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<u>Nature's Way Resources</u> 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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Tidbits from favorite columns (with update editing!) while I help my husband recover from West Nile Virus.







WINTER VEGETABLES, ROSE-CALM AND MORE

By Brenda Beust Smith

I love camellias, really treasure their winter blooms maybe because of this camellia notes from childhood pal Susie Parks Lilley. Susie reminded me of the wonderful camellias her father grew in her "across-the-street-from-us" home in Houston's Riverside Terrace community.

And longtime Memorial Area gardener ED HOLLAND sent a shot of his now-inbloom Sassanqua camellias (below) in the Memorial area. These may have a shorter bloom period than Japonicas, but their silver lining, reminds Ed: "... They make up for their short bloom life by carpeting the ground around them with colorful petals." Ed's sassanquas: I to r, below, 'Kanjiro', prolific 3-month pink; white 'Mine-No-Yuki' (Snow-On-the-Mountain); tall red 'Sparkling Burgundy,' and pink 'Interlude.'



PUZZLED by a references to "Sassanquas, Japonicas and Reticulatas."? Coushatta Camellia Society President Frank Ohrt generously explains:







"The genus Camellia has 50+ species. There are three main species grown for flowers (L to R above): Sassangua, Japonica, and Reticulata.

- Sassanquas have smaller leaves, smaller flowers (but more), are more sun-tolerant and cold hardy, and start blooming in late fall.
- Japonicas, from Japan and Korea, have larger leaves, wider variety of bloom size and form, and bloom later than sassanquas, though their blooming periods overlap.
- Reticulatas are from southwest China, are similar to japonicas, but usually have larger blooms. They are a bit more finicky to grow.

UPDATE: IT'S ALMOST 2023!: If you want to see camellias in full color, drop by Coushatta Camellia Society's **2023 Annual Outdoor Plant Sale, JAN. 29-30, 2023** at First Christian Church, 3500 N. Loop 336 W., Conroe. 1-4 p.m. Details: (*coushattacamelliasociety.com*)

* * *



"Rose-watching is the current fascination around here. Once a week everyone buys a single long- stemmed rose . . . bud and watches it unfurl day by day. It's a simple, private way of calming the nerves in these days of terrorists and snipers."

-- "The Cat Who Went Bananas" by Lillian Jackson Braun (2005)

Hey, these days, whatever works! Lillian Jackson Braun may have totally invented rose- watching (couldn't find any online historical reference). Even so, I cut a tight bud, positioned it eye-level behind my laptop cover and stared at it every time I sat down to work. Seeing up close how petals slowly unfurl IS relaxing and made me smile every time. Mission accomplished!

* * *

NINE WINTER EDIBLE CROPS TO PLANT NOW! We garden year-round here but the key to success, especially in our blistering hot summers and roller-coaster winters, is using only local advice and that's what <u>Houston</u>

Botanic Garden's Dany Millikin provides in our Spotlight Article below

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK BELOW FOR UPDATED CALENDAR EVENTS!

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

* * *



Winter Vegetable Gardening in Houston and on (our) Gulf Coast

By DANY MILLIKIN

HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN

Houston's winter has mild temperatures that bring out the best flavors in home vegetables. Pesky mosquitoes, weeds, and diseases are less bothersome. And we can grow some warm-season and most cool-season crops.

Warm-season vegetables are frost-susceptible so leave out the beans, cucumbers and summer squash that can't take cold during this winter season. They should go into your garden soon enough, joining February's planted tomatoes.

Frost-tolerant crops that need cooler conditions include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, kohlrabi, lettuce, radishes, spinach and turnips.

- Eight hours of direct sun daily is required, plant accordingly. Root crops (such as turnips) and leafy vegetables (like lettuce) tolerate some shade, but still need substantial winter sun. A southern exposure is best due to the angle of the sun. A garden that catches the early morning sun will dry more quickly, reducing the chance that harmful fungi or other diseases will develop.
- Good air circulation is important.
- Easy access to a water source makes gardening much easier.
- Success relies on an organic, loose and well-draining soil.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture, moderate soil temperatures and discourage weeds.

