



# LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Jul-2-2021 | Issue 394

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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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## ROSE-WATCHING FOR STRESS EYES ON PLUMERIAS & KIDS

*"Rose-watching is the current fascination around here. Once a week everyone buys a single long-stemmed rose . . . bud and watches it unfurl day by day. It's a simple, private way of calming the nerves in these days of terrorists and snipers."*

*"Are you a rose-watcher, Moira?"*

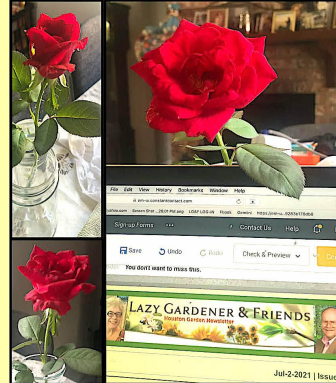
*"Definitely. And Kip finds it an aid to problem-solving; it clears the mind."*

-- "The Cat Who Went Bananas" by Lillian Jackson Braun (2005)

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

**HEY, WHATEVER WORKS!** In the quote above, Lillian Jackson Braun may have totally made up rose-watching. I couldn't find any online reference as an historical practice. Even so, I cut a tight bud and positioned it eye-level behind my laptop cover. Stared at it every time I sat down to work. Seeing up close how petals slowly unfurl IS relaxing and made me smile every time. Mission accomplished!





**PLUMERIAS WERE HARD HIT** this winter, especially those left growing in-ground. "Global warming" is misleading. "Global Change" at both temp extremes is our real threat. Even expertly-protected plumerias succumbed, as Plumeria Society of America's Paula Furtwangler admitted [last week](#) ([pdf download](#)). The good news is this set back hasn't discouraged these tropical beauties lovers one bit!

Below, Paula recommends some specific cultivars to replace lost treasures, as these beautiful, fragrant delights truly are. To help you recoup, the Plumeria Society of America is offering a free, open to public, **"All About Plumerias,"** program Tues., July 13 (6:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Dr. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org)).

Then look for Paula's recommendations (pictured below) among the many offerings at the: **SAT., JULY 24: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE**, 9am-3pm (or sell-out), Bay Area Community Center, 5002 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org)



*Above, l to r, 'Jeannie Moragne,' 'Pretty Princess,' 'Lemon Drop' and 'Texas Flaming Sunset.' Below, 'Irma Bryan,' 'Margaret's Pink,' 'Fantasia' and 'Mardi Gras.'*  
(Paula Furtwangler, Emerson Willis and George Hadjigeorge photos)



Another great upcoming source for plumerias:

**SAT., JUL. 17: THE MERCER SOCIETY VIRTUAL PLUMERIA SALE**  
8am-8pm, . Pickup only. [themercersociety.square.site/](http://themercersociety.square.site/); 713-274-4166  
(Note: inventory previews typically begin one week prior to the sale.)

**IF THIS PAST EXTREME WINTER WEATHER** has done nothing else, it reinforces the importance of listening to our local experts! Our Upper Texas



Gulf Coast region is a unique little subtropical pocket that, in vital aspects, differs from even Texas ecologies north, south & west of us.

Good example: while plumerias thrive here and they do grow well inground most of the year, our local plumeria experts have never advised leaving these these true tropical plants in the ground year round.

The wonderful thing about plumerias is they are so easy to lift and store over winter and will pick right up again blooming with no problem in or out of the ground after winter passes. Listen to Paula, who grows her plumerias both inground and in containers.

