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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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"Hurricane season brings a humbling reminder that, despite our technologies, most of nature remains unpredictable."

--DIANE ACKERMAN, (1948-), American Poet & Essayist

'IS IT FALL YET?'

by **BRENDA BEUST SMITH**



SCANNING THE TREES for that first sign of fall color? You must be new to our area. While we don't have the volume of fire-like autumn they do 'up nawth', we do have our share of spectacular starting now and (OK) very slowly increasing in October, through November and usually mostly in December. Unfortunately, those who predict these things say our first freeze may probably be on or around Dec. 8.

But look closely and you might catch a flaming branch or two. Check out your local independent nurseries! With the right plants, you won't have to wait that long. Good example, pictured above - NOW color from Montgomery County Master Gardener Cindy Price's winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*) shines pretty beneath her 100-year-old American holly. She adds, "Two more of my favorite

fall color trees, both native. Pawpaw and a hedge of four sweetgum trees that I keep cut low as a hedge just for their fall colors."

Is any of your fall color showing yet? Do share with pictures, names and specific variety if known.

* * *



"A deer-proof plant is any specimen surrounded by four barking terriers that live outdoors and off-leash!" -- GREG GRANT.

As the Greater Houston expands more and more into undeveloped areas, fauna that called those areas home are forced out. Their natural habitat and food sources are wiped out first by clear-cutting, then by row after row of homes with St. Augustine lawns.

So it's no surprise that many creatures, such as deer, continue to seek food and shelter where they have for centuries, even though now they are expected to respect these suddenly-off-limits sites.

What to do? Plant things they don't like to eat? Sometimes that works, sometimes hunger forces them to even eat plants treated with chemicals that will harm them. If you start searching for help, you'll find most posts are for central, north, west & east Texas, so double check actual plants against a Greater Houston source.

TO BE HONEST, in 50+ years of this column, the only person I ever heard say emphatically her deer solution worked was an 80+-year-old woman at a Houston Medical Center's Retirees Dinner. After my talk, someone asked about how to discourage deer in garden. I asked for any personal success stories.

This lady raised her hand, stood and told the group every night after dark she made her husband go out and "mark" the borders of her vegetable garden (*a la coyotes*). She said never had a deer problem although all her neighbors did. ***(I'm just passing this on. Not making a recommendation.)***

Years ago, LOCAL experts helped me develop a **No Deer** flyer listing a lot of

Deer have a strong sense of smell - particularly for new, young green growth. Try sprinkling these odoriferous items below around the plants or on leaves ... or pack into bags and hang from branches:

- Scented shaved soap
- Rotting eggs
- Bloodmeal
- Human hair
- Creosote
- Curry powder
- Coyote urine (available in some nurseries. How do you suppose they collect it?)



Or, mix 1 1/2 dozen eggs in 5 gal. of water. Spray on plants.

tips & plants worth trying in the Greater Houston area. Most may work, at least for a while, until the deer get REALLY hungry. If you're using some plants deer DON'T seem to destroy, please do share!

For free "No Deer!" flyer, email lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

Potpourri

WINTERING PLUMERIAS Halloween (or early October) is traditional day for moving these fragrant flowering trees indoors for winter, unless temperatures drop into the 50s at night before then. Pull out of ground or pot, shake off dirt and stick in a protected garage. Or, move in pot and all into garage. If plants too large to move, prune off too-large branches. Set these inside with main plant and plant them next spring. Cover rest. (From "Lazy Gardener's Guide" (free pdf: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)



NEED MORE HELP? SAT., OCT 5: PLUMERIA CARE IN WINTER by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**, 1-3 pm, AgriLife Extension Office, Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (519), La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

- **ATTN. GARDEN/PLANT GROUPS** -- In wake of Hurricane Beryl, [Nature's Way Resources](#) offers free guided tours of NWR's extensive nursery/soil/mulch facilities for garden clubs, plant societies and other plant-oriented, organized groups. As usual, NWR's now-expanded meeting site is free to above groups. Reservations a must for both.



* * *

"LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE" (PDF format) is emaild free.

Request: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

* * *

Brenda Beust Smith's column is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's "Lazy Gardener" column -- lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

Brenda's column focuses ONLY on the Greater Houston Area

* * *

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FALL FESTIVAL

LATIN FOOD

LOCAL VENDORS

PLANT SALES

Q&A with Skip Richter -

11:30-1:30

LIVE MUSIC

CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES

10.12.2024

• FOOD • FUN • FRIENDS

Start at 9:00am-2:00 pm / Free Entry

Special Guest: Skip Richter



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 301

Subject: Subject: health and environment

We have all heard the slogan **“Healthy Soil = Healthy Plants = Healthy People”**. I would add that **Healthy Soil = a Healthy Planet** to live on.

