



## August 14, 2020 - Issue # 352

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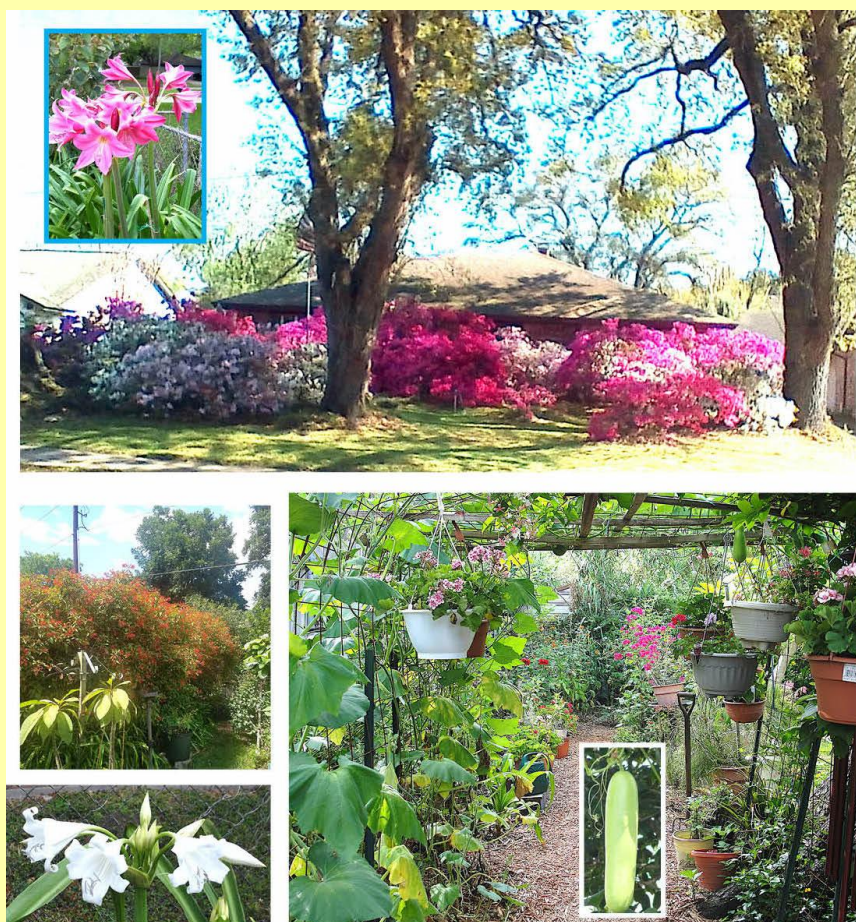
Nature's Way Resources owner John Ferguson, "The Lazy Gardener" Brenda Beust Smith and Pablo Hernandez welcome your feedback and are so grateful to the many horticulturists who contribute their expertise.

[Click here to join our email list](#)

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

### CORONAVIRUS CANCELLATIONS

If your event in our calendar below is cancelled, please let us know as soon as possible at [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)



# 'TOPSY' GARDEN FITS JUST FINE NO 'VS' IN HUMMER FEEDERS 'CLICK' SALES *DE RIGUEUR* NOW

"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy,  
there is always the garden."

-- Minnie Aumonier, 19th century poet

by BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Don't these pictures above make you really curious about this gardener? Something about this garden tells me right off the bat it's not a professionally-tended, created-for-public horticultural site.

Nope, this is a garden that, like Topsy, just "*grewed*." Love of plants in every niche, some of which -- shall we say -- are perhaps a little "too happy" for picky gardeners? It's a garden for someone who couldn't bear to cut down such treasures just in the name pristine neatness. And who obviously lives in a subdivision that gives gardeners freedom to "experiment and enjoy."

This is the Friendswood garden of Dale Phillips, whose plantings have delighted and excited neighbors and friends for 50+ years. Dale has shared plant photos with this newsletter many times. I love seeing his name on an email. What treasure's next?

That wonderful chicken wire & stake "tunnel" pictured above has been intimate with myriads of vines, including Asian gourds (insert) whose fruits hung down for easy pickin'. Although these can be stir-fried, Dale just gave them away.

Raised on a farm and retired from his work at NASA with GE, Dale's always been happy to experiment, such as with his current observations of a [frangipani vine \(\*Chonemorpha fragrans\*\)](#). It has yet to bloom. When it does, I'll definitely share. Patience is a virtue successful gardeners must possess.

