

Nature's Way Resources is proud to produce & email you this free weekly newsletter. We have no ads, but sponsors do graciously help support this project as a public service. Please note their names below & show your gratitude for this free service by patronizing their businesses! To become a sponsor, call (936) 273-1200

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

LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

HOUSTON GARDEN
NEWSLETTER



[Click here to join our email list](#)

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



***Didn't realize goldenrod
has so many fans — wow!
Looking ahead to more color...***

Let's face it. Our tree fall color is few and far between in public places compared to other areas. And it comes pretty late compared to the rest of the nation. But it seems a lot more folks not only notice and appreciate our goldenrod, they're planting it in their landscapes.

Thanks for the reports. I think we better thank Native Plant Society of Texas chapter folks. They opened all our eyes to beauty around us. Good example:

Dr. Bob Randall's home landscape plantings above.

Goldenrod is a native wildflower in almost every state in the nation. But not all are the same variety. Texas alone is said to be home to 20+ goldenrod varieties. Best bets: buy from a reliable nursery that carries natives or an [NPSOT chapter sale](#). The internet is full of tips on "how to keep goldenrod from becoming invasive." For us: npsot.org/posts/native-plant/solidago-altissima/

* * *



IS ALL COPACETIC IN YOUR VEGGIE PATCH?

Some plants are "alleopathic," i.e., contain herbicides that affect only certain other plants and release toxins that suppress specific plants in its vicinity.

Asparagus is said to not like growing near mints & onions. Beets may not do well with pole beans or mustard greens. Tomatoes near potatoes? Many say, "No, no!" Some even recommend allopathic to discourage lawn garden weeds!

Some folks say:

- Mint and onions should not be close to where asparagus is growing.
- Anise and dill should not be planted next to carrots cucumber, pumpkin, radish, sunflower, or squash.
- Tomatoes should not be planted close to potatoes.
- No cabbage family member should be planted near strawberries.
- Cabbage, cauliflower, corn, dill, and potatoes should not be planted near tomatoes.

Others are even meaner. Chinese tallows are said to literally transform soil around them so only their tallow seeds germinate, not seed of other plants or grasses. And research on-going to create alleopathic lawn grasses that repel lawn-loving weeds.

Two fascinating resources:

- Harris County Master Gardeners Alleopathic flyer [020-09-hcmga-urban-dirt\(5\).pdf](#)
- Texas A&M's pdf: agrilifeorganic.org/2024/01/09/allelopathy-what-is-it-what-has-it-and-how-do-we-use-it/

* * *

LOOKING FOR WINTER COLOR? THINK CAMELLIAS!

The Friends of Mercer Botanic Garden's annual camellia sale plants will be available this year at Mercer's Nov. 2 **Autumn Plant Sale**. In our **Spotlight Article** below, **KITT**



BURNSIDES shares a true advocate's perspective on these ready-to-bloom winter delights. The **SAT., NOV. 2: AUTUMN PLANT SALE**, 8am-3pm. Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble. Free. Friends of Mercer, Varieties pictured below will be available at sale. friendsofmercer.com

PS. Yuletide amellias are almost always in bloom on Christmas day

-- hence are popular as potted plants sited next to front doors!

* * *

Potpourri

- **INGRID HAMILTON** is among several readers bemoaning a noticeable increase in invasiveness of butterfly-attracting-Mexican hydrangeas (*Clerodendrum bungei*, Rose Glorybower). Not surprising. They are on the [Texas Invasive Plant List](#). Good resource to check periodically, especially if a plant seems overly-enthusiastic. Might be time for a rethink. *Ingrid Hamilton photo*



- **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.



- **CHECK OUT CALENDAR** below. It's overflowing with more great plant sales and other events in almost every part of the Greater Houston area.

* * *

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

* * *





L to r above: *Camellia japonica* 'Sea Foam'; *C. japonica* 'Sea Foam'; *C. japonica* 'Junior Miss'; *Camellia sasanqua* 'October Magic Ruby' and *C. sasanqua* 'Hot Flash'. Mercer Botanic Garden photos

CAMELLIAS: QUEENS OF THE WINTER GARDEN

By KITT BURNSIDES

FRIENDS OF MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS

Board Member & Tree & Shrub Grow Lead

Camellia flowers represent a spirit of depth, self-reflection and inner strength – qualities that are highly esteemed in Japanese culture. They also symbolize love, loyalty and humility – perfect to express gratitude towards family and friends.

