

LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

HOUSTON GARDEN
NEWSLETTER



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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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Karen Cottingham photo

HERB COLOR SEARCH REAPS FUN REWARD

IT'S WONDERFUL when a reader's question opens doors to great news for all gardeners! **BARBARA G**, in a Southwest Houston neighborhood, had to give up her beloved backyard herb garden. It was, she says, a beginner's effort, but still hurts. Her plan: move it to front yard. But, she worries, some of her more delicate herbal foliage, all green plants, might trigger HOA objections. So she's is looking for more herbs with beautiful, striking flowers as balance.

Great news. An upcoming herbal event may have just what she's looking for, a treasure probably not found in local nurseries:

Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*, pictured above) has a beautiful flower (actually its calyx, cup-like leaves that surround a bud). Unfortunately, this plant is not commercially available but it can be found at Farmers Markets and some

garden club plant sales, such as the one accompanying the .

SAT., APR.27: 38TH ANNUAL HERB DAY
EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM & HERBAL MARKETPLACE
by THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
8 am-2pm, Museum District. \$65.
Pre-registration: herbsociety-stu.org

All our specialty plant societies' events often include sales, many with member-grown plants, making them great resources for gardeners also seeking LOCAL growing advice. This symposium's sale, for example, will also highlight turmeric, ginger and a yarrow display among other more easily purchased varieties.

Insect- and disease-free in this area, roselle (an African native) is also known as jamaica or sorrel. HSA's South Texas Unit's **KAREN COTTINGHAM** warns roselle's actual beautiful flowers last just one day. However, the brilliant crimson seed-holding calyces (*pictured left and right at top*) last longer — into late summer and fall, ideal time to harvest seeds to replant in spring.

Roselle, a striking tropical shrub of the Malvaceae (mallow) family, thrives in our hot and humid climate. A sunny, well-drained location with some afternoon shade is ideal. Roselle needs at least six hours of full sun to bloom and produce these attractive calyces. Karen recommends pre-planting compost or slow-release hibiscus fertilizer, but no more as that triggers abundant leaf production at expense of flowers. Once established, roselle's deep root system makes it drought tolerant.

NOTE: Readers often ask about local specialty plant societies. We have so many, it's hard to keep up with accurate websites, contacts, emails, etc. If you'd like me to include your specialty plant society for recommendations, please email current website/FB Page links and (*just for my personal use*) best contact person's name, email and/or phone #.

* * *

Potpourri

- **EARTH DAY 2024: SAT., APR. 20:** How much plastic do you use in gardening? This year's global theme is "Planet vs. Plastics." Goal: 60% plastics production reduction by 2040. You could start by flying the official Earth Day flag, right, to help raise awareness. Easily ordered online.



Need some garden plastic removal ideas? [Sierra Club](#) folks have many suggestions. Or google Earth Day Events in Houston (or your specific area). Dozens of idea resource suggestions at events on the calendar.

- **GREAT BUTTERFLY SEARCH TIME!**
Texas Parks & Wildlife's latest "[Wild Texas](#)"

issue details butterflies found in various state regions and other home garden-related info like how to keep birds from hitting your windows and what to do with injured wildlife that might drop into your yard.

Pictured: Giant swallowtail on dianthus



- One thing about being 80, you can write what you want and folks who don't agree will simply write you off. This below is an expansion of a post I made on [*Houston Gardening Facebook Page*](#) (a group I highly recommend to all our area gardeners, but especially those new to Greater Houston area).

I personally get very frustrated with -- and honestly have no answer to -- the way folks — especially garden writers — throw such HUGE umbrellas over words like "weed," "invasive" and "poisonous." There are VAST degrees covered by each of these words!

Eg: "Weed" This is simply descriptive general term applies to any unwanted plant in a specific situation/site. "Invasive" can be very serious at one end, but in our immediate gardening environs, often "invasive" to one is beauty to another.

For example, many consider most, if not all, my precious emerald mead plants in last week's column "weeds."! Ask owners of now-prolifically-blooming Peggy Martin roses! I've gladly accepted wild honeysuckle cuttings from a friend who labels it her worst invasive plant.