Two of Dale's favorite crinums are pictured at the very top of this column: his pink *Crinum* 'Super Ellen Bosanquet' (4+' stalks with up to 7' long leaves) and his 3-5' tall white *Crinum* *Arcella* 'White Queen'.

Crinums rank high on Dale's favorites list and are why he and I first crossed paths. We both especially loved crinums sold by Marcelle Shepherd of Vidor. (Note: we've had no luck trying to follow up on Marcelle. If anyone knows/knew her, Dale & I would love to hear from you: [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com). Husband grew up down the street from the Dubuissou family in Rose City (Vidor).

## FOLLOWUP ON [HUMMER FEEDERS](#) . . .

- Dale doesn't use them anymore: "*I have so much natural food -- saliva and tons of hamelia.*" (such as the huge bloom-covered hummingbird bush at top of this column.
- **PAULA BAZAN** reported her most popular hummer feeders are these from [Perky Pet](#).







**"OUTLIERS ARE HUMMINGBIRDS that decide to stay along the Gulf Coast each winter instead of continuing to South America."** -- [JourneyNorth](#).

[Journey North](#) is a not-to-be-missed website for keeping up with migration arrival times. Unfortunately only a few of our local sighting reports now dot their migration maps -- perhaps understandable with our almost-year-round populations. Still, if you're seeing any, let them know!

I have a question for you readers and an apology. This is my white tunera. Online resources say -- and I quote: **"Blossoms open at sunrise and close at sunset."**

LIARS! These absolutely delightful yellowish-white flowers in full sun open about 8 in the morning. By noon, they are all closed up! And they stay closed all day long! Anyone else have this experience? To paraphrase Lady Catherine de Bourgh: *"I am most seriously displeased with this plant!"*



The apology goes to my yellow/red amaranth which I maligned recently when one morning it had suddenly shriveled up and died for no good reason! I was furious. Then, a few day ago, I walked out to find a tall, healthy green stalks has sprouted from the base. Good plant!

Sudden plant death does happen . . . from dog pee, burrowing animal damage (gophers, etc.), microscopic nematodes that attack plant roots, other below-ground culprits, too much fertilizer or, most often, too much or too little water. In this area, especially with sprinklers, it can also be the result of water never reaching down to the depth of roots. Or, roots rotting from being soaked for too long. Sometimes lack of humidity has been known to do this, but that's not often a problem in our area!

\* \* \*

**SITE CHANGE FOR 2020 BULB & PLANT MART** Pickup site for this year's strictly-online Bulb Mart shopping has changed. Oct. 16-17 pickups have been moved from the Church of St. John the Divine to Silver Street Studio at Sawyer Yards, 2000 Edwards St. Find out how to order online at [gchouston.org](http://gchouston.org).

\* \* \*

**BORDER PLANTINGS** can be great fun and educational for those who like to experiment with plants, to discover which ones you like and, more important, which ones like you! No hard & fast rules. Border gardens are always a work in progress. Follow general specs on sun/shade/drainage, but mostly success depends on experimentation. If something doesn't work out,

put in something else available in the nursery!

This fun border belongs to **Donna Brackett** and includes Scarlet Sage, Indian Blanket and Lance-leaf Coreopsis among other delights.

**"HAVE YOU TRIED . . ."** returns in this issue (above calendar) with a great plant for perennial borders or fence row plantings, especially middle or back positions. Check it out!

\* \* \*

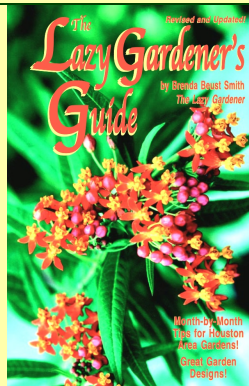


#### NOTES:

- **DANY MILLIKIN**, host of [HomeShow Garden Pros radio show](#), (Sat., 7-9am, 610AM) returns in our Spotlight below with part 2 of his look at growing eggplants.

\* \* \*

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



Free PDF download of Brenda's now-out-of-print —  
"LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE"

[Lazy Gardener Guide Front Cover](#)

[Lazy Gardener Rest Of Covers](#)

[Lazy Gardener Guide Book Pages](#)

In exchange for this free book, all I ask is  
that you be safe . . . PLEASE WEAR A MASK!  
Protect yourself and the rest of us!