Camellias, often referred to as “Queens of the Winter Garden,” are treasured for their beauty and resilience. These enchanting shrubs provide a unique touch to any garden, especially in cooler months. Here’s what makes camellias truly special and how to cultivate them successfully in the Houston area.

Why Camellias Stand Out

- **Long Bloom Season:** Camellias are a rare delight in fall and winter gardens, blooming when many plants are dormant. Their flowers can persist for weeks or even months, with some varieties blooming in waves, ensuring continuous bursts of color.
- **Pollinator-Friendly:** Despite the colder temperatures, camellias attract hummingbirds, honeybees, and other pollinators, providing a crucial food source when other plants may not be available.
- **Winter Color:** While other plants have shed their leaves or faded away, camellias bring vibrancy to the landscape, offering lush, glossy foliage and a variety of flower colors.
- **Support for Wildlife:** The sturdy, evergreen leaves provide shelter, while the flowers offer a year-round food source, making camellias a sanctuary for wildlife, including butterflies.
- **Versatility in the Landscape:** Camellias are adaptable and can be grown in containers, used for privacy screens, or even trained into unique shapes, making them suitable for a range of garden designs.
- **Longevity:** These long-lived plants are often passed down through generations, with some camellias thriving for up to 100 years.
- **Symbol of Love and Longevity:** Known for their symbolism, camellias

represent love, beauty, and endurance. Their fragrant blooms add a sensory dimension to the garden, enhancing any outdoor space.

Camellias thrive in the Houston climate, but they do require specific conditions to reach their full potential. Understanding the two main types—sasanquas and japonicas—is key to successful cultivation.

Sasanquas are smaller camellias that can handle more sunlight, making them suitable for gardens that receive morning sun and afternoon shade. They are known for their delicate, smaller blooms and can tolerate light pruning, allowing for more versatile use in the landscape.

Japonicas, on the other hand, feature larger flowers and prefer shadier spots. They are ideal for areas with filtered light, such as under large oak trees or on the north side of a structure. Japonicas are particularly suited to the Houston area due to their love for humidity and their tolerance for Houston's clay-based soils, provided the soil is amended for good drainage.

Planting and Care Tips

Site Selection: Choose a location with partial shade to dappled sunlight. Avoid direct afternoon sun, which can scorch the leaves.

Soil Preparation: Camellias prefer slightly acidic soil with good drainage. Amending the soil with compost or peat moss will help create the right conditions.

Watering: While camellias enjoy moist soil, they don't like to be waterlogged. Water deeply but allow the soil to dry out slightly between watering.

Fertilization: Use a fertilizer formulated for acid-loving plants, such as those used for azaleas, in early spring and mid-summer.

Pruning: Light pruning can be done after blooming to maintain shape and encourage growth. Remove any dead or crossing branches to improve airflow.

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTE:A complete preview of the Friends of Mercer **SAT., NOV. 2: AUTUMN PLANT SALE** inventory of available camellias and other plants can be viewed at: friendsofmercer.com/Autumn-Plant-Sale--Saturday-November-2-2024_c_41.html

* * 1 *

Subscribe to our Email Chain.



Sign up for the exclusive newsletter from Nature's Way Resources and be the first to receive updates on special promotions, news, events, and more! Stay informed about all things NWR.

[Learn more](#)



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 305

Subject: Books: Soil Science for Regenerative Agriculture and The Regenerative Agricultural Solution

One of the biggest topics in soil science and plant health is regenerative agriculture and horticulture. Many of the world's problems stem from the toxic chemical rescue industrial agriculture model used since World War Two.

These range from loss of topsoil, dead zones, climate change, poor quality food which causes health problems, behavioral problems and many more.

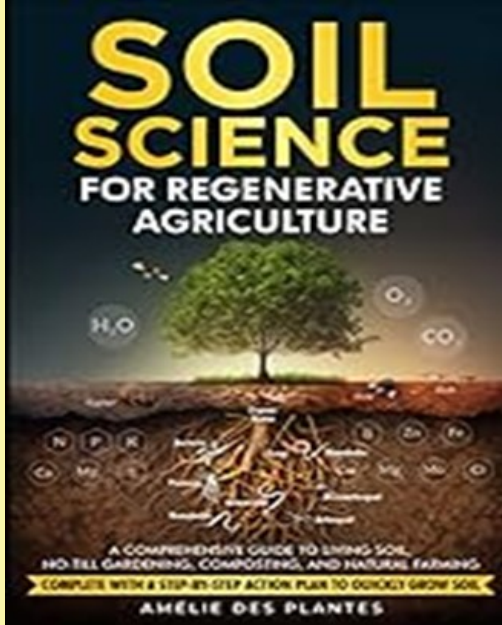
I read two new books this past week that will help the average gardener understand what is happening, and how to be part of the solution, have beautiful gardens and save money. A win-win for everybody. Both books are stories of hope and how to take care of the Earth.

