



# LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



May-28-2021 | Issue 389

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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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## "TYLER ROSES" — TEXAS ONCE THE 'ROSE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD'

*"Stretching his hand up to reach the stars,  
too often man forgets the flowers at his feet."*

~Jeremy Bentham, 1747– 1832

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

**A TRUE TREASURE** in the rose world, especially the Texas rose world, is coming to town. Mark Chamblee, now retired, helped Texas in general and, specifically the City of Tyler, into the history books as not only this nation's Rose Producing Capital, but **"Rose Capital of the World,"** a title no other city has ever earned since.

Our own Rosarian-extraordinaire, Gaye Hammond, shares excerpts of her overview of this slice of Texas history in anticipation of Mark's June 10 Houston Rose Society program. I'm especially delighted with Mark's visit in part

because of my own vision-altering experience with Tyler Roses.

Back in the '60s, a UH classmate & I decided to visit a friend in Tyler. A mutual friend urged us to be sure to visit the "Tyler Rose Fields." We asked our Tyler-born & raised friend how to get to the rose fields. But she had never heard of them. Finally called our Big Spring friend who told us how to get there and said (I'll never forget): *"Tyler folks just don't know what a treasure they have there."*

When we gazed out over miles of rows of rose bushes in full bloom, we asked ourselves, "How could anyone NOT be aware of such an awesome sight so close by?"

Unfortunately, people often overlook, or downplay, familiar treasures that are eye-popping experiences for visitors. Do you know about Tyler roses? Or about what a worldwide reputation they enjoyed?

"Tyler Roses" were famous, not as a specific variety, but as a production site that, at its peak, boasted over 65 different growers who, in the '70s-80s, produced well over 20 million roses annually, well over half of all roses produced worldwide. Tyler continues today as a packaging/distribution site for roses grown elsewhere.

Roses certainly are appreciated in Tyler today. The famous *Tyler Rose Festival*, is held in the fall (Oct. 14-17, 2021), a nod to the fact that here in Texas, roses are almost twice as beautiful in fall than they are in spring -- as the Tyler rose growers discovered eons ago!

And that's only the tip of the knowledge Mark Chamblee will share at the Thurs., June 10, Houston Rose Society virtual meeting, 7- 9pm, *Houston Rose Society/Houston event*. Free. [houstonrose.org/](http://houstonrose.org/)

**LET US NOT BE GUILTY OF OVERLOOKING OUR BEAUTIFUL FLOWER SITES!** Here are a few public Greater Houston Area gardens to get you started: [holidify.com/collections/gardens-in-houston](http://holidify.com/collections/gardens-in-houston). If you know of others that are worth a visit, let me know and I'll share! [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)

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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](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)*

\* \* \*







*One of the Chamblee greenhouses with original Knock Out and the newer Blushing Knock Out Roses (change colors as age). Texas Farm Bureau photo*

## MARK CHAMBLEE: A TEXAS TREASURE

*Excerpted from "Mark Chamblee: A Texas Treasure"*

by **GAYE HAMMOND**

*Past President, Houston Rose Society*

Mark Chamblee literally was raised in the rose business. A third-generation rose grower, Mark's family have been prominent in shaping the Texas rose industry for 60+ years. By the 1920s roses were big business in Tyler. Mark's earliest memory of roses is riding on the family's Farmall tractor fender while his dad, Roland Chamblee, tilled the rose fields. It was big day when Mark got tall enough to reach the tractor pedals and plow rose fields by himself. *(Pictured: Blushing Knock Out)*



On one of our many rose road trips, Mark shared that he never intended to get involved in the business. He really enjoyed his college business classes. Answering the call for help from his dad, Mark found that he was able to put what he had learned in college to work and eventually bought Chamblee's Rose Nursery from his dad in 1982.



When I first met Mark and his family (way before either of us had white hair), commercial rose growers around the world were producing field-grown grafted roses. Mark knew the devastating effects weather could have. He set about to grow roses as own-root plants. In his mind, greenhouses allowed better management of freezing temperatures and drought conditions as opposed to growing plants in the fields.

