



Mar-05-2021 | Issue 377

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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

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POST WINTER STORM 'URI' GOOD TIME FOR A NEW 'TEXAS TOUGH' GARDEN

"It's not that easy being green . . . "

-- Joe Raposo, lyricist, originally performed
by Jim Henson as Kermit the Frog

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

BEING GREEN'S certainly not typical of our plants these days! In fact, "green" seems so rare following our brobdingnag freeze, it's a great time to re-evaluate cold hardiness of our floral choices. Our weather truly is becoming as "inconveniently" extreme as scientists projected, icy-er freezes, stronger hurricanes, deeper flooding, more prolonged rains and droughts, etc. Did you know that ice storm had a name? "Uri." I didn't until I read the Houston

Chronicle editorial below.



One early blooming survivor has earned several readers' kudos already. Carolina jessamine may emerge as our Queen of the 2021 Arctic Blast. Normally one of our earliest blooming wild vines, this great landscape plant not only held on to all her buds for **Josanna Brattis Smith**, Josie reports hers are already opening to vivid yellow

blooms. My buds are all now gone although the leaves are still holding on. Hope Springs eternal! (file photo, not Josanna's.)



Don't get too excited, not blooming now, but readers report still "green" are, I to r, Tropic Snow peach, LA iris, Peggy Martin rose, Martha Turnbull gardenia and rain lilies!

For this particular reader response, I'm only calling for surviving plants that WEREN'T covered or protected in any way. We are talking lazy gardening, after all. My other still-green (**tho not blooming!**) plants include Gardenia 'Martha Turnbull, Jasmine 'Mme Galen', daylilies, red yucca and weeping yaupon.

- **Laura Carins (SW Houston)** reports her Peggy Martin Rose, Louisiana iris, rainlilies are green and her Tropic Snow peach tree is putting on new leaves in what she now calls her "taupe and burnt toast garden."
- **Robbie Sharp** noted her camellias are fine and I'm happy to report my own Yuletide camellia looks exactly the same today as it did pre-freeze.
- **Daniel Sebesta** discovered even though his more mature plants froze, smaller carrots, cabbage and mustard plants seem fine. Onions are gone, but garlic's ok.

NOTE: Do share your "still green even though unprotected" to lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

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WHILE YOU'RE WAITING TO SEE what does -- and doesn't -- reappear:

- Look into the Nine Natives program created by the [Katy Prairie Association](#), funded by the [Garden Club of Houston](#) and supported by many other groups to promote the value of using native plants to create pockets of prairie in all gardens, even in the middle of the city. [The Nine Natives Master List](#) is a great place to start!

- TIP O' THE TROWEL TO THE Houston Chronicle's Editorial Board for this incredible piece: ["Freeze got your garden, Texas? Plant back better with native species"](#)! It makes vital horticultural points we should all consider before replacing plants, topping of with:

"Even as you weep for your willow (native to China) and pay last respects to your beloved sago palm (native to Japan), remember that their deaths were not in vain as long as you "plant back better."

* * *

TRULY GOOD NEIGHBORS are those who help others less fortunate re-establish devastated gardens. Perfect gifts: vegetable seedlings, including okra, tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers! That's what [Beauty's Community Garden](#), one of Houston vast array of community gardens, will be selling as a fundraiser Sat., Mar. 13, 10am-4pm at Sunny's Foodstore, 6200 Westheimer Rd.

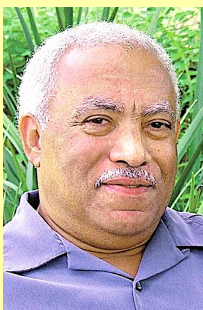


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PALMS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST POPULAR single type plant in the Greater Houston area. Almost all appear to have suffered from temps in the teens. Which will come back? Which will die? In case you missed it, here's a segment from Randy Lemmon's GardenLine show that might give you some insight into what to expect:

[Grant Stephenson's interview with Randy Lemmon Gardenline](#)

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FAREWELL TO DR. WILLIAM JOHNSON Greater Houston/Galveston gardeners lost a true treasure with the passing of Dr. William Johnson who headed Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office since 1997. Nationally recognized for superior service, Dr. Johnson generously shared his horticulture expertise, especially -- altho not limited to -- inspiring more fruit tree plantings in this area. He was a longtime friend who will be missed so much.

* * *

SPEAKING OF TREASURES . . .How will this cold affect treasured spring bluebonnet displays? Too soon to tell, but hope springs eternal. Are yours still showing green? Do share and [report sightings](#). Should you plant now? Yes, but starter plants only. Plant seeds in fall. And don't mow down! Greenery looks like clover.



