



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Sept-24-2021 | Issue 406

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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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*Brenda is taking a break this week, will be back next week.
Please enjoy again the 301 Issue*



**NOTE: BRENDA'S COLUMN WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK.
THIS COLUMN BEING REPEATED BY READER REQUEST**

WHY ISN'T MY FLOWER BLOOMING?

*"Flowers are restless to look at.
They have neither emotions nor conflicts."*

-- Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

*Brenda's Note: Not only is it somewhat presumptuous to disagree with Sigmund,
I also beg pardon for repeating a column published before. But this same
query above repeatedly comes in like clockwork this time of year! So . . .*

Sorry, Sigmund, I disagree! I think
plants are a LOT like us.

SPOILER . . .

You're not going to like this

Unfortunately, no single pat answer will tell you why your plant isn't blooming. Plants bloom when they're happy -- usually. They pout when not happy -- usually. Why might your plant be unhappy? Could it be . . .



- **TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE**

WATER? Symptoms are often the same for both sins. Most drought-tolerant plants can't bloom with too-wet roots, including antique roses, black-eyed Susans, blue daze, bougainvillea, bulbine, cassia, cestrum, coneflowers, Copper Canyon daisy, coreopsis, coral vine, durata, gaura, hamelia (hummingbird bush), lantana, fernleaf lavender, oleander, pavonia, pride of Barbados (Caesalpinia) and Rangoon creeper. Also, below l to r, russelia, hardy salvia and thyralis.



- **TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH SUN?** Most often too little sun is the culprit. Some plants, including most grafted roses and tomatoes, require morning, noon AND afternoon sun to bloom. Some plants listed for full sun in northern areas may need afternoon shade in our hot climate. On the other hand too much sun may actually inhibit blooming in shade plants such as, l to r below, firespike, barlaria, hostas and ligularia.



- **BUD DAMAGE?** Buds that won't open may be infested with thrips, gall midge and other insects. As summer heat kills wildflowers, thrips and other insects search for new food sources. Tear open a few buds. See bugs inside? Put all buds on bush in a sealed bag and throw away.
- **GENETIC PROGRAMMING?** Many plants are genetically programmed to produce a certain amount of seed. They track flowers still on stalks. When they've reached their quota, they stop flowering. Removing spent blooms tricks these plants into producing more flowers. But newer

hybrids are "reblooming" so don't need "deheading." How do you tell which you have? Research the specific variety or series name the best you can. Or just try deadheading if blooming slows down.

- **IMPROPER PRUNING?** Spring flowering shrubs (azaleas, camellias, bridal wreath, pink magnolias, etc.) bloom on old growth (gone through winter). Pruning in spring before blooming cuts off potential buds. Prune these immediately after blooming. Buds for next year start growing over summer. Summer flowering shrubs bloom on new growth. Prune them in winter. *(NOTE! Most of our common garden plants don't need pruning AT ALL unless they're growing out-of-bounds. Exception: hybridized roses.)*
- **INSUFFICIENT NUTRIENTS?** We have such a long growing season (sometimes year-round), plants may use up available nutrients. High quality compost will replenish almost all nutrients in a natural manner. A cup of Epsom salts sprinkled around the plant base may help too.
- **WRONG FERTILIZER?** Simplifying very complex chemical interactions: don't use a high nitrogen (high first number on bag) lawn food on blooming plants. Nitrogen promotes green growth (not flowers). Don't put a high phosphorus (high second number) on lawns. Phosphorus triggers blooming (aka weeds that drop seed). Compost is easiest.
- **OVERCROWDING?** Amaryllis and daylilies are just two of many plants that stop blooming when overcrowded. Lift, separate and replant. Can be done anytime. On the other hand, some plants – bird of paradise, gerbera daisies -- flower better when overcrowded.
- **IMMATURITY?** First come roots, then come flowers . . . in a plant happy world. Young plants don't want to bloom right away. They want to set good strong roots. Respect that!
- **OLD AGE** Plants don't live forever, you know. They can and do die of old age. Since no way of knowing how long a given plant will survive, if it's a particular favorite, take cuttings or collect seed.
- **UNKNOWN PLANT STRESSES/DAMAGE?** The plant may have been exposed to stressful heat/cold; allowed to completely dry out or treated with stimulants to force blooms that will last as long as possible on nursery shelves. The plant may need to recoup its strength by concentrating on regaining internal health and setting strong roots.
- **TOO NEW TO YOU?** Just like us, even healthy plants need to acclimate to a new growing environment, maybe a year or more. Spider lilies, hibiscus, amaryllis, lycoris (right), rainlilies and crinums may be slow to bloom after setting out.
- **WRONG BLOOM TIME?** Some plants bloom at different times in different climates. Larkspur, snapdragons, hollyhocks, delphiniums and many daisies bloom later in spring (April, May, June) in colder climates than they do here (Feb., March, April). Use only local bloom advice!



