

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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***'We have met the
enemy and he is us'***

-- POGO

(Walt Kelly cartoon character)



So many trees were felled by Hurricane Beryl, not to mention those that WILL eventually fall from internal damage, this Pogo* cartoon quote ('60s) seems sickeningly appropriate.* Saddest part, in many cases, it's partly our fault.

Why? Old age is certainly one possibility. But more likely is an all too common cause: improper watering. Look closely. See any LONG roots sticking out of this Beryl victim? Given this tree's size, at least some roots should have grown MUCH deeper. Many factors influence tree growth. An important one is healthy



roots reaching subsoil water sources;

Hand-sprinkled watering a tree for only short periods (especially in our increasingly 3-digit summers), encourages roots to grow upward into watered-levels, instead of downward where they will provide deep anchors when strong winds come.

It's FAR better to regularly DEEP-water once a week or so than to hand- or sprinkle-water for short periods several times a week. Remember, in our summers, overhead sprinklers lose as much as 50% to evaporation before any water even touches heated (more loss) soil below.

Do yourself a favor, especially if you're new to this area. Join Trees for Houston <http://www.treesforhouston.org>. Given all the treasures we just lost, we need to take very good care of those that remain.

**P.S. Pogo Quote at top is a twist on Oliver Hazard Perry's 1812 victory cheer: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." It was paraphrased by Walt Kelly in 1960s to reflect Vietnam War turmoil and later in Walt's "Pogo" comic strip to note how Humans are trashing Earth. I blatantly borrowed it again here for a dangerous tree-threatening gardening practice. Thanks, Walt!*

* * *

Potpourri

- **NATIONAL MOTH WEEK**
(always last week in July)
shines a worldwide light on important pollinators, a prime food for songbirds, many mammals and other insects, Surprised?



Most folks think of moths as plain-jane butterflies. As **CHUCK DUPLANT** photos above show, (L to r: *Cydosia* moth on Groundsel and *Eight Spotted Forester* on *Butterweed*), dark of night hides most moths from public spotlights. To attract moths: 1. don't use deadly chemicals, 2. Use plants that release scents in evenings: moonflower, night-blooming jasmine, dianthus and gardenias..

Learn more at "**Moth Night at Deer Park Prairie**," Sat, July 27, Houston Chapter/Native Prairies Association of Texas's celebration event.
Register: bit.ly/DPP20240727.

Do you know all the designated, now protected prairies in our area?
<https://www.hereinhouston.org/coastal-prairies>. Why should gardeners care?
Click on link to find out.

* * *

- **Betty and Jacob Friedman**
Holistic Garden at Rice
University has a honor system
plant sale underway.



Plants still available until sell-out are on benches outside the main gate along with a cash drop box and suggested plant prices. Among plants (in the initial offerings): l to r, **Buttonbush** (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), **Strawberry bush** (*Euonymus americanus*) and **Summer Jewel Pink** (*Salvia coccinea*). The garden is located behind Rice Recreation Center, 6100 Main St.

- **WANTED: BUMPER STICKER THAT READS:**
"WARNING: I BREAK FOR TINY NURSERIES!"
This 7+' bougainvillea "tree" on Wilson Rd in Humble really put Sketchers-to-the-pedal. A mixed mass of red, pink & white blooms, it has been pruned to encourage only strong vertical stalks. Roots are encased in large pot, single bottom hole in above ground container. Even if you want it in the ground, keep the plant in a container with small hole. "*Plant in pot in ground for more stability*". Why? If planted in too often water-soaked soil, bougainvillea tends to produce far more roots than flowers.



- **WANT YOUR SUNFLOWERS TO ATTRACT MORE BUTTERFLIES?**
Better read John's column below!

* * *

***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.

* * *

JOIN US FOR THE 3RD ANNUAL ORGANIC FAIR & WORKSHOP

OHBAPALOOZA

**Saturday
August 10, 2024**

*Save
THE
Date*

**United Way of
Greater Houston**

TIME:
8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

50 Waugh Dr.
Houston, TX 77007

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Brad Phillips | Dr. Mila McManus | Chaz Daughtry
Dr. Joe Novak | Glenn Olsen | Diana Liga | John Ferguson
Brienne Bernsen | Diana Wilson | Mike Serant | Erin Mills
Chrissy Doolen | Joanna Botvin | Dr. Mark Vorderbrugger

2 HEADLINERS | 3 CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ORGANIC EDUCATION, NETWORKING & MORE

Discover the power of Organics at OHBAPalooza! From cultivating organic foods to fostering community through urban farming, dive into topics like therapeutic gardening, water conservation, and the fascinating world of beneficial insects. Join us for an immersive journey through native plants, medicinal herbs, and even explore the secret language of trees—all in one dynamic educational event!

