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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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## HEAT'S RULING FOR NOW 'PLOUGH THROUGH IT'

*O wind, rend open the heat, / cut apart the heat, / rend it to tatters.  
 Fruit cannot drop / through this thick air — / fruit cannot fall into heat  
 that presses up and blunts / the points of pears / and rounds the grapes.  
 Cut the heat— / plough through it, / turning it on either side / of your path.*

*"GARDEN II" -- H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)  
 1886-1961, early modernist poet, novelist, essayist.*

**By BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

As long as it's too hot to garden during the day, let's get esoteric. Plants don't bloom to please us. They bloom to produce seed to continue the species. When a plant decides it has produced enough flowers to secure a significant amount of seed, it stops blooming.

It's hard to predict outcomes in weather like this. No way to know how much a particular plant has suffered or been damaged. But we can usually use this knowledge to both:

- force a plant to continue blooming after it has reached its seed-producing goal, and to
- make sure we don't inadvertently get in nature's way by pruning at the (usually) wrong time.

This is especially important when it comes to pruning's effect on future blooms. For example: pruning standard azaleas (*pictured*), camellias, hydrangeas, spirea (bridal wreath), rhododendrons and other most spring-only bloomers too early in the year, before they bloom, removes potential flower buds. These produce flowers on OLD growth.



These shrubs above start setting buds not long after their main bloom period ends, continuing to develop the next spring's flowers over the summer and winter. See where this is going?

Thinking now about whacking back standard-size bridal wreath, (*pictured*), azaleas, camellias and other gorgeous spring bloomers? If you do, you risk destroying Spring 2023's display. Best time to prune? Immediately these spring flowers fade.

Good rule of thumb: Trees and shrubs with a one-shot flowering period that ends before July 1 should be pruned immediately after flowering ends.

On the other hand, many plants — especially repeat bloomers like butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*, *pictured*), roses and rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*) — flower on NEW green growth produced in late winter/early spring, continuing through summer and fall. Pruning these in early spring will produce many more new branches, ie., more flowers. What else? Look around at what's in bloom now.



You can also prune/trim these bushes after flowering to improve their shape if you need to; new growth will produce new buds that will bloom.

### **WARNING — BE AWARE . . .**

- many normally-summer-blooming plants are now showing up very early in spring already covered with flowers. These have been forced with bloom hormones so you'll buy them. They should go back to normal seasonal blooming after planting.

- **HYBRIDIZING** is changing the game.
  - “Self-cleaning” hybrid plants means flowers naturally fall off as they start to fade and new ones are produced. They don't produce seed, so they don't need to be deadheaded (see below).
  - Most hydrangeas (*pictured*) bloom on old wood; but some new hybrid hydrangeas bloom on new wood. (Sheeze!!!) A nurseryman you trust can tell you when a particular type will bloom even if pruned in early spring.





- **"PRUNING" VS "TRIMMING"** — Although these two words are used interchangeably, best to know the difference if hiring landscape help. Make sure they (and you!) understand the difference.
  - Pruning: removing dead, loose, or infected branches or stems.
  - Trimming: cutting back overgrown plants from outside inward.
- **DEADHEADING FOR MORE BLOOMS:** We can prolong blooming on most plants flowering now by deadheading. Unlike pruning, which means significant cutting back, deadheading simply means pinching off spent blooms. This prevents them from turning into seed.
- **IT'S YOUR PLANT**, you can do what you want (*if no Big Brother is pulling strings!*) But, be kind to your plants. Always remove damaged or diseased branches. These will attract damaging insects or diseases.

**WARNING . . .** The internet is a master of tergiversation. And not all advice applies everywhere, even throughout the Greater Houston area. If you have success with pruning/trimming timing other than described here, please share.

### GOOD SOURCES FOR LOCAL PRUNING (and more) ADVICE:

- **TEXAS A&M** — <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Pruning-with-a-Purpose.pdf>
- **MANY LOCAL INDEPENDENT NURSERIES** have great newsletters with tips for their areas. Good example, this article by one of [The Arbor Gate](#)'s regular contributors & former Mercer Botanic Garden Director:
  - [Pruning Pretty Plants For Perennial Pleasure](#) by LINDA GAY. This is one of many great, locally-written gardening articles ([pdf downloads](#)) in [Nature's Way Resources](#)' archives. Click on the link, then on **"Resources"**, then on **"Gardening Articles."**
- Not sure about pruning your native Texas shrubs? Click for: [Tips from the National Wildflower Center](#)