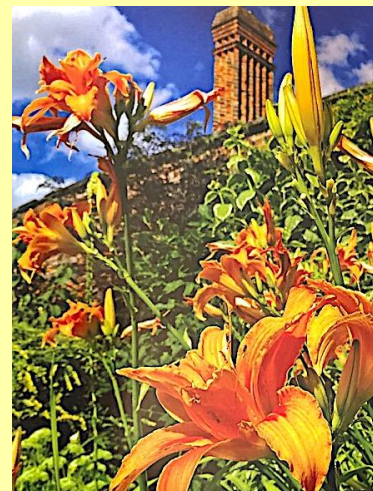
- **WRONG PLANTING DEPTH?** Everything sinks in our gumbo clay soil with heavy rains, especially bulbs. Too deep roots may stop blooming. Dig up and raise. Azalea and camellia roots want to fan out across upper soil levels. Give them room to spread horizontally. Mulch well but don't let decaying mulch raise soil levels bury roots too deeply.
- **WRONG VARIETY?** Some varieties of popular favorites do better here in our subtropical areas than do others. New hybrids that take more or less cold and heat are coming on the market all the time. Your neighborhood independent nurseries will carry varieties that do best for you.
- **MAYBE NEEDS A GOOD SPANKING?** Ever heard of switching okra? Farmers and fruit tree growers know sometimes sap gets sluggish, triggering a production slow-down. A good switching works on okra. A hardy whacking with a broom may trigger flowers on fruit trees and roses too (personal experience with the efficacy of this one!). One tip: do it at night. Why? So the neighbors don't see you!
- **BLAME THE WEATHER?** Plants may be a lot smarter than we are. Blooming takes a lot of energy. When they sense intense weather traumas (heat, cold, rainfall, floods, hurricanes) coming, they may stop blooming to conserve energy and concentrate on setting stronger roots.

ON THE OTHER HAND . . . blooms don't always indicate a happy plant. Spectacular bloom periods often occur after a hurricane, for example, when plants have been hammered by heavy winds. Or after a flood, a severe drought, an unusually cold or a prolonged winter . . . anything that makes them fear for their lives may trigger excessive flowering to produce more seed to ensure continuation of their species.

Sorry if all these possibilities "tighten your jaws" – as an old friend, Mack Cockran, used to say. I know this isn't the quickie answer folks want. But maybe these options will help you figure it out. Again , , , **Sorry, Sigmund!**

**As promised last week
FELDER RUSHING'S #1 WORLD'S
FAVORITE PASSALONG PLANT IS . . .**

Ta! Da! The common tawny daylily, *Hemerocallis fulva*. In his worldwide travels (5 continents) he says has seen it in "every kind of garden, from the finest manors and botanical gardens to humble cottage gardens and even in cemeteries. And, he notes, it... ***"doesn't set seed, meaning every single one you see is a divided clone of the original plant grown now for over 3000 years."*** Read more, and see this picture enlarged, in Felder's new book, *"Maverick Gardeners."*



* * *




HOUSTON
ARBORETUM &
NATURE CENTER



FORAGING FOR FOOD & KNOWLEDGE

with Mark Merriwether Vorderbruggen, Ph.D.