POISONOUS — when applied to a plant — now means anything from very mild stomachache to far more serious effects. Garden writers never take time to actually define what reactions they mean when calling specific plants poisonous and with good reason. Effects often depend on how much and/or what parts are ingested, when and by whom.

Good example, when I was very young, a cousin dared me to eat an oleander. I touched the end of a snapped-off oleander branch with my tongue. Children WILL do that. There no way on God's green Earth anyone -- or any animal -- who tasted a microscopic, infinitesimal pinpoint of oleander juice on the tip of the tongue, would deliberately extend that horror and pain.

My mother never knew. I suffered in silence. My tongue really hurt. Eventually it went away, no residual pain/damage (*at least I don't think so -- siblings may say it warped my personality for the long run*). But I certainly never did that again!

THE IMPORTANT POINT: Just because any plant is POPULAR does NOT mean it's totally edible at all times! Unfortunately too many gardening advisers these days tend to single out 1 -2 common plants as "poisonous," leaving the very mistaken impression that all other ones are ok for children or pets to nibble on.

This totally ignores the fact various parts of many of our common ornamentals

can make you, your child or your pet sick if eaten at WRONG time or always. Some are inedible when young, some when old, some just leaves, roots, bark and/or flowers -- always or maybe at given point in life cycles.

ONLY two options are available if you are concerned about this:

- Check out every part of every single plant before putting it in your yard. Or (best idea). . .
- Train/teach children and pets NOT to eat ANY plants unless you say it's ok. Just like you teach them not to run into the street, not to stick their fingers in an electrical outlet or touch fire, etc.

I'm not saying every plant has the potential to harm or worse. Of course not. Just saying, unless you've checked a plant out, don't assume just because you've not planted this or that other publicized tree, shrub, flower, etc., you have a completely edible yard!

P.S. I'm talking about plants commonly found in our local home gardens where children can access them. Hopefully nurseries will not carry -- or will warn you -- about possible dangerous plants. But many times sales folks will not know.

NOTE: many groups across the globe are fighting truly dangerous, invasive, very poisonous plants threatening human and wildlife lives by overpowering vital native habitats, One is [North American Invasive Species Network](#). Supporting one or more of these groups could be a perfect way to celebrate Earth Day 2024 .

* * *

**Brenda Beust Smith's column is based on her 40+ years as
Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener --- Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com
Note: This column focuses ONLY on the Greater Houston area.**

* * *



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 281

Subject: Healthy Soils – part 3

Continuing our discussion of what is a healthy soil, we are going to discuss item #2 below.

1. Organic matter from almost fresh to totally decomposed in the form of humus (humins, humic, ulmic, and fulmic acids)
2. Minerals (nutrients, sand, silt, and clay)
3. Soil life (microbes and macrobes)
4. Air & water
5. Plant choices
6. Care for and do not destroy the health of the soil one has

For ease of discussion, I am going to divide this topic into the elements (nutrients) and the base materials that form all soils (sand, silt, and clay).

Often people and gardening books (my self-included) use the term minerals, elements, and nutrients interchangeable. Minerals = elements = nutrients

The mineral requirement in a soil for healthy plant growth is a subject that is constantly being changed and expanded every year. First it was assumed that plants only needed the elements NPK (nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), and potassium (K)) which are known as the "macro-nutrients".

Later it was discovered that calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), and sulphur (S) were also required. Over the last 25 years research has shown that zinc (Zn) and a little sodium (Na) were essential. Research over the last 10 years has shown that boron (B) is essential. These are often called the minor nutrients.

There are about 90 elements naturally found in the earth's crust and seawater hence we still have dozens of elements to go.

What about aluminum (Al)? The synthetic fertilizer industry says it is not required by plants. However, when plant tissue is chemically analyzed, aluminum is present in small amounts. Other tests have shown that some plants grown in soils without aluminum will die, while still other tests have shown plants without aluminum are disease prone and are subject to higher rates of insect damage.

What about cobalt (Co)? Most of my gardening and agricultural books say it is not required by plants. However, the vitamin B-12 molecule which regulates the immune system of mammals (including humans) requires cobalt. The element cobalt is also essential for hemoglobin formation, and for the prevention of nerve degeneration.

