruning can be wonderful mental therapy -- "*She's crazy!*" (snip, snip), "*Stupid man!*" (snip, snip), etc. Let your garden work for you!

LAZY GARDENERS RULE!

Sometimes being lazy (my usual approach) and ignoring dieback pays off. Certainly worked for Audrey B. in Montrose area. She wrote: "...while back, I read one of your articles about not digging up dead-looking plants (in the Spring after a frosty winter) until you've given them several months (until Summer) to make sure they are really dead." Audrey's once gorgeous Rangoon creeper froze back. Digging it up didn't work. Too big. She ignored it. It took two years, she writes, "... but now it's back! My yard once again smells wonderful with these gorgeous flowers!"



NOTE: As wonderful as Rangoon creepers are (this is not Audrey's pictured), do know they are very enthusiastic growers that require a strong support.



Soil often dictates color of blue or pink hydrangeas. But green?

Deany Meinke comes up with great questions. Her pink hydrangea isn't dying. Flowers are turning green. I'd heard of blue hydrangeas turning pink. For decades I took cuttings of Mother-in-law's huge, magnificent blue hydrangeas in Vidor, just north of Beaumont. A few survived (never for long) but bloomed pink. She told me to put rusty nails in the soil. Didn't work.

This old fashioned remedy was based on the premise hydrangeas need more iron or aluminum (I know, same thing but . . .) than most of our Houston soils provide. Hydrangeas love sandy, slightly acidic soil such as is found in East Texas.

But turning green? New one for me, although some whitish-green hydrangeas now available. Checking around, I found lots of possibilities, some of which apply to flowers-in-general that lose their color:

- Iron/aluminum deficiency mentioned above. An azalea or tomato fertilizer may help correct this by making the soil more acidic.
- Flower colors often fade after pollination. A plant's colors attract the right pollinators. When the job's done, no need for all that intensity. If this is the case, color should return on next year's blooms
- Some flowers react more strongly than others to stress (extreme heat and sun, flooding, change of environment). Unnaturally muted or loss of color may be the result.

An old wives tale says using Epsom salt on hydrangeas will turn them blue. Not true. What you can try is aluminum sulfate.

Sad to say, with hydrangeas (and other flowers too), it may just be a case of old age. Although I warn readers to only use Houston-area gardening advice, I do love this quote from [Gardening Know How](#) website:

"Although science cannot always explain why flower color fades, it is clear that flowers, like humans, have a lifespan and often as they near the end of their lifespan they tend to produce less vibrant blooms than they did at the beginning of their life. If you experience flower fading and your plant is not stressed, just accept it as part of evolution of your garden and don't try to fix something that really is not broken."

ONE OF MY FAVORITE LANDSCAPE

VISITORS, the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, is the new official "Bird of Houston." This lovely crawfish-lover was selected over 59 other local birds in a recent [Houston Audubon Society's](#) Bird of Houston competition. Yellow-crowned

Night Herons like to nest in pine trees and feed on crustaceans and other amphibians. [Chronicle nature writer Gary Clark reported](#) when his son first saw one, he said: "Wow, they look like space aliens from Star Trek!"



Houston Audubon's Natives Nursery at the [Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary](#) specializes in local native prairie grasses and wildflowers along with understory plants grown from local prairie remnants by Audubon staff and volunteers -- filling a niche of hard-to-find natives.

* * *

**LOOKING FOR CLUB SPEAKERS & PROGRAMS?
Or . . . HOW TO GET MORE PUBLICITY FOR EVENTS?
"LAZY GARDENER SPEAKER LIST" & "PUBLICITY BOOKLET"**

are free — Just email 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

[CLICK HERE](#) for PDFs OF PAST LG&F NEWSLETTERS

* * *



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 98

The results of a 25-year experiment in Kansas was performed on prairie soil using sprinklers to simulate rain. A team from Rutgers University found that, contrary to our intuition, a 35% increase in rainfall led to a 21-33% reduction in water infiltration into the soil and a very little increase in water retention. Science Daily, September 2019

Over watering our lawns is one of the most common issues people have, resulting in many problems from disease to increased insects and weeds. I was at a farm near La Grange this past weekend and noticed that St. Augustine turf grass had escaped and was growing wild in several areas on sandy soils to heavy clay. It was thriving in spite of not having a drop of rain for over 10 weeks and zero fertilizer. It had heavy competition from native grasses, shrubs and trees yet it had no disease or pests.