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THEY'RE B-A-A-A-ACK! The ruminant have returned! Houston Arboretum & Nature Center continues its unique Rent-A-Goat "mowing" to remove vegetation in the Meadow area. Take kiddos to watch or to get lawn mowing ideas? [Houston Arboretum & Nature Center](https://www.houstonarboretum.org/).

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Brenda's LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER

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

Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

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NOTE IN CALENDAR BELOW: MANY SALES MAY HAVE SUFFERED SEVERE FREEZE DAMAGE ON PLANTS, BUT HAVE NOT SO NOTIFIED US. CHECK WEBSITES UPDATES & COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS!

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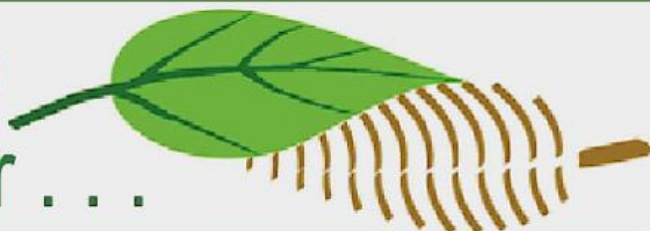


The Pines and Prairies Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas is now forming.

If you are interested in joining, please visit The Native Plant Society of Texas Web Page and go to the top right corner and click on the red box (join/renew) [Or use this link.](#)

Under chapter affiliation choose Pines and Prairies. This chapter will serve (but not be limited to) the Montgomery County Area.

**John's
Corner . . .**



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 145

There was an interesting article in the American Naturalist (January 2021) on a

species of beetles known as “Burying Beetles”. As most all parents, these beetles go the extra step for their children. They are part of nature’s clean-up crew that gets rid of dead animals and are a benefit to gardeners.

These beetles dig a hole and then scout for a dead bird, lizard, mouse, etc. and bury it. They even pluck its feathers or fur and roll the meat into balls. They then cover it in a goop they produce. This goop prevents the odors from being noticed by the competition, and it is antimicrobial to slow down the decomposition.

Their digging helps break up compaction, cycles nutrients, and helps prevent the spread of disease from the decay. However, if one uses pesticides you lose these benefits of this good beetle.

Tip: For decades experienced gardeners have recommended leaving large logs rotting in the back of their flowerbeds to provide a home for many critters that loosen soil, eat pest insects, and more. They are also food for beneficial microbes to earthworms and other beetles.

I recently read an article in the Journal HortScience (2020) comparing fertilization by both organic and artificial fertilizers on potted Blueberries. It reminded me that there is something we do not talk about often enough; over fertilization.

The researchers found that over fertilization resulted in too much electrical conductivity (EC) in the root zone causing poor plant growth, and interveinal chlorosis. All artificial fertilizers are chemically salts, that when exposed to water dissolve increasing the electrical conductivity of the soil.

For example, remember the experiments we did in school, where there was a battery and a light bulb with wires from the battery in a distilled water and nothing happened. However, when we stirred in a teaspoon of salt the lightbulb would light up. The salt dissolved into ions that could carry the electricity. This is one of the reasons why it is easy to burn plants with artificial fertilizers.

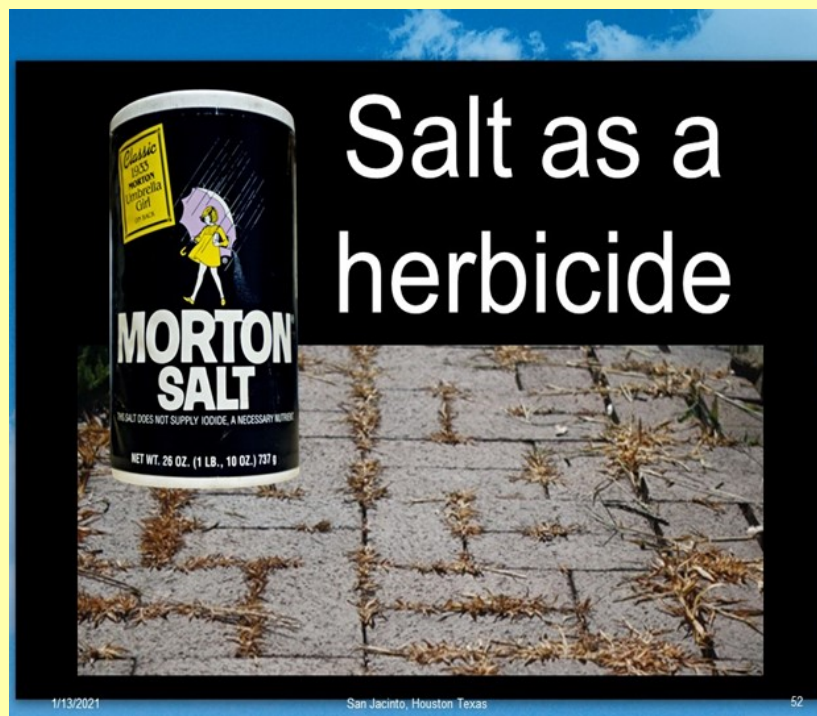
Additionally, plants require much more water as they have to dilute the salt burn effects as they can pull water out of plant tissues. This effect is why salt is used to preserve and cure meats, etc. Organic fertilizers do not burn plants and do not leach out of the soil polluting our waterways.