Why is this important?

For us as people who consume food to obtain minerals, the mineral (element) must be in the food we eat. This means it must be in the plants, which means it must be present and available in the soil for microbes to build the B-12 molecule and for plants to absorb. NO cobalt in the soil means NO vitamin B-12 in our food.

Recently it has been discovered that cobalt is needed in legumes for nodule formation and nitrogen conversion, seeds started without cobalt in the soil will not grow into a viable plant. It has also been found in the bodies of microorganisms that live in the soil. Is it important?

How about Selenium (Se)? This element is not generally thought of as a plant nutrient. However, it is important in protecting humans against chronic degenerative diseases as it is required in the production of powerful antioxidants such as vitamin E and glutathione peroxidase. Medical studies have found that America's "Stroke Belt" runs right across America where selenium content in the soils is low. Is selenium important? You bet it is!

How important are these other minerals? Studies have shown that people who live in igneous areas with highly mineralized soil and water, the Hunza's, the Vilcabamba's, etc. have life spans averaging 127 years old, without the aid of medical technology. Current theory, confirmed by animal tests, indicates the presence of all the trace and micro amounts of minerals in the water and soil where they live allows the human body to work more efficiently to repair itself, prevent disease, and slow down the aging process.

Scientists have discovered 118 total elements, of which 94 occur naturally in nature. Of these only 81 elements are considered stable (not radioactive). Seventy-nine of them have been found in animal and human tissue.

In nature, the individual elements (atoms) are rarely found in a pure form like veins of copper or nuggets of gold. They are most often found combined with other elements into what we call minerals. Today scientists have identified over 5,327 distinct minerals from the simple to the complex.

We are all familiar with these simple minerals like common table salt that we call sodium chloride (NaCl) that is composed of the two elements sodium and chlorine, or limestone, which is calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) which is composed of the element's calcium, carbon, and oxygen.

It is important to remember that minerals are not elements but are made up of elements. For example, there are hundreds of minerals that contain the element calcium (Ca) along with other elements, but provide only one element calcium. For gardeners here are a few examples that you are probably familiar with; limestone (calcium carbonate, CaCO_3), dolomite (calcium magnesium carbonate, $\text{CaMg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$), gypsum (calcium sulfate, CaSO_4), lime (calcium oxide, CaO), etc.

In soil science there is a rule called **Liebig's Law of the Minimum**, often simply called **Liebig's Law**. It is a principle developed in agricultural science by Carl Sprengel in 1828 and later popularized by Justus von Liebig. It states that plant growth is controlled; not by the total amount of nutrient resources available, but by the scarcest resource (the limiting factor). From Wikipedia "The availability of the most abundant nutrient in the soil is only as good as the availability of the least abundant nutrient in the soil." On the other hand, to use an old analogy, "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

If elements are missing from the soil, then plant growth and health are limited. The message I want to leave with you is: "We as scientists do not really know for sure what is important and what's not." As a result, modern soil scientists researching organic and biological methods take the position of having all the possible minerals (elements) be present in the soil and then let the plants and microbes take what they want and need. Sort of like when we go to the cafeteria to eat, we have dozens of items to choose from, but we only take a few, and different people take different things based on what they need (what they are hungry for).

These trace minerals (elements) are found in rock dusts like granite and basalt sands, products from the ocean (seaweed and fish emulsions), green sand or glauconite and a few other mined products that were all discussed in detail in previous newsletters and are available on the website.

I use the product **Re-Mineralizer** on everything I plant and grow, as it is a blend of green sand, granite sand, and basalt sands to ensure all 79 elements are present. It is cheap insurance to ensure that the microbes and plants have what they need.

Benefits of Remineralization

- Provides slow, natural release of elements and trace minerals.
- Increases a plants resistance to insects, disease, frost, and drought.
- Increase the nutrient intake of plants.
- Increase yields and increases Brix reading.
- Increases growth rate and diversity of microorganisms.
- Increases earthworm activity.
- Speeds up formation of the humus complex in soil.
- Sequesters carbon in the soil
- Prevents soil erosion.
- Increases the storage capacity of soils.
- Increases nutrient density of food crops.
- Enhances flavor of crops.
- Reduces weed problems.
- Rebalances soil pH.
- Makes organic fertilizers work more efficiently.

