



Jul-15-2022 | Issue 444

Nature's Way Resources is proud to produce & email you this free weekly newsletter. We have no ads, but sponsors do graciously help support this project as a public service. Please note their names below & show your gratitude for this free service by patronizing their businesses! To become a sponsor, call (936) 273-1200

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

[Click here to join our email list](#)
[CLICK HERE for PDFs OF PAST LG&F NEWSLETTERS](#)



Plants with societies/clubs based in the Greater Houston area include, l to r above, African violets, begonias, bonsai, bromeliads, cacti/succulents, camellias, chrysanthemums, daylilies, ferns. Also below (l to r) herbs, hibiscus, koi/pond gardens, native plants, oleanders orchids, palms, plumerias and roses



EXTREME WEATHER 'TOLERABLES' THRIVING HERE!

"What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps me in a continual state of inelegance."

-- Jane Austin in a letter to her sister Cassandra, Sept. 18, 1796

By BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Last week's listing of our fantastic specialty plant societies/clubs gave us a chance to also ask these knowledgeable folks if they have any "Non-speciality"

plants" that survived '21-'22 freezes + (so far) our current heat and drought without ANY cold protection or watering except rain?

(NOTE: Pictured above are examples of plants with specific societies/clubs in our area!
Websites download pdf: natureswayresources.com/NLpdf/443LGNewsletter.pdf)

Frustration is high among gardeners, especially those new to gardening here. Weather extremes, although noticeably intensifying, are normal for us — perhaps price we pay for a year-round growing season. Still scary! Hard not to panic even if plants may be just react normally, i.e., letting leaves turn brown and fall off so roots get more moisture and protection. Even normally-very-hardy plants may do this if they don't have deep-enough root systems.

REMEMBER: As frustrating and scary as these days are, roots should be our main focus now. Lose them and the plant's gone forever. Focus on roots, and hardy-for-us plants should return, maybe even healthier than before because they'll have a stronger root system than replacement plants.

You can help by sticking the hose nozzle down into the soil at the plant base BEFORE releasing the water full force. This will push most water downward where you want roots to grow. (For trees, water out at the canopy's edges.) A full minute on each plant should help. A soft drip is better in normal conditions, but these are NOT normal conditions (we hope!).

Note: If water flows back upward, drive a stake down first. This is probably a sign your soil needs more organic matter to encourage permeability microorganisms will provide.

It's ok to buy plants now . . . just maybe not actually plant them inground unless they're well noon>afternoon-shaded (even if with just an umbrella). It's a great time to look around for hardier choices for those you're sure have died.

Below, our plant society folks will give you ideas for replacements that won't be quite so quick to actually die. Folks' quoted below have, of course, been faithfully watering their specialty plants. We're talking folks with significant '\$\$\$' investments! Plants they list are their or others' other-landscape plants they've see survive and thrive without special treatment:

- **SUSAN KELLY** [*Houston Rose Society*](#), touts the '**Sweet Drift**' rose she planted in a local park. It survived freezes without protection and receives no watering other rainfall. (Susan Kelly garden photo with file insert)



- HCS's longtime Rosarian **BAXTER WILLIAMS** adds "**Belinda's Dream**" rose (see left below) as super-hardy. He's also got another "absolutely no-care" favorite flower — **periwinkles** (below right)



Baxter's boss wanted a no-care flower for a business site. Baxter's choice of **periwinkles** not only bloomed all summer & winter but even reseed for future blooms, with only rain watering and no fertilizing. (*Both file photos*)



- **ALAN RAYMOND** [*Houston Bonsai Society*](#), says in his yard, (*file photos above, l to r*) **aspidistra**, **crepe myrtles** and **sago palms** (cycads) are the plants he's never watered nor protected, and they have survived all conditions through the past 30+ years. (Aspidistra needs shade.)

LEON MACHA isn't representing any special plant society, but his longtime service with Greenleaf Nursery and the plant growing industry has given this El Campo garden writer a treasure trove of specific-named plant. Knowing exact recommended varieties (named plants) for our area can make a huge difference! Among favorites for heat-/cold-hardy choices is (*at right*): Chinese fringe tree.