Nine winter crops that aren't too late to plant now:

- <u>Carrots</u>, seed: mid-October-December, plant in groups so you don't have too much at harvest. Carrots take a long time to get edible.
- <u>Collards</u>, transplant: September-March, this fast-growing delicious leafy green is a nutritional powerhouse and can last all the way through spring.
- <u>Lettuce</u>, <u>leaf</u>, <u>seed and transplant</u>: late-September-April. Always be lettucing, that's my motto.
- Onion, transplant: mid-October-January. Tell me a vegetable you use more often.
- <u>Peas, snap</u>, seed: late-September-early February. Best to grow snap peas on a trellis, they can get a little birds nesting without.
- <u>Radish</u>, seed: September-February, very fast from seed to table. Great for kiddos
- <u>Spinach</u>, seed/transplant: October-November. I love growing spinach, easy to grow, easy use.
- <u>Turnips</u>, seed: September-February. If you pickle turnips are a must; grow for green and for roots. Most food per square foot of any garden food.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Contact DANI MILLIGAN, Houston Botanic Garden Director of Education at <u>713.715.9675 ext. 121</u>







NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 220

Many times, we have talked about the dangers of using sewage sludge (biosolids) or compost and fertilizers made from them, on our gardens. Many companies and some government agencies believe that our back yards are a good dumping ground for this toxic material.

Another paper from the University of Toronto finds that "super bugs," the most dangerous and antibiotic resistant bacteria are produced by exposure to antibiotics, etc. According to the paper, between 2014-2016 there were 700,000 deaths worldwide attributed to antibiotic resistance from these bacteria.

Triclosan has been found to be another contributor to this problem and is found to accumulate in sewage sludge and related products.. The FDA has banned triclosan in a few products but it is still used in thousands of consumer products. Environmental Science & Technology 2022

For gardeners: beware of low-cost composts and similar materials like pelletized fertilizers made from sewage sludge. Many companies use these toxic materials in their products to lower costs. Also, when one is buying products for insect and disease control read the label to ensure it does not contain triclosan.

More and more gardeners are growing their own food since the Covid pandemic. Researchers at the University of Sydney Medical School have found another reason to grow one's own food.

From animal studies they found that those whom ate grain-based foods versus processed foods, were much more likely to survive a flu or other virus infection. They found when the animals did not have an infection there was little difference in health or behavior. However, when an infection was present, all the animals on the processed food diet died. Journal Cell Reports 2022

Other studies have shown that the concentration of nutrients consumed while recovering from an infection can have a major impact on the severity of the infection.

Purchase organic food or, best yet, grow one's own food on re-mineralized soil so the food is full of micro nutrients that our immune system requires to work at its maximum.

Another study finds a link between foods that scored higher by a new nutrient profiling system, and better long-term health outcomes. The Friedman School of Nutrition Science at Tufts University have shown that a holistic food profiling system (Food Compass) works much better at identifying better health and lower mortality risk.

This new measurement system looks at the overall nutritional value of a food, beverage, or mixed meal. It measures nine domains of each item, such as nutrient ratios, food-based ingredients, vitamins, minerals (elements), extent of processing, and additives.

"A higher score was associated with lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, lower blood cholesterol, body mass index (fat), and hemoglobin A1c levels; and a lower prevalence of metabolic syndrome and cancer."

The higher score was also associated with a lower risk of mortality of all causes. Journal Nature Communications 2022

"One of the alarming discoveries was just how poor the national average diet is."

This study reinforces that we as gardeners need to grow more of our own food organically and buy from local famers markets as much as we can.

