

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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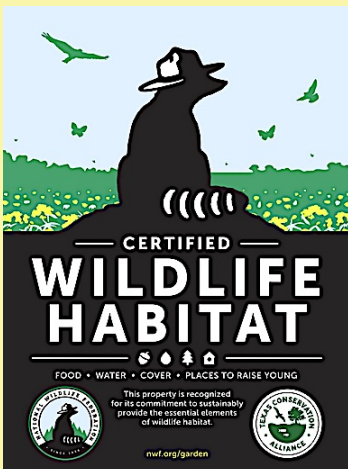
[CLICK HERE for PDFs OF PAST LG&F NEWSLETTERS](#)



"I love stepping out into the night to be greeted by dancing fireflies and swooping bats in the sky. So many critters, especially pollinators, depend on these dark nights.

-- Susan Serven, [DarkSky International](#)

FIREFLIES, 'CERTIFYING' GARDENS & SCULPTING TREES!



ONE NEAT THING to come out of our now long-lasting trend toward nature awareness is a new respect for the part one's home landscape plays in protecting wildlife and recognitions by "certifications." Most such designations depend on the innate honesty of gardeners -- especially when folks ask, "What's that?"

THAT" is a sign (left) showing the world you have completed a certification process. We used to have lots of different certifications. Now most have combined under the National Wildlife Federation.

[Best of Texas Backyard Habitats Program](#) is a joint

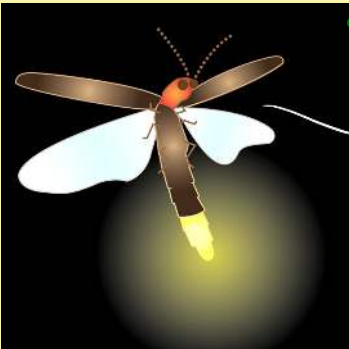
effort of the [National Wildlife Federation](#) and [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#). And, yes, they DO respect gardeners — no inspection for approval. But one never knows when a visitor might report you if you violate the rules, including (*excerpted partial list below*):

- If garden includes more than two plants listed in "Invasive Exotic Species" section of above webpage, certification can be denied/removed
- Food (for wildlife) year round. Feeders alone not accepted (*unless just occasional periods when plant food not available. Then they are required.*)
- Fresh, useable, reliable water, available at all times.
- Active measures to control cats, House Sparrows and English Starlings on your property (*includes, but not limited to, keeping cats indoors and encouraging neighbors to do same.*)
- Using feeds that sparrows and starlings dislike, etc.

Click links above for full list. It's a tough one, they're very serious about this.

* * *

Potpourri



- [HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK](#) now has a new mascot. Although not officially endangered, fireflies are steadily decreasing in numbers. Fitting symbol for HomeGrown National Park, a phenomena that strives to "regenerate biodiversity" by encouraging planting of appropriate natives. In just 3 years, HNP has united 38,000 biodiversity heroes (aka, home gardeners nationwide and others) who regenerated 100,000+ acres. Click on link above to read more.

Why not give your children/students one of the free HNP memberships so they'll receive constant updates and be fully informed by the time they establish their own landscapes? No charge, no obligations!! Never heard of Homegrown National Park? [Explanation in Doug Tallamy's own words](#)

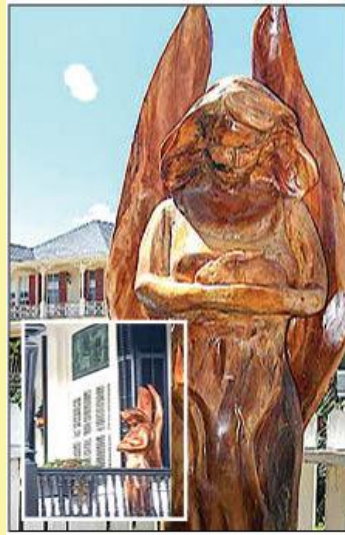
- **SPEAKING OF FIREFLIES**, when was the last time you saw one? Texas' own *Lampyridae* champion, [BEN PFEIFFER](#), founder of [Firefly Conservation & Research](#) -- who has spoken to many Houston area groups over the decades -- is currently questioning effects of new purple LED streetlights on our already-disappearing populations of these delightful living treasures. Check links above for more info on Ben and fireflies!
- And, if you like the quote at the top of this column, know Texas has its own DarkSky International chapter, manned by strong advocates for conditions fireflies need! :darkskytexas.org/. Join!

