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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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This is one of my favorite columns. It is mainly a repeat (with updates) while I take a break to help my husband recover from West Nile virus



HERE'S TO THE FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN WINTER!

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

If you'd like to get a headstart on replacing low-growing color (like caladiums, etc., that won't make it through even our normal winters), might consider getting these started now. In fact, even shady spots get more sun as winter leaf drop begins soon.

- Snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivale*), delightful bulb with beautiful dark green foliage and spring flowers.
- Violas (violet family) are great color come in white and blue and white. Many colors to choose.
- Columbine, especially Benary's ['Spring Magic'](#) series
- Cyclamen are also a great winter shade color!

- Encore Autumn Ember azaleas might even bloom year-round.
- Any other suggestions?



Above, l to r, snowflakes, violas and 'Spring Magic' columbines. Below, l to r, cyclamens for garden or container and 'Autumn Ember' Encore azaleas



Personal note here, cyclamen are strictly cold-weather bloomers. They tend to be a little more expensive, but will produce some of the longest lasting, most eye-catching color you can use here in winter. Mercer plants huge beds of them and they do just fine. They're also long-lasting, beautiful and so hardy in containers on patios or by front doors.

IF YOUR NEIGHBORS are raking up those falling leaves and pine needles to set out in bags for the garbage to pick up, do like I do. Ask if you can have them. These make great mulch and, piled over roots now are one reason so many plants that died back these past two winters are now blooming so brilliantly. Give it a try!

2022 UPDATES:

After our two recent horrible winters, readers generously shared their "Lazarus" plants -- those that returned after months of being presumed dead-dead. I'm curious to know if any of these supposedly "lost forever" plants actually returned this past summer? Do share! lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

Curious about what the Farmer's Almanac predicts for

us? <https://www.ktalnews.com/news/state-news/texas/heres-how-bad-texas-next-winter-will-be-according-to-the-farmers-almanac/>.

2023 SPOILER: It "might" not be as bad as previous winters, but even so tender plants like bromeliads will still need protecting. In our Spotlight Article below, [Bromeliad Society/Houston](#)'s Alicia Baker gives a preview of her presentation: **TUES., NOV. 15: ALL ABOUT BROMELIADS**, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. sugarlandgardenclub.org. But first . . .

* * *

FOLLOW UP TO LAST WEEK'S BOUGAINVILLEA TOUT: MARY ANN DRAWL in Hempstead sent in this fascinating picture of her bougainvillea, noting "It gets this big or bigger every year," even though they cut it to the ground every March. It gets no fertilizer. Only rainwater. It's on the south side of the house and gets direct sun.



It was huge. when they moved into this house 13 years ago. They chainsawed it to the ground. "It grew back!!" Mary Ann wrote. And that's all. Every year they cut it back (long thorns and all) and back it comes, sometimes with stalks that initially reach for the sky, some even getting tangled in the satellite dish! I could visual a sight like this in Galveston where, as a child,

I was always awed as a child by the incredible pink-covered vine that blanketed the old Southern Compress Warehouse on Broadway in Galveston. I wanted Mother to plant one. No, Mother would say, bougainvillea won't grow outside in Houston. Our winters are too cold. But over the decades have seen houses in North Houston blanketed with bougainvillea but to see such hardiness of a supposedly tropical vine as far north as Hempstead, this was a true delight! Mother Nature always bats last!

Now . . . Bromeliads!

* * *

If you don't see your submitted event in the Calendar below, email me!

*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*

* * *





PROTECTING BROMELIADS FROM WINTER FREEZES

By **ALICIA BAKER**

[Bromeliad Society/Houston](#)

Winter is coming — here are ways to protect your bromeliads from temperatures below 33 degrees:

1. Move them inside! This can be just into the garage, under an oak tree, or onto the covered patio. But get them under cover. Think twice BEFORE moving them into the house! Many 'varmint' live in bromeliads, and you probably don't want to invite them in for dinner.
2. Moving them to the ground and next to a brick or stone wall will help. South wall best, but east and west will work if blocked from NORTH winds.
3. If you can't move them, frost cloth works very well. Depending on how cold the forecast predicts. I used 3 layers for 28 degrees and the bromeliads were fine the next day.
4. The dark green frost cloth can get hot during the day when the sun hits it directly and burns the plants. It should be removed as soon as temperatures are above 33.
5. Realize that some bromeliads will succumb to the temperatures no matter what you do. If they are going to be in the dark for days (garage), remember to pour out the water that collects in the leaves - this will help prevent rot.

EDITOR'S NOTE: More questions? Alicia will be happy to answer them:

TUES., NOV. 15: ALL ABOUT BROMELIADS by ALICIA BAKER, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. sugarlandgardenclub.org



John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 217

Growing citrus trees continues to increase in popularity. We all know that citrus

juice is good for us from both the pulp and fiber to the vitamin-C content.