"At one point, more than half of all the roses produced in the world were produced in the Tyler area, with more than 20 million rose bushes produced annually," Mark explains. By the late 1950s, refrigerated box cars enabled "Tyler roses" to be shipped across the county. By 1973, one estimation pegs worldwide sales of Tyler roses at \$9 million - a huge number in that day and age.



Tyler boasted more than 65 rose growers until the big freeze of 1983. After the freeze, field production of roses shifted from Tyler to California and Arizona. The number of Tyler growers gradually dwindled to five, including Chamblee's Rose Nursery. These days, whether rose bushes are grown in California or Arizona, all are shipped to Tyler for processing, packaging and shipment.

If the nursery you frequent showcases own-root roses throughout the year, thank Mark Chamblee! Own root roses require no special processing and can be shipped by Chamblee's Rose Nursery in the pot they were grown in. Mark is one of the reasons that own-rose roses have become so popular in the last 20 years. Own-root rose plants can be sold year-round, as opposed to the seasonal crop that grafted bushes represent. **(Pictured: Mark Chamblee, left, with Alain Meilland of House of Meilland (France).**



As a licensed grower for world's oldest and biggest hybridizers of roses, one could find roses created by Will Radler (father of the [Knock Out® series](#) of roses), [Meilland International](#) (one of France's oldest rose breeding families), [Star Roses and Plants](#), [Kordes & Sohne Roses](#) and [David Austin Roses, Ltd.](#) among the offerings at [Chamblee's Rose Nursery](#).

One of Mark's special projects has been as a consultant to the [Tyler Rose Garden Center](#) (location of the [Tyler Rose Festival](#) and the Rose Museum). For the Rose Garden, Mark established a rotation cycle for plantings that also included the latest and best growing practices. With the average life span of a grafted rose being seven years, a healthy rotation of bushes in the rose garden would limit the damage that a hard freeze could have on the overall health of the garden.

As a consultant to Texas A&M, Mark committed to carry every rose variety that was part of the of the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Management's Earth-Kind®](#) research program in his nursery. He is also responsible for the huge planting of roses in the highway medians in Tyler.

While retiring from the rose retail nursery in 2019, Mark remains active in the horticulture industry in Texas. Mark Chamblee is an iconic pillar of the rose industry in Texas and one of our State's horticultural treasures. I am proud to call him my number one "rose bud".

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

- ***Gaye Hammond's entire article can be accessed in the Houston Rose Society's [www.houstonrose.org](http://www.houstonrose.org) issue***
- ***THURS., JUNE 10: PRODUCTS TO BOOST YOUR ROSES IMMUNE SYSTEM by MARK CHAMBLEE, (virtual), 7- 9pm, Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. [houstonrose.org/](http://houstonrose.org/)***



## NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 155

I finished reading a new book a few weeks ago titled "Compost Utilization In Production of Horticultural Crops", CRC Press, 2021 ISBN 978-081536646-1.

The authors bring up an important point that I see every day talking with customers, and it deals with the use of fertilizers, either too much, too little or the wrong type.

The book mentions that excess artificial fertilizers cause an increase in pest and pathogen levels. Additionally, artificial fertilizer reduction also reduces disease pressure.

Note: In past issues we have talked about how artificial fertilizers create fast weak growth which makes plants more susceptible to insect and disease issues.

A couple other tidbits of information are: 1) A sports complex of 44 acres of soccer fields saved \$38,000 per year by top dressing the turf with compost. 2) It also reduced water requirements by 83% saving 2.5 million gallons of water per year. 3) It reduced reseeding requirements saving additional costs in seeds and labor.

Another reason that quality compost is called "Black Gold" by experienced gardeners.

**We** all know that plants compete for sunlight. Similarly, plants change how they use underground resources when they are planted alongside other plants.

