



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Apr. 10, 2020 - Issue # 334

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Nature's Way Resources owner John Ferguson, "The Lazy Gardener" Brenda Beust Smith and Pablo Hernandez welcome your feedback and are so grateful to the many horticulturists who contribute their expertise.

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CORONAVIRUS CANCELLATIONS

If your event in our calendar below is cancelled, please let us know as soon as possible at lazygardener@sbcglobal.net



NATURE'S GIFT OF CALMNESS & NORMALCY IN A WORLD THAT'S ANYTHING BUT

"Hope we will move from 'vulnerable to victorious' soon!"

*-- Suzanne Chapman, Mercer Botanic Garden,
sharing a wonderful phrase used by Stephen F. Austin
University President Scott Gordon in ["Lumberjack Network"](#)*

by BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Asking great gardeners which plant is the most outstanding in terms of blooms and colors right this minute in their gardens is like asking a mother which of her children is the most fantastic. Getting most them to name JUST ONE as the very best was almost impossible!

Maybe, just for a moment, it would be good for all of us to savor just a little bit in the beauty nature is providing at this bleak point in time.

Spoiler: the two that surprised me the most I've saving for the very end. Hopefully all of these will bring a smile and/or help you fill in a bare area, to make sure you have a really beautiful Easter yard next year.



Take **DR. BILL WELCH** of antique rose fame. His first pick: **Byzantine gladiolas** (left). But then had to add **Belinda's Dream roses**, right, that "bloom 'most all of the time!"



SUZZANNE CHAPMAN of Mercer Botanic Garden listed at left (clockwise from left) **Pentas, 'Tokyo', Serissa** (with its variegated leaves ideal for small



gardens or containers), **Salvia coccinea** and the multi-colored **yesterday-today and tomorrow (Brunfelsia)**

Poppies and **Louisiana iris** highlight **Gudrun Opperman's** garden. Turns out, bees LOVE **Poppies**, which are strictly spring annuals for us. Plant seed in fall and already started plants in spring. **GUDRUN's** pass-along **Louisiana Iris** (far right) were seconded by **ANGELA ROTH** who also rang the bell for these below.



Angela's highlighted green, yellow and pink **roses** below are in Pin Oak's Diversity Rose Garden, built with a grant from the Garden Club of Houston. **Amaryllis**, below right, is a star in Angela's own home garden



DALE PHILLIP's two **orchid trees (Bauhinia)** are still covered with flowers even after our heavy recent rains pink-carpeted his yard with

fallen blooms! This is the largest of his two.



LAUREN SIMPSON's wildlife habitat, [St. Julian's Crossing](#), boasts

Winecups

(*Callirhoe involucrata*) are instant eye-catchers and are beloved by bees, left.



DON DUBOIS had a hard time picking a "most spectacular" from his Montgomery County prairie-turned-pollinator paradise. Finally, he finally pinpointed **Gulf Coast Penstemon**, left.

His other picks below are worth noting: Top row, l to r, **Dahlberg daisy**, **Heliotrope**, **Coral bean**, **Prairie Penstemon** and **Prairie Phlox**. Bottom, l to r, **Gaillardia**, **Purple Top Verbena**, **White Prickly Poppy**, **Green Milkweed** and, overseeing all, his garden's native rabbit.



NOT ALL SPRING COLOR IS FLORAL! In a [recent newsletter](#), our **Have You Tried** column spotlighted **rough-leaf dogwood**. John Ferguson recently shared this picture, right, of his rough-leaf dogwood's Fall color that lasted long into this spring!

AND NOW, TWO PLANTS THAT TRULY AMAZED ME. I don't think I've ever seen peonies and rhododendrons successfully grown for an extended period in the Greater Houston area. But new varieties and climate change are altering horticultural scenes everywhere!



GAYE HAMMOND'S ITO PEONY 'TAKATA' has 5" blooms. She says this one, called 'Yumi,' throws blooms in sprays as well as singles. Peonies in a Houston garden! That's one thing I never thought I'd see!



WHILE RHODODENDRONS don't normally do well in Houston proper, Gudrun's like the Kingwood area. Now about 6 years old, this one does well in part shade with good drainage. Gudrun warns it's very slow growing. She thinks she got it at a [Stephen F. Austin Mast Arboretum sale \(Nacogdoches\)](#).