*"You can plant in the ground but you always must dig up! Keeping them in pots can be an easier method, but if you must plant in the ground, always plan for the worst. You never know when a freeze like this one will come. And it is always at a time that is not convenient."*

In early fall, Paula removes the leaves to begin the dormancy process, warning *"never rip the leaves off, because you risk losing moisture that is needed for overwintering."*

***(Print out this advice below out and clip it to your October calendar)***

- **In late Oct./early Nov.** (especially if you'll be out of town at Christmas):
  - dig up in-ground plumerias, knock off most of the soil and wrap rootballs with black plastic trash bags.
  - let potted plants dry out one month prior to winter storage — move them under patio cover to avoid Autumn rains. Soil must be totally dry to overwinter. Use a moisture meter to measure the dryness.
- **If you absolutely cannot dig them up**, take an emergency cutting prior to a freeze and store it in your house over the winter. I dip the cut end into melted paraffin to keep the pith from receding into the cutting. The wax also retains vital moisture over the winter dormancy period.
- **Store plants upright** in cardboard boxes or plastic trash cans. I store mine in the garage (yes, it is insulated). Leave lights on at night when below freezing. Carpet remnants on the garage floor will provide extra cushioning between plant and cement.
- **During storage plumerias do not need water or light.** They go to sleep!
- **In late March** (depending on weather forecast) bring them back out into your yard, by either planting in raised and well draining beds, or re-pot into slightly larger pots. I fertilize with Osmocote Plus when I plant in Spring. It is a good timed released fertilizer plumerias love. Use a very fast-draining mix. I prefer Rose Soil amended with extra sand and perlite, and unscented kitty litter.

***Editor's Note: More questions for Paula? You can find her:***

- **TUES., JULY 13: ALL ABOUT PLUMERIAS**, 6:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Dr. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org).
- **SAT., JULY 24: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE**, 9am-3pm(or sell-out), Bay Area Community Center, 5002 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org)

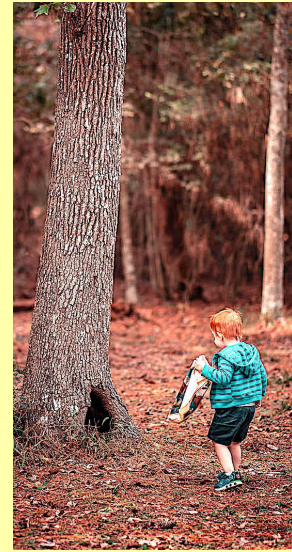
\* \* \*

## KIDS: TREES VS. BUGS -- GUESS WHICH WINS?

Turning children on to plants can be challenging. Bugs and animals are much more fascinating!

This is dilemma faced by **LAURA MEDIC** who, on Fri., July 15, will corral 9- to 12-year-olds at Mercer Botanic Gardens' **"KIDS ARE KEY TO TREE ID"** program (*Register: 713-274-4160*). Definitely a challenge faced by both parents and fellow group leaders!

We normally don't list children's events in our calendar below (too many of them!). But Laura's advice below is great for parents too trying to interest their kiddos in their own home gardening projects.



Laura says it's the unexpected aspects of trees (or any plants) that really seem to turn kids on:

- Focus on shapes, textures, smells.
- Point out live "things" to get their attention -- earthworms in the soil and lichens on bark, squirrels, and other wildlife.
- The closer they can look, the more detail they can see, the better. Use tools like rulers, magnifying lenses, etc.
- Encourage them to feel and smell leaves (you're sure aren't poison ivy).
- Kids like it when Laura calls sweetgum "the gum ball tree" especially when she tells them how the fragrant and sweet resin were once used as popular chewing gum.
- Repeat, repeat, and repeat important terms while doing a hands-on activity like playing a game.
- To help them develop an even greater appreciation for what they see growing, -- maybe eat more veggies! -- have them keep a journal of their observations. Just a little . . . too much and you will lose their interest.

\* \* \*

*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)*

\* \* \*





**Butterfly Class and Bug Hunt  
at Natures Way Resources  
July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 @ 9 AM-10:30 AM**



Come Join us at Natures Way Resources for a short class about butterflies, their food, lifecycle, and enemies. Stay afterwards for butterfly activities and the bug hunt (nets provided)!



Class size is limited, so please RSVP either by email ([nwrnursery@gmail.com](mailto:nwrnursery@gmail.com)) or by phone (936-321-6990)

Make sure you pack water and don't forget your sunscreen and sun hats!