Plants make two types of roots: fine hairs that absorb water and nutrients from the soil and coarse roots that transport these substances back to the plant. A plants investment in different types of roots requires the evaluation of both the total volume of roots and how these roots are distributed throughout the soil profile.

So, do plants keep their roots directly below the plant or do they send roots out horizontally to collect nutrients from the adjacent soil which has competition from adjacent plants.

Researchers at Princeton University discovered that it depends on how close together they are. If planted close together plants are more likely to invest more in their root systems and try and out compete its neighbors for the limited soil resources. They would invest more roots below the plant and less horizontally.



This confirms the old gardening wisdom that states do not plant plants too close together. Journal Science, 2020

As gardeners we all know that the quality of soil greatly effects the flavor of foods. For example, in wine culture it is widely known that the region where the grapes are produced gives each wine its own terroir.

Researchers at Oregon State University found that barley from different regions had noticeable differences in the taste of beers malted from barley.

The research caught the attention on Waterford distillery which reached out to them and wondered if this was true for other beverages like whiskey. They found that the environment in which the barley was grown had a greater contribution to the aroma of whiskey than the variety of barley.

They even found that the aromatic profiles had sensory differences that existed between years also. The findings raised the question could there be a vintage aspect to whiskey like we see in wine?

I am certain the reviewers and readers of the magazine Whiskey Advocate would agree that whiskey does have its own terroir. Journal Foods, 2021

The flavonoid called quercetin that is found in apple peels has been known for years to help magnesium (Mg) and zinc (Zn) get inside our cells where it helps our immune system fight viruses. This process makes quercetin an ionophore where these elements help the immune system prevent virus replication.

A study by researchers at the University of Queensland and the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases found that quercetin helps promote brain health.

They found another chemical in apple peels called DHBA (dihydroxybenzoic acid) that also promotes brain cell growth and health.

Quercetin also acts as a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory which provides health benefits. In addition to apple peels quercetin is found in grapes, green tea, onions and elderberry flowers. I now know that elderberry fritters are a health food in addition to just tasting good.

The University of Bristol has found that one of the biggest sources of food for pollinating insects is the home garden. They found that a home garden can generate large amounts of nectar.

On average, a home garden generated a teaspoon of valuable nectar each day. A teaspoon to insects is like 2,000 pounds to a human and is enough to feed thousands of insects, which then feed our birds and other animals. Journal of Ecology, 2021

Over the last couple decades there has been a lot of research that has shown

plants, bacteria, fungi, etc. exhibit many forms of intelligence.

The Technical University of Munich has discovered another form of intelligence in the microscopic world in our soil. They discovered that slime mold saves memories even though it does not have a nervous system.

Studying the slime mold (*Physarum polycephalum*) a single cell that can grow several inches or more in diameter. The cell body of the mold is composed of tubes. They found that the mold can solve complex problems like finding the shortest path through a maze.

The tubular network serves as a memory storage device and is used to store encounters with food sources and use the information to make decisions in the future. Proceedings of The National Academy of Science, 2021.

Many times, in the bible it states that if we do not praise God then the plants and trees will. This would require some form of intelligence and awareness that we are starting to see throughout creation.

Food for thought:

The CDC reported that 48 million people get sick from foodborne illnesses each year that result in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.

Yet, the USDA allows sewage sludge, full of toxic chemicals and pathogens to be used to fertilize conventionally grown food crops.

Many companies (including several in our area) make their compost from sewage sludge. To hide the true source material, it is often called "Biosolids" which is just the marketing name for sewage sludge.

More reasons to buy and grow organically.

Two very informative books for those whom want to learn more about the contamination of or food supply:

**Fateful Harvest** by Duff Wilson, Harper Collins Publisher, ISBN 0-06-019369-7, A history of how hazardous waste is disposed of in synthetic fertilizers and ends up contaminating the food supply. Wilson was an investigative reporter for the Seattle Times Newspaper and published a series of articles in July-August 1997-1999.

