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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. Thanks to Panayoti Kelaidis for permission to reprint this great fern article he wrote for us just before his 2019 visit with our Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society.



FERNS LINK US TO OUR DEEPEST ROOTS . . . FALL = BULB PLANTING & PECAN-BRAGGING TIME!

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

"Ferns . . . have inhabited Earth about 200 million years before the first dinosaur ever hatched from its egg.."

earthbuddies.net/ancient-plants-ferns/

SOMETIMES we become so focused on our own plants, we forget about the greater world from which they come. Our loss. Think of how broadening the historic horizons of your ferns, for example, would enrich appreciation of them.

In our Spotlight Article below, Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanic Gardens

Senior Curator /Director of Outreach, helps us to envision the wider world of the ferns that fill such an important role in our own gardens.

- Our treasured trees do limit the range of plants we use, which makes ferns all the more valuable for those deeply shady spots. [Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society](#), a collection of pteridologists, are always happy to introduce new "fernies" to the incredible world of these prehistoric treasures. Their [newsletters](#) alone are a wealth of information. Join!

* . * . *

IT'S OFFICIALLY FALL -- PLANT THOSE BULBS!

Planting times for bulbs in our unique subtropical pocket often differ from other areas, so I try to periodically republish my late longtime mentor/close friend Sally McQueen Squire's **"Planting By the Holidays" chart**. Decades ago, Sally was best known as "Houston Bulb Lady" (a title now bestowed on Ceil Dow). Sally's **"Bulb Planting by the Holidays"** below was -- and should still be -- one of our most popular guides.



- **NOVEMBER (actually HALLOWEEN through November)**

Plant these above: l to r, Agapanthus, allium, anemone, bletilla, lycoris, ranunculus (claws down!), crocus. And these below: Dutch iris, freesia, leucojum, milla, muscari, sparaxis and watsonia.



Brenda's Note: try all these in containers too. Most bulbs like cold. In fact, the reason tulips, hyacinths, crocus and other "Holland" bulbs DON'T naturalize here is that our winters aren't cold enough for long enough stretches for them to go into the true dormancy needed for bloom production. That's why we need to refrigerate tulips, hyacinths and crocus 4-6 weeks before planting. Otherwise, they "blast" (bloom deep down in the foliage base).

- **VETERANS DAY (Nov. 11)**

Start 'Paperwhite' narcissus in pebble-filled shallow dishes for holiday blooms. To extend season, plant new bowls every two weeks. The later you plant bulbs, the shorter time until blooming.

- **THANKSGIVING (Nov. 25)**

Plant: daffodils and pre-refrigerated hyacinths in ground. Plant unchilled hyacinths anytime in hyacinth glasses (water) or containers, Then refrigerate until roots fill glass. Start amaryllis bulbs in pots in a low-light area for holiday blooms.

- **NEW YEAR'S EVE (Dec. 31)**

Start planting tulip bulbs that have been refrigerated at least 4-6 weeks. Tulips can be planted anytime until Feb. 13. Why not on Feb. 14, you ask? Because that's the traditional day for pruning roses in the garden!

- **NEW YEAR'S DAY (Jan. 1)**

Plant all the bulbs you forgot to plant in the fall — especially those tulips and hyacinths! They won't bloom in the refrigerator!

- **VALENTINE'S DAY (Feb. 14)**

Don't worry about bulbs. This is the day to prune your roses!

- **WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY / PRESIDENT'S DAY (Feb. 20, 2023)**

Start caladiums in flats inside so will be ready to put into the ground on Easter. Alstromeria, if you haven't planted them already, need to go into the ground quickly. Stagger gladiolus planting at two-week intervals to produce a long season of color.

- **ST. PATRICK'S DAY (Mar. 17)**

Oxalis (those 4-leaf clovers sold in grocery stores love our gardens!) Dahlias can be started now but tubers often require a full season of growing before producing flowers.

- **EASTER SUNDAY (Apr. 9, 2023)**

Plant amaryllis and caladiums in the ground now. Don't plant caladiums earlier because these rot too easily in cold soil. Amaryllis will naturalize here; no need to lift come winter as they do *'up nawth'*.

- **MOTHER'S DAY (April 9, 2023)**

Plant achimenes. Crinum and cannas can be planted any time, except the dead of winter.

- **MEMORIAL DAY (May 29, 2023)**

Okay to plant caladiums this late if you use plants.

