



Sep-11-2020 | Issue 355

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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 [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)



## WATERING BEFORE A RAIN? WANTED: WINTER-BLOOMING POLLINATORS

*"Flowers are the music of the ground.  
From earth's lips spoken without sound."*

– Edwin Curran (American poet)

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

A special thanks to you, readers. You are truly the lifeblood of this column. So many questions you send in are too good not to share! For example ...

**Noah James** in Missouri City wants to know if his neighbor is crazy for watering plants right before rain is forecast?

No, he's not, especially during hot, dry summers in the Greater



Houston area with our thick gumbo clay soil and steadily rising temperatures.

In the summer especially, top soil levels of all soils tend to dry out and crust over. Think of it like pouring water on baby powder.

The first part of any rainfall is ends up softening upper soil levels. Subsequent rain can seep downward. Most, however, rolls off to lower areas.

- Upper soil layers are usually extremely dry and will absorb most of the water falling at first.
- Since less moisture moves down into cooler, lower soil levels where roots should be growing, roots start growing upward into levels that are usually hotter and drier.

Don't just turn on the sprinkler when rain is forecast. Aim the hose at the base of treasured plants to ensure that's where the most possible rainwater is absorbed.

\* \* \*

A "new-to-Houston Copperfield gardener" was a bit miffed at last week's note: *"Almost all who responded recommended planting for year-round blooms since some pollinator populations start yearly cycles earlier here than in areas north."*

She's from a colder climate and wants to know how & why should one plant for pollinator flowers in winter? In our subtropical Gulf Coast area, we have a 12-month growing season with a few breaks for REALLY COLD spells. This means:

1. It's often hard for us to set bloom seasons. If it stays warm enough, or if the cold spells are short enough, many perennials just keep on blooming
2. Bees, butterflies, hummers may or may not move south. Those who decide to stay will be looking for food and shelter.



**READERS: Help Copperfield out here.** Which of your pollinator plants often bloom through winter?

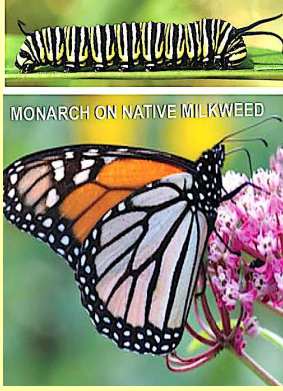
For example, **PAULA BAZAN** wants Pink powderpuff ([Calliandra emarginata](#)) included as a great pollinator plant, and adds -- coincidentally - it continues to bloom into late winter and beyond. Hers, she says, is a favorite of honeybees. Although roses are not generally

considered major "pollinator plants," they are themselves pollinated by bees and butterflies. Her Panama Rose Rondeletia blooms through winter.

\* \* \*

**JAZZ PAZ** in Northbrook/SW Houston, made a common mistaken identity -- thinking caterpillars that totally consumed a passionvine in one single day was a





monarch stage. But no, said Nancy Greig. "The only local caterpillars that eat passionvine are the orangish, spiky caterpillars of the gorgeous Gulf fritillary butterfly (*Agraulis vanillae*)." Like the monarch, these are orange & black on the upper side, albeit slightly smaller. But the orange is brighter orange and the underside is spangled with silver spots.

Nancy (Cockrell Butterfly Center Director Emeritus) explains the gulf fritillary likes several different passionvines, but tends to shun the tough leaves of the red-flowered variety.

Nancy, of course, doesn't want you to kill any caterpillars, not even tomato hornworms! Even these, she points out, turn into the spectacular hawk moth (*Carolina Sphinx*), "that is basically the nocturnal equivalent of a hummingbird," she says.



Speaking of the Cockrell Butterfly Center, their traditional fall plant sale is one of many being kept alive by online shopping. Don't understand how these sales work? Let's take a look at the Cockrell's [easy-to-follow instructions for Online Shopping](#) which will start at 9am Monday, Sept. 14:

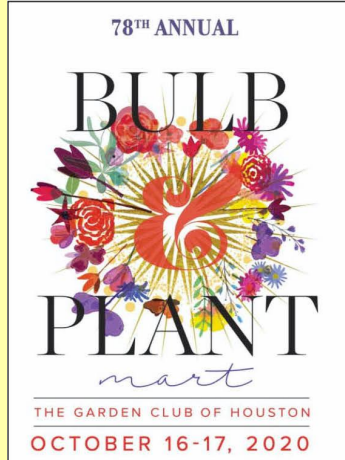
1. Shop at our [online Museum Store](#) from Sept. 14–18 (or until we sell out). Online orders will be available starting at 9 a.m. on Sept. 14.
2. An HMNS team member will contact you via email to schedule your pick up time. Pick up is only available on September 26 at the HMNS at Hermann Park location.
3. Pick up your plants during your designated pick-up time. It's that easy!