* * *

DEAD / DYING TREES KEEP ON GIVING!!!

Hope all your trees survived our recent Nature onslaughts. If not, or if trees are severely damaged, look at what some folks are doing! One

of first such tree sculptures I ever saw was [JAMES PHILLIPS'](#) post-Hurricane Ike (2006) tree sculpture of an angel holding a rabbit. Even neater (*for my Chronicle article*), turned out it was commissioned post-Ike by [MARCY HANSON](#), a (retired) Playboy Bunny (now head of Galveston Police's Adopt a Cop program), for her damaged cypress tree. "Angel Cradling Bunny" is still on its original site but secure on the porch of now-owners: "The Mansion on 17th St. B&B."



(Pictured above: Phillips' angel tree with bunny on original site and at current site.)

How long do these artistic treasures last and what about invading insects? Almost impossible to predict with 100% accuracy. Too many factors, as anyone who has lived through our Gulf Coast weather can testify! Jim says with routine application of oil, decay can be slowed. Many of his remain after 10-15 years in the elements. "Angel Cradling Bunny" certainly has!

Of course, you can always try repurpose a dying tree yourself: [\(Some ideas\)](#) But know that termites and other delights do like decaying wood. Take the free [self-guided Galveston tree sculpture tour](#). (Angel with Bunny is your first stop!) Then get opinions on whether or not your damaged and/or dead tree is a candidate before making final decisions.

*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.

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*NOTE: Please check calendar below if your event
info was changed by our recent tornado invasion.*

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John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 288

Subject: fluoride tires magnesium lithium glyphosate

Another reason to use modern biological methods (organic) in our gardening has been found. Many of the products sold to gardeners contain fluoride, from pesticides to some artificial fertilizers. For example, a commonly used very

toxic post-harvest insecticide used on our food, is sulfur fluoride. This then gets into our food supply, additionally toxic fluoride is added to many public water systems and gets into our bodies when we drink it.

A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open has found that mothers who consume fluoride during pregnancy, their children have more emotional problems and aggressive behavior. The likelihood of developing anxiety problems, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) were increased.

Another study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives found a correlation between fluoride exposure in utero and reductions in cognitive function in children.

The Fluoride Action Network (FAN) has prepared a large summary of 78 studies documenting the negative effect of fluoride on children's IQ.

<https://fluoridealert.org>

We have mentioned the dangers of using mulch made from rubber tires many times. Many of the dangerous chemicals found in tires have now been found in crops grown for human consumption. Journal Frontiers in Environmental Science.

Another study (2022) found that tires can generate 2,000 times more pollution than a vehicle's tailpipe. Tires also produce microplastics. Driving an electric vehicle does not solve this issue.

We talked about avoiding things that harm the soil the last couple weeks. We do not need these rubber tire products like mulches, weed blocks, etc. in our gardens.

During our study of the elements in the human body last year, magnesium (Mg) that is found in green plants, was a super star for good health, and 80% of Americans are deficient.

Another benefit of consuming green plants (or taking supplements) was published in the Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2021). They found increased intake of magnesium reduces the risk of liver cancer.

Low magnesium levels make one more susceptible to heart attacks and strokes. Magnesium is also used in over 300 enzymes in the human body.

Another benefit of using trace mineral amendments in our vegetable gardens and orchards has been found. The element lithium (Li) in low doses helps prevent mental cognitive decline as we age and promotes general better health. Products from the ocean (seaweed, fish emulsion, greensand, etc.) contain this element.

According to the Journal Environmental Science and Pollution Research, 99% of the world's population are now contaminated with the herbicide glyphosate

(think Round Up). This herbicide has been linked to many health problems from cancer to hormone disruption.

