



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



Feb-25-2022 | Issue 425

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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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GARDEN ADVICE FROM PAST, TULIPS — THINK PRE-CHILLED!

"Each spring a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground."

-- Lewis Gannett, (1891-1966)

Cream Hill "Discoveries of a Week-end Countryman"

By **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

THIS RECENT COLD SPELL has been so depressing! Almost 80° one day and the next down in 30's! What we need now is to look ahead, which inspired a great question from [SUSAN STINSON](#), longtime Houston area gardener.

Susan wanted to know why is it that we have so many "calendar-type" guides on when to plant vegetables (even to start seeds), but don't have the same available for flowering plants? Good point!

I came close -- but no cigar -- with my somewhat-flippant-but-still-pertinent planting notes from my decades-old, now-out-of-print **"Lazy Gardener's Guide"**: For example, from the March chapter . . .

March

This month, you really should:

- Put tomatoes in the ground early this month.
- Mow the lawn when it needs it, then feed.
- Watch out for bluebonnets. They look like clover. Don't mow them down,
- Fertilize everything. Water first, feed, then water again
- Gradually move hibiscus and other container plants into more light.
- Remove flowers on newly-purchased plants so they will set stronger root systems.
- Unwrap banana trunks and keep well watered. Want bananas? Remove baby plants.
- Plant Louisiana phlox (***pictured***) around late-appearing shrubs like hamelia, lantana, dishplate hibiscus, etc. This perennial groundcover is green in winter, blooms in spring and goes dormant (almost disappears) in summer,
- Give hibiscus a slight haircut, then feed with hibiscus food to encourage lush growth.
- Attend area programs to learn about new-to-us hardy, low-maintenance flowers.



Really feeling energetic ... ?

- Landscape with a wide variety of plants, instead of large masses of all the same kind. Masses of the same variety attract insects and disease.
- Donate excess plants to school, nursing home or community garden.
- Check grocery stores for white-flowering oxalis (clover, ***pictured***) around St. Patrick's Day. Perennial in shady areas. Goes dormant in summer; reappears in winter.
- Plant antique roses, four o'clocks, gingers, jasmines and mock oranges for fragrance.
- Prune poinsettias; keep spent blooms picked off mums. Mums bloom spring and fall,
- Make a note of beautiful spring bulbs (tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, ranunculus (***pictured***), anemones, etc.) now in bloom. Fall is the time to purchase and plant most of them.
- Remove tulip bulbs after the flowers fade. Discard; they won't bloom again. (***See below***),
- Watch tree trunks for webworm eggs in limb crotches on susceptible trees. Remove!



- Try crushed egg shells, coarse sand in ring around plant stem to discourage snails.
- Give all the plants a manure tea treat: Mix in washtub: 1/2 rotted (or bagged) manure and 1/2 water (preferably rainwater). Let it sit overnight. Drain off water and pour over plants. This tea is high in nitrogen, so don't use more than once a month on blooming plants.

If the spirit moves ...

- Continue pinching perennial tips to make them bushier. Stop when they produce buds.
- Dig up, thin out and transplant perennials so crowded they no longer bloom properly.
- Feed azaleas, spirea, climbing roses and other shrubby spring bloomers after they bloom. (*Pictured: spirea / bridal wreath*)
- Remove spent flowers on spring bloomers to promote more bloom production.
- Work 1/2 cup of Epsom salts around roses, hibiscus and other bloomers for more flowers
- Remove fading daffodil blooms so they won't go to seed. Leave fading foliage on.
- Feed plumerias with fish emulsion and superphosphate.
- Plant bell peppers, cucumbers, green beans, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes and watermelon – but cover if a late freeze is forecast. Start eggplants in pots.
- Put bluebonnet plants in raised, containers and/or hanging baskets. (Sow seed in fall.) . In the water garden, remove leaves and muck from pond bottom if not done last fall.
- Remove toad eggs if you see them.



Great Don't-Do Tips for REALLY Lazy Gardeners!

