

**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!

**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



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

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



***'We are lucky here in Houston. . . don't have to worry much about freeze damage to our roses...'***

*--- Donald Burger, Houston Rose Society (pictured: Burger garden)*

**By BRENDA BEUST SMITH**

**ESTABLISHED ROSES** should have no problems with the current temperature drops, especially with welcome rains. So says Houston's well-known attorney/rosarian **DONALD BURGER**. His highly-regarded, spot-on [online gardening advice](#) has, for decades, helped [Houston Rose Society](#) become the nation's largest rose society! Still, even tough roses could use a helping hand NOW. (Note: His advice column is neatly tucked into his [broad-based website](#).)

Donald recommends adding "...about three inches of mulch to rose beds in winter on most roses." Exception: grafted roses, most of which are not growing on their own roots. Almost all hybrid teas and floribundas are grafted. Miniature

and (antique) old garden roses are seldom grafted. How to tell?

Donald explains: *"On a grafted rose there will be a bud union near ground level where the graft was made. It looks like a scar that bulges out. That graft union must be protected. Pile the mulch up around the bud union high enough to cover the bud union by about three inches. That is in addition to the extra mulch you have spread over the beds in general."*

When temperatures warm back up, pull mulch away from the bud union until the next freeze. He warns: *"You may have to repeat this cycle several times over winter. Do not simply leave the bud union covered."* ([More on watering, pruning and "outside Texas, etc.. chores" not needed here!](#))

January is our best rose planting month. Save pruning for Valentine's Day! Don't cut blooms off now, let petals "heel over." This is, however, the best month to PLANT roses here!

**\*NOTE! DUE TO THE WEATHER, LAST MINUTE CHANGE  
IN DONALD BURGER'S THURS., JAN. 9, 7-9pm, PRESENTATION.  
"ROSE BED BUILDING" IS NOW VIRTUAL ONLY. SIGN ON, TUNE IN!**  
[us06web.zoom.us/j/82493328655?pwd=Bx1bhke5Bns0nTZjjFbnz9SlbSlQLE.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82493328655?pwd=Bx1bhke5Bns0nTZjjFbnz9SlbSlQLE.1)

\* \* \*

**HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY'S  
KAREN GERLACH** kindly shared  
two roses she'd recommend if  
you could only plant one or two:  
l to r, Old Blush & Cinco de Mayo!



*Now, Karen's tips on ...* **POST FREEZE GARDEN INSPECTIONS**

- **Check all your plants** for signs of frostbite, this will appear as brown or blackened leaves. I recommend focusing on identifying "mushy" areas which should be removed to prevent further rot.
- **Prune Damaged Areas:** After we are sure there will be NO MORE FREEZES, you can trim dead plant material back to the healthy/live tissue. Be careful not to remove too much, plants need some leaves to photosynthesize. The dead, unsightly material will help protect the rest of the plant if we get another freeze. We also don't want to stimulate new plant growth which is more tender if another freeze occurs.
- **Watering:** Water plants thoroughly to help them recover, especially if the freeze was followed by dry conditions. The rain prior to this freeze should benefit your plants so be careful not to overwater, especially with the rain in the forecast. Some folks like to add liquid Seaweed supplements or other nutritional products. Avoid stimulating new growth with high nitrogen fertilizers as we are still in Winter. New growth is tender and very susceptible to further freezes.
- **Protection from Further Cold:** If frost recurs, protect your plants with frost covers and mulch around the base of plants to retain heat. For perennials, the key is to insulate the plant base and roots so they can bounce back in the spring.

\* \* \*



**OUR SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE BELOW** focuses on how steadily growing use of adaptable native flowers/plants has triggered a growing interest in wild seed collection. Tough as seeds may be, mishandling can contribute to species decline. In our **SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE**, [Houston Botanic Garden's](#) **LYNDSEY A. WARE** makes clear how important it is to correctly handle collected wildflower seed in this tip-filled preview below of HBG's:



**SAT., JAN 25: NATIVE SEED COLLECTION & PROPAGATION WORKSHOP**

10-11:30am, Houston Botanic Garden, 1 Botanic Lane, \$20.

[hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/](http://hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/)

\* \* \*

## Potpourri

### WILDFLOWER LOVERS' LICENSE PLATES!

- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** in Austin plates feature spring bloomers Texas bluebonnet, pink evening primrose, Indian blanket and Indian paintbrush. Proceeds support native plants and restoration/creation of healthy landscapes efforts. The Wildflower Center receives \$22 of the \$30 fee.

[wildflower.org/donate/licenseplate](http://wildflower.org/donate/licenseplate)

*(Top right, Collene Sweeney illustrations).*



- **Texas Parks and Wildlife's Conservation License Plates** include (along native wildlife) beautiful bluebonnet plates (above). Order today - no need to wait till vehicle registration renewal is due, as the cost will be pro-rated. Best of all, \$22 of the \$30 goes directly to help fund conservation efforts right here in Texas. [conservationplate.org](http://conservationplate.org).
- **TEMPORARILY STOPPED "GARDENING"?** Don't stop reading your area's independent nurserymen's newsletters. They know your area better than anyone and may have area-specific winter tips. Before you buy fertilizers, especially for edibles, read John's column below!
- **ATTN. GARDEN/PLANT GROUPS** -- In wake of Hurricane Beryl, [Nature's Way Resources](#) offers free guided tours of NWR's extensive nursery/soil/mulch enterprise to plant-oriented, organized groups. As usual, NWR's now-expanded meeting site is free to above groups. Reservations a must for both.



\* \* \*

*Brenda Beust Smith's column is based on her 40+ years as the  
Houston Chronicle's "Lazy Gardener" column, continuing sponsored  
by Nature's Way Resources in 2013 — (lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)  
Brenda's column focuses ONLY on the Greater Houston Area*

\* \* \*



## **BECOME A RESPONSIBLE NATIVE SEED HUNTER!**

***COLLECTING & PROPAGATING PLANTS  
IN TEXAS' COASTAL PRAIRIE REGION***

**BY LYNDSEY A. WARE  
Houston Botanic Garden  
Harris County Master Gardener**

Texas Gulf Coast region once beamed with native plant species that held land together, mitigated flooding, and filtered an intricate bayou-to-bay system. Less than one percent of coastal prairie exists today, making the rising trend of planting natives all the more beneficial.

It's still far less common to find native plants at local nurseries than non-native ornamentals. Collecting native seeds and growing out plugs for yards that dare to walk on the wild side could really up the ante on creating a more sustainable Houston.

Simple starter steps to become a responsible seed hunter include:



- Learn the plants and collection times! ([Native Prairie Association of Texas](#) and [Coastal Prairie Conservancy](#)'s seed collecting events are excellent for getting to know plants and life cycles. Fact sheets and field guides help as does observing them throughout growth stages in their natural habitat.
- Research, and abide by, ethics, laws, and regulations. Identify land owners and get appropriate permissions. Obtain permits through [TPWD Wildlife Diversity Permits: Scientific Plant Research](#) or get owner/steward permission from landowner(s)/stewards.
- Know the species status. Don't collect rare species already being propagated and planted by agencies.
- Collect ethically, remove no more than 25% of a plant's seed bank.
- Gather materials: Paper bags, waterproof markers, paperclips, etc. to close bags, sanitized clippers, (buckets if collecting in wetlands)
- Dress accordingly for field (or ditch, or abandoned parking lot etc.) with bags labeled for plant species, date & time, and location.
- Collect and process seed before storing in cool, dry place.
- Sowing at best propagation time, environment, and method.
- Label native seed. Propagate grasses in aluminum pans. More vulnerable species may need seed trays and 4" pots. Some aquatic species can be propagated in tubs of water while others prefer to move slowly into such depths.
- Once germinated and established (usually after a few months), transplant seedlings to a preferred environment. This isn't hard to do with natives – they're built for our clay gumbo soil and various wetland systems.

Happy Seed Hunting!