I HOPE THESE REPORTS provided a welcome diversion in these strange, challenging and very scary times. If you have a flower that's creating a magnificent spray of color right now, do share a picture!

Above all, BE SAFE! -- Brenda

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ALL EARTH DAY HOUSTON 2020 CELEBRATIONS

scheduled at Discovery Green for Sun., April 19, 2020,
and subsequent Discovery Green Conservancy events
through May 15 will be rescheduled in 2021

"LAZY GARDENER SPEAKER LIST" & "PUBLICITY BOOK LET"

are free — email request to: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

Brenda's column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS #115

I was listening to a customer last week talking about how they love to watch birds in their yard. They then mentioned that they did not have near as many birds as they used to. Next they stated they needed to purchase a Bt product to kill all the caterpillars in their yard as they were falling out of the trees.

What they did not understand is that 90% of bird species when laying eggs or raising babies, require a high protein energy dense diet. By eliminating the caterpillars they were effectively getting rid of the birds as they could not grow and reproduce without their major food source.

Why does nature have the caterpillars eat the energy-dense new leaves in the spring AND have the birds build nests and lay eggs? God knew what he was doing. The birds (or wasps) will eat most of the caterpillars, the foliage will quickly regrow and the cycle of life will continue.

I also suspect the feeding by caterpillars on the foliage provides other benefits we just do not understand at present (see article below on secondary plant metabolites).

Another benefit of gardening. A study in the journal *Ecopsychology* (April 2020) has found that gardeners had significantly higher levels of body appreciation and pride. They also had a better understanding and appreciation of body functioning. This led to better mental and physical health.

Have you ever wondered how long a seed may remain viable? Scientists at the Hadassah Medical Center and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem collected date palm seeds from the archeological site called "The Fortress of Methuselah" that were dated at over 2,000 years old which sprouted into date palm trees.

The North American Butterfly Association now offers signage and certification for butterfly gardens. One can visit [their website](#) and register your garden and for a small fee get the sign below or one on Monarchs.



Many years ago, I attended a lecture by Jerry Brunetti on secondary plant metabolites. A few years earlier Jerry had been diagnosed with terminal cancer with only a few months to live. Jerry did his graduate work in animal nutrition and owned a feed company at the time. By using his knowledge of nutrition, he cured himself of cancer and lived another couple decades. One of the things he talked about was how a plant's immune system does not waste energy to make chemicals to fight insects until they are eaten on by a pest. He called these chemicals secondary plant metabolites and they were the anti-cancer compounds. Hence, if one wanted to maximize the benefits of eating vegetables look for the ones whose leaves had been nibbled on by insects. Research by scientists at Texas A&M published in the journal *Nature's Scientific Reports* (December 2019) has found that *organically* grown produce (plants) benefited nutritionally from "wounding" caused by insects. They found that the damage by insects caused a stress response in fruit and vegetables which in turn triggered the plant to produce high levels of antioxidant compounds.

Scientists at Iowa State university have been studying planting prairie strips

around crop land. After 10 years they found that adding a prairie to a small portion of the farm yields impressive benefits by improving water quality, reducing erosion, creating habitat for beneficial insects, and providing nutrient retention. The results have been so impressive that the federal government is providing grant money through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for land owners to plant prairie strips on their property.

The Organic Consumers Union has a nice article with lots of nutritional information called "[Coronavirus – What Are the Best Alternatives for Self-Care](#)".

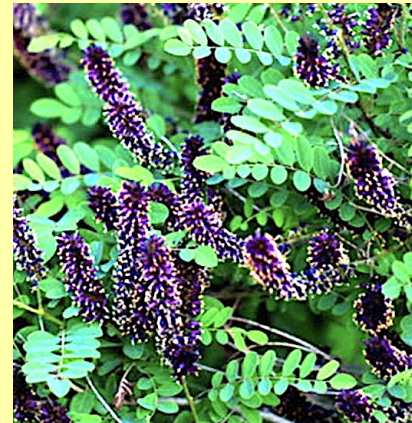
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HAVE YOU TRIED . . .