* * *

NOTE: 2022 UPDATES:

- . . . **ON PRIZE PECANS.** Galveston County Extension Service will be honoring outstanding pecan crops at its upcoming **GOING NUTS FOR PECANS SHOW** Sat., Dec. 10 at the Extension Center, 4102-B Main St, La Marque. To enter (no charge), pecans samples must be dropped off at the center by Dec. 2. (Do not have to be Galveston County residents to enter! Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/)
- . . . **ON RICE HOLISTIC GARDEN's Songbird and Pollinator Plant Sale**, extended to Sun., Nov. 13. For online shopping, pickups, times, onsite shopping, etc.: ebank.rice.edu/C21279_ustores/web/store

* * *

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*

* * *



"Only spread a fern-frond over a man's head and worldly cares are cast out, and freedom and beauty and peace come in." -- John Muir



Fern wall at Guangzhou airport China (PANAYOTI KELAIIDIS photo)

LOOKING FOR FERNS IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

by PANAYOTI KELAIIDIS

Denver Botanic Gardens

Senior Curator / Director of Outreach

If you want to see a fern in Colorado, good luck! Although we have nearly a hundred kinds of ferns and fern allies, most are tucked on inaccessible cliffs, or deep gorges. Unlike humid regions, where ferns can blanket the landscape, ferns in cold or dry regions are subtle, but they are present.

I have been astonished to find a vast assortment of ferns above treeline, well above 14,000 in the Himalaya, in the deserts of Central Asia and the American Southwest. I have found them in the arctic and above tree line in New Zealand, the Andes and in the hot, dry corners of South Africa.



***Asplenium trichomanes* (above left with *Cyclamen purpurascens*) and above right in a garden. Below, *Cystopteris fragilis* near Denver, CO. (PANAYOTI KELAIIDIS photos)**

Some, like Braken (*Pteridium aquilinum*, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Cystopteris fragilis*) are global—found on most continents and in many habitats. Others are highly specialized and local, like some of the dryland ferns of our Southwest such as *Bomera hispida* that grows only in a corner of Texas and Mexico.

I am especially intrigued by the strange distribution of a few ferns, like the Interrupted fern (*Osmunda claytoniana*) which I've always associated with the hardwood forests of eastern North America. But I found this growing abundantly in forests of Yunnan, in the Chinese Himalaya!



***Osmunda claytoniana* Tianchi Lake, left, and ferns planted on walls along streets in Chengdu China (PANAYOTI KELAIIDIS photos)**

Ferns seem to love to grow in scenic spots and in special places, from temples in Tibet to even in crevices of the Acropolis! At Denver Botanic Gardens we have tried to promote a regional garden style that reflects our Western landscape more faithfully.

A surprising number of Texas natives, like Undaunted Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia reverchonii*), Silver (*Vernonia larseni*) and Texas Oak (*Quercus buckleyi*) have emerged as stars in Rocky Mountain landscapes. The extraordinary biodiversity of Texas is a resource that benefits all of America.



John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 218

Many of you know that I have been working on a habitat reconstruction at my retirement property near La Grange. Last week I planted 20 Texas Redbuds (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*). These were purchased through the rural land's reforestation program by the Texas Forest Service.

During my research I discovered that there is a white form of this tree often sold by the common names Texas White and Royal White. I checked with several of our local growers and they are all sold out.

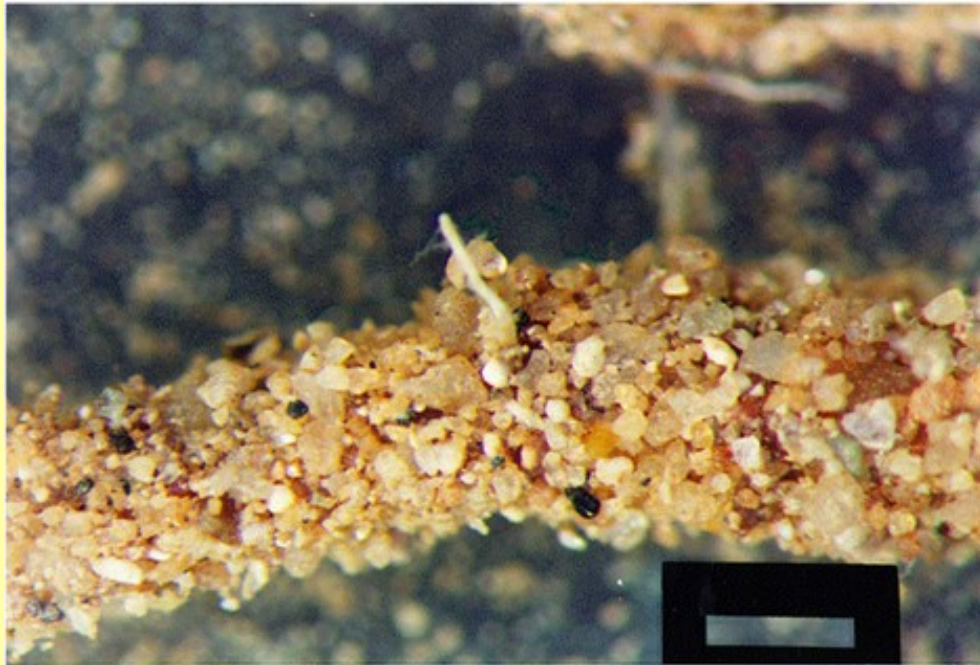
Hence, I was wondering if any of our readers have any experience with this variety and are aware of anyone whom is selling it.