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Thanks to [Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter's CELESTE MEAD](#), who pointed out the Turk's cap pictured last week (*small insert picture*) was actually Mexico-native *Malvaviscus penduliflorus*, which has downward hanging flowers (like a pendulum!). Texas' native Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*) has slightly-smaller, upward-flower-pointing flower (*large picture*). Both attract hummingbirds and are cousins of cotton & okra,

**EDIBLE!** Celeste also noted this about Turk's cap: "*Besides being larvae host for the white skipper butterfly and a popular nectar source for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies, Turk's Cap is edible. The flowers which are rich in antioxidants make a lovely addition to salads. The fruit, high in vitamin C, is edible raw or can be made into jelly or tea. Leaves can be cooked and eaten.*"

Our native Turk's cap will be among plants for sale at NPSOT/Houston

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## POTPOURRI:

- **WILDSKAPING AND HOAs** — A reader who asked not to be identified was looking for help creating a front yard wildscape his HOA would approve. [The Native Plant Society of Texas](#) defines "wildscaping" as "*designing your home's landscape to attract and benefit wildlife, especially birds and butterflies, by providing the required food, water, and shelter.*" Working to create a wildscape in an HOA-governed community covered at [npsot.org/wp/resources/wildscaping/](https://npsot.org/wp/resources/wildscaping/).
- **["The City of Houston has entered Stage One of the City's Drought Contingency Plan, effective Tuesday, June 21, 2022."](#)** Driving from Dayton to Humble around 3pm recently, with car thermometer registering 103°, we passed a massive field with row-after-row-after-row of overhead sprinklers going full speed -- shooting water up into the air. The \$\$\$\$ of water being lost to evaporation both in the air and in upper soil levels was staggering. The amount actually soaked in had to be minimal.

**TRY NOT TO LET ANY OF YOUR PLANT WATER TOUCH AIR.** Aim hoses down into the soil at the base of the plant.

Speak up if you see sinful waste. We're paying the subsidence price for our steadily-dropping subsoil water table with cracked driveways, cabinets doors that don't shut tight, damaged foundations, not to mention steadily-rising water bills. [Houston Chronicle: Houston is one of the fastest sinking cities on Earth](#)

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*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)*

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## Upcoming Events







# OH BAPALOOZA 2022

Organic Fair + Superb Education  
 August 6<sup>TH</sup> | 8:30 to 3:30PM | 50 Waugh Dr. Houston, TX 77007  
**EDUCATIONAL SCHEDULE**  
**REGISTER TODAY AT [OHBAONLINE.ORG/REGISTER](https://ohbaonline.org/register)**

MORNING SCHEDULE	AFTERNOON SCHEDULE
8:30AM Registration, Social, & Exhibits	12:00PM Lunch & Exhibits
9:45AM Intro & Welcome	<b>1:00PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS</b>
10:00AM Earthing   Clint Ober Using the Earth's forces to heal Grand Hall	Top 10 Disease Causes   Mila McManus, MD Learn what you can do to prevent diseases & have a healthier life Grand Hall
10:50AM Break	Growing & Using Herbs   Justin Duncan Learn how herbs can improve our lives through their nutritional & medicinal properties Room A
<b>11:00AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS</b>	Hot Weather Veggies   Skip Richter Explore the many vegetables to grow in Houston during the Summer Room B
Organic Permaculturing   Bob Randall, Ph. D Obtain the most landscape benefits with less effort, resources & expenses. Grand Hall	Organic Lawn & Gardens   Molly Pikarksy By going Organic, you will have a better quality garden & life. Learn Molly's secrets & more! Room C
High Yield Gardening   Brianne Bernsen How to grow delicious and nutritious Organic food in small spaces Room A	<b>2:00PM COOKIES &amp; EXHIBITS</b>
Get Healthy, Stay Healthy   Blair Johnson Feel amazing! Learn Blair's "5R System" to a more energetic & healthy life Room B	2:30PM Mark Vorderbruggen, Ph. D The medicine man will teach you about foraging, common plants or weeds around you that provide food and medicine Grand Hall
Soil Food Web   Lisa Morano, Ph. D The population, community & ecosystem processes that are going on within soil Room C	<b>3:30PM ADJOURNMENT</b>

See You There!



## John's Corner



### NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 205

**A** nationwide study has found a link between the built food environment (fast food) and the connection to chronic diseases like heart disease, type II diabetes, and certain types of cancers. Journal of The American Medical Association (2021)

If you remember researchers at MIT University also found an extremely strong link to getting Covid-19 and fast food. Fast foods use a lot of GE products that are full of the herbicide glyphosate.