- Don't prune off freeze-damaged limbs or remove what looks like freeze-killed plants just yet. Wait until April. They may come back out.
- Don't prune crepe myrtles unless are causing damage, have grown out of bounds or have dead limbs. (*See below!*)
- Don't cut foliage off bulbs that naturalize after they finish blooming. They use the fading foliage to set next year's blooms.
- Don't plant caladiums yet. It's still too cold.
- Don't put out any tender tropicals, like plumerias (*pictured: Plumeria 'Nancy Ames'*). We may have a late freeze.



ONCE AGAIN, THESE TIPS are (almost) verbatim from my now decades-old **LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE** book. Most of our local, general gardening "rules" haven't changed much since our grandmothers gardened, have they? But some have! If your experiences contradict any of these "tips", do share! For a free pdf version of this book, email lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com. (Also includes garden designs for herbs, wildlife, bulbs, hot sun, shade, rain garden and more.

TULIPS ARE STARTING TO BLOOM all over Houston, but unfortunately probably an equal number won't flower at all. Why? Because we have to compensate for our "too warm" soil. In our Spotlight Article below, it's obvious why Sherrie Hakansson Steiger is known in her Southwest Houston area as the Tulip Lady.



She'll explain why we do not plant tulips now but they can still light up a garden if you buy already-started ones. The key phrase for success now is "pre-chilled." In case "Hakansson" rings a bell, Sherrie's the daughter of longtime Houston garden club leader (and my good friend and fellow Houston Cougars supporter) Mary Lou Hakansson. (Pictured, Sherrie with Mary Lou. Above: Sherrie's tulip.)

* * *

TIP O' THE TROWEL TO ...the proliferation of LOCAL gardening resources now available to Houston area gardeners! It's hasn't been this great, I don't think, since the '70-'80s when the Houston Chronicle & Post, plus several radio shows dedicated regular, specific time/space to gardening. For example, in addition to the newsletter (of course) we have:



- **HOUSTON GARDENING Facebook page.** Questions asked and answered by actual gardeners is shared, such as this "what's going on?" shot (Pictured: crepe myrtle). My thought: Looks like a victim of 'Crepe Murder.' Black sooty mold is often one of many sad results of improper pruning (ie. PPPO — Pruning Promoted for Profit Only). ([Great reliable crepe pruning guide](#))
- **RANDY LEMMON**, Houston longtime radio gardening guru, for his "[10 BEST THINGS](#)" and his [10 WORST THINGS](#)) for gardeners here in the last 30 years. Especially . . .

Among Randy's [BEST THINGS](#): We are "Planting More Fruit Trees," especially citrus. A typical backyard can handle a dozen. Randy's listeners average 4-6 different fruit trees. Fruit trees are sold year-round now. 20 years ago: available only in spring. Among Randy's [WORST THINGS](#): New homebuilder landscapes are "Simply the Worst." Most scrap up dirt/clay home was built on and plop in cheapest plants. Horrible excuse for raised beds — with dyed mulch, further poisoning the soil.

- **NAT'L WILDFLOWER FEDERATION** has a mediation plan for Pollinator-Friendly Landscape advocates versing HOAs. ((pdf download) www.nwf.org/-/media/Documents/PDFs/Mayors-Monarch-Pledge/NWF-Landscaping-Guide)
- **CONGRATULATIONS TO [Houston-Galveston Area Council's 2021 Parks and Natural Areas Awardwinners](#) :**
 - Planning Process / Policy Tools — *Mont Belvieu City Park*

- Projects Over \$500,000 — *Brock Adventure Park*, Houston Parks & Recreation (HPRD)
- Projects Under \$500,000 — *Riparian Restoration*, (HPRD)
- Programming — *Outdoor Education Initiative*, City of League City Parks and Recreation

* * *

NOTE TO READERS I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO MANY PLANT SALES
in all my years of writing about Houston area gardening!
Check out the calendar below!

