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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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DON'T LET RAINS (OR FACEBOOK) MISLEAD -- PLANTS KNOW BETTER!

*'Hello bottles my old friends
I've come to dig you up again . . .'*

— Dr. David Lowry, Michigan State,
(parody of "Hello Darkness" by Paul Simon), to inspire keepers of an
[142-year-old seed experiment still underway at Michigan State.](#)

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

DESPITE OUR RECENT RAINS, many plants in our gardens are probably complaining about what a dry spring this has been so far. Rains have not been slow and prolonged enough to wet more than just the upper soil levels.

Slow, prolonged waterings at the plant's base are the most productive. Overhead sprinkling, the least. Unfortunately, most recent downpours were lost to runoff, thanks to hard-packed, dry soil, pushing nearly all of us into "moderate drought" status. Gardens on Greater Houston's western edges are even worse off.

So, hopefully, that's the reason so many of my seemingly-dead plants have yet

to produce any green growth. They're just waiting . . . like the yet-to-sprout seeds in Michigan State's [142-year-old seed experiment](#), that inspired the wonderful parody-quote above. Thanks to **Helen Mooty** for sending in that fascinating New York Times article on one of the world's oldest horticultural experiments.



L to r, a few of my so-far-no-shows: cassia, bleeding heart vine, Mexican flame vine, thryallis and yesterday-today-and-tomorrow. (My photos from better times)

I'm still waiting on my (*all-well-established, years-old*) angel trumpet, bleeding heart vine, cassia, confederate rose, coral fountain plant, coral vine, *Hamelia* (hummingbird bush), ixora, Mexican flame vine (two of them), passion vine (red), pride of Barbados, snail vine, thryallis, turk's cap (giant) and yesterday-today-and-tomorrow.

Tropical butterflyweed has returned but giant white milkweed shows no sign of life. And other stalks have me puzzled. Can't remember what they are!

None of these were covered/protected pre-freeze. As an official "lazy gardener," I take seriously my obligation to ignore my plants. But, as the neighborhood "bag lady," for the past 3 years I've been gratefully accepting all raked/bagged leaves neighbors want to set out for me, and these are just dumped around the base of all these plants. Just like my main gardening guru, Mother Nature, does it!

I haven't cut many dead stalks back yet, but may start doing so this week. On the other hand, many others have returned and I do appreciate the notes from readers about their "Lazarus" plants. Gave & still giving me hope!



Above file photos of a few of Margaret's "returnees" (l to r) rough leafed dogwood, Rudbeckia texana, lyre leaf sage, Monarda citroadora and Aristolochia fimbriata

Speaking of successes, thanks to **MARGARET PIERCE** who reported her Lazarus-returnees include dwarf yaupon, Gulf Muhly, Lindheimer Muhly, *Salvia farinacea*, perennial wine cup, native lantana, rough leafed dogwood, American Beautyberry, *Rudbeckia hirta*, *Echinacea purpurea*, *Rudbeckia texana*, Simpson rosinwood, Lyre leaf sage, *Monarda citroadora*, crinums, spider lilies, amaryllis, rain lilies, roses, redbud, Walter's Viburnum, *Aristolochia fimbriata*.

Yet to rise from the dead, so she's given up: citrus, gardenias, dutchman's pipe vine, passion flower vine and her prize bottlebrush tree down in Galveston.

* * *



DOUBLECHECK FACEBOOK GARDENING ADVICE!

SALLY MAARS' in North Shore, a Houston newcomer, loves sweet peas. She was thrilled to see a Facebook post listing sweet peas among "*Annuals that Bloom All Summer*." True for Houston, she asks?

NO! In fact, this is an excellent example of why advice from outside Greater Houston needs to be doublechecked against a local source. Sorry, Sally. Sweet peas are not only strictly early spring bloomers that won't last all summer here, it's even too late now to plant seed. Sweet pea seeds must be planted in fall. Occasionally in February, you can find already-started sweet peas in nurseries. Plant immediately if you do. Our spring is just a blink before summer starts.

* * *

ARBOR DAY / EARTH WEEK DELIGHTS:

- **MERCER ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION** -- A wonderful opportunity to honor a loved one will happen April 30, 2-5pm at Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield in North Harris County. You can sign up to foster a legacy tree. Or participate in Mercer's tree giveaway. Register: [Facebook event](#).
- **TIP O' THE TROWEL TO . . .**
 - [**TREES FOR HOUSTON**](#) on it's new permanent, 1.5-acre campus at 2001 W. 34th St. in the Garden Oaks area. It will include an onsite tree nursery, education center and offices for the nonprofit group which, in the past year alone, has distributed and planted nearly 20,000 trees.
 - [**PLANT IT FORWARD**](#) on its 10th Anniversary of empowering independent, professional farmers with refugee backgrounds to grow and distribute fresh produce throughout our community. [Participating Farmers Markets](#)

* * *

LAST MINUTE UPDATE - THIS JUST IN!