Either credit or debit cards (no cash) can be used for purchases at the Cockrell Sale. But each sale might be slightly different, of course. Always log onto the sponsoring group's website for exact instructions. Also upcoming:

- **2020 BULB & PLANT MART** - Now through Oct. [gchouston.org](http://gchouston.org). This Garden Club of Houston mega sale is now as famous for it's great plants as it is for Houston' single best resource for bulbs of all kinds. Include, of course, are amaryllis which Nancy Wilson Kelley highlight in our Spotlight Article below. Don't miss these GORGEOUS pictures. They can all be ordered now and you'll be given pickup instructions.

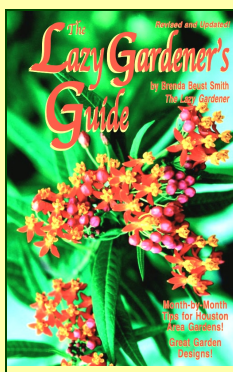
Whether you plan to buy or not, I hope you'll check out the **2020 78th Annual Bulb & Plant Mart's traditional Horticultural Guide**. As always, it's free, this incredible listing of plants that, yes, are available for sale, but also make wonderful reading, especially in our current sheltering-in-place.

Click on this link: [gchouston.org](http://gchouston.org) Scroll to bottom of



first page & click on "BPM 2020 Hort Guide" for a free download. Prepare for an eye-popping experience. A hard copy will be provided for those who order when purchases are picked up at a drive-thru on Oct. 16 & 17. All funds raised from the sale go directly into GCH's community projects which include but are not limited to Houston Hospice Gardens, Houston Museum of Natural Science Butterfly Center, Hogg Bird Sanctuary, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Rienzi and Urban Harvest.

TIP O' THE TROWEL to Keep Bolivar Beautiful (Carlis Danna Cole, President) and Keep Surfside Beautiful (Tabitha Mull, Chairman) for ranking, respectively, in the top 3 communities in Texas cited for outstanding beautification projects. Padre Island placed first in this [Keep Texas Beautiful Awards](#) category.



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!*  
\* \* \*

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

\* \* \*



## GET OFF TO RIGHT START WITH BULB & PLANT MART AMARYLLIS

By NANCY WILSON KELLEY  
[Garden Club of Houston](#)

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum Amaryllidaceae*) are among the easiest bulbs to grow in Houston. Each year at The Garden Club of Houston's annual Bulb and Plant Mart I have purchased many of these outstanding bulbs, long-time favorites such as 'Adele', 'Alfresco', 'Exposure', 'Picotee' and 'Susan'. New this year are 'Double Record', 'Jewel' and 'Nymph.' Typically, I plant them indoors in pots to brighten the winter months.

Three big mistakes to avoid when planting these wonderful bulbs indoors are:



- Plant using a container that has a hole to drain the water. These bulbs do not like to be soaked or they get mushy and will not bloom.
- Do not over water, let top inch of soil dry out before watering again.
- Rotate the plant every two to three days so the stalks will not grow towards the light!

After they bloom, I transplant the bulb with the stalk still intact into my yard. Being a very lazy gardener, I only make certain they are regularly watered.

The reward is bulbs that have bloomed year after year throughout the spring although I have never had one bloom in the summer. Imagine my surprise when I went out in late July and one of my “Alfresco” bulbs was in full bloom! A gift from the garden during these difficult times.



***Amaryllis 'Jewel'***



***Amaryllis 'Adele'***



***Amaryllis 'Alresco'***



***Amaryllis 'Aphrodite'***



***Amaryllis 'Susan'***



***A. 'Double-Record'***

NOTE: Ordering is now open for the **78th Annual Bulb & Plant Mart**. Details: [gchouston.org](http://gchouston.org) for ordering/pickup directions.

\* \* \*



## Microalgae, Soil, Climate Change, & Contagion: Solutions for a COVID-19 Recalibrated World

Featuring David Ramjohn,  
CEO of Algeternal Technologies



### “Microbes Rule the World”

In our recalibrated world, we must understand & respect the importance of microorganisms. Microalgae are the single most important category of microbes on Earth. Learn what Microalgae are & how using them will help you grow the best plants ever. We must harness these planetary primary producers to promote growth, reverse the damage we have done & avert future crises.

September 23, 2020 5:00 to 6:00 PM CDT

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87232207340>

Meeting ID: 872 3220 7340

### THANK YOU SPONSORS



# John's Corner . . .



## BOOK REVIEW

Over the last few months with a revised work schedule due to the pandemic, I have had a chance to get caught up on some reading and finished over a dozen books since April.

