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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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**BRENDA NOTE:** *Using tidbits from favorite columns (with update editing!) while I help my husband recover from West Nile Virus.*

## **A GREAT LAZARUS PLANT TALE & OTHER HOPEFUL 2023 THOUGHTS!**

**NO MATTER HOW, OR WHAT, YOU CELEBRATED THIS SEASON,** I hope you're left with a healthy dose of eunoia that lasts all year long. And that it's enhanced in spring with the return of all your favorite plants! Just don't get too wild & crazy celebrating the arrival of 2023!

**ALSO WANT TO THANK** all of you who sent in Lazarus plant tales about returnees from our "2021 *Snowpocalypse*." I have yet to hear from someone who can top my successful (this year!) 5-year-wait for my. cassia to return from the "dead" and actually bloom! But Dale Philips comes close.





DALE's gardens -- a Friendswood delight -- includes a frangipani vine (pictured above). Dale sent me cuttings that took a long time to spread but mine soon covered a really ugly fence. Here's Dale's report sent in earlier this month!

**EARLY IN DECEMBER:**  
*"This story is incredible, You recall my Frangipani vine did well in the flood, but the (2021) freeze killed it, I took down trellis. About two months ago I was out back and there it was growing, so put up trellis again and you can see how much it has grown back!"*



This amazing growth above predates our recent "2022's Freezetastrphy."

Of course, this above-ground growth probably couldn't survive our recent deep freeze. But tough roots are probably still hibernating underground. Smart gardeners don't expect most ornamentals to continue producing leaves through our winters, certainly not after temps in the 20s & below! But they do expect hardier plants to return in Spring. I'm betting this will be one of them!

### **SPEAKING OF GARDENERS' REPORTS . . . 155 'AGREES' & COUNTING!**

I never expected such a reponse to my pre-recent freeze post on the [Houston Garden Facebook page](#). A really encouraging response to all the folks asking for advice and/or detailing how they were protecting plants. My post:

*"Boggles my mind how folks rake up, bag and throw away the best FREE, freeze protectors we could use. Fallen leaves & pine needles have already started to decay, to compost, if you prefer, a process that all by itself generates heat.*

*"It's the way Mother Nature protects plants in winter. Plants drop their leaves so they can focus all energies helping roots survive winter cold and help conserve needed moisture in the soil. Heat generated by the decomposition helps keep roots alive. Mother Nature's a great roll model if we'd only pay attention."*

I've always felt this way -- maybe for the wrong reasons! No one much agreed with me 50+ years ago when I started the Chronicle Lazy Gardener column. So seeing at least 155+ (at last count) folks agree with me now is really exciting. [My Houston Garden Facebook post](#)

\* \* \*

**TO PRUNE NOW OR NOT TO PRUNE?** Also, on that website, I was awed -- and really dismayed -- by the number of gardeners so anxious to prune off all the newly-dead top growth now. Not a good idea!



- **PRUNING STIMULATES NEW GROWTH**, especially when cold spells are followed by warm weather, like NOW! Deadwood on a plant reinforces the reality that it's still winter! Don't trick plants into thinking it's spring.
- **TENDER NEW GROWTH WILL BE FAR MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO FREEZE DAMAGE**, putting the root system at far greater risk. Plants "die back" in winter for many reasons, one of which is so all their energy can go into preserving their roots for healthy spring growth. Leave them alone and pile on the leaves for a toasty top cover
- **MANY OF OUR TREASURED WILDLIFE NEED THAT DYING, LEFT ON PLANTS -- WOOD AND FOLIAGE** for food, shelter and winter nesting materials, among other things.
- **AND, DON'T FORGET:** Survival of our native fauna is being taught in -- stressed in -- schools these days. So don't be surprised if your pruning triggers raised eyebrows or worse from neighborhood kiddos.

### ***UNDER PRESSURE TO KEEP YOUR YARD COLORFUL AND NICELY "PLANTED" DESPITE COLD TEMPS?***

Your local nursery now has cold tolerant plants to "fill in" until spring brings your regulars back, including many winter-loving edibles like red Swiss chard (pictured below). Ask for help!

For an incredible array of our winter-edible plant suggestions, download our very best guide:

#### **URBAN HARVEST "WINTER 2022" GUIDE"**

[urbanharvest.org/gardening-advice/gardening-basics-and-planting-guides/](http://urbanharvest.org/gardening-advice/gardening-basics-and-planting-guides/).

Just plant beautiful edibles around your defoliating shrubs, etc. Let these shrubs and other plantings die back naturally. The edibles will fill in nicely and die back once things heat up in late spring.