I read an interesting report the other day on a subject dear to my heart from www.Earth.org that summarizes a lot of the recent research and importance of soils. The title of the article is “New Report Reveals Crucial Links between Soil Quality and Human Health, Calls for Global Action”.

There is a new advocacy and awareness campaign called “Save the Soil” from the group Conscious Planet which is backed by many international organizations (UNEP, UNCCD, UNFAO, WFP, and IUCN to name a few).

Ahead of COP29, they are calling for soil regeneration to be recognized as a public health priority. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the group of nations (198 countries) that have signed the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\), which was put together in 1992](#). It commits them to act together to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations “at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system”.

Soil degradation is accelerating: global malnutrition, causing mental health issues, reducing ecosystem services like cleaning air and water, causing climate change, increased vulnerability to natural disasters, and many more factors that affect our lives.

All of this causes increased cost of food, increased medical bills, increased insurance costs, and affects all areas of our economy and lowers our quality of life.

This is why using modern organic methods in our yards and gardens is so important, as we become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. In addition, it gives better results and lowers our total costs of having a beautiful garden.

The abuse of the Earth's soil has led to massive amounts of desertification and loss of what were once productive fields and ecosystems. They identified soil microbes as critical to returning these soils to good health if we quit destroying them.

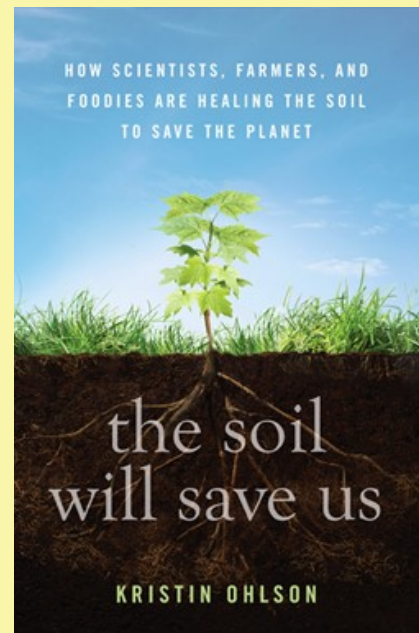
Desertification results from the interplay of many factors leading to increased temperature, wind changes, precipitation changes, intensification of solar radiation and more frequent extreme weather events from droughts to tropical storms (increase in quantity and intensity).

So, what causes desertification? There are many factors from clear cutting of forests so it's easy to mine lithium to make batteries for electric cars, tillage of the soil, intensive crop growth using monoculture, chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and artificial fertilizers, inefficient irrigation systems, over grazing by livestock, soil compaction, over pumping of ground water, growing genetically modified crops, deforestation for firewood and many more. Earth-Science Reviews (2024)

For those who want to learn more the following books are very useful.

The Soil Will Save Us, Kristin Ohlson, Rodale Books, (256p) ISBN-10: 1609615549; ISBN-13: 9781609615543 Copyright 2014

Thousands of years of poor farming and ranching practices—and, especially, modern industrial agriculture—have led to the loss of up to 80 percent of carbon from the world's soils. That carbon is now floating in the atmosphere, and even if we stopped using fossil fuels today, it would continue warming the planet and acidifying our oceans. In *The Soil Will Save Us*, journalist and bestselling author Kristin Ohlson makes an elegantly argued, passionate case for "our great green hope"—a way in which we can not only heal the land but also turn atmospheric carbon into beneficial soil carbon—and potentially reverse global warming. It is based on organic methods that give real results and at lower costs resulting in higher productivity from the land.



In the book of Job, God tells us to study nature and let it teach us. She starts with antidotal stories from farmers and ranchers all over the world that have restored their soil by copying nature. It then moves into the how's and why's this method restores soils fertility, increases yields and stores carbon in the soil. She talks about that there is a vast kingdom of creatures under our feet—billions of microorganisms in a tablespoon of soil—that take the carbon dioxide that plants pull from the atmosphere and turn it into life-giving soil carbon.