The reasons to grow our own fruits, vegetables, and herbs continue to increase every day.

Continuing on with the link between food and health, a research paper published in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition* (2022) found that a higher intake of vitamin C was associated with a lower risk of many types of cancers. Similarly, one of the benefits to being a gardener is exposure to lots of sunshine which allows our bodies to make vitamin-D. A paper in the journal *Cancer* (2021) found that higher levels of vitamin-D reduced the need for pain medicines in cancer treatment.

I mentioned the herbicide glyphosate above which is the active ingredient in Round-Up. The University of Konstanz has just released a study that in Germany, the biomass of all insects has decreased by 76 percent between 1989 and 2016.

They found that Bumblebees when exposed to glyphosate, it disrupted their ability to regulate temperature hence they were unable to keep their brood warm enough, so they died. *Journal Science* (2022)

A new study from Nagoya University has found that when plants are exposed to rain, hair-like structures on the leaf surface recognize rain as a risk factor for causing disease. Hence, they activate their immune system to prevent infections.

Pathogens can be transferred to the plant from raindrops splashing onto the soil or from being washed out of the air. *Journal Nature Communications* (2022)

In many animals, frequent events triggering of the immune system often weakens the animal, as there is not enough time to recharge and recover. I wonder if this mechanism is one of the reasons people who water all the time from overhead irrigation have more disease problems than those who only water occasionally with deep watering.

We often hear about using plants from prairie grasses to trees to sequester carbon to help offset global warming.

A study from DOE/SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory has found that some bacteria have enzymes that can fix carbon *20 times faster* than plant enzymes. *Journal ACS Central Science* (2022)

As a gardener one way to help fight climate change is to use the modern biologic methods often called organic.

For example, when we use artificial chemical fertilizers (which are chemically salts) we kill off a lot of good bacteria, pollute water ways and generate



greenhouse gasses. When we use a good organic fertilizer (my favorite is Microlife), we feed and increase the good bacteria and other beneficial microbes.

Not only do these good bacteria sequester carbon in the soil, these carbon-based molecules help create good soil structure that helps our plants grow stronger and healthier.

A study published in the journal Environmental International (2022) by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, found that children living in a tree filled environment have better childhood development than those living in a grass covered environment.

Both trees and grass provide better outcomes than children living in a paved environment.

"This study reinforces many other studies that green spaces are associated with better attention and memory in early childhood, higher achievement scores, and fewer emotional and behavioral problems."

## **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., 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., JULY 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/)

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

**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/](https://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](https://MCMGA.com)

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

**TUES., SEPT. 6: BASIC ORGANIC GARDENING CLASS 1** (Zoom, 4-part series), by UHI GARDEN EDU, 6-7:30pm, Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](https://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

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

**SAT., SEPT. 10: INSECTARY GARDENS, HOW TO ATTRACT THE GOOD GUYS** by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30-11:30 AM. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](https://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., SEPT. 17: WILDSAPES WORKSHOP & EXTRAVAGANZA SALE.** Native Plant Society of Texas/Houston Chapter. Register/sale inventory: [npsot.org/wp/houston/wildscapes-workshop-2022](https://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](https://MCMGA.com)

**SUN., SEP. 25: SUSTAINABLE LIVING THROUGH PERMACULTURE 1,** (Southwest Houston), 1-5pm. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](https://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., OCT. 1: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDEN AUTUMN PLANT SALE,** 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble. [themercersociety.org/](https://themercersociety.org/)

**SAT., OCT. 8: FALL GARDENING AND NUTRITION WORKSHOP** by **CAROL BURTON**, 9am-1pm. Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](https://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., OCT. 4: IN THE GARDEN: FALL VEGETABLE PLANTING DEMONSTRATIONS** by **SHARON STINSON**, 5:30-6:30pm, Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](https://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

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

**SAT., OCT.8: COMPOSTING** (Zoom) by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30-11:30.  
Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., OCT.8: FALL GARDENING WORKSHOP** by **CAROL BURTON**, 9am-1pm. 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

**TUES., OCT. 11: ALL ABOUT STRAWBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES AND BLUEBERRIES** (Zoom) by **JUSTIN DUNCAN**, 6-7pm. Urban Harvest event [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**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](http://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](http://MCMGA.com)

**TUES., OCT.25: GROWING HERBS FOR HEALTH AND THE HOLIDAYS** (Zoom) by **SHERRY CRUSE**, 7:00-8:30pm. Urban Harvest event [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

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

**SAT., NOV. 12: HOLIDAYS AT MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS**  
[themercersociety.org/](http://themercersociety.org/)

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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. 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.