\* \* \*



**GETTING THE MOST OUT**



# OF YOUR EGGPLANTS! (Part 2)

by **DANIEL MILLIKIN**

Executive Director, [OHBA – Organic Educators](#)

[HomeShowGardenPros.com](#)

While eggplants are moderately heavy feeders, you can overdo it on the nitrogen. If lush green leaves are out of control but there are very few flowers, too much nitrogen fertilizer may be the issue.

Cool weather is the nemesis of the eggplant grower. If temperatures are consistently at or below 60°F, there won't be much of a harvest. The sweet spot for fruit production is between 75 and 90°F. And even though eggplant is known to thrive in hot weather, if temperatures are steadily above 95°F, plants will stop setting fruit. Don't give up, the fall will bring a whole new crop.

Be mindful to water strategically, especially when fruits are developing. Water deeply inconsistently, to a depth of 6 inches or more. This trains the plant to develop deeper roots. Use high quality mulch as well, this is different than other vegetable crops and it will help maintain moisture levels.

Fruits are heavy, so cage plants from the beginning in the same way you would cage a tomato. This will keep leaves off the ground, which will help to reduce chances for disease and keep fruits from becoming deformed.

Eggplants, much like tomatoes and peppers, have flowers with both male and female parts and are considered self-pollinating. However, wind and pollinators can only help. With that said, give plants a little shake here and there to further improve chances for pollination.



## PESTS AND DISEASES TO KNOW ABOUT

Flea beetles especially have a real talent for finding any and every eggplant you grow. Okay – so that might be dramatic. But seriously, their tiny holes (pictured here) discoloring the leaves let you know they have found your stash. But with some perseverance, and some horticultural Molasses, they are easily controlled.

Other pests that like to make a meal out of eggplant include cutworms and spider mites. Cutworms, which are moth larvae, do their damage at night, which is obvious come morning. Spider mites can barely even be seen and hide on the undersides of leaves. If you turn over a leaf and see a white web-like residue, it is likely spider mites.

Fortunately, healthy plants can handle a few unwanted critters. Grow them under row covers until they are large enough to withstand damage. If action must be taken, consider horticultural molasses, diatomaceous earth or insecticidal soaps.



As for diseases, prevention is key. Powdery mildew and verticillium wilt have been known to affect eggplant and are difficult to control once present. Verticillium wilt is caused by soil-borne fungi that can survive for more than ten years, even without a host present. Once infected, remove plants immediately; and drench area with Humic Acid.

Avoid growing host plants, which include other members of the Solonaceae family like tomatoes and peppers, in the impacted area for at least three years.

### WORTH THE EFFORT

*Have you grown eggplant before? What's your secret to success? Let us know and connect with us at [HomeshowGardenPros.com](http://HomeshowGardenPros.com).*

\* \* \*

## OHBA

# Organic Online Workshop Week

REGISTER ONLINE @ [OHBAONLINE.ORG/WEBINAR-EVENTS](http://OHBAONLINE.ORG/WEBINAR-EVENTS)

### 6 FABULOUS ORGANIC EXPERTS:



**DANIEL MILLIKIN**  
Do you know about Summer dormancy? This 1 hour webinar will teach you about the transition from Summer to Fall. Daniel will also talk about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats for Fall gardening. Join us for some helpful tips on dealing with the seasonal transition!

**AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup> @ 5:00PM CST**



**BRAD PHILLIPS**  
Trees are the most valuable plant assets on all properties. Come learn the best practices for sustainable tree care in & out of the landscape. You will learn how to reduce cost, improve results and increase property value of all types in this one hour special presentation.

**AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup> @ 5:00PM CST**

### WATCH 4 OF OUR PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ZOOMINARS ON THE OHBA WEBSITE UNDER 'WEBINAR EVENTS':



Mike Serant  
Love Mother Nature



Suzanne Wainwright  
The Buglady



Betsy Ross  
The Rain Dance



Molly Pikarsky  
Summer Plants

Links for live Zoominars will be sent out one day prior to the event, via email. After watching the 6 presentations, take a small quiz & earn the very first OHBA Organic Workshop Week Certificate! Submit your quiz by August 28, 2020 @ 4:00 PM.