Ohlson introduces visionary scientists, farmers, foodies, ranchers, and landscapers, whose work shows that earth can be healed and offers the hope that seemingly intractable problems like climate change, air and water pollution, food quality, and even obesity have the same low-tech solution.

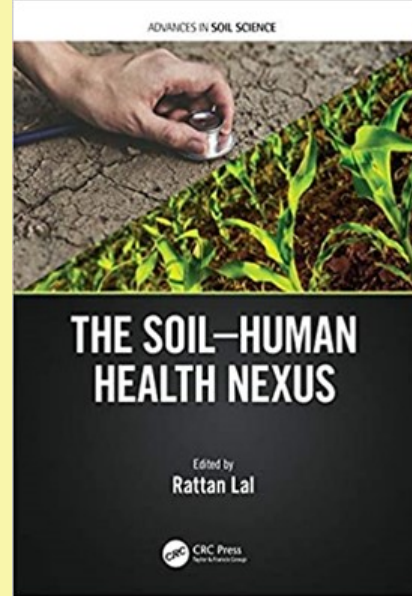
Ohlson's fascinating journey to understand the hidden dynamics of the natural world—brought to life through vivid storytelling and crisp, engaging analysis will inspire everyone to rethink the potential of the ground beneath their feet, as well as the landscapes around them, and to figure out how they can make a difference.

THE SOIL – HUMAN HEALTH NEXUS edited

by Rattan Lal, PhD,
CRC Press, 2021, ISBN: 978-0-367-42214-1

This book ties together many of the issues facing society today and is part of a series of books titled Advances in Soil Science. This book compiles the studies of over 25 scientists and hundreds of papers from around the world.

The focus is on what has become known as “*One Health*” from multiple disciplines from all over the world to obtain optimal health for people, animals, plants, and our environment. The concept of One health has a strong history in the Bible as far back as Moses.



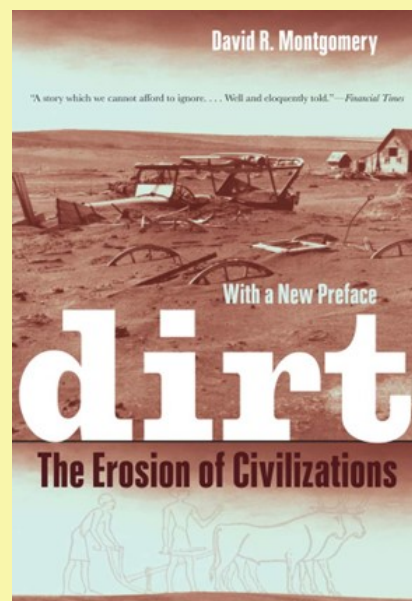
See what the land is like and whether the people that live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some fruit of the land. Numbers 13:18-20

The term "soil health" refers to the functionality of a soil as a living ecosystem capable of sustaining plants, animals, and humans while also improving the environment. In addition to soil health, the environment also comprises the quality of air, water, vegetation, and biota. The health of soil, plants, animals, people, and the environment is an indivisible continuum.

“Soils can beneficially or adversely affect human health, and likewise human activity can improve or destroy soil health. In the new anthropogenic era, it is worth examining the soil health-human health nexus. To do this, the author evaluates soil from the perspective of what infects us, what heals us, what contaminates us, what nourishes us, and what we breathe. Likewise, the author examines the impact of humans on soil using a similar matrix and suggests strategies to improve human health by maintaining or improving soil health.”

"Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations" by David Montgomery, ISBN 978-0-520-24870-0

For those who want to know more about the importance of soil care, the book below explains that every civilization in history failed because they did not take care of their soil.



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

WANT YOUR EVENT IN RIGHT AWAY? FOLLOW THESE CALENDAR RULES!

ALL EVENTS MUST BE OPEN TO & CAPABLE OF HANDLING PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

- Use this 3-line (max) **EXACT** FORMAT/STYLE (*reformatting=delay!*)

**DAY, DATE: TITLE by NAME (if talk), time, address, Fee/free.
Sponsoring group (if not in title). website/phone (NO MORE!)**

- Only events submitted/earmarked specifically for LG&F calendar are used
- Actual gardening/plant type events only. No harvesting, cooking, etc.
- NO events picked up from general flyers. NO PDFS! TYPE IN EMAIL
- Submit: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com. Check published entry!
- All events on-site and in Greater Houston area ONLY!
- ALWAYS PROOF PUBLISHED WORDING & TEST EMAIL
- YOU are responsible for telling us about cancelled events