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TICKETS

OHBA MEMBERS: \$50
NON-MEMBERS: \$70

OHBA



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 292

Subject: Invasive Plants, Bees and Nutrition, Autophagy and Nutrition

A study by ecologists at the University of Massachusetts has found that over 1,330 retail nurseries are still selling invasive plants. Researchers have cataloged over 1,285 species of plants that are invasive and over 60% remain available for purchase. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* (2021).

[Texas A&M](#) has a database where one can look up a plant to see if it is invasive.

The following link has nice photos showing the [invasive species](#).

[The Native Plant Society](#) also has a lot of information and pictures.

When I purchased our retirement property, it had a lot of invasives I have been working for 9 years to remove. There were several acres of *Rosa bracteata*, commonly called the Macartney Rose. There were several dozen chinaberry trees, a couple acres of Japanese Honeysuckle and I have removed over 1,000 Huisache trees (*Acacia smallii* formerly *A. farnesiana*) to name a few. I have been actively fighting the invasives for over 9 years and am finally approaching 95% cleaned up.

Even though some of these plants offer things we like; chinaberry has a wonderful fragrance, Japanese honeysuckle is fragrant and as a kid I loved to sip the sweet nectar of the flowers, etc. they cause a lot of ecological harm.

Most gardeners know that bee populations have been decreasing. The decline has been linked to several causes like pesticide use and other toxic chemicals.

Researchers have found another reason is that the bees need a healthy diet. This is a mix of proteins, lipids, amino acids, omega 3 and omega 6 acids, and some other essential nutrients. They get these nutrients from the pollen and nectar they consume. However, if they consume them in the wrong ratios the bees experience cognitive decline, and they may become more susceptible to parasites.

The researchers measured the nutrient profile of 57 species of flowers common to North America and the nutrient profile varied greatly. To be healthy the bees must consume pollen and nectar from a large diversity of flowers.
Journal of Sustainable Food Systems (2024)

After reading the paper I remembered a test I did over 20 years ago comparing the number of pollinators on a sunflower species. I planted two rows each six foot wide by fifty foot long and planted them with two different versions of the sunflower. One seed source was open pollinated, and the other was a cultivar bred for even sized stalks and flowers.

We took several photos of both flower beds. We were able to count over 80 butterflies (numerous bees and other insects too small to count) feeding on the open pollinated variety and Zero butterflies on the cultivar!

As gardeners we know that we need a balance of nutrients and minerals in the soil if we want healthy plants and optimal growth. A deficiency or surplus can have negative effects on growth.

Researchers in Japan have found that the process of autophagy (remember that autophagy literally means “self-eating”), plants are able to balance their intake of nutrients even when they are out of balance in the soil. Autophagy serves as a sort of feedback mechanism that can respond to deficiency or too

much of something. Trends In Plant Science (2021)

Another example of why re-mineralizing one's soil is so important.

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., 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

FRI, JULY 26: RECIPE FOR A 24/7 LANDSCAPE by **CHERIE COLBURN**, 6-7:30 pm, virtual & in-person, free, The Woodlands Township, RSVP <https://bit.ly/3PurbTi>

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. 3 (RESCHEDULED): TROPICAL PLANT SYMPOSIUM & (GINGERS, HIBISCUS & FERNS, BROMELIADS & PLUMERIAS) SALE, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Sale free / [Symposium register](#)

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

SAT., AUG. 10: OHBAPALOOZA GARDENING & MORE, 8am-3:30pm, 50 Waugh Dr. \$70. Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance event. Register: OHBAonline.org/register

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

SAT., AUG. 24: ONIONS AND GARLIC by **KEVIN LANCON**, 9-11am AgriLife Extension Bldg., 4102-B Main St. (FM 512), La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener events. Free. Register: txmg.org/galveston/; 281-309-5065

SAT., AUG. 24: INTERNATIONAL VEGETABLES GROWN LOCALLY by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 11am, Pasadena Central Library, 1201 Jeff Ginn Memorial Dr., Pasadena. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

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

WED., SEPT. 4: CONTAINER GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10:30am, Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., SEPT. 9: HEIRLOOM AND PASS-ALONG PLANTS by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 10am- 11:30am, Register in advance to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

WED., SEPT. 11: DECORATING FOR GARDENING FUN by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10:30am. Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

MON., SEPT. 16: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN- OPEN GARDEN DAY by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 8:30am- 11am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUE., SEPT. 17: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10:30am. Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

TUE., SEPT. 17: HEIRLOOM AND PASS-ALONG PLANTS by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 11am- 12pm. Free, Facebook Live, no

reservation required: facebook.com/harriscountypl/events

WED., SEPT. 18: FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 12:30pm. Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

THUR., SEPT. 19: A FEW PERENNIALS by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am. Glazier Senior Ed Center, 16600 Pine Forest Ln. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., SEPT. 28: FALL PLANT SALE by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am- 1pm. Alabonson Park, 9650 N Houston Rosslyn Rd. Pre-order online for pickup at the sale, Sept 18-24. hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales

SUN., SEPT. 29: CONTAINER GARDENING BY by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am. Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd. Free. 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.

* * *



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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