



# LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



May-20-2022 | Issue 437

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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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*The lark's on the wing,  
The snail's on the thorn  
God's in his heaven —  
All's right with the world*



*"If poet Robert Browning pictured a snail impaled on a thorn in this verse, he's of one mind with a lot of Houston area gardeners."*

*The Lazy Gardener's Guide, Page 30*

**By BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

Given our past and current gardening challenges, how much "starting over" we all had to do and now in blasting heat, a bit of flora fun might be just the ticket.

First, though, don't mess around with heat stroke! This insidious complaint's symptoms may resemble ignoreable effects in other situations. Yet resulting damage can be permanent and deadly in some heat stroke cases.

Tip o' the trowel to ["Houston Gardening" Facebook](#) contributors for reporting heat stroke experiences including nose bleed/runny nose, NOT sweating when should, headaches, vomiting, pain in heart area, chill bumps or shaking (as from cold), etc. [cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatrelillness.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatrelillness.html)

Saturday will still be pretty hot, but here's hoping for a good rain break and a very slight temperature dip next week. How about a little "advised" break from all the things you need to do in the garden?

In my (years old) **Lazy Gardener's Guide\***, every monthly chapter includes a

monthly activity "To-Do This Month" list subdivided into "**Really should,**" "**If the spirit moves,**" "**If you're really feeling energetic**" and (my favorite) "**DON'T-DO Tips for Really Lazy Gardeners!**" For example:

## **MAY: DON'T-DO TIPS FOR REALLY LAZY GARDENERS**

*(Lazy Gardener's Guide\* Pg. 29)*

- Ignore silky whitish webs covering tree trunks. Good insects at work!
- Don't take it personally if bluebonnets, calendula, dahlias, delphiniums, geraniums, gerberas, hollyhocks, larkspur, tuberose begonias, marigolds, nasturtiums, nicotiana, petunias, poppies, snapdragons and other spring bloomers fade. It's our heat, not you.
- Don't cut back fading wildflowers if you want them to reseed. Let them die back naturally.
- Don't remove St. Augustine clippings. These replenish the soil, shade roots.
- Don't prune azaleas unless absolutely necessary. They are setting next spring's buds.
- Don't let anyone sell you "pink" or "blue" hydrangeas. Hydrangeas usually bloom blue in slightly acidic soil, pink in slightly alkaline soils.



## **JUNE: DON'T-DO TIPS FOR REALLY LAZY GARDENERS**

*(Lazy Gardener's Guide\* Pg. 33)*

- Don't overwater (*1 to 1/2 inch above*) bougainvillea, buddleia, durantas and hamelia. Also: heather, lantana, portulaca, purslane or other drought-tolerant plants. They will STOP blooming.
- Don't get upset if early spring bloomers fade. They may not be able to take the heat.

## **ALSO FROM LGG'S JUNE SECTION . . .**

***"The lark's on the wing, The snail's on the thorn  
God's in his heaven — All's right with the world"***

*"If poet Robert Browning pictured a snail impaled on a thorn in this verse, he's of one mind with a lot of Houston area gardeners."*

***The Lazy Gardener's Guide, Page 30***

Those who recommend upturned grapefruit rinds and jars full of beer have obviously never tried to cope with a true Houston snail/slug invasion. These techniques solve the problem only if the snails and slugs die laughing at you.

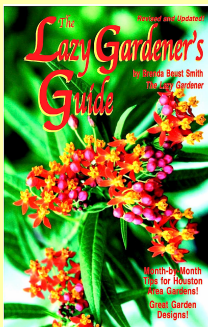
If you want to try, go ahead. These, plus hand removal, diatomaceous earth, shredded sandpaper, crushed eggshells, copper strips, seaweed and/or coarse sand might make a noticeable dent in their numbers. Or, they may not.

(My mother used to . . . ). . pay kids by the coffee can-full to collect them. Kids love that. You dispose of them later. Best solution? Replace plants snails and slugs eat with plants they don't eat.