Note: Over fertilization is rarely an issue with organic fertilizers.

Another paper published in the Journal HortScience (2020) was mitigating salt stress on Eggplants by using biochar. They used both a softwood and hardwood biochar and it did help reduce salt stress. However, the absurdity was, Why use artificial fertilizers that created the salt stress in the first place!

It made think of the old proverb: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

This old advertisement tells us why as gardeners we need to avoid items that are high in salt.



A study published in the Journal HortScience (2020) was on using a black plastic tarp (5-6 mm thickness) as a weed control method up in the Northeast USA. They found that tarping the soil for three weeks reduced weed percent cover by 95-100% depending on the weed species. Longer time frames did not improve the results.

Soil moisture and temperature were generally higher in the tarped plots. Many gardeners know this process as solarization, which can be an effective weed suppression methodology, especially for new gardens. Along the Gulf Coast with our higher temperatures and increased sunlight this method works well.

The Journal HortTechnology (2018) had a paper on using compost as a mulch in growing lettuce in New England. The compost was effective in reducing weeds in both spring and fall experiments.

The mulching increased soil temperature, fresh and dry weights were significantly higher. The use of compost significantly extended the growing season allowing for additional harvests contrary to expected results.

Comment: The dark color of a good compost absorbs energy from the sun warming the soil. Microbes in the compost also can generate some heat allowing for a longer growing season.

The photo below is from a friend of mine taken during the recent winter storm who uses organic methods. Notice how much less snow and ice than the neighbors across the street or next door. The picture illustrates this warming effect which translates into less freeze damage to grass and plants.

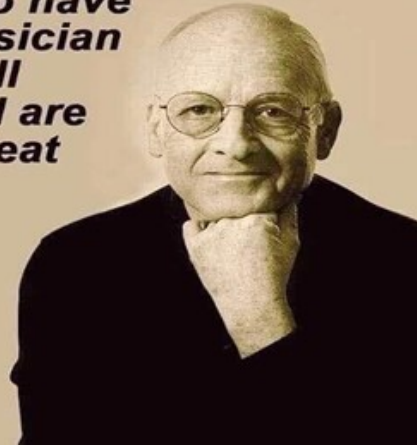


When looking for the photo above I ran across this old picture of compost and victory gardens. I would modify the caption to state “Soil Loves **GOOD** Compost”. Since Texas does not have labeling laws, many very bad products are sold as compost.

Speaking of victory gardens, home gardening exploded last year and is expected to continue this year. Many people are disgusted with the poor quality of our food supply that is loaded with toxic chemicals and is nutrient deficient, that causes or aggravates many health problems.

As a retired physician, I can honestly say that unless you are in a serious accident, your best chance of living to a ripe old age is to avoid doctors and hospitals and learn nutrition, herbal medicine and other forms of natural medicine unless you are fortunate enough to have a naturopathic physician available. Almost all drugs are toxic and are designed only to treat symptoms and not to cure anyone.

- Dr. Allan Greenberg, MD



When researching papers for this article I also ran across the old slide below (1998) that illustrates the problem with our governmental agencies that are supposed to protect us.



There is a very good book on the corruption in the FDA for those whom want to learn more:

FDA - Failure, Deception, Abuse - The Story of an Out-of-Control Government Agency and What It Means For Your Health, Life Extension Foundation, Praktikoa Books, 2010, ISBN: 978-1-60766-001-9.

We often hear about using trees to sequester carbon to help remove carbon dioxide from the air to offset climate change. Fire when used properly can help grasslands sequester more carbon than forests and create habitat for wildlife plus improve the ecological environment. The short video below is a good summary of the benefits of fire.

In nature God uses lots of small fires to maintain the ecological system. It is only our government again that screws things up. The USDA forest service has not allowed controlled or normal burning for decades. As a result, we now have the catastrophic fires like we see in California. God tells us to study nature and let it teach us...when will we learn.

[The Untold Story Of Grasses | William Bond - YouTube](#)

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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.
PLEASE ALWAYS put group's **FULL** name in email subject.

