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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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L to r: roses, hyacinths, tulips, strawberries and artichoke blooms

All gardeners know better than other gardeners.

-- CHINESE PROVERB

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

GRAB WHAT'S LEFT OF 2024 TO ENJOY YOUR GARDEN BEFORE PREDICTED FIRST FREEZE!

Now, I ask you: How's a gardener supposed to decide What to do/plant in the garden when it's going to be in 40's one night and high 70's the next day? I say: be thankful 1. we can still garden while rest of country is looking at dormancy setting in! And: 2. It's just a quick mild single-night freeze the 2nd week of December. Most things we plant can easily tolerate these temporary cold dips. And overall, this is predicted to be on the mild side. (*Altho, we all know how much to trust these 'educated' guesses, don't we!*)

Besides, there's plenty we should be doing in November, even with the predicted-now-coming-extensive climate change in store. This list is from my **Lazy Gardener's Guide***:

This month, you really should . . .

- Water inground plants if a freeze is forecast. Dry roots are more easily damaged by cold.
- Plant daffodils and (refrigerated) hyacinths on Thanksgiving Day.
- Plant artichoke plants, bok choy, cilantro, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, green onions, turnips.
- Order seed catalogs for winter distractions; addresses are also in all gardening magazines. CHECK ZONES !!!!!
- Plant or move shrubs and trees so the roots can become established before real cold sets in for good.
- If you haven't already, order a copy of [URBAN HARVEST's Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer Planting Guides](#)

If the spirit moves . . .

- Start an herb garden — best month!
- As potted mums fade, pinch tips to force more root growth and/or plant in garden! Soon, so they can set good roots before the first true freeze! Predicted Dec. 8. Mulch well with leaves, pine needles, etc.



If you're really feeling energetic . . .

- Try human hair sprinkled on the soil to discourage rabbits from eating bulbs.
- If you don't have falling leaves or other healthy mulch . . . pick up some hay at the feed store. It makes an inexpensive mulch.
- Plant strawberries. They do well in containers and hanging baskets too.
- Take advantage of any Pecan Shows in your area to learn more about growing these trees.
- Cut dead growth off all fading perennials; it might attract insects. Put in compost pile.
- Leave fading rose blooms on bush. They need this signal to start going dormant for winter.

(. . . and, my favorite part! . . .)

Don't-Do tips for really Lazy Gardeners

- Don't panic if leaves of plants moved indoors suddenly drop off. They're adjusting to a new environment. Cut back watering. Mist frequently to compensate for loss of humidity.
- Ignore althaeas and hardy hibiscus. They'll come back in the spring. For bushier plants in spring, cut dead stalks to the ground. *(Pictured: my Mimi's althaea!)*
- Notice thibiscus blooms. They get smaller as the nights get colder.
- Cut back on watering clivia, agapanthus.

(Free LGG pdf copy: email lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)



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- **ATTN. GARDEN/PLANT GROUPS** -- In wake of Hurricane Beryl, [Nature's Way Resources](#) offers free guided tours of NWR's extensive

nursery/soil/muϙher 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.

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*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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John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 309

Subject:

BARONS – Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry
by Austin Frerick, Island Press, 2024, ISBN: 978-1642832-693

In this newsletter we have talked about the poor quality of the American food and how it harms our health numerous times and is also one of the leading causes of global warming. If you want to know what is causing the rapidly rising cost of food, it is price gouging by these monopolies.

This book is a good summary for those who want to learn more about how a few families control the food market and are monopolies that our government has ignored and even supplemented with tax dollars via the USDA and other agencies.

Besides destroying the environment, the abusive treatment of workers including using and abusing child labor, including constant abuse of animals. These companies would have made the Nazi's of Germany proud of their abuses.

The book is broken into several sections starting with an introduction and then it looks at each of the Barons:

Chapter 1: The Hog Barons
Chapter 2: The Grain Barons
Chapter 3: The Coffee Barons
Chapter 4: The Dairy Barons

Chapter 5: The Berry Barons
Chapter 6: The Slaughter Barons
Chapter 7: The Grocery Barons

From the book's cover – "Barons is the story of seven corporate titans, their rise to power, and the consequences for everyone else. Take Mike McCloskey, Chairman of Fair Oaks Farms. In a few short decades, he went from managing a modest dairy herd to running the Disneyland of agriculture, where school children ride trams through mechanized warehouses filled with tens of thousands of cows that never see the light of day. What was the key to his success? Hard work and exceptional business savvy? Maybe. But more than anything else, Mike benefitted from deregulation of the American food industry, a phenomenon that has consolidated wealth in the hands of select tycoons, and along the way, hollowed out the nation's rural towns and local businesses.