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

CALENDAR SUBMISSION RULES PLEASE READ! EVENTS MUST BE OPEN TO & CAPABLE OF HANDLING PUBLIC ATTENDENCE

- Use **ONLY** this (3-line max) format & style for **FASTER INCLUSION**.
DAY, DATE: TITLE by NAME (if talk), time, address, Fee/free.
Sponsoring group (if not in title). website/phone (NO MORE!)
- Only events submitted specifically for LG&F calendar are used
- Actual gardening/plant events only.No harvesting, cooking, etc.
- No events picked up from flyers / NO PDFS! TYPE IN EMAIL
- Submit: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com. Check published entry!
- All events on-site and in Houston unless otherwise noted
- Making us retype to our required format opens door to errors
- **ALWAYS PROOF PUBLISHED WORDING & TEST EMAIL**
- **YOU** are responsible for telling us about cancelled events

FRI., APR 19: SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am, Harris County Precinct One, 9500 Hall Rd. Free.
hcmga.tamu.edu

FRI-SUN., APR. 19-21: KINGWOOD GARDEN CLUB GARDENSCAPES & PLANT SALE, self-guided tours of homes and gardens: \$25. Plant Sale free access.
kingwoodgardenclub.org

SAT., APR. 20: PERENNIALS & PEPPER SALE by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-1pm. Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd.
Pre-Order online Apr 1- 18, at hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., APR. 20: EARTHKIND LANDSCAPING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 11am, Pasadena Central Library, 1201 Jeff Grin Memorial Dr. Pasadena. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., APR. 20: VEGETABLE PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT, 9am, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg. Fort Bend Master Gardener event. Free. fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/grow-your-own-a/

SUN., APR. 21: FERNS & LYCOPHYTES OF MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES" by **ADAM BLACK**, 2pm, Justin Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. www.tgcfernsoc.org/

TUES., APR. 23: CONTAINER GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 2:30pm, Freed Community Center, 6818 Shadyvilla Ln. Houston. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., APR. 24: UNDERSTANDING DRAINAGE-PRACTICAL DATA FOR EFFECTIVE POTTING MIXES by **JOSEPH RODD**. 7pm. Free. Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on 1475 West Gray. Houston Cactus and Succulent Society. [/hcsstex.org](http://hcsstex.org)

FRI., APR. 26: FLOWERING PLANTS FOR FOUR SEASONS (virtual), 1pm, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners. Free. [Landscape Success - Fort Bend \(agrilife.org\)](http://LandscapeSuccess-FortBend.agrilife.org)

SAT., APR. 27: 2024 OLEANDER FESTIVAL, 8am-noon, Betty Head Oleander Garden Park, 2624 Sealy, Galveston. International Oleander Society event. oleander.org

SAT., APR. 27: DEER PARK PRAIRIE POLLINATION WORKSHOP & CNC BIO BLITZ, 9am. Della_Barbato@TexasPrairie.org

SAT., APR. 27: 38th ANNUAL HERB DAY by **THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT**. 8 am-2pm, Museum District. \$65 Pre-registration: herbsociety-stu.org

SAT., APR. 27: VEGETABLES, HERBS & FLOWERS SALE by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am- 1pm, Alabonson Park, 9650 N Houston Rosslyn Rd. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., APR. 27: NATIVE LANDSCAPING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (Level 1 Class), 8:30am - 3:30pm, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble,. \$45, [Native Plant Society of Texas \(neoncrm.com\)](http://NativePlantSocietyofTexas.com)

SAT., APR. 27: POLLINATOR GARDEN FOR A BACKYARD, 9am; **FRUIT TREES** by **Robert Marshall**, 10 am; and **PLUMERIAS** by **LORETTA OSTEEN**, 11:30 am, (all at) 112 W. Spreading Oaks, Friendswood. Heritage Gardeners event. Free. facebook.com/FriendswoodHeritageGardeners