INDIGO AMORPHA

(Amorpha fruticosa)

Also known as False Indigo, this large, loose airy fragrant shrub produces blue > purple flowers April-June. Sun-part shade, drought-tolerant, likes most soils, cold tolerant, Favorite of native bees, butterflies and other nectar insects.



INDIGO AMORPHA 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.

At Nature's Way Resources we have uploaded our **Master** and **Native** Plants inventory online to implement a curbside pickup for orders. Any questions and orders for the plant nursery can be directed to Carol at nwrnursery@gmail.com.

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

ADULT GARDEN PLANT EVENTS ONLY

ALWAYS CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOUR EVENT IS IN! HOWEVER . . .

PLEASE READ BEFORE SUBMITTING EVENTS!

- *droppable-1586288881933Events NOT submitted in the EXACT format below may take 2 weeks or longer to be reformatted/retyped and added to calendar.*
- *Events written in the email in this EXACT format will be copied & pasted immediately into the next upcoming calendar.*
- *No pdfs or flyers!!! They only delay publication.*
- *Submit to: lazygardener@sbcglobal.net.*
- *Put group name in email subject.*

- JUST A REMINDER: WE ARE REMOVING
CANCELLED CALENDAR EVENT AS SOON AS NOTICES COME IN.**
- **CHECK UPDATED CALENDAR BELOW BEFORE ATTENDING ANY
PREVIOUSLY-SCHEDULED EVENT, AS WELL AS THOSE STILL LISTED
IN CASE OF LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION.**
 - **MANY NURSERIES ARE STILL HOLDING THEIR EVENTS WITH
CAREFUL SPACING OF ATTENDEES.**

SAT., APR. 11: WILD THYMES HERB GARDENING by JIM MAAS, & MELDA SIEBE, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., APR. 18: BENVENUTI AMERICAN DAYLILY DISPLAY GARDEN, DAYLILY SALE, 9am-2pm, 509 Huckleberry Dr., Lake Jackson. lorisgarrett@comcast.net; 832-922-5732; 979-529-9258

SAT., APR. 18: 14" METAL HANGING BASKET by JIM MAAS, & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., APR. 25: PLANTING IN GLASS by JIM MAAS, & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$45. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., MAY 2: GARDENING FOR BUTTERFLIES & BEES by JIM MAAS, & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$45. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., MAY 2: PARTY FOR THE PLANET, 6-10pm, Armand Bayou Nature Center, 8500 Bay Area Blvd. Pasadena. abnc.org/pftp; party@abnc.org; 281-474-2551

SAT., MAY 9: HOUSTON HEMEROCALLIS SOCIETY DAYLILY SHOW, 1-3pm, & PLANT SALE 10am-3pm. Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 4040 Watonga, Houston, 77092. Free. ofts.com/hhs/calendar.html

SAT., MAY 9: BRAZOSPORT DAYLILY SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW & SALE, 1-4pm, St., Mark's Lutheran Church, 501 Willow Dr, Lake Jackson, nfreshr@aol.com

TUES. MAY 12: PLUMERIA IN THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS by NICOLE TIERRMAN, 7-9 pm; Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org

SAT., MAY 16: PLUMERIA by JIM MAAS, & LORETTA OSTEEN, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., MAY 16: LAKE JACKSON GARDEN CLUB ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE/GARDENERS FLEA MARKET, 9am –noon, Lake Jackson Civic Center Outside Plaza. 333 Hwy 332 East, Lake Jackson. lakejacksongardenclubtx@gmail.com

SAT., MAY 23: MINIATURE FAIRY GARDEN by JIM MAAS, PAT CORDRAY & BRENDA HESSE, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$45. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

SAT., JUN. 13: 14" METAL HANGING BASKET by JIM MAAS, & PAT CORDRAY, 10am, Maas Nursery, 5511 Todville Rd., Seabrook. \$35. 281-474-2488; maasnursery.com

TUES., JUL 14: BONSAI by SCOTT BARBOZA, 7-9pm; Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org

TUES., OCT 13: FALL PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SOCIAL/LUAU 7-9:00 pm; Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

For event submission rules, see top of calendar

If we inspire you to attend any of these,
please let them know 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, 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.