NOTE: MANY SALES MAY HAVE SUFFERED SEVERE FREEZE DAMAGE ON PLANTS. CHECK WEBSITES THIS INFO & COVID-19-RELATED PRECAUTIONS!

FRI., FEB. 26-FRI., MAR. 5: HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SPRING PLANT SALE (online) Pickup: March 20th at Genoa Friendship Garden, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road. Order: hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/

SAT. FEB. 27-MAR. 6: 2021 SPRING VEGETABLE AND HERB PLANT SALE by FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS. Online: fbmg.org/events/annual-sales/vegetable-herb-sale/. FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu; 281-341-7068.

FRI., MAR. 5: WALK 'N' TALK: TEXAS TOUGH PLANTS FOR A GULF COAST GARDEN, 10-11am, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield, Humble.

FRI., MAR. 5: HERBS FOR THE GULF COAST GARDEN by BRIANA ETIE & NANCY LANGSTON-NOH (virtual), 10-11:30am. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/event/herbs-for-the-gulf-coast/

MON., MAR. 8: SUCCESSFUL SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING by HERMAN AUER (virtual), 10-11:30am. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/event/successful-spring-vegetable-gardening/

MON., MAR. 8, COMPOSTING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, virtual, 10-11:30am, co-host Houston Community College. Register: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

THURS., MAR. 11: ONLINE BROWSING ONLY FOR FRI.,-SAT., MAR. 12-13: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MARCH MADNESS SALE. store.galvestonmg.org

THURS., MAR. 11 PRODUCTS TO BOOST YOUR ROSES IMMUNE SYSTEM by MARK CHAMBLEE (virtual), 7- 8pm, Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. global.gotomeeting.com/join/380904309; 872-240-3412 , access code: 380-904-309

FRI.,-SAT., MAR. 12-13: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MARCH MADNESS SALE. Online. Browsing only Thurs., Mar. 11. Shopping: noon Friday-noon Saturday. store.galvestonmg.org

SAT., MAR. 13: BEAUTY'S COMMUNITY GARDEN PLANT SALE, 10am-4pm, Sunny's Foodstore, 66200 Westheimer Rd. facebook.com/beautyscommunitygarden/

SUN., MAR. 14: HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN INFORMATION SESSION, 11am, Houston Botanic Garden, 8205 N. Bayou Dr. Register by email: education@hbg.org

TUES., MAR. 16: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VIRTUAL HERB & VEGETABLE SALE, 8am– Wed noon, Online: mcmga.square.site AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. mcmga.com; (936)539-7824

TUES., MAR. 16, COMPOSTING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, virtual, 10-11:30am, co-host Harris County Public Library System. facebook.com/harriscountypyl/live

TUES., MAR.16: BOUGHT THE ORCHID, NOW WHAT?, by JOSEFINA ALCALA, 10am. Sugar Land Garden Club ZOOM event. sugarlandgardenclub.org

THURS., MAR. 18: ALL ABOUT BASIL by BRANDI KELLER, virtual, 10am, Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: homegrown2021Q1.eventbrite.com/

FRI., MAR. 19: YEAR-ROUND CARE OF LANDSCAPE TREES AND SHRUBS (virtual), 10-11:30am. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/event/year-round-care-of-landscape-trees-and-shrubs/

SAT, MAR. 20: MARCH MART VIRTUAL PLANT SALE, 8am-8pm The Mercer Society. Online: themercersociety.square.site. Details: 713-274-4166.

FRI., MAR. 26: TOMATO STRESS MANAGEMENT – GROWING GREAT TOMATOES (virtual) by IRA GERVAIS, 10-11:30am. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/event/tomato-stress-management/

SAT., MAR. 27, HERB AND PLANT SALE AT THE WYNNE HOME. 8am-2pm. Wynne Home Arts Center, [1428 11th St., Huntsville](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1428+11th+St,+Huntsville,+TX). Texas Thyme Unit, Herb Society of America event. texasthymeunit.org; 936-891-5024

SUN., MAR. 28-APR. 3: NEAR NORTHWEST MANAGEMENT DISTRICT VIRTUAL SPRING PLANT SALE, SALE PREVIEW by HEIDI SHEESLEY at nnmd.org. Pick up at Treeseach Farms, Inc.

TUES, APR. 13: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VIRTUAL SPRING SALE, 8am – Wed noon, Online at mcmga.square.site ,AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. mcmga.com; 936-539-7824

WED., APR. 24: INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY (Zoom event), 7pm. Free. [Join meeting](#). (Meeting ID: 952 433 8090. Passcode: 006790)

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 do 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



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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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 -- 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.