SAT-SUN., Apr. 27-28: HERITAGE GARDENERS ANNUAL SPRING TOUR, PLANT SALE, VENDOR MARKET, 9 am-4pm (tours 1-5 pm), 112 W. Spreading Oaks, Friendswood, Tickets for tour, Others free. [Heritage Gardeners](http://HeritageGardeners)

THURS., MAY 2: HEALTHY SOIL, HEALTHY PLANTS by John Ferguson,

9am, Waller County Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead. Free. RSVP 979-826-7651

SAT., MAY 4: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIEY FLOWER SHOW AND DAYLILY SALE, Sale 8am-3pm, Show 1-3pm, Alvin Senior Center, 309 West Sealy, Alvin. Free, lonestardaylilysociety.org, 281-331-0162.

SAT-SUN MAY 4-5: HOUSTON BROMELIAD SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE. Noon-4 pm Sat.; 11am-3pm Sun. Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. (Hermann Park). Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

SUN.,MAY 5: PLUMERIAS 1:30–4:30pm Bay Area Community Center, 5002 E. NASA Pkwy. Plumeria Society of America event. Free, theplumeriasociety.org/

MON., MAY 8: PLANT PROPAGATION by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10:30am. Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

FRI.-SAT., MAY 10-11: HOUSTON CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SPRING SALE. Fri: 9am-5 pm, Sat: 9am-3 pm. Free. Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. hcsstex.org

SAT., MAY 13: SUMMER GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonet St. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., MAY 13: IDENTIFYING “GOOD & BAD” BUGS by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 10am- 11:30am. Free. Register to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

WED., MAY 15: GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am, Peckham Aquatic and Fitness Center, 5597 Gardenia Ln. Katy. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

— **MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE FUTURE EVENTS!** —

TUES., MAY 16: RAISED BED GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 11am, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., MAY 20: OPEN GARDEN DAY by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 8:30am-11am. Free tour of Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., MAY 21: IDENTIFYING “GOOD & BAD” BUGS by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am- Noon. Facebook Live. No reservation required: facebook.com/harriscountyp/levents

WED., MAY, 22: ASCLEPIADACEAE - MY JOURNEY WITH STINKY STARRY SUCCULENTS by **PHILIP RICHARDS, PhD**. 7pm. Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. HoustonCactusandSucculentSociety

MON., MAY 29: PERMACULTURE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonet St. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SUN., JUNE 2: GROWING BEGONIAS IN HOUSTON???? 2-4pm, Plants for All Seasons - 21328 State Hwy 249. Houston Astro Branch Begonia Society.

TUE., JUN. 4: RAINWATER HARVESTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6pm, Pasadena Public Library, 4330 Fairmont Pkwy. Pasadena. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., JUNE 8: PLUMERIA SALE #1, 9 am -1:30pm Bay Area Community Center, 5002 E. NASA Pkwy, Seabrook, Texas 77586 Free access to sale. theplumeriasociety.org/

MON., JUN. 10: SEED SAVING AND STARTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 10am- 11:30am, Free. Register in advance to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

WED., JUN. 12: RAINWATER HARVESTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10:30am, Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JUN. 13: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 1pm, Katy Branch Library, 5414 Franz Rd. Katy. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., JUN. 17: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN- OPEN GARDEN DAY, 8:30am- 11am, Free tour of Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., JUN. 18: SEED SAVING AND STARTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 11am- 12pm. facebook.com/harriscountyp/1/events

WED., JUN. 20: RESIDENTIAL RAINWATER HARVESTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUE., JUN. 25: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am, Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 13: TROPICAL PLANT SYMPOSIUM, Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. . friendsofmercer.com/

If your event didn't get in right away, one possible reason is you didn't submit it in our EXACT - NEVER CHANGING format.

These usually take longer to be re-formatted and open doors to errors.

Your choice! SEE TOP OF CALENDAR FOR DETAILS.

* * *



*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 general feature 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 became 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 general reporting into also doing gardening reporting 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.

About her column, Brenda says: "I don't consider myself a 'garden writer.' I started out 50+ years ago as a very lazy "gardening reporter." I still feel that way today. I hope my columns inspire/help newcomers, but I do not write to them. I write to very experienced gardeners who want to expand their horizons.

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.



Lazy Gardener And Friends | 101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe, TX 77385

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