Become a forager! Join us for a hike in the trees, along with snacks & a fabulous presentation at the Houston Arboretum! Discover edible weeds and what their presence tells you about your soil.

SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2021 • 5:00–7:00PM

HOUSTON ARBORETUM & NATURE CENTER

120 W LOOP N FWY, HOUSTON, TX 77024

• 610 ENTRANCE •

TRAIL MIX & WATER PROVIDED!

TICKETS:

MEMBERS: \$30

NON-MEMBERS: \$40

4:40–5:00PM Meet & Greet

5:00–6:00PM Hike & Forage

6:00–7:00PM Mark Presentation

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For any event questions please contact Erica B. at erica@ohbaonline.org



John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 167

My first exposure to the importance of trace minerals occurred about 28 years ago. I was planting some early spring vegetables in the garden behind my house. This extremely rich organic soil

had been amended with compost and organic fertilizers for years. There was a new trace mineral package called Eco-Min (granite sand based) that had just been introduced to the market and I decided to test it. I planted many of the cool season vegetables from transplants (cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, etc.) and for every other plant; I placed a tablespoon of the mineral package in the bottom of the transplant hole. Nothing showed a response except the Brussels sprouts, but did they respond as shown in the picture below! Obviously, there was some trace mineral (element) in the package that the plant needed that was limiting growth.



This experience reminded me of **Liebig's Law of the Minimum**, often simply called **Liebig's Law** or the **Law of the Minimum**. It is a principle developed in agricultural science by Carl Sprengel in 1828 and later popularized by Justus von Liebig. It states that plant growth is controlled; not by the total amount of nutrient resources available, but by the scarcest resource (the limiting factor) like a needed element. From Wikipedia "The availability of the most abundant nutrient in the soil is only as good as the availability of the least abundant nutrient in the soil." On the other hand, to use an old analogy, "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

Most agricultural and horticultural departments in our universities teach that we only need 16 elements to grow a plant. As the photo above shows, we really do not know what a plant needs, much less what an animal or humans need. If the trace elements are not in the soil, microbes cannot release them, plants cannot take them

up; hence, they do not get to the animals or to the humans that eat the plants and animals.

“Micronutrient deficiencies are widespread across the globe in both developed and developing countries. These deficiencies pose a serious threat to long-term health and longevity. Deficiencies in key minerals, such as magnesium and potassium, increase the risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes. It is estimated that 1 out of 3 people in the United States has at least 10 minerals they are deficient in. Those 10 minerals being potassium, manganese, magnesium, calcium, zinc, iron, copper, selenium, chromium, molybdenum and boron.”
From the Mineral Fix

This is why we now recommend adding trace minerals like the Re-Mineralizer to the soil for all plantings to ensure that all the needed elements for microbes, plants, and animals are present.

For the healthiest and most nutritious plants it is always best to use a good organic fertilizer like Microlife and the Re-mineralizer as they complement each other.

To compile the information in this review of all the elements and what they do, I have collected hundreds of articles from various journals and other publications as well as the books and magazines listed below to list a few.

References:

Nature's Building Blocks - An A-Z Guide to the Elements, John Emsley, Oxford University Press, 2011, ISBN 978-0-19-960563-7

Trace Elements in Soils and Plants, Alina Kabata-Pendias, CRC Press, 2011,
ISBN 978-1-4200-9368-1

Trace Elements in Abiotic and Biotic Environments, Alina Kabata-Pendias and Barbara Szeke, CRC Press, 2015, ISBN 978-1-4822-1279-2

How Plants Work, Linda Chalker-Scott, Timber Press, 2015,
ISBN 978-1-60469-338-6

Seawater Concentrate for Abundant Agriculture, Arthur Zeigler, Ambrosia Technology, Arthur Ziegler, 2012, ISBN: 978-0-615-66614-3

"The Hidden Half of Nature: The Microbial Roots of Life and

Health", David Montgomery and Anne Bikle, W.W. Norton and Company, 2016,
ISBN: 978-0-393-24440-3