In cutting back my giant white milkweed's dead stalks before starting proofing this column, I discovered two tiny green sprouts from a below ground root! Hope springs eternal! This shot was taken 2+ years ago. Pre our "2021 Arctic Attack", it had grown almost as tall as the roof peak.

I'm celebrating! Remember, any totally unprotected plant re-sprouting now, after being "killed" after snow/ice spell, must have one super-hardy root



system. Worth the wait and saving!

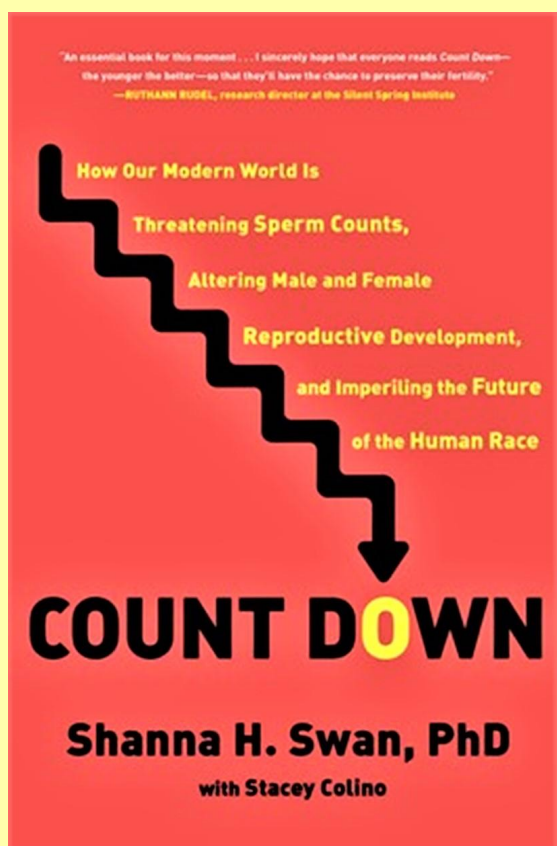
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**Brenda's LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON
GARDEN NEWSLETTER**
column is based on her 40+ years as Houston
Chronicle's Lazy Gardener
Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

* * *



BOOK REVIEW:



COUNT DOWN – How our Modern World is Threatening Sperm Counts, Altering Male and Female Reproductive Development, and Imperiling the Future of the Human Race – Shanna H. Swan, PhD, with Stacey Colino, Simon and Schuster, 2020, ISBN: 978-1-9821-1366-7

Many times, over the years we have talked about how chemicals are destroying our health as well as the soil and health of our planet.

In the book there is a cartoon with the caption "OK, Big Boy. Before we get frisky, you know we don't want any more kids! Did you take your birth control? YUP, Honey! I have been drinking tap water all day long." Unfortunately, this is a sad truth of our society today.

This book looks at all the things that are harming our fertility and our children and what we consume today how it may affect our grandchildren.

"In the tradition of *Silent Spring* and *The Sixth Extinction*, an urgent, meticulously researched, and groundbreaking book about the ways in which chemicals in the modern environment are changing—and endangering—human sexuality and fertility on the grandest scale, from renowned

epidemiologist Shanna Swan.”

“In 2017, author Shanna Swan and her team of researchers completed a major study. They found that over the past four decades, sperm levels among men in Western countries have dropped by more than 50 percent. They came to this conclusion after examining 185 studies involving close to 45,000 healthy men. The result sent shockwaves around the globe—but the story didn’t end there. It turns out our sexual development is changing in broader ways, for both men and women and even other species, and that the modern world is on pace to become an infertile one.

How and why could this happen? What is hijacking our fertility and our health? *Count Down* unpacks these questions, revealing what Swan and other researchers have learned about how both lifestyle and chemical exposures are affecting our fertility, sexual development—potentially including the increase in gender fluidity—and general health as a species. Engagingly explaining the science and repercussions of these worldwide threats and providing simple and practical guidelines for effectively avoiding chemical goods (from water bottles to shaving cream) both as individuals and societies, *Count Down* is at once an urgent wake-up call, an illuminating read, and a vital tool for the protection of our future.”

Items we use in gardening every day from plastic tools to water hoses often contain toxic chemicals. Not to mention the fertilizers and pesticides. This book is about how to recognize the danger and avoid those products that hurt us and our families.

More reasons to use modern organic methods and develop an organic lifestyle.

* * *

Have you tried . . . CHICAGO LUSTER ARROWWOOD VIBURNUM

(*Viburnum dentatum* 'Synnvestedt')

Bright, shiny green mature, deer-resistant foliage gives this ultimately 12' x 10' blooming shrub its eye-catching name. Late May-early June white flower clusters are followed by impressive fall color and abundant blue-black fruit. The common name "arrowwood viburnum" comes from Native Americans preference for this wood for arrows. One of the hardiest and easiest to grow of all viburnums for the garden. Attracts numerous pollinators.



