



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Apr. 17, 2020 - Issue # 335

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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



LOOK BEFORE PLUCK OR PRUNE ... PEONIES, NUN ORCHIDS & EDIBLES

There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.
-- Janet Kilburn Phillips

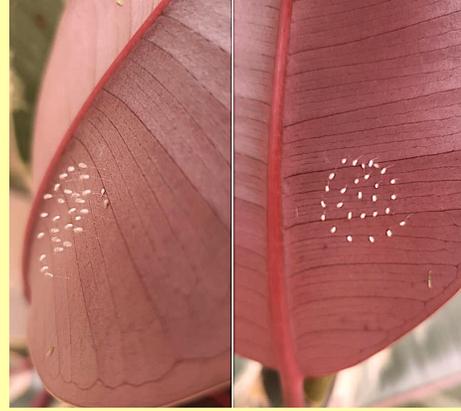
by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

NEXT TIME YOU WANDER through your garden and are tempted to tweek off a dead branch here, a decaying stalk there, first listen to **Linda Gay**. She was taking close looks at her garden delights when she spotted the eggs below right.

That's right, EGGS, laid by a lacewing, one of our beneficials. Horticultural educator extraordinaire that she is, Linda posted

pictures on Facebook, warning gardeners to keep an eye out:

*"Beneficial lacewing eggs on my Ficus. Notice the spiral pattern and the filament that is exactly the same length on all eggs."
(Lacewing larvae eat aphids, spider mites and white flies.)*



For more on green lacewings, Linda sent me to Montgomery County Master Gardener **Carolyn Townley**-- aka the Texas Bug Lady -- who generously shares her beneficials expertise on two of our very best: green lacewings and ladybugs.

Green lacewings are fascinating creatures. Their eggs are found in spirals as pictured above, but also in lines atop hair-thin threads on various foliage, especially on plants infested with aphids. The larvae (center below) collect dead aphid and other insect debris on their backs while feeding, earning the nickname "trash bugs." They are considered one of the top beneficials (keep harmful insects in check) for your garden. *(Don't confuse green lacewings (below left) with lacewing butterflies. Totally different!)*



Although many ladybugs (lady beetles) are in our area, two of the most commonly seen are the seven-spotted lady beetle (*Chilocorus septempunctata*), left below, and twice-stabbed lady beetle (*C. cacti*).



Ladybug larva don't all look alike (see inserts), but they are among our very best biological controls for pest insects. Plants that attract ladybugs include cilantro, dill, fennel, caraway, yarrow, tansy, angelica, scented geraniums, coreopsis and cosmos.

* * *

LOVE GARDENERS WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR!

I was delighted when Fort Bend County Master Gardener **Arleen Harbin** sent in these pictures of



Venus and Apollo in her garden!

But smile turned to awe at her nun's orchid in such magnificent bloom. She keeps these in three large containers in case they need to be moved into shelter in a hard freeze.

* * *

GAYE HAMMOND'S PEONY drew queries from fans.

- Janet Westlake was one of a couple of readers who want to know where one can buy a peony such as her yellow 'Yumi' (right). The Arbor Gate was Gaye's source. She doesn't know of any other nurseries here that carry them. If you do, let me know and I'll share. Monrovia (wholesale grower) carries Itoh peonies and services many Texas nurseries. Gaye also is growing:
- **'Takata'** -- a lovely lilac purple.
- **'Canary'** is the third peony Gaye has heard works well here was among those tested by Texas A&M



* * *

INTO EDIBLES FOR FIRST TIME? One of the most extensive, expert advice resources today for the Greater Houston area, [Urban Harvest](#), now HAS free [webinars](#) and drive-through service at its famous Saturday [Farmers Market](#), 2752 Buffalo Speedway. If you can, hit the "Donate" button and help support this market (one of Texas' largest) and the now hundred-plus area community gardens which depend on Urban Harvest's expertise and guidance. [Other farmers markets open now.](#)



FUKUMI SMITH -- Houston area gardeners lost a true treasure with the passing of Fukumi Smith, 30+ year Mercer Botanic Garden greenhouse volunteer who, says Mercer's Suzanne Chapman, "definitely influenced generations of horticulturists." Fukumi was a longtime American Begonia Society Astro Branch member and Montgomery County Master Gardener. [Obituary](#)

* * *

"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**

PLEASE "CORRAL YOUR GREASE & WIPES!"

FROM HOUSTON PUBLIC WORKS: Houstonians are cooking at home more and have increased use of disinfectant wipes. While these measures may help control COVID19, they may also increase the number of sewer overflows, harming public health and the environment. The main cause of our sanitary sewer overflows is clogged pipes from fats, oils, and grease poured down kitchen sinks and wipes flushed down toilets. Put grease and wipes in the trash, never down the drain. For more on how to safely get rid of grease, visit publicworks.houstontx.gov.



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS #116

A fruit tree that grows well along the Gulf Coast is the Loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*). With the mild winter this past season I have noticed the fruits getting ripe all over town. Their yellowish color against the dark green leaves are very attractive.

It grows in full sun to part shade and in any well drained soil. The tree is hardy into the low teens but the fruit and flowers are not and may be lost in a hard freeze. It grows 15-25 feet tall and wide in most cases and produces a yellowish to orange fruit in the spring.

The fruit are particularly rich in the health promoting chemicals that are called carotenoids, that have been found to help protect against heart disease and some forms of cancer.

The fruits are small 1.5-2 inch-long by slightly over an inch in diameter. They are sweet when ripe with a slight citrusy flavor and can be eaten raw or incorporated into various dishes.

As a boy my parents had one next to their house. I would climb up on the roof and eat dozens of the fruits and see how far I could spit the large seeds. Our next-door neighbor also made a delicious marmalade from the fruit. As you probably already guessed, my job was to pick the fruit.