Regenerative agriculture and horticulture uses the modern gardening methods based on organics and soil biology.

The first book is on modern soil science for the beginner or average gardener and is titled:

SOIL SCIENCE For Regenerative Agriculture – A Comprehensive Guide to Living Soil, No-till Gardening, Composting, and Natural Farming by Amelie Des Plantes, 2023, ISBN 979-8391704478.

From the Amazon website: "Work with nature to consistently grow the highest



quality produce—all while doing your part in fighting climate change and helping the environment.

Are you stressed out about...

The seemingly steady decline in both the quantity and quality of your crops?
“Technical farming problems” like soil erosion and biodiversity loss?
Climate change—how you can cope with it, and how you can be part of the solution rather than the problem?

If so, chances are you’re suffering from eco-anxiety... and unfortunately, you have good reason to do so.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), each year, an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost due to erosion. That’s a whopping 3.4 tons lost every year for each person on the planet.

This is quite a serious issue, considering the fact that it takes approximately 500 years for a 2.5-centimeter layer of fertile topsoil to form under agricultural conditions—and our food security ultimately depends on soil quality.

But the good news is there’s a way to reverse the damage... and you can be part of the solution... through regenerative agriculture!

Regenerative agriculture has countless benefits— producing nutrient-dense food, combating climate change, enhancing ecosystem biodiversity, improving air and water quality, huge savings from higher yields, using fewer synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides... the list goes on and on!

Now, if it sounds like you’re going to need technical expertise to do this... don’t worry. Understanding your soil and giving it what it needs doesn’t have to be complicated.

Start with this easy-to-read guide filled with practical advice and information on how to improve your relationship with your soil and get the most out of it!

Here’s just a fraction of what you’ll discover from this book:

- 8 reasons you should stop tilling RIGHT NOW—and what you should be doing instead
- Why carbon isn’t the main bad guy in our “carbon problem”
- How we’ve been jeopardizing our soil quality—and aquatic life—since the industrial revolution
- Why organic fertilizer won’t solve all your soil problems—and what you should know before grabbing a bag or two for your garden
- 7 essential soil tests to help you figure out everything you need to know about your soil
- The hidden downsides of generating renewable energy through hydropower

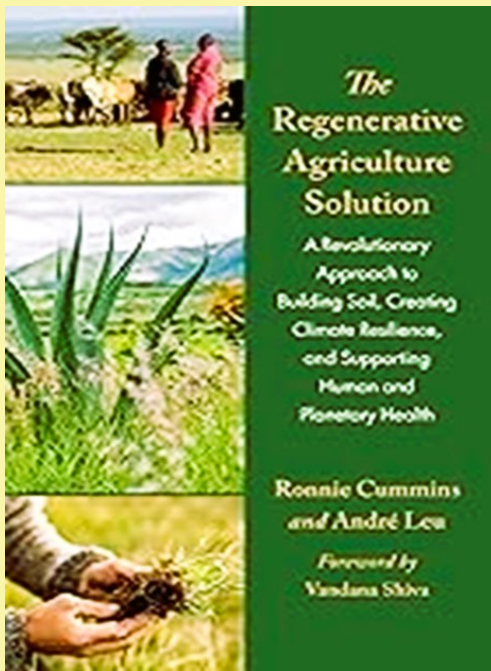
- The key to maximizing plant health for optimum crop quality
- How to compost—the right way!
- A Korean farming method that helps you eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers
- A 9-step soil regeneration action plan to produce high-quality topsoil

And so much more.

Even if you don't think you have a green thumb and don't have the slightest idea of what soil science is, you'll be able to boost your soil quality in no time with these simple techniques.

Give back to our Earth by giving back to the Earth—starting today!"

Amélie Des Plantes is a permaculture designer and the author of *Think Like an Ecosystem* and *Soil Science for Regenerative Agriculture*. Amélie is a deep-rooted organic gardener and environmentalist with an interest in beekeeping and homeopathy. She is passionate about expanding her own knowledge and views her development as a permaculture designer as a lifelong journey.