The Handbook of Trace Elements, Istavin Pais and J. Benton Jones, 1997, CRC Press/St. Lucie Press, ISBN 1-884015-34-4

Soil Mineralogy with Environmental Applications, Editors Joe Dixon and Darrell Schultz, Soil Science Society of America, 2002, Library of Congress Card Catalog Number: 2002100258

Food Forensics - The Hidden Toxins Lurking in Your Food and How You Can avoid Them for Lifelong Health, Mike Adams, BenBella Books, 2016, ISBN: 978-940363288

Chemical Exposure and Human Health, Cynthia Wilson, McFarland Publishers, 1993, ISBN: 0-89950-819-3

Rare Earths - Forbidden Cures, Joel Wallach, DVM, ND and Ma Lan, MD, MS, 1994, Happiness Publishing, Library of Congress Catalog

Minerals for the Genetic Code, Charles Walters (Dr. Olree), Acres, USA, 2006,
ISBN: 0-911311-85-8

Dead Doctors Don't Lie, Dr. Joel Wallach, DVM, ND and Dr. Ma Lan MD, Wellness Publications, 2015, ISBN: 0-9748581-0-2

The Elements, Theodore Gray, Leventhal/Workman Publishers, 2009,
ISBN: 13-978-1-57912-814-2

The Art of Balancing SOIL Nutrients, William McKibben, Acres, USA, 2012,
ISBN: 978-1-60173-032-9

The Soil-Human Health Nexus, Rattan Lal, ISBN: 978-0-367-42214-1, CRC Press, 2021, Advances in Soil Health Series

The Mineral Fix – How to Optimize Your Mineral Intake for Energy, Longevity, Sleep and More, James Dinicolantonio, PhD and Siim Land, ISBN: B08ZLPL8TX

Life Extension Foundation, LE Publications. A monthly health magazine, which summarizes hundreds of papers in the medical research journals.

Newsletters by Dr. Mercola - articles.mercola.com and several other researchers.

Minerals - Foundations of Society, American Geologic Institute, 2002

Earth Magazine - American Geosciences Institute, assorted articles

Journal of Rocks & Minerals - assorted articles

All the journals of the Soil and Crop Science Societies, and many more.

Note: The October issue of Life Extension magazine was on fruit and vegetables and titled "The Power of Plant-Based Nutrients". It is an excellent summary of how eating fruits and vegetables can improve our health.

To give you a teaser a couple of the articles are: Anti-Cancer Effects of Broccoli and Plant-Based Multivitamins.

I have purchased 100 copies of the magazine, as it is so loaded with beneficial information. They will be available on a first come first served basis at Nature's Way Resources as soon as they arrive.

* * *



Pines and Prairies Chapter

*Please join us at the
Recreation Center at Rob Fleming Park*

*Saturday, September 25, 2021
9am to noon*

*for our Fall Plant Sale as part of
The Woodlands Landscaping Solutions*

Plant inventory

Plant information



*Funds raised are used for research, grants, scholarships, education,
demonstration gardens and preservation of native plants*

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

SUBMITTING EVENTS? PLEASE READ!

- *Only events submitted specifically for LG&FHGN calendar will be used*
- *Put your group's FULL name in email subject.*
- *Very long links will be shortened, but full link activated when clicked*
- *Submit events to: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com*

SAT., SEPT. 25: FALL IS FOR PLANTING, 10am, Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 N Shepherd Dr. Free. [Register](#). 713-863-8322, wabashfeed.com/

SAT., SEPT. 25: LEAGUE CITY GARDEN CLUB'S GARDEN TOUR, "Renaissance in the Garden," 10am-4pm, Tickets \$15, Nana's Attic, 501 E. Main, League City, leaguecitygardenclub.org.