#### **ALSO FROM JUNE (page 24) 4 - Planting to Help Cut Utility Costs:**

Plants can help keep the house cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Plant (deciduous / lose leaves) trees, large shrubs or vines on lattice sheets to shade the west side in summer, and allow warming sun rays through in winter. Use natives if you opt for a large shade tree.

If you don't have room for a tree, try a reinforced lattice wall with a deciduous vine, such as coral vine or hyacinth bean vine. These allow winter sun in. Do not allow lattice to touch the ground (*and leave room for some air circulation between wall and plant.*). Build a strong frame, using treated lumber. Attach the lattice to the frame.



**NOTE: MY "LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE" book is no longer available for sale. The one on Amazon is the very first edition. I'm proud of it, but it is very out-of-date, and not nearly as detailed as this final edition (2003). For a free pdf copy of this final edition, email me at [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)**

\* \* \*

***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](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)***

\* \* \*



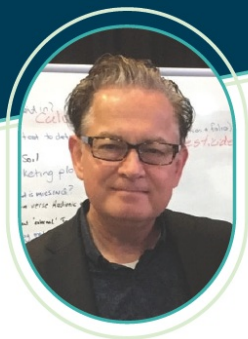
# HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF

## HEALTHY IN TODAY'S WORLD



Urban Harvest

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>



Dr. Arden Andersen, D.O.  
Globally Recognized  
Medical Doctor,  
Nutritionalist & Crop Advisor

Since the pandemic, human health has become paramount. We are faced with many different challenges that effect our overall well-being. How is today's society making our total health a **huge challenge**?

Come join us for an eye-opening seminar '*How to keep yourself healthy in today's world*'. Most of America's foods have low nutrient density, are laden with pesticides, preservatives & sugars that are destroying our most valuable asset, our health.

Dr. Andersen will discuss what needs to change with our food system, financial bias, cultural habits & psychological addiction. Learn what you can do today to be stronger, healthier & happier.

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## John's Corner



### NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 197

Phytoremediation is the process of using plants to remove and store contaminants in their tissue that was taken from soil. Researchers at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore has been studying tropical plants that are native and available locally.

They have identified 46 species of plants that have shown promise for use in phytoremediation. Of these 12 species were identified as most promising.

For example, Cow Grass (*Axonopus compressus*), Brake Fern (*Pteris vittate*), and Indian Pennywort (*Centella asiatica*) were found to be very effective in

removing several types of heavy metals and metalloids.

Heavy metals and other contaminants, accumulate in soils in urban areas from air pollution, vehicle emissions, pesticides, paints, batteries, industrial waste and sewage sludge (biosolids). Environmental Pollution (2022)

Note: In parts of Houston and along the Gulf coast the soil is contaminated. If it is contaminated then it is best to place an impermeable liner down on the ground and build a raised garden bed on top of it. The liner prevents the roots from reaching the topsoil and absorbing these toxins.

**An** article in Science daily talked about a chemical called geosin which has an unmistakable pleasurable fragrance, the scent of wet soil or the air after a summer rainstorm or the scent that fills our nose while gardening in rich healthy soil.

We all know that a caterpillar's bright colors, a pufferfish's spines, a Monarch butterflies' coloration, all warn predators that "I am not good to eat".

This chemical (geosin) is produced by bacteria for a particular purpose, to warn predators that they are poisonous to them. A soil worm called nematodes is the most abundant animal on earth and help cycle nutrients by eating bacteria.

However, some bacteria like *Streptomyces coelicolor* are toxic to nematodes. They produce this chemical that the nematodes can smell to warn them away. Humans can easily detect this chemical even at 5 ppm. Environmental Microbiology (2022).

I have noticed at my retirement property outside of LaGrange I have lots of lightning bugs. I have a St. Augustine lawn that I provide minimal care to and rarely water. I do not have diseases, sod webworms or chinch bugs.