**Science For Sale: How the US Government Uses Powerful Corporations and Leading Universities to Support Government Policies, Silence Top Scientists, Jeopardize Our Health, and Protect Corporate Profits**, by David Lewis, PhD., Skyhorse Publishing, 2014, ISBN: 978-1-62636-071-6

David Lewis was a research microbiologist at the EPA's Office of Research and Development and at the University of Georgia for over 30 years.

Later he became involved with studying the land application of sewage sludge (biosolids). When he discovered how the safety studies had been falsified, how



toxic and dangerous the sewage sludge really was, he started reporting on the health problems it causes.

Government and Industry came after him to shut him up from telling the truth where he was later vindicated in federal court that he was a whistle blower telling the truth.

For additional information on the dangers of sewage sludge and the waste water produced see: [www.sludgefacts.org](http://www.sludgefacts.org) and [www.sludgenews.org](http://www.sludgenews.org)

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## Have you tried ... ORANGE MEXICAN SUNFLOWER

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This 6' high, 2-3' wide, vigorous annual bloomer -- a major hummingbird/butterfly-attractor -- provides reliable brilliant orange-red-yellow color July-September (often even longer here on the Gulf Coast). Full sun, low maintenance and moderately deer-resistant. Easy to grow from seed or starter plants, seedlings transplant easily, tolerates poor soils. Deadheading triggers more blooms. Mexico & Central America native. Named for Tithonus, Greek lover of Eos, Goddess of the Dawn. Used by ancients to heal wounds and treat numerous diseases.



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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).



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

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/](https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/)

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

SAT., MAY 29: HOW TO MAKE COMPOST by JOHN FERGUSON, 11:30am-1pm, Houston Botanic Garden, 8210 Park Place Blvd. \$15. Register at [secure.hbg.org/573/762](https://secure.hbg.org/573/762)

FRI., JUNE 4: A PASSION FOR PLUMERIA by LORETTA OSTEEN (Zoom), 10-11:30. Pre-register: [galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/](https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/)

THURS., JUNE 10: PRODUCTS TO BOOST YOUR ROSES IMMUNE SYSTEM by MARK CHAMBLEE (virtual), 7- 9pm, Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. [houstonrose.org/](https://houstonrose.org/)

FRI., JUNE 11: LOUISIANA IRISES by MONICA MARTENS, Ed.D. (Zoom), 12 Noon-1:00. Pre-register: [galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/](https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/)

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. Check for updates: [galvestonhomeandgarden.com/](https://galvestonhomeandgarden.com/)

THURS., JUNE 10: PRODUCTS TO BOOST YOUR ROSES IMMUNE SYSTEM by MARK CHAMBLEE, (virtual), 7- 9pm, Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. [houstonrose.org/](https://houstonrose.org/)

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

FRI., JUNE 11: LOUISIANA IRISES by MONICA MARTENS, Ed.D. (Zoom), 12 Noon-1:00. Galveston County Master Gardeners event. Pre-register: [galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/](https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/)

TUES., JUNE 12; PLUMERIAS IN YOUR GARDEN by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am-noon, HCMG & Harris County Public Library System event. Free. Facebook Live: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/live](https://facebook.com/harriscountyp/live)

TUES., JUNE 15; PLUMERIAS IN YOUR GARDEN by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am-noon, HCMG & Harris County Public Library System event. Free. Facebook Live: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/live](https://facebook.com/harriscountyp/live)

THURS., JUNE 17: ART FROM THE GARDEN by BRANDI KELLER (virtual) 10am, Harris County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: [homegrown2021Q2.eventbrite.com/](https://homegrown2021Q2.eventbrite.com/)

SAT., JUNE 19: HOW TO KEEP INSECTS AWAY THIS SUMMER, 10-11am, Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 North Shepherd, free, [wabashfeed.com](https://wabashfeed.com), register: <https://bit.ly/3bUWKlq>, 713-863-8322

FRI., JUNE 25: BEYOND BEES!, 9:30-10:30am, [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](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 . . .

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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.