The second book: **The Regenerative Agricultural Solution – A Revolutionary Approach to Building Soil, Creating Climate Resilience, and Supporting Human and Planetary Health** by Ronnie Cummins and Andre Leu, 2014, ISBN 9781645022695

From the Amazon website: "Read this book to understand why you should care about regenerative agriculture. Until the public is better-informed and insists on sweeping changes to current agricultural policy . . . we will continue to degrade our planet and destabilize our climate. Leu and Cummins, through inspiring stories and solid science, show just how quickly we could turn that around." — Allan Savory, president,

Savory Institute; chairman, Africa Centre for Holistic Management

Is it possible that the solution to the global climate emergency lies in a "waste" agricultural product?

The best-kept secret in today's world is that solutions to some of our most pressing issues—food insecurity, deforestation, overgrazing, water scarcity, rural poverty, forced migration—lie in adopting, improving, and scaling up organic and regenerative agriculture best practices.

The *Regenerative Agriculture Solution* starts with the story of how two brothers—Jose and Gilberto Flores—are at the leading edge of this approach, pioneering the use of the previously discarded leaves of the prodigious agave plant to regenerate agricultural soils, reduce erosion, and improve water capture.

When Ronnie Cummins, the cofounder of Organic Consumer Association (OCA) and Regeneration International, met the Flores brothers in 2019 and witnessed their revolutionary agave agroforestry system, he knew they were onto something important.

Cummins had spent decades studying the potential and pitfalls of organic and regenerative agriculture and knew best practices when he saw them. He started to write a book about Flores's brother and other visionary people, such as Dr Vandana Shiva, Allan Savory, and John Liu, who started landscape-scale regeneration projects. The scientific data was even more convincing, suggesting that these projects—and others like it—could revolutionize how we understand the climate catastrophe.

Sadly, Cummins passed away in April 2023, in the midst of working on the book. Not to leave this work unfinished, Ronnie's widow and OCA cofounder, Rose, called on their friend, colleague, and collaborator, Regeneration International's cofounder André Leu, to complete the work and place the Flores brothers' breakthroughs in the broader context of regenerative agriculture solutions to the world's many interlocking ecological crises.

The result is *The Regenerative Agriculture Solution*, a book that shows how regenerating our forests, rangelands, and farming ecosystems can cool our planet, restore the climate, and enrich our communities.

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.-FRI., OCT. 13-25: RICE HOLISTIC GARDEN PLANT SALE 9am-noon, Rice University. Directions: garden.rice.edu/

SAT., OCT. 26, VEGGIE AND HERB PLANT SALE by MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, [9020 Airport Rd, Conroe, Free. \(936\) 539-7822](http://9020AirportRdConroeTX77385)

SAT., OCT. 26: VEGETABLE/HERB/NATIVE PLANT SALE, 8:30am-1:30pm, Bayou City Community Market, Westbury Baptist Church, 10425 Hillcroft. Westbury Community Garden event.. westburycommunitygarden.org

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

SAT., NOV 2: GREENHOUSE HOBBYIST, 9-11am (Extension office); and **LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR HOME**, 1-3 pm (Discovery Park) both in Carbide Park, 102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Register (both): galveston.agrilife.org; 281-309-5065.

SAT., NOV. 2: AUTUMN PLANT SALE, 8am-3pm. Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble, Free. Friends of Mercer, friendsofmercer.com

WED., NOV. 6: HISTORY OF ORCHIDS, 9:30-11:30am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W NASA Pkwy Webster,. Parking back of church. Free. Gardeners by the Bay event. gbtb.org

THURS., NOV. 7: CAMELLIA CONNECTION by CHRISTY JONES, 10–11:30am, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

THURS., NOV. 7: TREES FOR OUR AREA & TREE HEALTH by CONNOR MURAN, 9-10am, Extension Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead, Waller County Master Gardeners Free, RSVP: 979-826-7651; txmq.org/wallermg/events/

FRI., NOV. 8: MERCER GARDEN TOUR by Horticulture Staff, 9 – 10 am, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

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

WED., NOV. 13: FANTASTIC FERNS A TO Z by DARLA HARRIS, Noon – 2 pm, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

TUES., NOV, 19: 'CAMELIAS' by BART BECHTER, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Sugar Land Garden Club event. Free. sugarlandgardenclub.org

Wed., DEC. 11: WINTER SALAD CONTAINER GARDENING by SARAH ELLIS, Noon – 2 pm, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

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 . . .
THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
& please patronize our Newsletter & Calendar sponsors below!

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us
at 936-273-1200 or send an e-mail to: lazygardenerandfriends@gmail.com



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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!