CHICAGO LUSTER ARROWWOOD VIBURNUM *is carried by*
Nature's Way Resources ([Map](#)). Or contact 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.

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

NOTE: IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT MASKING POLICIES AT EVENTS, CHECK WITH CONTACTS LISTED

FRI., APR 23: BEST PRACTICES OF WATERING by KAROLYN GEPHART (Zoom), 10-11:30. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

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

SAT., APR. 24: HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE AT SUGAR LAND PLANT SALE, 9am-12pm, HMNS Sugar Land, 13016 University Blvd, Sugar Land. hmns.org/sugarland

TUES, APR. 27: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VIRTUAL SPRING SALE, 8am – Wed noon, Online at mcmga.square.site. Pickup — AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. mcmga.com; 936-539-7824

FRI.-SAT., APR 30-MAY 1: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MAY DAY SALE. Online. Browse beginning Fri, Apr 23. Shopping Noon Fri-Noon Sat. <https://store.galvestonmg.org>

SAT., MAY 1: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS SPRING EVENT, 10am, Memory Park, 202 Bessie Price Owen Dr., Montgomery. Free. Texasroserustlers.com

SAT., MAY 1: QUAIL VALLEY GARDEN CLUB SPRING PLANT SALE, 10am-3pm, The Tee Garden, 2880 LaQuinta Drive, Missouri City. QuailValleyGardenClub.org

SAT., MAY 1: BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON SALE, 7am.-4pm, Jimbo's Nursery, 15019 W. 8th Street, Santa Fe. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org/, Jimbo's 409-925-6933; Allyn Pearlman 713-858-3047

SAT., MAY 1: FAMILY ADVENTURE SERIES: SACHET THIS WAY, 10:30am-12pm, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

WED., MAY 5: GULF COAST ANNUAL HERB FAIR, 9am-3pm, Moody Gardens Grand Ballroom, 2903 Dominique Dr., Galveston. Luncheon, \$40. pelicanway88@att.net

THURS., MAY 6: BENEFITS OF BATS by BRANDI KELLER, virtual, 10am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register: eventbrite.com/e/home-grown-lecture-series-tickets-143797162183

SAT., MAY. 8: DAYLILY PLANT SALE, 10am-2pm, 5705 Pinemont, Houston. Houston Hemerocallis Society event. List of varieties posted at ofts.com/hhs/

SAT., MAY 8: SPRING PLANT SALE, 9am-4pm, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. 713-274-4160

MON., MAY 10: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT, virtual, 10-11am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

THURS., MAY 13: BENEFICIALS AND PESTS IN THE ROSE GARDEN by SUZANNE WAINWRIGHT-EVENS, virtual, 7-9pm, Houston Rose Society event. Free. Details: houstonrose.org

FRI., MAY 14 AND 28: GARDEN CRUISIN': TOUR DE 4, 9am & 11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Ages 60+ or age 12+ with transport needs. Register: 713-274-4160

TUES., MAY 18: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT, virtual, 11am-noon. Harris County Master Gardeners & Public Library System event. Live at: facebook.com/harriscountyp/live

THUR., MAY 20: GROWING FABULOUS HOUSEPLANTS by PAUL WINSKI (virtual). 10am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: eventbrite.com/e/home-grown-lecture-series-tickets-143797162183

THURS., MAY 20: VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION, 6-7pm, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Off-site: Timber Lane Community Center. Register: 713-274-4160

FRI., MAY 21: COMPOSTING by JIM GILLIAM (Zoom), 10-11:30. Pre-register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

FRI., MAY 22: EXPLORING DENDROLOGY: THE STUDY OF TREES, 9-11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160.

THURS., MAY 27: BIRD SURVEY, 8-10am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160

FRI., MAY 28: RAINWATER HARVESTING by NAT GRUESEN (Zoom), 10-11:30. Pre-register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., MAY 29: ALL ABOUT INVASIVES, 9-11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160

SAT., JUNE 5: MORNING FAMILY HIKE, 9am-11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160

SAT.-SUN., JUNE 5-6: GALVESTON HOME & GARDEN SHOW, Galveston Island Convention Center. galvestonhomeandgarden.com/

FRI., JUNE 11: GARDEN CRUISIN': TOUR DE 4, 9am & 11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Ages 60+ or 12+ with transport needs. Register: 713-274-4160

SATURDAY, JUNE 19: FATHER'S DAY VIRTUAL PLANT SALE, 8am-8pm, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Online only at themerchersociety.square.site. 713-274-4166.

FRI., JUNE 25: BEYOND BEES!, 9:30-10:30am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160

SAT., JUNE 26: ALL ABOUT INVASIVES, 9am-11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#). Free. Register: 713-274-4160

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 . . .

THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
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at 936-273-1200 or send an e-mail to: 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.