I was reading a paper this morning that over the last century the amount of available (reactive) nitrogen (N) has doubled through industrial and agricultural activities. "This excess nitrogen has become concentrated in streams, lakes, and coastal bodies of water often resulting in eutrophication, low oxygen dead zones and harmful algae blooms".

At the same time many ecosystems have declining nitrogen availability. There are many causes from increased carbon dioxide in the air allowing plants to grow faster (which uses up nitrogen quicker) to a loss of insects that help cycle nitrogen back into the soil, to the loss of nitrogen fixing algae in our soils.

This got me thinking that there may be a connection. One of the problems when we use nitrogen rich artificial chemical fertilizers, is that the nitrogen ends up in our storm sewers before it gets to our bayous and streams. There it causes a loss of dissolved oxygen which kills aquatic life from crayfish to minnows that eat mosquito larva. As a result, our mosquito problems get much worse.

I remember reading a paper years ago on lightning bugs (fireflies) that described how in their larval form, while living in the soil they are voracious

predators of many soil insects. I would suspect this includes the eggs of lawn pests like webworms and chinch bugs.

I also suspect from the text above; we now spray poisons to kill mosquitos which also kill lightning bugs. No lightning bugs, hence no larva, thus more lawn pests like sod webworms and chinch bugs, and now we apply more toxic cancer-causing chemicals to treat them.

It is time we started studying nature and use the methods God gave us to grow plants and manage insects.

Just more reasons to use modern biological methods and organic fertilizers. Not only do they give better results, they do not have the tremendous environmental and health costs to society, and they cost less.

I finished reading a book this week titled, “REWILDING - The Radical New Science of Ecological Recovery” (Illustrated Edition) by Paul Jepson and Cain Blythe, MIT Press, 2022, ISBN 978-0-262-04676-3.

I know many of our readers are trying to restore habitats for animals and pollinators at their homes as well as their country places. This book ties ecology, habitat, animals, etc. altogether and is a good introduction to how they relate to the larger ecosystem.

This book is easy to understand and has lots of illustrations to help the reader become familiar with how all we do, ties together.

From the cover: “How rewilding has transformed the conservation movement, combining radical scientific insights with practical innovations.” Progressive scientists and conservation professionals are pursuing a radical new approach to restoring ecosystems: rewilding. By recovering the ripple effect generated by the interactions among plant and animal species and natural disturbances, rewilding seeks to repair ecosystems by removing them from human engineering and reassembling guilds of megafauna from a mix of surviving wild and feral species and de-domesticated breeds, including elk, bison, and feral horses. Written by two leaders in the field, this book offers an abundantly illustrated guide to the science of rewilding. It shows in fascinating detail the ways in which ecologists are reassembling ecosystems that allow natural interactions rather than human interventions to steer their environmental trajectories.

Rewilding looks into a past in which industrialization and globalization downgraded grasslands, describes current projects designed to recover self-willed ecosystems, and envisions the future with ten predictions for a rewilded planet. It shows how rewilding is shaking up conservation science and policy, bringing new hope and renewed purpose to efforts to revive essential ecological processes. Color illustrations capture moments of beauty in nature and offer enlightening infographics and visualizations.



# 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 to LG&F calendar are used*
- *Use our exact format, type into email, no pdfs/jpgs/flyers*
- *3 lines max per entry. We will edit down if you don't.*
- *Too long links activated by word "Details."*
- *Submit: [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com). Check your published entry!*

***EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED***

**SAT., MAY 21: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW & PLANT SALE**, Sale: 10am-4pm; Show: 1-4pm, Epiphany Lutheran Church, 5515 Broadway, Pearland. [lonestarydaylilyociety.org](http://lonestarydaylilyociety.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 Dr. [bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)