SAT., SEPT. 25: 24th ANNUAL WOODLANDS LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am-noon, Recreation Center/Rob Fleming Park, 6464 Creekside Forest Dr., The Woodlands. Free. thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/landscaping

SUN., SEP 26: SUSTAINABLE LIVING THROUGH PERMACULTURE 1, Southwest Houston site, 1-5 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/sustainable-living-through-permaculture-1-2/

SAT., OCT. 2: EASY PATH TO A BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY LANDSCAPE by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am-noon. Free. The Woodlands Emergency Training Center, 16135 IH-45 South, The Woodlands. Register: thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., OCT 2: GROWING BLUEBERRIES by **ROBERT MARSHALL**, 9-11am. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

MON., OCT. 4: ONLINE ORDERING ENDS for OCT. 14-16 HOUSTON BULB & PLANT MART. store.galvestonmg.org

TUES., OCT 5: GROWING HERBS FOR USE, INSIGHT & DELIGHT (Zoom) BY **KAREN COTTINGHAM**, 6-7:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event

FRI. OCT. 8: TREE PLANTING & HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL by **NICHOLAS GRIFFIN**, 10am, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., OCT. 9: FALL FAVORITE VEGETABLES by **GENE SPELLER**, 9-11. Free. Galveston City Master Gardener event. Pre-register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., OCT. 9: FORT BEND COUNTY FALL VEGGIE-HERB PLANT SALE, 9am-noon (or sell-out), 1402 Band Rd. fbmg.org/events/annual-sales/vegetable-herb-sale/.

SAT., OCT 9.: BOKASHI COMPOSTING: WASTE NOT, WANT NOT (Zoom) by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30 – 11:30 am. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/bokashi-composting-waste-not-want-not/

SAT., OCT 09.: EDIBLE ACADEMY: FALL GARDENING AND NUTRITION WORKSHOP, 9am- 1pm., Gregory-Lincoln EC., Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/2021-edible-academy-fall-garden

SUN., OCT 10.: DESIGNING BOUNTIFUL GARDENS SERIES 1/6 (Zoom), 1-5:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/designing-bountiful-gardens

MON., OCT. 11: PLANT PROPAGATION (virtual), 10-11:30am. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners event. Register: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

TUES., OCT 12: IN THE GARDEN: COOL WEATHER VEGETABLE GARDENING by **GABRIEL BORJA**, 6-7:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/in-the-garden-cool-weather-vegetable-gardening/

WED., OCT 13.: TOUGH TEXAS NATIVE PLANTS (Zoom) by **PAUL WINSKI**, 10-11 am. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/tough-texas-native-plants/

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 14-16: HOUSTON BULB & PLANT MART, St. John's Church, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. gchouston.org/bulb-plant-mart-info/

FRI.-SAT, OCT 15-OCT 16: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FALL PLANT SALE (Online). Noon Fri. to noon Sat. Browse begins Fri, Oct

8. store.galvestonmg.org

SAT., OCT. 16: THE LAWN CARE: GREEN WITH ENVY (virtual) by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am - noon. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., OCT. 16: THE LAWN CARE: GREEN WITH ENVY (virtual) by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am - noon. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

TUES., OCT. 19: PLANT PROPAGATION (virtual), 11am-noon. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners event. hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

SAT., OCT 30: KOKEDAMA by **KAT TONDRE**, 9-11am. \$20. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., OCT. 30-NOV. 2: 2021 TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL, Mission, TX. texasbutterflyfestival.com/

SAT., NOV. 6: RAINWATER HARVESTING CLASS by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am-noon., The Woodlands Emergency Training Center, 16135 IH-45 South, The Woodlands. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., NOV. 6: THE WOODLANDS GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE at the **WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL**, 10 am, Rob Fleming Park, 6055 Creekside Forest Dr, The Woodlands. thewoodlandsgardenclub.org

FRI., NOV. 12: GARDENS OF EUROPE by **VIVIANE TONDEUR**, 10am, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT. NOV. 13: HOUSTON FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS PLANT SALE AND FOOD DRIVE. 10am-1pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

Check contacts listed for covid-triggered changes and/or masking policies

Only events submitted specifically for this calendar publication will be used. We don't pick up events from other newsletter or mass emails.

Links will be fully linked if clicked but word-shortened if too long.

*** * ***



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-project to reporting, 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.