For more information head to [OHBAonline.org](http://OHBAonline.org)



# THE FIRST EVER CERTIFIED ORGANIC WORKSHOP WEEK

August 18<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> @ 5:00 PM

**OHBA**  
ORGANIC HORTICULTURE  
BENEFITS ALLIANCE

## From this workshop you will get:

### TICKETS

REGISTER ONLINE @  
[ohbaonline.org/events](http://ohbaonline.org/events)  
OHBA members: \$25  
Non-OHBA members: \$50



2 live OHBA Webinars featuring  
Organic experts:  
Daniel Millikin & Brad Phillips



4 fascinating OHBA Zoominars  
(previously recorded)

Take a small quiz to receive an OHBA  
Organic Workshop certification!

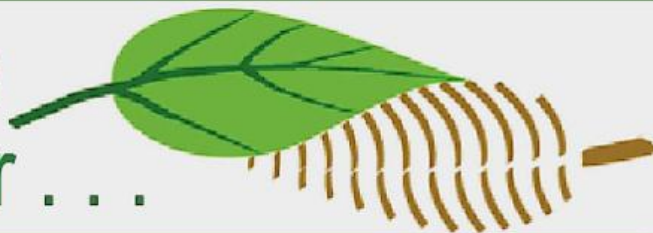
## SPECIAL TOPICS INCLUDE:

Summer to Fall transition  
Summer dormancy  
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats  
Organic Tree Management & Maintenance

## THANK YOU SPONSORS!



# John's Corner . . .



## BOOK REVIEW

### TREE STORY – The History of the World Written in Rings

By Valerie Trouet, John Hopkins  
University Press, 2020, ISBN: 978-  
1-421143774

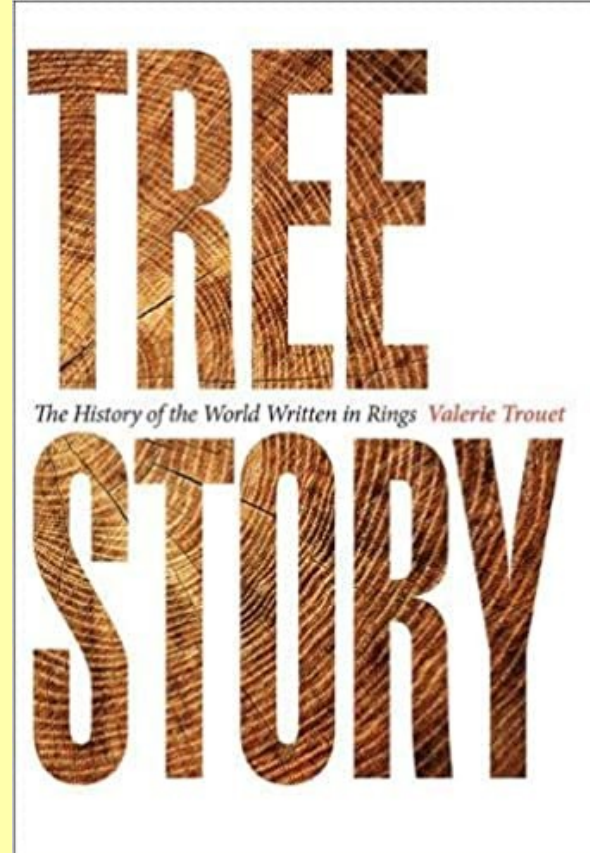
For me this was a fun book to read. I have known about tree ring dating since I was in Boy Scouts and I was aware to a limited degree about the use of tree rings in modeling rainfall and climate in general.

This book opened up a world about using tree rings in many fields from

archeology to climate change to confirming historical event from thousands of years ago. Dr. Trouet made this book easy to read by linking science and adventure as she tells the history of tree science now called *dendrochronology* from the Greek words for tree, "dendros", and time "chronos".

She explains how tree rings from living trees can be sampled without hurting the tree and then used to compare to wood in a sunken ship to date the ship or date the age of a historic violin. Rings from living trees can overlap with trees that were buried in ash and preserved by volcanic eruptions extending our map into the past.

She explores tree ring dating from all over the world including many very remote places. The stories of what was involved to get there and what they experienced are remarkable. From the study of tree rings, they can date climatic issues, changes in the circulation of ocean currents, as well as refine the accuracy of carbon-24 dating.



"Blending popular science, travelogue, and cultural history, *Tree Story* highlights exciting findings of tree-ring research, including the fate of lost pirate treasure, successful strategies for surviving California wildfires, the secret to Genghis Khan's victories, the connection between Egyptian pharaohs and volcanoes, and even the role of olives in the fall of Rome. These fascinating tales are deftly woven together to show us how dendrochronology sheds light on global climate dynamics and uncovers the clear links between humans and our leafy neighbors. Trouet delights us with her dedication to the tangible appeal of studying trees, a discipline that has taken her to austere and beautiful landscapes around the globe and has enabled scientists to solve long-pondered mysteries of Earth and its human inhabitants."