* * *

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 Marigold-Crackerjack Mixed-Tagetes erecta Morning Glory Mixed Colors-Ipomoea Sunflower-Mammoth-Helianthus annuus Sunflower, All Sorts Mix Zinnia-Lilliput Mixed Colors-Zinnia elegans Basil, Genovese Seed Packets - 3 Catnip Seed Packets - 63 Garlic Chives Seed Packets - 556 Cilantro, Coriander Seed Packets - 66 Dill, Long Island Mammoth Seed Packets - 68 Parsley, Plain Italian Seed Packets - 73 Arugula, Rouquette Seed Packets - 567 Beans, Provider Seed Packets - 5 Beets, Detroit Seed Packets - 8 Brussel Sprouts-Long Island Improved Cabbage, Pak Choi *NEW* Cabbage, Copenhagen Market Seed Packets - 10 Cantaloupe, Hale's Best Seed Packets - 12 Carrot, Nantes Seed Packets - 14 Celery, Tall Utah *NEW* Corn-Golden Bantam 8 Row Corn, Pearls & Gold Seed Packets - 18 Cucumber, Boston Pickling Seed Packets - 19 Cucumber, Marketmore 76 Seed Packets - 20

Eggplant, Black Beauty Seed Packets - 22 Kale, Dwarf Siberian Seed Packets - 594 Lettuce, Simpson's Curled Seed Packets - 29 Lettuce, Parris Island Romaine Seed Packets - 452 Lettuce, Buttercrunch Seed Packets - 24 Mustard, Southern Giant Curled Seed Packets - 30 Onion, Evergreen Bunching Seed Packets - 32 Onion, Sweet Yellow Seed Packets - 589 Pepper, Long Red Cayenne Seed Packets - 38 Pepper, California Wonder Seed Packets - 37 Peas, Sugar Ann Snap Seed Packets - 36 Pumpkin, Jack O'Lantern Seed Packets - 40 Pumpkin, Small Sugar *NEW* Radish, Cherry Belle Seed Packets - 41 Radish, Sparkler Seed Packets - 43 Spinach, Bloomsdale Savoy Seed Packets - 44 Sauash, Acorn Seed Packets - 45 Squash, Yellow Crookneck Seed Packets - 48 Squash, Zucchini Seed Packets - 49 Tomato, Ace Tomato, Cherry Turnip, Purple White Globe Seed Packets - 57 Watermelon, Sugar Baby Seed Packets - 60

LOCATED INSIDE THE SALES OFFICE





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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

SUBMITTING EVENTS? PLEASE READ!

- Only events submitted specifically for 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: <u>lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com</u>. Check published entry!
- Always check to make sure event is listed. if not let Brenda know EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

TODAY-DEC. 2: 2022 GALVESTON COUNTY PECAN SHOW SUBMISSIONS, 3pm. 4102-B Main St, La Marque. Galveston County AgriLife Extension event. https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

- **WED., DEC. 7: HOW TO GROW AMARYLLIS** by **PATTY CORDRAY**, 9:30-11am Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA Parkway, Webster. Gardeners By The Bay <u>event.gbtb.org</u>
- **SAT., DEC. 10: GOING NUTS FOR PECANS!**, 2-4pm, Galveston County AgriLife Extension, 4102-B Main St, La Marque. Free but register: https://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/
- **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/*
- SAT., DEC. 10: MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS' HOLIDAY IN THE GARDENS, 10am-4pm, 22306 Aldine-Westfield Rd., Humble. Free. Friends of Mercer Gardeners/The Mercer Society event. info@themercersociety.org
- FRI., DEC.16, WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE by URBAN HARVEST, 8am-3:30pm, \$25.United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr. Register: urbanharvest.networkforgood.com/events/47909-women-in-agriculture-conference

2023

(Make sure later-2023 events are carved-in-stone before submitting. Complete details a must.)

- WED., JAN.4: "NATIVE PLANTS AND HOW TO KNOW THEM" by DIANE HUMES/ 9:30-11:00am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 NASA pkwy, Webster. Gardeners By The Bay event. *gbtb.org*
- SAT., JAN. 28 SUN., AUG 13: STEVE TOBIN'S EXPLORING NATURE'S NETWORKS EXHIBIT OPENS. Houston Botanic Garden, One Botanic Lane. Ticket info: https://doi.org/visit/
- TUES., FEB. 14: NCARBON'S NATURE BASED CREDIT PROGRAM: AN EARTH BASED, EARTH CHANGING CONCEPT by JIM BLACKBURN, 1-2pm, United Way of Greater Houston 50 Waugh Dr. Free. Crestwood Garden Club event.
- 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 PR releases. See submission policy above 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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lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com



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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 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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