\* \* \*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Learn more from the pros!*

**SAT., JAN 25: NATIVE SEED COLLECTION & PROPAGATION,**

10-11:30am, Houston Botanic Garden, 1 Botanic Lane,

\$20. [hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/](http://hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/)

# OHBA presents... SCIENCE DAY '25

Understand the challenges and discover the opportunities for a regenerative future where you, your business and your community will prosper. Dig into captivating discussions on wildlife preservation, the resilience of native plants, the vital connections between human, environmental, and animal health, organic pest management, and transformative water conservation strategies.



Lisa Morano, Ph. D.

Professor of Microbiology &  
Director of UHD Center for Urban  
Agriculture & Sustainability

**TOPIC** Critical and Environmental  
Challenges



Keiji Asakura

Asakura Robinson Company LLC  
Landscape Architecture

**TOPIC** One Health: Connecting  
Humans, Animals & Environment  
Through Biodiversity



Doug Tallamy

Professor and Chair of the  
University of Delaware  
Department of Entomology

**TOPIC** Bringing Nature Home



Preston Swor

Hunter Industries  
Irrigation Expert

**TOPIC** Irrigation Technologies  
and Water Conservation



Erin Mills

Houston Botanic Garden  
Entomologist + Associate Director  
of Family Programs

**TOPIC** How to Foster Beneficial  
Insects in Your Garden



## WHERE?

Evelyn Rubenstein JCC - Meyerland

5601 S Braeswood Blvd,  
Houston, TX 77096

## WHEN?

Friday January 31, 2025

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM



### TICKETS

**Members:** \$75

**Non-members:** \$90

\*Breakfast & Lunch Included  
\*CEUs Pending



## John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL  
AND PLANTS # 313

### Subject: organic gardening

Over the holidays I had a chance to get caught up on reading some of my horticultural journals. I read and looked at hundreds of articles. Moving to a new home in the country this past year and planting hundreds of trees, I was way behind in my reading.



Researchers are finding information and better performance using organic products and methods compared to artificial fertilizers and toxic chemicals. Things that most organic gardeners have known for 30 or more years. So, let's get started.

In the journal HortScience (2024) researchers found that organic fertilizers and plant biostimulants (humic acid in this case) gave better results (total yield, fruit weight, increased nutrition, etc.) on growing strawberries compared to toxic chemicals and artificial fertilizers.

As most gardeners are aware, the mining of peat causes a lot of environmental damage. In this paper the researchers were looking at using composted cattle manure as a replacement for peat. They found that seedling diameter and height were significantly increased using composted cattle manure in place of peat to grow lettuce from seed. HortScience (2024)

Another paper in the journal HortScience (2024) was looking at how organic matter in the soil affects the growth of citrus. In the test plots with higher amounts of organic matter from compost, there was increased nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) uptake. In this study they found that 3% organic matter by weight gave the best results for citrus.

There was very little about the type of compost used except it was mentioned in passing that it was from plant material. As discussed before the holidays there is a huge difference in products called compost depending on feedstocks and processing methods.

Another study published in the journal HortScience (2024) found that biostimulants can be used to promote plant growth and increase nutrient availability. This study was on Petunia plants and how they respond to humic and fulmic acids on petunias grown in soilless media.

They looked at low and optimal fertilizer rates in the media. They compared fertilized media without biostimulants and media with both fertilizers and biostimulants with different amounts of treatments and frequency of treatments.

The plants with both fertilizer and biostimulants had more nutrients in their tissue, the plants were 32% larger and had five more flowers per plant. The treatments also reduced the time required to start flowering.

Another study published in the journal HortScience (2024) by researchers at the University of Florida was on strawberry production and biostimulants and seaweed extracts. They found the application of both biostimulants, and seaweed extracts consistently resulted in a significant increase in whole-season marketability and total strawberry fruit yield.

Biostimulants by themselves showed little effect, however compared to no biostimulants the plants with biostimulants had increased number of crowns, higher soil respiration, and better root system architecture. This would suggest that treated plants would be more resistant to environmental stress.

When both were used results were over 20% greater than using seaweed alone, indicating a strong synergistic effect.