Another great reason to be a gardener has been discovered. A recent article in the journal Science Translational Medicine, July 2019 was on the link between our gut microbes and muscle growth. They found that certain microbes strengthened our muscles which is extremely important as we age. These good microbes come from healthy soil that we are exposed to when we garden organically and get our hands dirty or eat food grown in healthy soil. Every day the link between healthy soil and healthy people continues to increase. As Mike Serant of MicrolifeTM fertilizer fame likes to say: **“Healthy Soil = Healthy Plants = Healthy People.”**

A new study published in the journal Nature Microbiology (2019), has found that 90% of the serotonin in our bodies is produced by microbes in our gut, where it influences gut immunity. It turns out that the gut microbes tell our gut cells to produce serotonin which the microbes import into their cells. Serotonin helps us feel good, it is believed to be part of our immune system, and helps us deal with stress. The researchers found that the antidepressant drugs fluoxetine or Prozac reduced the amount of serotonin transported into the microbial cells and reduced the number of these microbes. Another reason to be a gardener and immerse our hands in healthy soil so we can keep a supply of this good microbes in our bodies.

We often talk about the poor quality and low nutrient density of our food. Here is the link to another organization trying to teach folks about this issue. [The Bionutrient Food Association.](#)

A common weed in North America is the Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), an herbaceous perennial that belongs to the Asteraceae family of plants, along with daisies and sunflowers. Native to Europe, dandelion seeds were brought by European colonists coming to America, where they were initially planted for culinary and therapeutic use and they have spread across America.

One of the roles of this plant in nature is to correct soil problems. It likes compacted soil and soil low in available calcium. Being an annual, as the plant dies, the deep taproot decomposes allowing air and water to enter the soil breaking up the compaction. The deep taproot also collects or recycles calcium (Ca) from the sub-soil and returns it to the surface in its leaves. When it dies the leaves decompose releasing the calcium.

The Dr. Mercola newsletter has a nice article on the culinary and health benefits of this plant. [16 Health Benefits of Dandelion](#)

One of our native plants, the common Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *Canadensis*) is famous for its health benefits (just search on-line for health benefits and elderberry). One of the mechanisms has now been explained as the elderberry flower contains Quercetin. This compound has a wide range of benefits including antioxidant, anti-viral, helps circulatory issues, fights chronic inflammation, helps with hay fever, mood disorders and much more. The berries are used to make wine, jelly and even cobbles.

The large clusters of white flowers are not only beautiful in our gardens they are delicious (think elderberry fritters) or garnishment for a salad. Pollinators from bees to butterflies love the pollen and nectar from the flowers and birds love the berries. For the gardener it is also drought tolerant even though it can grow in standing water. It has few if any disease or pest problems, grows in any soil from

sand to heavy clay. It is a perennial that gets more beautiful over time and blooms for over 6 months of the year.

There is a new documentary that illustrates the corruption in the USDA, EPA and many of our agricultural universities that have pushed toxic chemicals on the people of the world. It is titled “A New Resistance” and features Round-Up as it explains how glyphosate causes many of our health problems. The trailer is less than 3 minutes in length and can be seen at the link below.

[ANR Final Trailer](#)

To give an example of the corruption our regulatory agencies the “Food Babe” a food blogger reveals the shocking differences between U.S. and U.K. ingredients lists - accusing American brands of trying to “poison consumers” with high numbers of additives and chemicals. The article can be found at

dailymail.co.uk

We have talked about the dangers of fluoride many times from how it hurts plants in our landscape to our pets and our health. Below are links to several recent articles by environmental groups on the dangers of fluoride.

Natural News has an internationally certified testing lab where they test the safety of products the USDA, EPA and FDA will not, exposing the lies we have been fed and they have a few articles on this issue:

[The mass dumbing down of humanity is now confirmed by scientists](#)


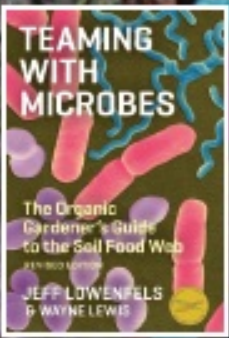

[Fluoride chemicals added to U.S. drinking water are unprocessed TOXIC WASTE; water fluoridation needs to end](#)

Dr. Mercola is an MD that has been writing about how to prevent health problems for years:

[Harmful Effects of Fluoride Continue to Mount](#)

[Updates on the Lawsuit Against the EPA to Stop Water Fluoridation](#)

* * *

**NOVEMBER 7TH
2019**

Jeff Lowenfels Teaming with Microbes

United Way 50 Waugh Drive Houston, TX 77007

SPONSORS














Come discover the fascinating world of soil microbiology with the most entertaining, Jeff Lowenfels. He is the author of the Teaming Series featuring the award-winning book *'Teaming with Microbes'*. As a world renowned soil microbiology expert and leader in the Organic movement, Jeff will blow your mind with his findings from the soil food web.