Also *below, l to r*, 'Bubba' desert willow, pride of Barbados, Althaea 'Firecracker,' Russellia 'CAREFREE,' 'Burgundy' Loropetalum, and 'Lime Sizzler' Firebush. (*File photos*)



IT'S HARD TO GROUP NATIVE VARIETIES in with non-native garden plants, since many natives have now been hybridized into commonly-offered nursery choices with the same general name. If pure natives are what you want, specify that when you buy. One place to be assured of natives is at Native Plant Society chapter sales: Some native recommendations:



- **DEBBIE BUSH**, [*NPSOT / Clear Lake Chapter*](#), reports her American

Beautyberry, *left above*, made it through freezes, droughts, and heat for years with no watering or covering whatsoever. It get afternoon shade. Ditto for her Texas lantana (*center*) and southern wax myrtle (*right*) easily survived the freezes and look great now with no watering. (*all file photos*)

NATIVE PLANT ENTHUSIASTS take special pride in the fact that properly-planted, established natives usually don't need the protection or watering imported plants do:

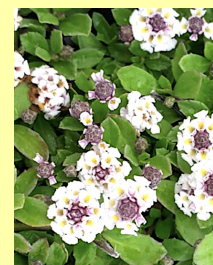


- **LINDA FOSS**, [Native Plant Society of Texas / Houston Chapter](#) says her Turks cap (*File photo*) and sunflowers are surviving the heat and drought unattended just as easily as they did the 2021 freeze.

Linda did add her goldenrod's lower leaves(*file photo*)are all turning brown, something she's never seen them do before. Not to worry -- a smart plant protecting its roots! Houston chapter's also tackling our replanting challenge on its [Facebook page](#):



- **NOTE: 'WILDSCAPES' RESCHEDULED! NPSOT / Houston Chapter's 2022 annual workshop/extravaganza sale will now be Sept. 17. Register & plant sale inventory: npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop-2022/.**
- **GAIL MCCONNELL**, [Native Plant Society of Texas / Pines and Prairies Chapter](#) president, emphasized the importance of afternoon shade during this extreme period — even for natives — especially vegetative canopies (trees, bushes, vines, sometimes weeds). These can make a major difference in survival during these exceptionally hot spells, even for natives. NPSOT/P&PC Director-at-Large **MIKE MCGEE** adds: *"I don't know that we can state there are any plants which are extremely drought and heat immune,"* Among many others, Gail did point out these are great choices: Turk's cap, coral honeysuckle, cherry laurel and, at right, coral bean (*file photo*).
- **MEADE LEBLANC** [Native Plant Society of Texas/Clear Lake Chapter](#) shares plants she's observed thriving both in her own yard and at Armand Bayou Nature Center (receiving no irrigation there). They include rock rose and (*file photo pictured*) frog fruit groundcover as well as . . .
 - Trees: eastern redbud and wax myrtle (use instead of crape myrtle)
 - Shrubs/Flowers: rock rose, blue mistflower, firewheel (Indian blanket), scarlet sage, Gulf Coast penstemon, black eyed Susan



I urge you to click on all these folks websites where you will get TONS of more help with your plantings!

POTPOURRI

- **WILDSCAPES WANNABES** Some gardeners are running into problems with wildscaping in their subdivisions. The Native Plant Society of Texas

has a great help-piece: <https://npsot.org/wp/wildscaping-your-hoa/>

- **IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR REPLACEMENT PLANTS** (who isn't?):
 - **MON., JULY 18: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE**, 8:30-11am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Harris County Master Gardener event.
 - **SAT., JULY 23: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE**, 5002 NASA Parkway, 9am-1pm, Bay Area Community Center, Seabrook. theplumeriasociety.org, 281-796-7185
 - **SAT., JULY 30: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS BEAT THE HEAT SUMMER PLANT SALE** (virtual). 8am-8pm. themercersociety.org/
 - **SAT., SEPT. 17: WILDSAPES NPSOT / HOUSTON CHAPTER's 2022** annual workshop & sale: npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop-2022/.
 - **SAT., OCT. 1: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDEN AUTUMN PLANT SALE**, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble. themercersociety.org/

Check our calendar below for last-minute submitted sale notices.

* * *

*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*

* * *



John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 204

Bio-Solids or Sewage Sludge Revealed Part 4 of 4

News of the dangers of sewage sludge continues to come out almost daily. The Boston Globe newspaper had an article recently on a facility that composted sewage sludge. The facility mixed biosolids compost into a product called "top-shelf loam" whom claimed to be an organic composting company. A farmer purchased this material to use on their farm. This contaminated their property so much they could not eat the vegetables from their garden or eat the eggs from their chickens.

Massachusetts state officials have already identified 218 properties that are contaminated from the applications of these products. Additionally, 83



When organic is toxic: How a composting facility likely...