A report in the magazine Life Extension (October 2022) gives additional evidence why it is good for us and the environment.

Several research studies (9) found that growing and eating the citrus called Moro Orange, has many health benefits. This fruit is high in beneficial chemicals called anthocyanins along with flavonoids, carotenoids, and hydroxycinnamic acids.

When overweight individuals consumed 400 mg of Moro orange juice extract daily for 12 weeks, they reduced their weight and belly fat by 4% compared to the control group. Similarly, a six-month trial found a 4.2% weight reduction.

I just learned of another reason to grow our own food or at least purchase from local farmers markets and it concerns climate change. A study from the University of Sydney, Australia has found that 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions is due to food transportation. Being a home vegetable gardeners can be part of the solution.

Homeowners can make a difference as there is a large amount of land in residential landscapes. This is over 484 million acres (280 times larger than Yellowstone National Park). Our decisions will determine the health of the food web, carbon sequestering, and much more in these millions of acres. Mother Earth News (October 2022)

Most of us are very concerned about the declining numbers of Monarch butterflies. Researchers at the University of Cincinnati have found several factors that affect their health.

Butterflies roosting near artificial light sources like those found on porches, garages, streetlights, etc. disrupts their circadian rhythms. Which then interferes with their navigational abilities.

Monarchs depend on the darkness of night time to process proteins that are essential to their internal compass. The light pollution also throws off their sense of time and hurts their navigational abilities.

Another joint study has been released by the CDC and several universities on the herbicide glyphosate. They found that over 80% of the children and adults in the USA now have this pesticide in their urine.

Studies at Florida Atlantic and Nova Southeastern Universities have found that glyphosate leads to convulsions in animals. They found that exposure at levels 300 times less than allowed, affects the nervous system. They found that this chemical alters hormones in humans that are the same, which affects sleep and mood in humans.

This also is important to gardeners, as round worms once exposed, convulse, and do not recover. Beneficial nematodes (round worms) help cycle nutrients for our plants and provide other services in the soil.

Other parts of the study found that chronic exposure and accumulation in our bodies may lead to Parkinson's disease. Scientific Reports 2022

A question I often get asked is "When is the best time to mulch my yard?" and the second question is "What is the best type of mulch to use?"

The first answer is "Anytime is better than not at all." However, let us look at nature, where fall is when almost all plants naturally get mulched. Hence, this is what plants want and prefer.

Mulches help control weeds, prevent diseases, conserve moisture, insulate the soil from extreme temperatures, enrich the soil with organic matter (carbon that feeds the soil food web), may provide valuable nutrients, and helps the garden look good.

A few years ago, in this newsletter I went through the pros and cons of over 20 different types of mulch. These reports can be found on our website. The answer to the second question is "Depends on the application and what one is trying to do."

For example, many folks are putting in their fall vegetable garden. A well mulched garden can produce 50% more vegetable than one without mulch. In general, a composted (aged) native mulch made from the branches and limbs of shrubs and trees produces the highest quality mulch for most applications.

Properly made Native Mulch is full of beneficial microbes, loaded with nutrients, and has a beautiful dark chocolate brown color. It is great for most shrubs, trees, roses, most vegetables, and any fungal loving species. In most cases a four-inch-thick layer works best.

However, as some studies suggest, if one is growing members of the Cole family (Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower, Broccoli, etc.) that prefer and do better in bacteria dominated soil, then a grass clippings or hay mulch might work better.

* * *

A lot of folks have asked for heirloom and non-GMO seeds. We listened, and now we offer Bentley seeds!