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

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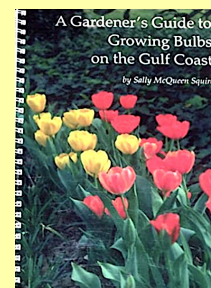


Apricot Impression and Red Parade tulips (Sherrie Steiger photos)

“WE HAVE TO TRICK TULIPS INTO THINKING IT’S WINTER”

by SHERRIE HAKANSSON STEIGER
*Harris County Master Gardener, Bouquettes Garden Club,
 Houston Federation of Garden Clubs*

I like to plant Darwin Hybrid Mid Season Tulips. They are the most reliable because they do not bloom early or late like some other varieties. I plant exactly as the book says to do, written by Sally McQueen Squire, [“A Gardener’s Guide to Growing Bulbs on the Gulf Coast”](#).



In Houston we have to trick tulips into thinking it is Winter. My method:

- Refrigerate bulbs on November 1 for 6 to 8 weeks. I put them in pantyhose or netting on paper towels. They cannot be near apples.
- I usually plant in mid-January when I see a cold front is coming.
- Plant bulbs 4 inches deep with a [bulb planter](#), adding 1 teaspoon of superphosphate at the bottom of the hole.



Left to right, 100 bulbs, holes dug and hilled tulips planted!

- Cover superphosphate with 1 tablespoon of play sand. Make sure no superphosphate touches the tulip bulb.
- Place the tulip bulb in pointed side up. Cover with existing soil.



Sherrie has planted (above, l to right) 'Red Parade,' 'Golden Parade,' 'General Eisenhower' and 'Gudoshnik.' (*All file photos).

“TULIPS ARE ALWAYS BLOOMING ON MARCH 6, SO PLAN TO HAVE A PARTY!”

My favorite is 'Gudoshnik' with blooms that are sulphur yellow, tinted or flamed red. As they age, they turn to a more creamy color. In Russian, Gudoshnik means painter. This was also the favorite tulip of Houston's late bulb lady, Sally McQueen Squire. As Sally said, *“Tulips are always blooming on March 6 so plan to have a party!”*

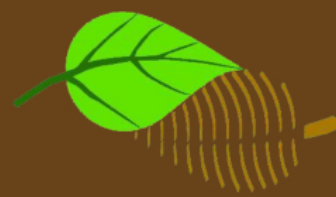
After they bloom, I dig them up and throw them away. I have read you should rotate tulips to a different bed each year to prevent disease. I have never had any rebloom even if one is accidentally left in a bed!

***To contact Sherrie, email Brenda at
lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com.
We'll forward your email to her.***