Come join us as one of the most enlightening and captivating lecturers in the Organic Movement comes to Houston for this can't miss event.

TICKETS

Register Online
ohbaonline.org/events

OHBA Members \$25
Non-Members \$50

ITINERARY

5:00-6:00PM
**REGISTRATION,
NETWORKING
& LIGHT BITES**

6:00-7:30PM
JEFF LOWENFELS

Have You Tried . . . **Novak's Passion Fruit Vine**

This large vine makes delicious, edible passion fruit. The fruit are green then turn purple when they ripen. The pulp inside is yellowish-orange, sweet, aromatic and delicious. The exotic looking flowers are white with a purple tinged center. Normally root-hardy in Houston winters



NOVAK'S PASSION FRUIT VINE is carried by Nature's Way Resources ([Map](#)).

Or . . . contact our sponsor, Montgomery Pines Nursery in Willis, our other sponsors below or your neighborhood nurseryman for possible sources.

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR EVENTS

ADULT GARDEN / PLANT EVENTS ONLY

Events are in Houston unless otherwise noted. No events are picked up from newsletter, etc.

Individual events must be submitted in exact format below to lazygardener@sbcglobal.net

PUT ALL INFO IN EMAIL, PICTURES ATTACHED, WITH SPONSORS NAME IN EMAIL SUBJECT LINE

THURS., OCT. 3: BIBLICAL GARDENS by JEAN FEFER, 10 am, MUD Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr, Katy. Free, Nottingham Country Garden Club event. ncgctx.org

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 3-5: HOUSTON BULB & PLANT MART, 5-7pm Thurs., 9am-5pm Fri, 9am-2pm Sat. Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Garden Club of Houston event. gchouston.org/bulb-plant-mart-info/

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 3-5: NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS 2019 FALL SYMPOSIUM, South Shore Harbour Resort & Conference Center, League City. Register: npsot.org/wp/symposium2019/

SAT., OCT. 5: VISIT WITH RANDY LEMMON, 11am-1 pm., Wabash Feed and Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd. Free, 713-863-8322, wabashfeed.com

SAT., OCT. 5: SPRING BRANCH AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB ANNUAL PLANT SALE, 10am-4pm, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Park Dr. Free. 281-682-1073, cseverson57@comcast.net

SAT., OCT. 5: HEALTHY LANDSCAPES = HEALTHY WATERWAYS CLASS, 8am - Noon, The Woodlands Emergency Training Center, 16135 IH-145 South, The Woodlands. Free. Register: thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., OCT. 5: POLLINATOR FESTIVAL, 10am-4pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

SAT., OCT. 5: HIBISCUS CLASS W/HIBISCUS GRAFTING by JIM MAAS & JOE MILLER, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., OCT 5: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS 2019 FALL PLANT SALE, 8am Sale Preview, 9am-noon Sale. Agrilife Extension Building, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. Free. 936-539-7824; mcmga.com

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

TUES., OCT. 8: MAKE HOUSE A HOME WORKSHOP USING PLANTS & FLOWERS FROM GARDEN by BETTY LAHIRI, 9am, Shenandoah Municipal Complex, 29955 I-45 North, Shenandoah. The Woodlands Garden Club event. Free. thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

WED., OCT. 9: SURPRISINGLY SPOOKY, MARVELOUSLY MYSTERIOUS PLANTS, noon-2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., Oct.10: BEHIND GARDENLINE SCENES by RANDY LEMMON, 7pm, Cherie

Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Rose Society event. Free. houstonrose.org

FRI., OCT. 11: PLANTS OF THE BIBLE by JEAN FEFER, 11:30am, Jim & JoAnn Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonnet St., Free. pct3.com/Senior-Centers/Jim-JoAnn-Fonteno-Senior-Education-Center

SAT. OCT 12: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FALL PLANT SALE, 9am-1pm; SALE PREVIEW, 8am, Galveston County Fair Grounds, Jack Brooks Park-Rodeo Arena, Hwy 6 & Jack Brooks Road, Hitchcock. Free. galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SAT. OCT 12: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FALL PLANT SALE, 8-8:50am-Overview; 9am-1pm-Sale. Galveston County Fair Grounds, Jack Brooks Park-Rodeo Arena, Hwy 6 & Jack Brooks Rd, Hitchcock. Free. galvcountymgs@gmail.com, 281-309-5065, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SAT., OCT. 12: FRUIT TREE CLASS by JIM MAAS, PAT CORDRAY & PAUL NESTRA, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., OCT. 12: FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS VEGETABLE-PLANT SALE, 9am-noon, Bud O'Shields Community Center, 1330 Band Rd. fbmg.org/files/2019/09/2019Fall-V-H-Sale-Plant-List-VeryShort.pdf