## 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](#)



## 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!**)  
--\*2 events same day/site, 4 lines ok (**ONLY** if we can't tighten text to fit in 3 )--
- 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](mailto: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. JAN. 8: LUNCH & LEARN – NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION** by **KARI HERNANDEZ**, Noon- 2pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: [pct3.com/MBG](http://pct3.com/MBG) or call 713-274-4160

**WED., JAN. 8: COMPOSTING**, 9:30-11:30am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W. NASA Pkwy Webster. Parking at back of church. Free. Gardeners by the Bay event. Free. [gbtb.org](http://gbtb.org)

**THURS., JAN. 9: ROSE BED BUILDING (VIRTUAL only)**  
7-9pm, Houston Rose Society event. Free.  
[us06web.zoom.us/j/82493328655?pwd=Bx1bhke5Bns0nTZjjFbnz9SIbSIQLE.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82493328655?pwd=Bx1bhke5Bns0nTZjjFbnz9SIbSIQLE.1)

**SAT. JAN. 11: THREATENED TEXAS PRICKLY ASH** by **JACOB MARTIN**, 11am-12:30pm, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free. Register: [pct3.com/MBG](http://pct3.com/MBG) or call 713-274-4160

**SAT., JAN 18. GROWING TOMATOES, Part 2**, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**, 9-11 am; **ANYONE CAN GROW ROSES**, 1-3 pm.



Free. AgriLife Extension Office, Carbide Park, 4102-B Main (FM 519), La Marque  
[txmg.org/galveston](http://txmg.org/galveston)

**TUES., JAN. 21: THE TEXAS MONARCH FLYWAY STRATEGY and MIGRATION**  
by **DEBORAH JANUARY-BEVERS**. 10am: Free, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road,  
Sugar Land. [sugarlandgardenclub.org](http://sugarlandgardenclub.org)

**SAT., JAN 25: NATIVE SEED COLLECTION & PROPAGATION**, 10-11:30am,  
Houston Botanic Garden, 1 Botanic Lane, \$20. [hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/](http://hbg.org/event/native-seed-collection-propagation/)

**SAT., JAN 25: FRUIT TREE SELECTION & CARE** by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 8am- 9am, 22910 Colonial Pkwy., Katy. Free. [hcmga.tamu.edu](http://hcmga.tamu.edu)

**SAT., JAN 25: WESTSIDE FRUIT TREE & BERRY SALE** by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am- 1pm (sell-out), 22910 Colonial Pkwy., Katy. Pre-order online Jan 16-23. [txmg.org/hcmga/shop](http://txmg.org/hcmga/shop)

**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](http://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register)

**FRI & SAT. FEB. 14 & 15: FRUIT & TOMATO VIRTUAL PLANT SALE**, Friends of Mercer Botanic Gardens, [friendsofmercer.com](http://friendsofmercer.com), 713-274-4166

**SAT., FEB. 15: FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS 2025 FRUIT TREE SALE**, 9am-noon, County Fairgrounds, Barn H, 4310 Texas 36 S. Rosenberg. [Fort Bend Master Gardeners 2025 Fruit Tree Sale-Open to the Public](http://FortBendMasterGardeners2025FruitTreeSale-Open.to.the.Public)

**TUES., FEB. 18: SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING** by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 11am- 12pm, Free on Facebook Live. [facebook.com/harriscountypg/events](https://facebook.com/harriscountypg/events)

**FRI., FEB. 21: TREE GIVEAWAY**, 11am-2pm or last tree is gone, Waller County AgriLife Office, 846 6th St., Hempstead, 979-826-7651, [waller.mg@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:waller.mg@ag.tamu.edu)

**SAT., MAR. 8: FORT BEND MASTER GARDENER SPRING VEGETABLE & HERB PLANT SALE**, 9-noon, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd, Rosenberg. [Ft. Bend Master Gardener Spring Vegetable & Herb Plant Sale](http://Ft.BendMasterGardenerSpringVegetable&HerbPlantSale)

#### PLEASE READ BELOW

*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](mailto: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.



Lazy Gardener And Friends | 101 Sherbrook Circle | Conroe, TX 77385 US

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



Try email marketing for free today!