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John's Corner

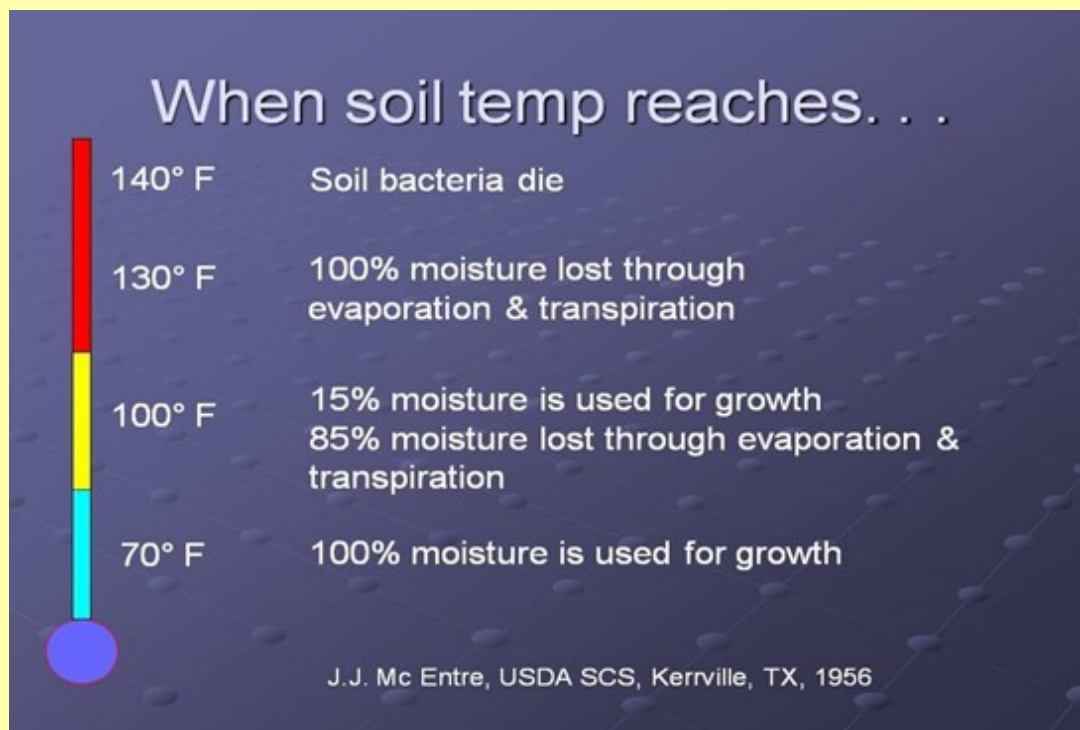


NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 185

We often talk about the importance of microbes in this column. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst has found that the ability of agricultural grasses to withstand drought is directly related to the health of their microbiology. This is the microbes living in the soil, mulch, roots, leaves, stems, etc. Applied and Environmental Microbiology 2021

Many gardeners I know have not had to water their lawns or flowerbeds since the drought of 2011. They all use the modern biological methods sometimes referred to as organic methods.

One of the ways to use less water in our lawn grasses is to top dress with a fine screened leaf mold compost. The compost not only provides beneficial microbes and nutrients, it also serves as a mulch. This mulch layer keeps the soil cooler. As one can see from the chart below this is an extremely important factor in using less water!



When a gardener uses a good quality leaf mold compost, the microbes in it will break down clay and compaction creating soil structure, allowing air to go deeper into the soil. As air (oxygen) goes deeper into the soil, roots can go deeper (most roots require at least 6 ppm oxygen or they die). A study by the University of Florida several years ago found that St. Augustine grass has the biological (genetic) potential to grow over 12 feet deep. Hence, when it rains the water can soak deeper into the soil and be held in the pores and by the humus until plants need it (instead of running off).

The Agronomy Journal (June 2020) had an excellent article where they reviewed dozens of studies on the importance of organic matter and water holding capacity of soil. Increasing the OM (organic matter) from just 1% to 2% will store an additional 1.5 quarts of water per cubic foot of soil. They also found that a good compost can hold 20 times its weight in water (another benefit of top dressing with compost).

Note: Artificial fertilizers not only kill off beneficial microbes that prevent disease and cause plants to attract insect pests, they also destroy organic matter in the soil.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research have found that bacteria from the plant microbiota become adapted to their host species and preferentially colonize their native plant hosts. Nature Microbiology (2021).

This mechanism helps explain why when we dig up a plant in the wild, most tend to establish better when the soil they are growing it is included, and why their seeds germinate better.

Many years ago, when I was lecturing at the Catie Agricultural Research Institute in Costa Rica, I remember them sharing the efforts to establish a certain Pine Tree species from Honduras. Year after year they would plant seeds which would germinate but soon die.

Finally, they went to Honduras, and they dug up a small pine tree with soil and planted it near where the seeds were planted. The transplanted pine grew well and the seeds that germinated nearby also did well. However, the seeds planted farther away died. It was obvious that something in the soil was required for that specie of pine tree to grow, but they did not know what it was at the time.

Today we know that some of the microbes had become adapted to that species of pine and were required for the pine to grow as they had evolved together. This is similar to how the Monarch butterfly caterpillars evolved to eat only milkweeds.

For gardeners, if you have a plant that is struggling and see one of the same species in a neighbor's yard that is doing well, ask permission to take a small shovelful of soil from the rootzone and work it in around your struggling plant. Sometimes it solves the problem.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development study found that spending time outdoors in the fresh air was good for your brain, over all well-being and health. Their finding adds to the neuroscientific support for the treatment of mental disorders. The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry (2021).

Many studies have shown both physical and mental benefit for being outdoors and the connection to beneficial microbes. Another rapidly growing field of study is the direct link between microbes in our gut and our mental health.