SAT., OCT 12: SURFSIDE NATURE FEST, 10am-4pm, Surfside Bird and Butterfly Trail, 418 Parkview, Surfside. Surfside Tourism/Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful event. Free. 979-248-8257, sandy@windyescapes.com

MON. OCT. 14: BASIC BOTANY with Anita Tiller from Mercer Botanic Gardens, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM, Lake Houston Gardeners, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 2929 Woodland Hills, Kingwood. Free. www.lakehoustongardeners.org

TUES., OCT. 15: UNDERSTANDING BROMELIADS by DENNIS CATHCART, 7pm, Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Bromeliad Society/Houston event. Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

TUES., OCT 15: WONDERS & BEAUTY OF NIGHT GARDENING by DALE RAMEY, 10am; St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Rd, Sugar Land. Free. Sugar Land Garden Club event. sugarlandgardenclub.org

THURS., OCT. 17: KATY PRAIRIE UPDATE by WESLEY NEWMAN, 6:45-8:30pm; American Red Cross, 27000 Southwest Fwy. Free. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter event. npsot.org/Houston

SAT., OCT 19:: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS FALL CUTTINGS EXCHANGE & Q&A by DR. WILLIAM C. WELCH & GREG GRANT, 9am-3pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 414 E. McAlpine St., Navasota. Free. texasroserustlers.com

SAT., OCT. 19. GROW YOUR OWN - FALL & WINTER GARDEN COLOR by FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9-11am, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Register: fbmg.org; Brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu

SAT.-SUN, OCT. 19-20: HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY FALL SHOW, 9am-5pm Sat., 10am-5pm Sun., Memorial City Mall. houstonbonsaisociety.com

WED., OCT. 23: PROPAGATION OF HAWORTHIA by WALLY WARD, 7:30 pm, at the Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. FREE. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society. hcsstex.org

FRI.-SAT., OCT. 25-26: HOUSTON ARBORETUM FALL NATIVE PLANT SALE, 9am-4pm, 120 West Loop North. Free. houstonarboretum.org; 713-681-8433

SAT., OCT. 26: HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY FALL SHOW, 12-4pm, Memorial City Mall, 303 Memorial City Way. Free. houstonrose.org

SAT. NOV 2, TEXAS ARBOR DAY, 1pm – 4pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, West Side Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. 713-274-4160.

SAT., NOV. 2, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER OPEN GARDENS, 9-11:30 am, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. Free. 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., NOV. 2: BULB CLASS by J JIM MAAS & MARGARET CHERRY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$45. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

SAT., NOV. 2: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER OPEN GARDENS, 9-11:30 am, AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. Free. 936-539-7824; mcmga.com

THURS., NOV. 7: HOLIDAY LOOK AT THE GARDEN by FRANKIE GREEN & ALICE BROWN, 10am, MUD Building, 805 Hidden Canyon Dr, Katy. Nottingham Country Garden Club event. Free. ncgctx.org

FRI., NOV.8: CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY by ANNA VALLERY, 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. Free. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

WED. NOV. 13, GARDENS (MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS COLLECTIONS), noon–2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

SAT., NOV. 16: MINIATURE FAIRY GARDEN CLASS by JIM MAAS, PAT CORDRAY & BRENDA HESSE, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$45. 281-474-2488, maasnursery.com

WED., Nov. 20: CACTI IN HABITAT PART III by DAVID VAN LANGEN, 7:30 pm, Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society. Free. hcsstex.org

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

FRI., JAN. 10, 2020: RECYCLE, REDUCE, REDUCE by Native Plant Society of Texas, & PLANT SALE. 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. Free. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

FRI., APRIL 10, 2020: EXCITING UNDERUTILIZED PLANTS ADAPTABLE TO HOUSTON REGION by ADAM BLACK. 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Federation of Garden Clubs event. Free. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

FRI. MAY 8, 2020: THINGS I WISH I HAD LEARNED SOONER (ABOUT ROSES) by BAXTER WILLIAMS. 10am, First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. Free. 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!
& 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 _

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE 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, it then 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 which morphed into her Lazy Gardener's Guide on CD. which she now emails free upon request.

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 specialty shows on HoustonPBS (Ch. 8) and her call-in "EcoGardening" show on KPFT-FM.

For over three decades, Brenda served as 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.