WED., SEPT. 25: UNIQUE CACTI OF COCHISE CTY., AZ by **ROB ROMERO** (also Zoom), 7pm, Metropolitan MF Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Houston Cactus & Succulent Society event. Free. Zoom Link: kaktoskomments@gmail.com

WED., SEPT. 25: COMPOSTING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, Pasadena Public Library, 4330 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena

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 **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10am. Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

WED., OCT. 2. POTTING FALL SEASON COLOR, 9:30-11:30am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W NASA Pkwy Webster. Free. Gardeners by the Bay gbtb.org

SAT., OCT. 5: ANNUAL HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY SHOW, 9am–3pm, Mercer Treehouse Staff Building, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. houstonbonsaisociety.com/

SAT., OCT. 5: CLEAR LAKE NATIVE PLANT SALE, 8-11am Clear Lake Native Plant Sale, 2700 Bay Area Blvd, Clear Lake

SAT., OCT 5: PLUMERIA CARE IN WINTER by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**, 1-3 pm, AgriLife Extension Office, Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (519), La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/

SAT., OCT. 5: GARDENING FOR BUTTERFLIES, 1-2:30pm, Houston Botanic Garden, 1 Botanic Lane. \$20. hbg.org/event/gardening-for-butterflies/

SAT., OCT. 5: SAN JACINTO MASTER GARDENERS ANNUAL PLANT SALE, 9am. 10251 Main Street. Shepherd. txmg.org/sjmg

WED., OCT. 9: THE LOW DOWN ON NATIVE PLANTS IN HOUSTON by **SUZZANNE CHAPMAN**, noon–2 pm, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free, Register: pct3.com/MBG

THURS., OCT. 10: ROOT-A-ROSE CLINIC, 7-9pm, St. Andrew's Church 1819 Heights Blvd. Houston Rose Society event. Free.

FRI., OCT. 11: MERCER GARDEN TOUR by Horticulture Staff, 9–10am, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free, Register: pct3.com/MBG

FRI.& SAT., OCT., 11-12: 82nd ANNUAL BULB AND PLANT MART. Garden Club of Houston event. Free. gchouston.org/

FRI.& SAT., OCT., 11-12: HOUSTON ARBORETUM FALL PLANT SALE, 9am-2pm, 120 West Loop North (120 West Loop North, (between Post Oak Blvd. and Woodway Drive). Free. 713-681-8433 houstonarboretum.org

SAT., OCT. 12: VEGETABLE/HERB PLANT SALE, 9am-noon (or sold out). AgriLife Extension Range, 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. fbmg.org

SAT., OCT. 12: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL & PLANT SALE, 9 am-2 pm. Discovery Gardens Carbide Park, 4102 Main St (Hwy 519), LaMarque, txmg.org/galveston

SAT., OCT. 12: AQUAPONICS by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-11:00 AM, Tom LeRoy Building, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. 936-539-7822. \$5 Register with Event Brite.

TUES., OCT, 15: 'HUGELKULTUR' (BUILDING MOUND BEDS) by **MARY KARISH**, 10am: Free, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land sugarlandgardenclub.org

SAT., OCT. 19: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY PLANT SALE, 9am-4pm, 7124 Booth Lane, Manvel. Free, lonestardaylilysociety.org; 281-331-0162.

SAT., OCT. 19: NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS PINES & PRAIRIES NLCP LEVEL 3 CLASS, 8am-4pm. Mercer Botanical Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. Signup: npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/

SAT., OCT. 19: SELECTING, PLANTING & CARE FOR TREES, 1st Baptist Church, 9AM, 445 Main St., Hempstead, Free. WALLER.MG@TAMU.EDU

WED. OCT. 23: GROWING CACTUS & SUCCULENTS FROM SEEDS by **JACOB MARTIN**, 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Family Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society event. Free. hcsstex.org

SAT., OCT. 26, VEGGIE AND HERB PLANT SALE by MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe, Free. (936) 539-7822

**SAT. NOV. 2: THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT 51ST
ANNUAL HERB FAIR.** 9am-2pm, Southside Place Clubhouse, 3743 Garnet St.
Free. herbsociety-stu.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.
Reformatting delays publication and opens doors for errors.
Your choice! SEE TOP OF CALENDAR FOR EXACT FORMAT.*

* * *



If we inspire you to attend any of these,
please let them know you heard about it in . . .
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Saturdays 7-9am • SportsRadio 610



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 back 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 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 had 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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