The link below is a nice introduction to how microbes in the soil work to make plants healthy.

[Read More...](#)

Over the last few weeks, the number of questions about food safety and food plants from herbs to fruit trees, from folks coming into the nursery has skyrocketed. Many folks have been asking “where can I learn more?” Hence below are some links to additional information for those whom are interested in protecting their families.

This season more and more people are putting in food gardens as part of the landscape. Healthy food is one of the best ways to strengthen our immune system. Several studies have now linked the severity of this pandemic to the type food ones eats. Folks whom eat lots of fast foods (junk foods) are more likely to have a severe disease problem. The link to the article below is a nice summary of some of the issues we face.

The coronavirus pandemic is focusing global attention on the hazards inherent to our industrial food system. Kristin Lawless writes in *Heated* about two major problems of our industrial food system: it is harming our environment and our bodies. “What we do to our environment, we do to ourselves,” Lawless writes. “This pandemic has the potential to illuminate the connections between the way we grow and produce our food, the environment, and our health. Both Big Ag and Big Food have worked hard to hide these connections from us, but now the truth is laid bare.” [Read more..](#)

The following link is to an organization (U.S. Right To Know) that provides information about food safety that our media will not tell you as they want the advertising dollars from the big agricultural and food product manufacturing companies. [Read More...](#)

With the current pandemic a lot of interest has been on eating things that strengthen our immune systems and avoiding things that weaken our immune system. I have been saying this for a couple months now as glyphosate (Round Up) prevents the absorption of elements that our immune system needs to fight viruses like selenium, zinc, iodine, magnesium, etc. A new study by Stephanie Seneff, Ph.D., who’s spent 12 years studying glyphosate’s and other toxic chemicals’ effects on human health at the university MIT, believes the clustering of COVID-19 deaths around river tributaries in both China and the U.S. points to glyphosate contamination in our food and the environment.

Using detailed examples to back her hypothesis, Seneff connects the dots between chemical pollution, locations of where COVID-19 has hit hardest and numerous studies showing the connection between glyphosate and lung infections and diseases. Source: [Stephanie Seneff, Ph.D., April 8,2020](#)

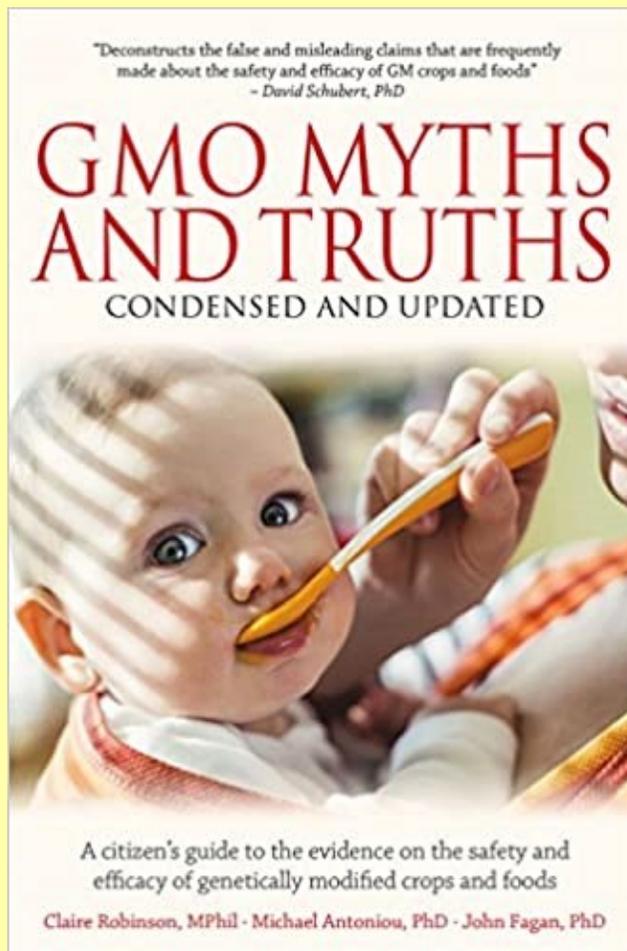
Genetically modified foods have the highest levels of glyphosate in and on them and should be avoided. Information on the dangers of GMO foods can be found on the website <https://gmwatch.org/en/>.

The best way to get healthy and safe foods is to grow one’s own food, next is to shop at farmers markets. The educational organization called [Urban Harvest](#) sponsors several farmers markets in our area.

After that purchase only organically certified food at the grocery store. As this dangerous chemical is not allowed to be used in organic food production.

Note: Genetically Modified Food (GMO's) are not easily identified since President Obama signed legislation into law nick named the DARK act (Deny Americans the Right to Know) even though over 90% of Americans wanted labeling to make it easy to avoid this issue.

The 4th Edition of a book on this issue has just been released:
GMO Myths and Truths: A Citizen's Guide to the Evidence on the Safety and Efficacy of Genetically Modified Crops and Foods, 3rd Edition 4th Edition, by Claire Robinson Mphil, Michael Antoniou PhD, and John Fagan PhD, ISBN-13: 978-0993436703



* * *

HAVE YOU TRIED . . .

FRINGE TREE

(Chionanthus virginicus)

American fringe tree has masses of white flowers with fragrant, strap-shaped petals in May-June. This Texas native is cold tolerant, has yellow fall color and loses leaves in winter, so good on west side of house (shade in summer/sun in winter). Tolerant of urban pollution, seldom needs pruning and may produce dark, bluish-black fruits in late summer that birds love. color. While it may not be quite a "snow-white" bloomer as the imported Chinese fringe tree, it is a native beloved by our birds.



This native FRINGE TREE 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.

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 . . .*

THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
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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 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.