\* \* \*

### **DON'T MISS THIS FREE EVENT**

**RIVER OAKS GARDEN CLUB's** nationally-recognized **SADIE GWIN BLACKBURN ENVIRONMENTAL SEMINAR**, Wed., Jan.25.

**THOMAS WOLTZ**, landscape designer for the Memorial Park restoration, will address "*The Role of Landscape Architecture in Designing Equity and Community Wellness in Civic Spaces.*" 11:30 am coffee / noon program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Brown Auditorium. 1001 Bissonet. Free. No reservations needed. [riveroaksgc.org/one-more-featured-post/](http://riveroaksgc.org/one-more-featured-post/). (Pictured map: [Clay Family Eastern Glades](#) and Hinds Lake in Memorial Park)



\* \* \*

## 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*

\* \* \*

**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 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: [lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com). Check published entry!*
  - *Always check to make sure event is listed. if not let Brenda know*
- EVENTS ARE ON-SITE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

— 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](http://gbtb.org)

**THUR., JAN 5: GROWING ORGANIC VEGETABLES 10-CLASS SERIES -** (Zoom live class) by **DR. BOB RANDALL**, 10am-  
11am. Free. Register: [homegrown2023a.eventbrite.com/](https://homegrown2023a.eventbrite.com/)

**SAT, JAN 7: WEDGE GRAFTING** by **HERMAN AUER, HAZEL LAMPTON,**  
**DEBBIE ESPINOSA**; 9-11:30am, & **GROWING PECANS AT HOME** by Stephen  
Brueggerhoff, 1-3 pm. Galveston County Master Gardeners. [Register](#). 281-309-  
5065.

**SAT., JAN.7: FRUIT TREE TRAINING & PRUNING (1/3)** by **DR. BOB RANDALL**, 10am-  
12:30pm, Urban Harvest event.  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/event](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/event). [urbanharvest.org/education/classes](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes)

**THURS., JAN 12: STOP TREATING YOUR SOIL LIKE DIRT** by **DANNY WILSON**  
(also virtual). St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Houston Rose  
Society event. Virtual: [meet.goto.com/install](https://meet.goto.com/install), [meet.goto.com/294564965](https://meet.goto.com/294564965).

**THU., JAN.12: GROWING ORGANIC VEGETABLES 10-CLASS SERIES -** (Zoom live class) by **DR.**  
**BOB RANDALL**, 6:30-9pm. Urban Harvest event. Details:  
[urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**TUES., JAN, 17: FEARLESS PRUNING** by **DEBORAH BIRGE** 10am, . St. Basil's  
Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. [sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://sugarlandgardenclub.org).

**TUES. JAN. 17: STARTING SPRING TOMATOES & PEPPERS** (Zoom live class) by **JANICE**  
**BROWN**, 7-8pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT, JAN 21: GROWING GREAT TOMATOES (PART 2)** by **IRA GERVAIS**, 9-  
11:30am; **PROPAGATING FIG TREES** BY **BARBARA CANETTI**, 1-3  
pm, [galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/](http://galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/); 281-309-5065.

**SAT., JAN. 21: GROWING MUSHROOMS** by **MICHAEL FREERICK**, 10:30am,  
Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd, \$10. Register:  
[bitly.ws/ynA8](https://bitly.ws/ynA8), [wabashfeed.com](http://wabashfeed.com)

**SAT., JAN. 28 — SUN., AUG 13: STEVE TOBIN'S EXPLORING NATURE'S  
NETWORKS EXHIBIT OPENS.** Houston Botanic Garden, One Botanic Lane. Ticket  
info: [hbg.org/visit/](http://hbg.org/visit/)

**SAT., JAN. 28: HABITAT CREATION FOR INSECTS, BIRDS & MAMMALS** by **KEVIN TOPEK**, 10:30am, Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 N. Shepherd, \$10.  
Register: [bitly.ws/ynA8](https://bitly.ws/ynA8), [wabashfeed.com](http://wabashfeed.com)

**SUN., JAN. 29: SUSTAINABLE LIVING THROUGH PERMACULTURE 1** by **THE PERMACULTURE GUILD OF HOUSTON**, noon-5pm. Southwest site. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**SAT., FEB. 11: HISTORIC THIRD WARD COMMUNITY GARDENS TOUR** (Multiple Locations) by **URBAN HARVEST**, 9:30am - 12:30pm. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes/](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes/)

**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. FEB. 18: URBAN GARDENING** by **TERRY GARNER**, 9:30-10:30am, Palm Center Community Garden. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes)

**TUES. FEB. 28: SPRING GARDENING HANDS-ON DEMO** by **URBAN HARVEST STAFF**, 10-11:00am. 302 Canal St. Urban Harvest event. [urbanharvest.org/education/classes](http://urbanharvest.org/education/classes)

**SAT.-SUN., MAY 5-7: ANNUAL SPRING BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON SALE**, 8am, Judson Robinson, Jr Community Center, 2020 Herman Dr. Free. [bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)

**SAT, & SUN., OCT 14 & 15: 2023 SOUTHWEST BROMELIAD GUILD SHOW & SALE**, 8am, Holiday Inn 18530 State Highway 249. Free. [bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)

**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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## 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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