Medical researchers have found that taking glycine supplements helps our bodies remove glyphosate as the “gly” in the molecule stands for glycine.

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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

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

- 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

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-Noon. facebook.com/harriscountyp/updates

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

MON., JUNE 24: BUTTERFLIES AND HUMMINGBIRDS by **NANCY SHAFER**, 2 pm, Missouri City Branch Library, 1530 Texas Parkway, Missouri City. Fort Bend County Master Gardeners event. Free. 281-238-2100

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

FRI., JUNE 28: SHADE GARDENING IDEAS AND TIPS (ONLINE), 1pm, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners. Free. [Landscape Success - Fort Bend \(agrilife.org\)](https://LandscapeSuccess-FortBend.agrilife.org)

TUES., JULY 2: CLAY POT IRRIGATION by **DR. JEAN FEFER**, 11am, Trini

MON., JULY 8: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 12pm, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonet St. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., JULY 8: FALL'S BEST VEGETABLE GARDEN by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 10am- 11:30am. Register in advance to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

TUES., JULY 9: PROPAGATION by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 1pm, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 10: PLANT PROPAGATION by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6pm, Tuttle Neighborhood Library, 702 Kress St, Free, Livestream on Facebook. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 10: GROWING AND COOKING MUSHROOMS by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6pm, Pasadena Public Library, 4330 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 10: PLANT PROPAGATION by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6pm, Tuttle Neighborhood Library, 702 Kress St. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 10: LANDSCAPING FOR THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE by **MARK VORDERBRUGGEN**, 12 – 2 pm. Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble. Free. Registration required. Pct3.com/mbg 713-274-4160.

WED., JULY 10: CONTAINER GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am, Peckham Aquatic and Fitness Center, 5597 Gardenia Ln., Katy. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JULY 11: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 12:30pm, Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., JULY 13: TROPICAL PLANT SYMPOSIUM (GINGERS, TROPICAL HIBISCUS & FERNS, BROMELIADS & PLUMERIAS), Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. . friendsofmercer.com/

SAT., JULY 13: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonet St. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., JULY 13 : PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA SALE, 9am-1pm Bay Area Community Center, 5002 E. NASA Pkwy, Seabrook. theplumeriasociety.org/

— MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE FUTURE EVENTS! —

MON., JULY 15: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN- OPEN GARDEN DAY by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 8:30am- 11am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., JULY 16: FALL'S BEST VEGETABLE GARDEN by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am- 12pm, No reservation required: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/1/events](https://www.facebook.com/harriscountyp/1/events)

THUR., JULY 18: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., JULY 22: COMPOSTING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 12pm, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonet St. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., JULY 23: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., JULY 25: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 12pm, Walker Neighborhood Library, 5505 Belrose Dr. In person and livestreamed at [facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary)

THURS., JULY 25: THE WATERSHED STEWARD PROGRAM by HARRIS COUNTY AGRILIFE, 1pm-5pm, Michael Talbott Pavilion, 7522 Prairie Oak Dr. Free. Pre-registration required. tw.s.tamu.edu/workshops/registration

TUES., JULY 30: GROWING TOMATOES IN FALL by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10:30am, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., AUG. 6: MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI by DR. LISA MORANO, 11am, Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu/lecture-series

MON., AUG. 12: GROWING BULBS IN TEXAS by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 10am-11:30am, Register in advance to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

WED., AUG. 14: COMPOSTING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10:30am, Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., AUG. 15: CONTAINER GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., AUG. 19: OPEN GARDEN DAY by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 8:30am- 11am, Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., AUG. 19: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 5pm, Hockley Community Center, 28515 Old Washington Rd., Hockley. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUES., AUG. 20: GROWING BULBS IN TEXAS by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am-12pm, No reservation required: [facebook.com/harriscountyp/1/events](https://www.facebook.com/harriscountyp/1/events)

TUES., AUG. 27: RAISED BED GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 10am, Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd. Free and open to the public. hcmga.tamu.edu

OCT., 11-12: 82nd ANNUAL BULB AND PLANT MART. gchouston.org/

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.

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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 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 US

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