They won't eat from their garden, swim in the pool, or drink their water, even though it now flowsthrough an expensive filtration system. "I'm severely traumatized by this," said Ryan, who has been crushing the eggs from their chickens to ensure...

[Read more](#)

www.bostonglobe.com

A few questions I occasionally get asked is:

1) "Can sewage sludge (bio-solids) be composted? "

The answer is Yes. However, composting of sewage sludge can be done but the factors involved are much more complex both from a scientific point of view as well as governmental regulations. The potential for foul odors is much higher, the cost is higher (extra government regulation), and the chance of very dangerous and toxic pollutants in the sludge and in the compost where they become more concentrated is extremely high.

However, with proper planning and site preparation, some of the extra problems can be overcome. Several studies have shown that compost made with some sewage sludge (no industry or hospitals dumping into it) can be beneficial in very limited applications, **IF** properly done and used on disturbed sites (cleaning up toxic waste dumps, mine tailings, etc.).

Mankind, at the top of the food chain, produces some of the richest manure if we eat a clean and healthy chemical free diet. As such it would theoretically make a very good compost.

To make even some of the human manure useful, it would require the material entering the sewage system is regulated at the source, preventing toxic contamination from occurring, **then** composting can be a solution and long-time frame composting methodology can ensure that some of these chemicals are broken down. This extra processing costs a lot more money hence companies and governments do not do it.

As we have discussed above, modern waste water treatment facilities, *in compliance* with current regulations, produce a sewage sludge that can legally be composted but is full of toxic and extremely dangerous substances from pharmaceuticals and pathogens to heavy metals.

2) “Do we have companies in this area that sell compost made from sewage sludge?”

We have several companies that compost sewage sludge (often called biosolids to hide what it really is) and sell it in the Houston area under various names. In some areas it is also sold to other soil yards to use in their products. See #7 for more details.

3) “Will sewage sludge make my grass green?”

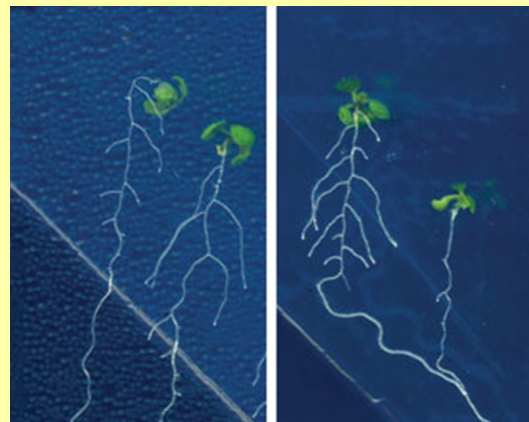
Yes, one application will green up your grass or even make hay grow faster. However, it starts the process of poisoning one’s soil. Each application there after makes the issues worse. Sewage sludge (biosolid) compost often has a lot of salt in it and with each application it can build up in the soil.



Salt is not good for plants as this old advertisement illustrates.

The other thing that happens as salts build up in our soil is that roots can sense it and will turn away (not go deep into the soil) hence one has to water more often which then can lead to other issues.

In the photo at right, when no salt is present, the roots go down through the membrane and when dissolved salts are present the roots turn away.



So even though it may appear to offer short term benefits it creates many long-term problems.

4) “How will the combination of these toxic chemicals affect us?”

Most gardeners know about a toxicology term called “Lethal Dose” often

referred to as LD. LD-50 means the chemical is lethal 50% of the time.

Pesticide manufactures often combine several chemicals that each have a higher LD number, however when combined the result is a LD that is much less than LD-50 hence it is far more toxic (it takes a lot less of the material to kill 50% of the test animals or people). With the thousands of different potential chemicals now in sewage sludge there is no way to predict what may occur as they combine. Avoidance is the only way to protect one's self, family, and pets.

5) "Does composting sewage sludge make things worse?"

Often the case is yes. Using certain composting methodologies can biodegrade a few chemicals and reduce some pathogens, I would guess that 99% of composting facilities do not use them as it costs more and take much longer.

On the other hand, as the sewage sludge cake is being composted, water is evaporated, carbon escapes to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide and methane, nitrogen is lost as nitrous oxides, etc. The result is there is a large reduction in volume and the toxic material from heavy metals to PFAS becomes more concentrated in the compost.