VEGETABLE/HERB/FLOWER SEEDS

NON-GMO, HEIRLOOM, OPEN POLLINATED

Forget Me Not-Firmament-Cynoglossum amabile	Eggplant, Black Beauty Seed Packets - 22
Marigold-Crackerjack Mixed-Tagetes erecta	Kale, Dwarf Siberian Seed Packets - 594
Morning Glory Mixed Colors-Ipomoea	Lettuce, Simpson's Curled Seed Packets - 29
Sunflower-Mammoth-Helianthus annuus	Lettuce, Parris Island Romaine Seed Packets - 452
Sunflower, All Sorts Mix	Lettuce, Buttercrunch Seed Packets - 24
Zinnia-Lilliput Mixed Colors-Zinnia elegans	Mustard, Southern Giant Curled Seed Packets - 30
Basil, Genovese Seed Packets - 5	Onion, Evergreen Bunching Seed Packets - 32
Catnip Seed Packets - 63	Onion, Sweet Yellow Seed Packets - 589
Garlic Chives Seed Packets - 556	Pepper, Long Red Cayenne Seed Packets - 38
Cilantro, Coriander Seed Packets - 66	Pepper, California Wonder Seed Packets - 37
Dill, Long Island Mammoth Seed Packets - 68	Peas, Sugar Ann Snap Seed Packets - 36
Parsley, Plain Italian Seed Packets - 73	Pumpkin, Jack O'Lantern Seed Packets - 40
Arugula, Rouquette Seed Packets - 567	Pumpkin, Small Sugar 'NEW'
Beans, Provider Seed Packets - 5	Radish, Cherry Belle Seed Packets - 41
Beets, Detroit Seed Packets - 8	Radish, Sparkler Seed Packets - 43
Brussel Sprouts-Long Island Improved	Spinach, Bloomsdale Savoy Seed Packets - 44
Cabbage, Pak Choi 'NEW'	Squash, Acorn Seed Packets - 45
Cabbage, Copenhagen Market Seed Packets - 10	Squash, Yellow Crookneck Seed Packets - 48
Cantaloupe, Hale's Best Seed Packets - 12	Squash, Zucchini Seed Packets - 49
Carrot, Nantes Seed Packets - 14	Tomato, Ace
Celery, Tall Utah 'NEW'	Tomato, Cherry
Corn-Golden Bantam 8 Row	Turnip, Purple White Globe Seed Packets - 57
Corn, Pearls & Gold Seed Packets - 18	Watermelon, Sugar Baby Seed Packets - 60
Cucumber, Boston Pickling Seed Packets - 19	
Cucumber, Marketmore 76 Seed Packets - 20	

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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. Check your published entry!
 - Always check to make sure your event is listed. if not let Brenda know
- EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

SAT., OCT. 22: MAINTAINING YOUR GARDEN, 10-11am, Beauty's Community Garden, 3201 Airline Dr. Free but register: <https://bit.ly/3RSTppZ>

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/

WED., OCT 26: PHOENIX'S BOTANICAL GARDEN & ARIZONA'S SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK by **DR. ANDREA VARESIC**, 7pm. Metropolitan Multi-Service Center,

1475 West Gray St. Houston Cactus and Succulent Society event. hcsstex.org

FRI.-SAT., OCT., 28-29: TEXAS COASTAL PRAIRIE CONFERENCE: PRESERVING LANDS & LEGACIES. University of Houston Clear Lake Bayou Building, <https://www.prairiepartner.org/conference>

WED., NOV. 2: BEES AND THE ENVIRONMENT by **ED BOYER**, 9:30-11am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Pkwy, Webster. Gardeners By The Bay event. gbtb.org

FRI., NOV. 4 - SUN., NOV. 13: BETTY AND JACOB FRIEDMAN HOLISTIC GARDEN HOLISTIC STORE SONGBIRD & POLLINATOR PLANT SALE, Rice University. Inventory, ordering & pPickup: ebank.rice.edu/C21279_ustores/web/store

SAT., NOV. 5: 49th ANNUAL HERB FAIR by **THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT**, 9am-2pm, Southside Place Clubhouse, 3743 Garnet St. Free. herbsociety-stu.org

SAT., NOV. 5: DISEASES AND INSECTS, 10-11am, Beauty's Community Garden, 3201 Airline Dr. Free but register: <https://bit.ly/3RSTppZ>

SAT., NOV. 5—: NATIVE TEXAS PLANTS by **MARK BOWEN**, 10:30, Wabash Feed and Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd, \$10. Register here <https://bit.ly/3VbBD3m>, wabashfeed.com

THURS., NOV. 10: PEST FREE ORGANICALLY by **JAY WHITE**, 7-9pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Houston Rose Society/Houston event. Free. Virtual: meet.goto.com/475926661

SAT., NOV. 11: HARVEST, HANDLING & STORAGE, 10-11am, Beauty's Community Garden, 3201 Airline Dr. Free but register: <https://bit.ly/3RSTppZ>

SAT., NOV. 12: FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS VIRTUAL CAMELLIA & WINTER COLOR SALE, 8am, 713-274-4166, friendsofmercer.com

SAT., NOV. 12: GOOD SOIL IS THE LIVING LAYER OF EARTH 9am-noon, Texas AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe. 936-539-7824. MCMGA.com

TUES., NOV. 15: ALL ABOUT BROMELIADS by **ALICIA BAKER**, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. sugarlandgardenclub.org

THUR., DEC. 1, PLANTABLE CHRISTMAS TREE ALTERNATIVES (virtual) by **BRANDI KELLER**, 10-11am. Free. Register: homegrown2022.eventbrite.com

WED., DEC. 7: HOW TO GROW AMARYLLIS by **PATTY CORDRAY**, 9:30-11am Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Parkway, Webster. Gardeners By The Bay event.gbtb.org

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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.



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