I recently finished reading a new book on this connection that I borrowed from my wife whom is a psychologist.

"This Is Your Brain on Food" by Uma Naidoo, MD, 2020, ISBN: 978-0-316-53682-0 who is with the Harvard Medical School. From the book over 40 million Americans are dealing with mental health concerns, and food is some of the most potent mental health medicine available (the book explains how and why).

The food we eat and how it is grown, directly affects our health and mental abilities. Most of the microbes in our guts that promote physical and mental health come from the soil!

As a society we can no longer separate gardening, health and environment as they are tightly linked in many ways. As we continue to learn, the old adage **"Healthy soil = healthy plants = healthy animals and humans = healthy environment"** becomes truer every day.

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NWR NOW CARRIES SEEDS FROM

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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

SUBMITTING EVENTS? PLEASE READ!

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

EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

***--- COVID IS STILL IMPACTING ON-SITE GARDENING EVENTS ---
CONFIRM TO MAKE SURE ON-SITE EVENTS HAVEN'T BEEN CANCELLED
OR SWITCHED TO VIRTUAL. SOME MAY REQUIRE MASKS. GO PREPARED!***

SAT., FEB. 26: URBAN FOOD & HABITAT CRATION by KEVIN TOPEK,
10:30am, Wabash Feed and Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd. Register:

WED., MAR. 2: GROWING VANILLA ORCHID: 9:30-11am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Pkwy, Webster. Free. Gardeners By The Bay event. www.gbtb.org

WED., MARCH 2: GROWING VANILLA ORCHID: 9:30-11am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Pkwy, Webster. Free. Gardeners By The Bay event. gbtb.org

THUR., MAR. 3: SUCCESSFUL GARDENING TIPS by **MARY KARISH**, 6pm, Waller County Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead. Waller County Master Gardeners event. Register: 979-826-7651/.

SAT., MAR. 5: WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL VEGETABLE AND HERB SALE. 9am-1pm, Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead. txmg.org/wallermg.

SAT., MAR. 5: BRAZORIA MASTER GARDENER VEGETABLE SEEDLING SALE, 9am - Noon (no cash sales), Brazoria Environmental Education Station, 583 CR 443, Angleton. txmg.org/brazoria/, 979-864-1558

SAT., MAR. 5: MISSOURI CITY GREEN "POP UP" NATIVE PLANT WORKSHOP & SALE. Educational Workshop: 9-11am; Sale: 9am-1pm, Missouri City Farmer's Market. missouricitygreen.org

SAT., MAR 5: NATIVE LANDSCAPE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. (LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION) by **NPSOT Clear Lake Chapter**. Zoom: 9am-4pm. \$45. Register: <https://bit.ly/NLCPspring2022>

TUES., MAR 8: GROWING PLUMERIAS, (Zoom & in-person), 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org 281-796-7185

TUES., MAY 10: GROWING PLUMERIAS, (Zoom & in-person), 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org 281-796-7185

THURS., MAR. 10: ART OF FERTILIZATION: RIGHT PRODUCT, RIGHT TIME, RIGHT REASON by **GAYE HAMMOND** (virtual & in-person), 7-9pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free. Houston Rose Society event. Link: houstonrose.org/

FRI., MAR. 11: THINGS I WISH I HAD LEARNED SOONER by **BAXTER & PATSY WILLIAMS**, 10AM, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman St., Free. Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

SAT. MAR 12: TOMATO STRESS MANAGEMENT by **IRA GERVAIS**, 9-11:30am. **GARDENING FOR JEWELS—HUMMINGBIRDS**, by **DEBORAH REPASZ**, 1-3pm. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

TUES., MAR. 15: OF COURSE YOU HAVE NATIVE BEES IN YOUR GARDEN! By **NANCY SHAFER & EMMA DOW**, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Rd., Sugar Land. Free. Fort Bend Master Gardener

event. sugarlandgardenclub.org.