With the hot and dry summer, we have had in 2020 and the extreme drought in many parts of Texas, this book was very interesting and presents a lot of useful information.



**“WATER IN PLAIN SIGHT – Hope For A Thirsty World”,** by Judith D. Schwartz, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2019, ISBN: 978-1-60358-916-1.

Society as we know it is out of useful water. The cost of water is steadily increasing all over our region. With a rapidly growing population the demand for water will continue to increase.

If we as a society would change our landscape practices and work on improving our soil to hold and capture water it would help solve many environmental issues from flooding, greenhouse gasses, pollution, dead zones, landfill space, etc.

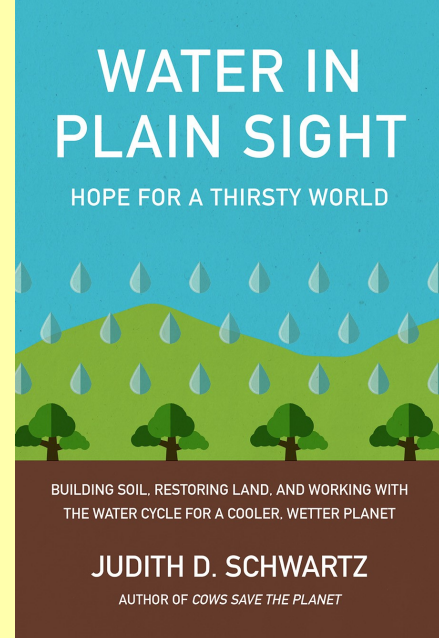
The author starts out talking about how to make rainfall more effective using examples from all over the world on how people are healing their soil so that when it rains, the water soaks in and is stored in the topsoil or is used to replenish the water table. She goes on to explain that desertification (the loss of the lands ability to sustain plant and animal life) is not as large a factor as how effective is the soils ability to capture and store water till needed. She explores the importance of using native perennial prairie grasses whom roots go 12-15 deep or more into the soil becoming more open or porous to allow water to enter.

Next, she covers how extremely out of date (illogical or stupid) interstate agreements that waste valuable water with their “use it or lose it”, ethics. She explores the role of agriculture using almonds for example. I knew they required a lot of water but I learned that it requires one gallon of water to produce one single almond! For just the state of California, that equates to 1.1 trillion gallons of water. Note: When one purchases almonds form California you are helping to suck the state dry. A quarter pound hamburger requires 450 gallons of water to raise beef in a feedlot.

Judith explores the difference between green water and blue water. Green water represents two-thirds of the worlds freshwater which has been mis-managed or ignored. This leads her into an easy to understand explanation of the role soils play in storing water and how to improve one’s soil.

She explores the link between birds, beavers and other animals and their role in saving water. For example, a good bird habitat also is a good water saving habitat of which she gives several examples.

Next, she explores trees and how they can actually help store water which is the opposite of what we were taught. The root system of a mature tree can actually hold tens of thousands of gallons of rainwater. For urban areas (like Houston) this is extremely important as more trees will reduce flooding. This does not mention the cooling effect trees have on climate and removing air pollution. A tree planting experiment in Melbourne, Australia found that a tree cover of 40%, reduced average temperatures by 9 degrees.



Judith gives lots of information on plants, salts, water diversion projects and much more all through the book. She includes an explanation of the damage from artificial fertilizers and why they require many times as much water for a plant when they are used. {Our cities and counties need to take the lead in changing their landscape guidelines and be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.}

She even covers some of the newer technologies how one can harvest water from the air even in desert environments that is free from a lot of the chemicals in our drinking water.

This book is for the average reader whom wants to understand how water affects so many aspects of our life's and how to be better stewards of it. Solving the water issue also links the solving the soil care issue also solves many overlapping environmental problems.

This book is a primer on soil ecology and economy and how it provides hope for the despairing environmental news we here each day. It is about solutions for healing our planet. It is the best book to date on the interrelation ship of water to all areas of our lives.

## HAVE YOU TRIED

. . .

### MUSICAL NOTES CLERODENDRON

*(Clerodendrum thomsoniae)*

This eye-grabbing shrub blooms in fall. Pure white "musical note" buds in dense clusters atop upright stems open at night and last well into morning. Sometimes evergreen but will return from roots, although be patient. It can get a bit leggy so don't be afraid to prune back to encourage bushier growth. Can take full sun or part shade. 3-5'H x 4-5'W



**MUSICAL NOTES CLERODENDRON** 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

All events in Houston unless otherwise specified.