Along with Mike McCloskey, readers will meet a secretive German family that took over the global coffee industry in less than a decade, relying on wealth traced back to the Nazis to gobble up countless independent roasters. They will discover how a small grain business transformed itself into an empire bigger than Koch Industries, with ample help from taxpayer dollars. And they will learn that in the food business, crime really does pay—especially when you can bribe and then double-cross the president of Brazil.

These, and the other stories in this book, are simply examples of the monopolies and ubiquitous corruption that today define American food. The tycoons profiled in these pages are hardly unique: many other companies have manipulated our lax laws and failed policies for their own benefit, to the detriment of our neighborhoods, livelihoods, and our democracy itself. Barons paints a stark portrait of the consequences of corporate consolidation, but it also shows we can choose a different path. A fair, healthy, and prosperous food industry is possible—if we take back power from the barons who have robbed us of it."

Austin Frerick is an expert on agricultural and antitrust policy. He worked at the Open Markets Institute, the U.S. Department of Treasury, and the Congressional Research Service before becoming a Fellow at Yale University. He is a 7th generation Iowan and 1st generation college graduate, with degrees from Grinnell College and the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Reviews:

"In this eye-opening debut study, Frerick, an agricultural policy fellow at Yale University, reveals the ill-gained stranglehold that a handful of companies have on America's food economy...It's a disquieting critique of private monopolization of public necessities." --Publishers Weekly, starred

"Frerick's prose throughout is both direct and masterfully controlled, with every point supported by extensive references and notes. This is no alarmist screed but rather a careful, systematic, and utterly damning demolition job—an exquisitely informed exposé. . . A genuinely revelatory look at mass food production in the United States." --Kirkus Reviews, starred

Wow. This is one important book... If you want to know how corporations

control the food supply, start here. Marion Nestle, Food Politics

[Frerick] dissects not only the food barons' business practices, but also the disastrous impacts of these practices... The author, who frequently sounds as though he is fighting to control his personal rage at the people he's writing about, backs up his statements with facts and figures. This is an angry and accusatory book, but also a fair and well-documented one. Booklist

After reading [Austin's] book, I have come away with a completely different idea of agriculture that I cannot unsee. Bloomberg Odd Lots



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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

SAT.,-SAT, NOV. 15-23: NATIVE, POLLINATOR & SONGBIRD SALE, Betty & Jacob Friedman Holistic Garden, Rice University. Details: garden@rice.edu

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. NOV. 20: COLLECTING ADVENTURES WITH LINDA CATHCART by DENNIS CATHCART, 6:45pm, Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Houston's Cactus & Succulent Society & Bromeliad Society event. hcsstex.org

FRI., DEC. 6: RAIN GARDENS AND CONSERVATION by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 11am, Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., DEC 7: GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEED, Part 1, by IRA GERVAIS, 9-11am. Galveston AgriLife Extension, Carbide Park, 4102-B Main (FM 519), La Marque. Free. galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/, 281-309-5065.

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

WED. JAN. 8: LUNCH & LEARN – NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION by KARI HERNANDEZ, Noon- 2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG or call 713-274-4160

SAT. JAN. 11: THREATENED TEXAS PRICKLY ASH by JACOB MARTIN, 11 AM – 12:30 PM, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG or call 713-274-4160

FRI & SAT. FEB. 14 & 15: FRUIT & TOMATO VIRTUAL PLANT SALE, Friends of Mercer Botanic Gardens, friendsofmercer.com, 713-274-4166

MON., FEB. 10: SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 10-11:30am, Free. Register in advance to receive link: hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register

TUE., FEB. 18: SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING by HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS (virtual), 11am- 12pm, Free on Facebook Live. facebook.com/harriscountyp/levents

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.

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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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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 later was said to rank 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 show 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.



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