FRI-SAT., MARCH 18-19: HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT 27TH ANNUAL HERB AND PLANT SALE 9am-5pm, Round Top Festival Institute, 248 Jaster Road, Round Top. herbsocietypioneer.org/events

SAT. MAR 19: CUCURBITS—SQUASH & CUCUMBER FAMILY by KEVIN LANCON, 9-11:30am. **SUCCESSFUL CONTAINER GARDENING** by KAROLYN GEPHART, 1-3. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., MAR. 19: THE JOHN FAIREY GARDEN BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL, 10am-4pm, 20559 FM 259 Rd., Hempstead. 979-826-3232

FRI-SAT., MAR 25-26: NPSOT CLEAR LAKE CHAPTER NATIVE PLANT SALE. Zoom, Fri, Mar 25. 7pm. Shop in-person: Saturday only, 9-11am, University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd, parking in Lot D4. npsot.org/wp/clearlake/native-plants/native-plant-sale/

FRI.-SAT, MAR. 25-26: MARCH MART, Fri: 9am-4pm; Sat. 8am-4pm, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](http://MercerBotanicGardens), 22306 Aldine Westfield, Humble. Free. Fri AND SAT., MAR. 26, 8 am – 4 pm. [MARCH MART](http://MARCHMART), 713-274-4166.

SAT., MAR. 26: BRAZORIA MASTER GARDENER CITRUS SPRING PLANT SALE, 9am - noon (no cash sales), Brazoria Environmental Education Station, 583 CR 443, Angleton. txmq.org/brazoria/, 979-864-1558

SAT., MAR. 26, HERB FESTIVAL AT THE WYNNE HOME 8am-2pm. Wynne Home Arts Center, [1428 11th St.](http://142811thSt), Huntsville. The Herb Society of America/Thyme Unit event. texasthymeunit.org; 936-891-5024

SAT. MAR 26: IRISES FOR THE GULF COAST GARDEN by MONICA MARTENS, 9-11:30am. **RAINWATER HARVESTING** by NAT GREUSEN, 1-3pm. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT. MAR. 26: BUILDING HEALTHY SOIL SAVES MONEY NOW by JOHN FERGUSON, 10:30am, Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd. Register: <https://bit.ly/3McOgqm>, wabashfeed.com

SAT., MAR. 26-APR. 3: NEAR NORTHWEST MANAGEMENT DISTRICT VIRTUAL SPRING PLANT SALE, Presentation by HEIDI SHEESLEY, White Oak Conference Center. Pickup: Treeseach Farms. nnmd.org

WED., APRIL 6: GARDENERS BY THE BAY PLANT SALE 9:am-noon, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Pkwy, Webster. 281-935-6442, leslie.j.wong@gmail.com

FRI., APRIL 14: MAKE GARDENING EASIER by DR. JOSEPH R. NOVAK, 10am Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman. Free. Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

SAT. APR. 30: BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON SPRING BROMELIAD SALE, 9am-4pm, Metropolitan Multi-services Center, 1475 W. Gray. Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

FRI. MAY 13: NATURE'S BURIAL, LEAVING A NATURAL LANDSCAPE AS YOUR LEGACY, by **THE KATY PRAIRIE CONSERVANCY**, 10am, Trinity Episcopal Church. 1015 Holman. Free. Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org.

SAT.-SUN., MAY 21-22: BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON ANNUAL SHOW-SALE, 9am-5pm Sat.; 11am-4pm Sun., Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

SAT JUN 11: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE, 5002 NASA PARKWAY, BAY AREA COMMUNITY CENTER, SEABROOK, theplumeriasociety.org, 281-796-7185

TUES., JULY 12: GROWING PLUMERIAS, (Zoom & in-person), 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org 281-796-7185

SAT JULY 23: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE, 5002 NASA PARKWAY, BAY AREA COMMUNITY CENTER, SEABROOK, theplumeriasociety.org, 281-796-7185

TUES., OCT 11: GROWING PLUMERIAS, (Zoom & in-person), 7pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org 281-796-7185

— **Check contacts for changes and/or masking policies** —

NOTE! Only events submitted specifically for this calendar publication will be used. We do not pick up events from other newsletter or mass emails. Links will be fully linked if clicked but word-shortened if too long.

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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 Assistant 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 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.