A few of the brands confirmed to be made with sewage sludge can be found at:

www.sludgenews.org

6) Is sewage sludge used in other products? YES – Milorganite and Hou-Actinite are dried sewage sludge products that are commonly sold as fertilizers. A sample label is shown below.

According to one website: "A product similar to Milorganite is Hou-Actinite which is a granular, heat-dried biosolids product produced by the City of Houston, **HOU-ACTINITE™ Activated Sewage Sludge, 6-3-0 1.0 Fe**, Available in Fairway Granules and Greens Grade sizing.

"Hou-Actinite™ is a naturally nutrient rich slow release activated sewage sludge. **Hou-Actinite's™** slow-release characteristics reduce the risk of burning and leaching from over watering."

From a local retailer website: **Product Overview**

Hou-Actinite is a registered, Class A fertilizer with the Texas State Chemist. It is a recycled, slow-release fertilizer that is released by natural microbial action in the soil. Hou-Actinite is easy to apply and releases nitrogen slowly preventing ground water runoff and does not require immediate watering.

- Natural, slow-release nitrogen
- Adds organic matter
- Water insoluble nitrogen environmentally safe
- Virtually dust free
- Non-burning, if used as directed

The product descriptions make it seem great and do not tell the consumer they are buying toxic waste.

7) How can I tell if the soil company I purchase soil products from, uses sewage sludge in their products?

A person can go to the TCEQ website for solid waste authorizations and see what kind of permit they have. There are four types of authorization (permits) by TCEQ for composting:

1. Exempt – a facility can take grass, leaves, manures. Easy to obtain and very little regulation.
2. Notification – the above plus food waste, dead animals, liquid wastes, etc. Additional permitting and vetting required.
3. Registration – the above plus sewage sludge. Lots of additional engineering and facility requirements that are very expensive to do. Hence, companies do not spend the money for this authorization unless they compost sewage sludge. Both TCEQ and EPA require additional record keeping as to how many tons of sludge they accept along with other data.
4. Permit – all the above plus unsorted garbage straight from the curb. Extremely expensive and tedious. I have not heard of any facilities in Texas doing this.

For more information see Chapter 332 of the Health and Safety code which spells out the types of authorization available and the requirements. Additional requirements can be found in Chapter 328 on recycling and in Chapter 325 on solid waste regulations.

A warning sign may be companies that sell dyed mulch, as it is very bad for plants, often toxic, and causes environmental problems. These type companies would be more likely to use sewage sludge since they do not care about their customers of being a steward of the environment.

8) What can be done about the situation?

Many of us remember the large train load of sewage sludge that was shipped from New York that was sent to Texas a number of years back that sat on the tracks for a long time as we did not want it. Sewage sludge is a major disposal and handling issue.

There are several possible solutions to a horrible environmental problem: Since mankind is at the top of the food chain our manure would make the highest quality compost. To make this feasible, companies should not be allowed to dump toxins into the sewer. They should handle their own problems and pay the associated costs. Taxpayers should not subsidize them in this manner.

Hospitals should not be allowed to dump their waste into public sewer systems. Their waste could easily be disposed of by incineration or other methods. There are several methods to reduce pathogens from super heating the sludge to ultraviolet light to kill pathogens. This should be a requirement of all waste treatment facilities.

Preventing the worst of the toxic material from entering the waste stream would

eliminate many of the problems with sewage sludge is the first step.

With the most toxic chemicals and metals eliminated there are composting methodologies that will biodegrade many of the remaining chemicals. **Then** the compost produced could then be useful for many other applications like along highways (which already have a toxic exposure from automobiles, establishing vegetation along streams and bayous or rehabilitating electrical or pipeline easements or even treating old creosote plants or oil processing storage sites to improve soils and help with revegetation.

Other landscaping uses could be on turfgrass farms, reforestation projects, improve soil properties in detention basins so more storm water soaks in the soil to reducing flooding, etc.

If the biosolids are cleaned up, there are many applications where a one-time application could be beneficial hence no buildup of toxic material from repeated applications.

A cleaned-up sewage sludge could be used to produce biogas for fuel and the residuals could be processed for other applications. For example, the world is running out of easily mineable (cheap) phosphorous (P) to make fertilizers. Without phosphorous our food supply will suffer and yields decline. Biosolids are a rich source of this needed nutrient to grow food and other plants.

A good use of taxpayer dollars that are now spent on advertising promoting toxic sewage sludge, would be to use the money to fund research on how to economically recover the phosphorous and other valuable nutrients.