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.*
- **FARMERS MARKETS** -- Normally we do not run non-gardening/plant events. During this pandemic, when most gardening events have been cancelled, we are happy to publish a running list of local Farmers Markets. See at end of calendar.

**Submit events to:** [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com).

**ALWAYS** put group name in email subject.

**CHECK WEBSITES FOR ON-SITE COVID-19-RELATED PRECAUTIONS!**

MON.-THURS., SEPT. 14-18: COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER FALL VIRTUAL PLANT SALE. Pickup: Sat., Sept. 16. [hmns.org/cockrell-butterfly-center/](https://hmns.org/cockrell-butterfly-center/)

TUES., SEPT. 15, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS VIRTUAL PLANT SALE. 8am - 8pm at [mcmga.com](https://mcmga.com). AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. [mcmga.com](https://mcmga.com)

TUES., SEPT. 15: Harris County MASTER GARDENER OPEN FORUM, 11am-noon, & 7-8pm. Site: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/](https://facebook.com/harriscountyp/)

WED., SEPT. 16: TURF MAINTENANCE by MICHAEL POTTER, virtual lecture, 10-10:30am, Harris County Master Gardener event, free. Register: [gardeningonthegulf.eventbrite.com](https://gardeningonthegulf.eventbrite.com)

THURS., SEPT. 17: UPDATE ON Harris County PLANT TRIALS by PAUL WINSKI, 10-10:30am, virtual lecture. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: [homegrown2020september.eventbrite.com](https://homegrown2020september.eventbrite.com). [hcmga.tamu.edu](https://hcmga.tamu.edu)

FRI., SEPT. 18-SUN., SEPT. 20: HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN OPENING SEASON – CELEBRATING LATIN AMERICA, 9am-5pm daily, One Botanic Lane. [Purchase tickets](#)

SAT., SEPT. 19: COOL SEASON VEGETABLES online class. 9am. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. \$15. Register at least 2 days prior at [fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/](https://fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/). 281-342-3034 or Brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu

SAT., SEPT. 26: 23rd ANNUAL WOODLANDS LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS (drive-through event) by The WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP, 9am-noon. Sterling Ridge Park & Ride, 8001 McBeth Way, The Woodlands. [thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment](https://thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment)

FRI., OCT. 2-SUN., OCT. 4: HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN OPENING SEASON – CELEBRATING ASIA, 9am-5pm daily, One Botanic Lane. [Purchase tickets](#)

SAT. OCT. 10: HOUSTON FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS PLANT SALE & FOOD DRIVE, 10am-1pm, 1501 Sunset Blvd. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs & The First Christian Church event. [houstonfederationgardenclubs.org](https://houstonfederationgardenclubs.org)

SAT., OCT. 10: NATIVE LANDSCAPES FOR BIRD (virtual program) by Native Plant Society of Texas – Houston Chapter, 9am-4:30pm, \$52. Register: [npsot.org/wp/nlcp](https://npsot.org/wp/nlcp)

FRI., OCT. 16-SUN., OCT. 18: HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN OPENING SEASON – CELEBRATING AFRICA, 9am-5pm daily, One Botanic Lane, [Purchase tickets](#)

SAT., OCT. 17: FRUIT TREES-WHAT TO GROW IN FORT BEND COUNTY, online class. 9am. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. \$15. Register at least 2 days prior; [fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/](https://fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/). 281-342-3034 or Brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu

SAT., OCT. 24: NATIVE LANDSCAPES FOR BIRD (virtual program) by Native Plant Society of Texas – Houston Chapter, 9am-4:30pm, \$52. Register: [npsot.org/wp/nlcp](https://npsot.org/wp/nlcp)

FRI., OCT. 30-SUN., NOV. 1: HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN OPENING SEASON – CELEBRATING THE MEDITERRANEAN, 9am-5pm daily, One Botanic Lane. [Purchase](#)

[tickets](#)

SAT., NOV. 7: NATIVE LANDSCAPES FOR BIRD (virtual program) by Native Plant Society of Texas – Houston Chapter, 9am-4:30pm, \$52. Register:

[npsot.org/wp/nlcp](http://npsot.org/wp/nlcp)

SAT., NOV. 14: COMPOSTING - BENEFITS & HOW TO COMPOST, online class. 9am. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. \$15. Register at least 2 days prior; [fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/](http://fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/). 281-342-3034 or [Brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu)

TUES., NOV. 17: HEIRLOOM PLANTS (ZOOM program) by GREG GRANT, 10am. 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

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[YearRoundHouston.com](http://YearRoundHouston.com)

## MicroLife™



Complete Organic Solutions



## 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.