## HAVE YOU TRIED . . .

### OX-EYE SUNFLOWER

*(Heliopsis helianthoides)*

*This showy, drought-tolerant, 3-6' butterfly-attracting herbaceous perennial blooms June-August and makes an excellent cut flower. This dry-side, well-drained soil lover appreciates regular watering. Will bloom in part shade, but prefers full sun. Removing spent flowers prolongs bloom period. Also*



*known as ox-eye daisy or false sunflower, it forms upright clumps with 2-3" blooms. No serious insect/disease problems. Great for cutting gardens, perennial borders and pollinator habitats, especially in middle or back areas. Ancients used the leaves to reduce fevers and loose phlegm.*

*OX-EYE SUNFLOWER 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**

**(See Farmers Markets at end of calendar)**

### **ADULT GARDEN PLANT EVENTS ONLY**

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

#### **PLEASE READ BEFORE SUBMITTING EVENTS!**

- Events NOT submitted in the EXACT format below may take 2 weeks or longer to be reformatted/retyped and added to calendar.
- Events in this EXACT format (below) are copied/pasted immediately in upcoming calendar. Pdfs or flyers need re-typing - only delay publication.
- Submit to: [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com). Put group name in email subject.

### **CHECK WEBSITES FOR . . .**

- **COVID-19 - RELATED PRECAUTIONS AT EVENTS**
- **UPDATED CALENDAR BEFORE ATTENDING ANY PREVIOUSLY-SCHEDULED**
- **LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION.**

AUG 18: TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTERS FALL TRAINING CLASS BEGINS. \$125. Evening & Saturday classes. [coastalprairie.org](http://coastalprairie.org); [carol@coastalprairie.org](mailto:carol@coastalprairie.org).

THURS., AUG. 27: BIRD SURVEY led by Paul Gregg and Christy Jones, 8am-10am, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160. <https://bit.ly/2On3WdT>

SAT., AUG. 29: THE MERCER SOCIETY - VIRTUAL SPECIALTY PLANT SALE - PLUMERIA, 8am-8pm, Online Only. 713-274-4166. [themercersociety.square.site](http://themercersociety.square.site)

TUES., SEPT. 15, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GRDENERS VIRTUAL PLANT SALE. 8am - 8pm at [mcmga.com](http://mcmga.com). Pickup instructions will be emailed to you. AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. [mcmga.com](http://mcmga.com)

TUES., NOV. 17: HEIRLOOM PLANTS by GREG GRANT, 10am; St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. Sugar Land Garden Club event. [sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://sugarlandgardenclub.org)

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### **LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS**

- **URBAN HARVEST FARMERS MARKET**, Saturdays, 8am-noon, in St. John's School parking lot, 2752 Buffalo Speedway.

- **FULSHEAR FARMERS MARKET** Saturdays, 9am-1pm, 9035 Bois d'Arc Lane @ FM 1093, Fulshear.
- **THE WOODLANDS FARMERS MARKET AT GROGAN'S MILL**, Saturdays, 8am-noon, Grogan's Mill Shopping Center Parking Lot, 7 Switchbud Pl., The Woodlands
- **BEAUTY'S GARDEN**. Acres Homes Farmers Market Saturday, 10am-2pm, 4333 W Little York Rd.
- **WESTCHASE DISTRICT FARMERS MARKET**, Thursdays, opens 3pm, St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church, 10503 Westheimer Road (at Rogerdale Road, one block west of Beltway 8)
- **MEMORIAL VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET**, Saturdays, 9am-1pm, 10840 Beinhorn Rd.

Although normally we did not run out-of-garden events, during this pandemic period when most gardening events have been cancelled, we are happy to publish a running list of local Farmers Markets.  
Send notices to [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)



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!**  
& please patronize our Newsletter & Calendar sponsors below!

## 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](mailto:lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com)





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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 -- started in the early '70s as a fun side-, it then ranked as the longest-running, continuously-published local newspaper column in the Greater Houston area.

Brenda's gradual sideways step from reporter into gardening writing -- first as a just-a-fun side Chronicle assignment in the early '70s -- 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 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 Humble, TX, and is married to the 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.