Another short-term solution is to put it in salt domes. If we can store crude oil or radioactive waste in empty salt domes why not sewage sludge. I suspect in some areas of the country we could find abandoned mines that could be backfilled with sludge cake.

We have special sealed landfills for hazardous waste, why not have sealed landfills built to handle sewage sludge. Yes, it would cost more to the disposal companies but most likely save a fortune in health care costs not to mention quality of life.

The bottom line is that land application or composting of sewage sludge is very profitable for some companies and they have a vested interest in protecting the status quo.

The publisher Elsevier has a collection of research papers called “Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection”. In it, is a paper from the Journal of Environmental Management (2017) titled: “The Presence of contamination in sewage sludge – The current situation”.

The toxins and dangers of sewage sludge (biosolids) continue to get worse every day and they are strongly linked to many human health problems as well as environmental disasters.

As the old proverb states: “Buyer Beware”

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. Check your published entry!*
- EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED***

SAT., JULY 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/

SAT., JULY 16: BLACKBERRY PROPAGATION, 9-11am & FABULOUS FIGS, 1-3pm, by **STEPHEN BRUEGGERHORR**, AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4012-B, La Marque. Galveston Cty Master Gardeners. Free, register: txmg.org/galveston

MON., JULY 18: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN DAY & PLANT SALE
8:30-11am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Harris County Master Gardener event.

TUES., JULY 19: POLLINATOR GARDENING: HOW TO CREATE A BUTTERFLY GARDEN (Zoom) by **SHERRY CRUSE**, 7-8:30pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/education/classes/

TUES., JULY 19, FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING (virtual) by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 11am-noon, free. Harris County Public Library event via Facebook Live: facebook.com/harriscountyp/levents/

THURS., JULY 21: BASIC ORCHID CULTURE by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6:30 – 8pm, Texas AgriLife Extension Office 9020 Airport Rd. Conroe. MCMGA.com

SAT., JULY 23: PLUMERIA SOCIETY SHOW & SALE, 5002 NASA Parkway, 9am-1pm, Bay Area Community Center, Seabrook. theplumeriasociety.org, 281-796-7185

SAT., JULY 23: FALL ORGANIC GARDENING (Zoom) by **BOB RANDALL & CAROL BURTON**, 9:30-12:30pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/education/classes/

SAT., JULY 30: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS BEAT THE HEAT SUMMER PLANT SALE (virtual). 8am-8pm. themercersociety.org/

TUES., AUG. 2: GROWING GREAT TOMATOES FOR FALL (Zoom) by **SHERRY CRUSE**, 7-8:30pm. Urban Harvest event. 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/

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

SAT., AUG. 13, PREPARING TURF FOR FALL & WINTER. 9am-noon, Montgomery County Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road Conroe. 936-539-7824. Register: MCMGA.com

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

THURS., AUG. 25: HOW TO GROW MINI GREENS. 6:30-8pm, Montgomery County Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road. Conroe. 936-539-7824. Register: MCMGA.com

FRI-SAT, SEPT. 9-10: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER SUNDOWN SALE. Online. Details/Shop: <https://store.galvestonmg.org>

SAT., SEPT. 17: WILDSAPES WORKSHOP & EXTRAVAGANZA SALE. Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter. Register/sale inventory: npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop-2022

SAT., SEPT.17, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDNERS FALL FLORAL SALE. 9am-noon, County Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road Conroe.936-539-7824. Register: MCMGA.com

SAT., OCT. 1: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDEN AUTUMN PLANT SALE, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble. themercersociety.org/

SAT., OCT. 8, INDOOR & CONTAINER GARDENING, 9-11am, Montgomery County Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road Conroe. 936-539-7824. Register: MCMGA.com

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

SAT., OCT. 15, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS FALL VEGGIES, HERBS & SUCCULENTS SALE. 9am-Noon, Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road Conroe. 936-539-7824; MCMGA.com

SAT., OCT. 15, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN GARDEN DAYS. 9am-noon, Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. 936-539-7824. MCMGA.com

SAT., NOV. 12: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS CAMELLIA & WINTER COLOR SALE (virtual),themercersociety.org/

SAT., NOV. 12: HOLIDAYS AT MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS

* * *



If we inspire you to attend any of these,
please let them know you heard about it in . . .
THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
& please patronize our Newsletter & Calendar sponsors below!

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us
at 936-273-1200 or send an e-mail to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com



Saturdays 7-9am • SportsRadio 610





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 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.