**THURS., MAY 26: IN THE GARDEN – SUMMER PLANTING** by **CAROL BURTON & MEAGAN TERRY**, 6:30-8pm, 3302 Canal St. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., JUN. 7: ALL ABOUT PEPPERS: GROWING & CARE OF FOR A SUCCESSFUL BOUNTY** (Zoom) by **TERESA SEE**, 7-8pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**THURS., JUN. 9: OKRA OBSESSION: GROWING, BREEDING, AND UTILIZING THIS INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR** by **ROBERT "SKIP" RICHTER**, 10-11am. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**THURS., JUNE 9: THINGS I WISH I HAD LEARNED SOONER** by **BAXTER WILLIAMS**, (on site & virtual) 7-8:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free. Houston Rose Society event. [meet.goto.com/151838133](https://meet.goto.com/151838133)

**SAT., JUN 11: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE**, 9am-1pm, 5002 NASA Parkway, Bay Area Community

**SAT., JUN.11: COMPANION PLANTING FOR HIGH DENSITY GARDENS**

(Zoom) by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30-11:30am. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**WED., JUN.15: CULTURAL CONNECTIONS--ROSELLE HIBISCUS:**

**PRODUCTION TO MARKETING** (Zoom) by **STEDMAN DOUGLAS**, 6-7pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., JUN. 21: SUMMER EDIBLE ACADEMY** by **CAROL BURTON,**

**KELLIE KARAVIAS, & GARDEN EDUCATORS**, 9am-3pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**WED., JUN. 29: MARKET GARDENING: THE MONTROSE URBAN FOOD**

**FARM** (Zoom) by **SCOTT HOWARD**, 7-8pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., JUL. 9: LOW VOLUME IRRIGATION (Zoom)** by **ANGELA**

**CHANDLER**, 9:30-11:30am. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**THURS., JUNE 9: HEIRLOOM GARDENING: YESTERDAY'S PLANTS FOR**

**TODAY'S GARDENS** by **GREG GRANT**, 10am, St. John's UCC, 516 North Colorado, Burton. Register: [herbsocietypioneer.org](http://herbsocietypioneer.org); 281-660-6071

**SAT., JUNE 25, CAPTIVATING CARNIVOROUS PLANTS.** 9am-noon, [Mercer Botanic Gardens](http://MercerBotanicGardens), 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. 713-274-4160.

**TUES., JULY 12: GROWING PLUMERIAS**, (Zoom & in-person), 7pm, Cherie

Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org); 281-796-7185

**TUES., JUL.12: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT FOR URBAN**

**GARDENERS** (Zoom) by **NATHAN HERMOND**, 7-8pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., JUL.16: STARTING FALL TOMATOES, ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW!**

by **MEG TAPP**, 10-11:30am, UHI Patio Garden at Headquarters. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., JUL.19: POLLINATOR GARDENING: HOW TO CREATE A**

**BUTTERFLY GARDEN** (Zoom) by **SHERRY CRUSE**, 7-8:30pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., JULY 23: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE**, 5002 NASA Parkway,

9am-1pm, Bay Area Community Center, Seabrook. [theplumeriasociety.org](http://theplumeriasociety.org), 281-796-7185

**SAT., JUL.23: FALL ORGANIC GARDENING** (Zoom) by **BOB RANDALL &**

**CAROL BURTON**, 9:30-12:30pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., AUG.2: GROWING GREAT TOMATOES FOR FALL** (Zoom) by



**SHERRY CRUSE**, 7-8:30pm. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., AUG.9: A RETURN TO WELLNESS** (Zoom) by **TAMIKA CASTON-MILLER**, 6-7:30pm. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., AUG.13: FALL WORKSHOP: FRUIT TREE CARE** (Zoom) by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30am-11:30am. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., AUG. 16: GARDENING FOR SOIL, COMPOST AND MULCH** by **SHERRY CRUSE**, 7-8:30pm, Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

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

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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. The name, she says, is not just fun, it's true.

Brenda's gradual sideways step from reporter into gardening writing 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.

Brenda became a Harris County Master Gardener and, over the years, served on the boards of many Greater Houston area horticulture organizations. She 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 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 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.