## John's Corner

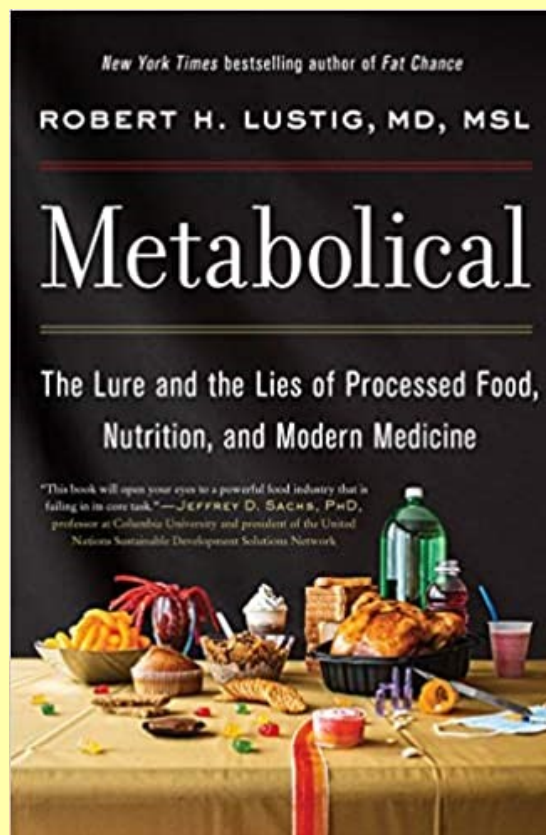


### BOOK REVIEW

**Metabolical** – The Lure and Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine by Robert H. Lustig, MD, MSL, Harper Collins Publisher, 2021, ISBN: 978-0063027718

We often talk about issues with our food supply and how it is behind most of our health problems. Remember the proverb "Healthy soil = Healthy plants = Healthy people." The processed food industry violates this basic law of nature (God) at every step.

This is the best book I have read to date that goes into the how and why the processed food industry is ruining our health that leads to millions of unnecessary deaths every year. It is very up to date with the latest science and the information and is presented in an easy-to-understand format.



Robert H. Lustig, M.D., is an internationally renowned pediatric endocrinologist who has spent the past sixteen years treating childhood obesity and studying the effects of sugar on the central nervous system, metabolism, and disease.

He is the director of the Weight Assessment for Teen and Child Health Program at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Benioff Children's Hospital; a member of the UCSF Center for Obesity Assessment, Study, and Treatment; as well as a member of the Obesity Task Force of the Endocrine Society.

From the Wall Street Journal

“Amazingly, medical schools in the United States focus very little on nutrition. The topic, according to one study, gets less than 1% of the classroom time that aspiring physicians are required to sit through over four years—even though the foods and beverages people ingest are far and away, in America, the biggest drivers of disease.

Because of the knowledge gap, doctors routinely miss opportunities to counsel their patients on the connection between nutrition and health—thus allowing bad eating habits to keep doing major damage. This failure is one of many indictments that Robert Lustig, a physician, brings against America’s medical-nutritional establishment in “Metabolical,” a wide-ranging polemic that covers the misdeeds of food and beverage companies and the misinformation that, in his view, contributes to the undermining of health.

Early on, Dr. Lustig asks: “Why has our health status declined?” The chief culprit, he believes, is a change in food processing over the past 50 years. Food companies have concocted products with the healthy elements removed (vitamins, minerals, micronutrients, fiber) and unhealthy elements added (mostly sugar and salt). This transformation, he writes, has fueled a downward “vortex.” It started slowly but has “picked up speed” and “overwhelmed our medical resources.”

For the full article see the following link:

[‘Metabolical’ Review: Is It Something I Ate?](#)

From his website:

The *New York Times* bestselling author of *Fat Chance* explains the eight pathologies that underlie all chronic disease, documents how processed food has impacted them to ruin our health, economy, and environment over the past 50 years, and proposes an urgent manifesto and strategy to cure both us and the planet.