I am reading a new book on fungi and their role in horticulture. In nature many to most plants form symbiotic relations with fungi in the soil. Especially the mycorrhizal fungi. These good fungi help the plant collect water and nutrients, produce plant growth hormones, and help protect the plant from disease and pest insects.

New research has found that many species of plants from grasses to vegetables and flowers, due to hybridization and selected breeding, have lost the ability to work with symbiotic fungi in the soil. The result is that these modern varieties are much more susceptible to insects and diseases and require much more care.

For example, I often hear on the gardening shows folks calling in about mildew on their crepe myrtles. I have never had this issue as my crepes are over 40 years old. At my farm, according to the county forester, there are a few crepes that are over 80 years old. They never get fertilized or watered, they grow in poor soils from heavy clay to limestone, they never get disease or pests, and they are full of bees and other pollinators. So, I wonder if the modern problems may be a result of the breeding and loss of the beneficial fungi.

Mycorrhizal fungi also provide other services to plants and soils. For example, they can loosen clay soils and help create good soil structure. In sandy soils they can glue the sand particles to their hyphae keeping it from eroding and again build soil structure as shown in the photo below.



Mycorrhizal fungi also have the ability to help balance soil nutrients and bring them into balance. The hardness of a soil is often a function of the calcium (Ca) to magnesium (Mg) ratio. If there is an excess of calcium, these good fungi can form calcium oxalate crystals on their hyphae by pulling the excess calcium out of the soil solution so it is no longer available, correcting the mineral imbalance.

However, if we apply a fungicide, till the soil, apply artificial fertilizers, not to mention pesticides or herbicides, we kill many of these good guys and we lose the services they provide.

This is another reason why properly made composts and composted (aged) native mulches work so well as they are natural bioinoculants in addition to their many other benefits.

If you want to learn more on this subject there is a very good article from Acres USA magazine that can be found at www.ecofarmingdaily.com

It seems like every time I open a journal or newsletter there is another study being released on the dangers of glyphosate which is used in the brand Round Up.

A paper in the Journal of Neuroinflammation (2022) has found this toxic chemical can infiltrate the brain and increase pro-inflammatory cytokines which are linked to neurodegenerative disorders.

They found the damage was dose dependent, hence the more glyphosate one is exposed to, the greater the damage.

Another reason to avoid GMO products as they have the highest level of this toxic chemical on them and purchase organically certified foods whenever possible. The best solution is to grow one's own food organically.

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 - 3	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>

SAT., OCT. 22-DEC. 2: PECAN SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED FOR 2022

GALVESTON COUNTY PECAN SHOW, 4102-B Main St, La Marque. Galveston County AgriLife Extension event. galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

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

MON., NOV 14, BOTANICAL LATIN FOR THE GARDENER by **ANNE MULLINS**, 6:30-8:30pm. Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 2920 Woodland Hills, Kingwood. Lake Houston Garden Club event, Free

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

SAT., DEC. 10: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEED, 9-11:30am, Galveston

County AgriLife Extension, 4102-B Main St, La Marque. Free but register:
galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

SAT., DEC. 10: GOING NUTS FOR PECANS!, 2-4Pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension, 4102-B Main St, La Marque. Free but register:
galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

2023

SAT.-SUN., MAY 5-7: ANNUAL SPRING BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON SALE, 8am, Judson Robinson, Jr Community Center, 2020 Herman Dr. Free.

SAT, & SUN., OCT 14&15: 2023 SOUTHWEST BROMELIAD GUILD SHOW & SALE, 8am, Holiday Inn 18530 State Highway 249. Free.

NOTE: We do NOT pick up events from other newsletters or general releases. See above calendar for submission for this calendar.

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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.



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