Dr. Robert Lustig, a pediatric neuroendocrinologist who has long been on the cutting edge of medicine and science, challenges our current healthcare paradigm which has gone off the rails under the influence of Big Food, Big Pharma, and Big Government.

You can’t solve a problem if you don’t know what the problem is. One of Lustig’s singular gifts as a communicator is his ability to “connect the dots” for the general reader, in order to unpack the scientific data and concepts behind his arguments, as he tells the “real story of food” and “the story of real food.”

*Metabolical* weaves the interconnected strands of nutrition, health/disease, medicine, environment, and society into a completely new fabric by proving on



a scientific basis a series of iconoclastic revelations, among them:

- Medicine for chronic disease treats symptoms, not the disease itself
- You can diagnose your own biochemical profile
- Chronic diseases are not "druggable," but they are "foodable"
- Processed food isn't just toxic, it's addictive
- The war between vegan and keto is a false war—the combatants are on the same side
- Big Food, Big Pharma, and Big Government are on the other side

Making the case that food is the only lever we have to effect biochemical change to improve our health, Lustig explains what to eat based on two novel criteria: protect the liver, and feed the gut. He insists that if we do not fix our food and change the way we eat, we will continue to court chronic disease, bankrupt healthcare, and threaten the planet. But there is hope: this book explains what's needed to fix all three.

\* \* \*

## 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.

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

**THURS., JULY 8: AMERICAN HANDS IN HYBRIDIZING EASY CARE ROSES**

by **PING LIM** (virtual), 7-9pm, Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. Meeting link: [houstonrose.org/](https://houstonrose.org/)

**FRI., JUL. 9: GARDEN CRUISIN': TOUR DE 4**, 9am & 11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](https://www.mercerbogardens.com/).

Free. Ages 60+ or anyone age 12+ with transportation needs. [Register](#); 713-274-4160.

**SAT., JULY 10: AQUAPONICS** by **ROBIN COLLINS**, 9-11:00. In-person, AgriLife

Extension Office, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque.

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

**MON., JULY 12: NATIVE PLANTS ON THE CHEAP** by **MARTHA RICHESON, WENDY REISTLE & NANCY SAINT** (Zoom), 6:30pm, Native Plant Society of Texas/Clear Lake Chapter program on Plant propagation (Zoom). [Register](#).

**MON., JULY 12: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING** (virtual), 10-11:30am. Harris County Master Gardeners with Houston Community College event. Free. Register early:

[hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops](https://hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops)

**TUES., JULY 13: ALL ABOUT PLUMERIAS**, 6:30pm,, Cherie Flores Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. Plumeria Society of America event. Free. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org)

**THURS., JULY 15: GARDEN HUMMINGBIRD SAFETY** (virtual) by **BRANDI KELLER**, 10am. Must register: [homegrown2021Q3.eventbrite.com/](http://homegrown2021Q3.eventbrite.com/)

**FRI., JUL. 24: GARDEN CRUISIN': TOUR DE 4**, 9am & 11am, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](http://MercerBotanicGardens.com). Free. Ages 60+ or anyone age 12+ with transportation needs. [Register](#), 713-274-4160.

**TUES., JULY 20: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING** (virtual), 11am-noon, Free. Watch via Facebook Live at: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/live](https://facebook.com/harriscountyp/live)

**SAT., JULY 24: PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE**, 9am-3pm(or sell-out), Bay Area Community Center, 5002 Nasa Parkway, Seabrook. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org)

**THURS., JUL. 29: MERCER BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**, 6-7pm, Timber Lane Community Center. [Register](#). 713-274-4160.

**THURS., JULY 29: FORT BEND REGIONAL VEGETABLE CONFERENCE SUMMER SESSION** (virtual) 8:30am-noon. Counties of Waller, Wharton, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, Colorado, Austin and Fort Bend event. [Register](#). 281-633-7029 or [brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu)

#### 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.



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.

