

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



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'The trouble with gardening is that it does not remain an avocation. It becomes an obsession.'

— Phyllis McGinley (1905-1978), American poet & Pulitzer Prize winner



Exciting new options (for us) highlight upcoming events! See below ...

PLANT SALES COMETH!

By BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Enjoy our -- relatively-speaking! -- beautiful weather this week. It's gonna get colder next week. Fortunately, our many local Master Gardeners and other Greater Houston gardening groups are already gearing up for major fruit and vegetable sales. Inventories are easy to see on most websites!

Our gardening organizations are often privy to new varieties from competing growers long before we are. That's how these coming sales can offer new-on-market varieties, often not yet otherwise available. They've been tested in local Demonstration Gardens for a while!

Master Gardeners' (and other) Demonstration Gardens are usually open to the public. You don't have to live in a specific county to visit. [Find your closest one](#)

to plan a visit. (Note: some listed sales are virtual only.) Submitted so far:

- **SAT., JAN 25: WESTSIDE FRUIT TREE & BERRY SALE** by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-1pm (or sell-out), 22910 Colonial Pkwy., Katy. Pre-order online Jan. 16-23. txmg.org/hcmga/shop
- **FRI & SAT., FEB. 14 & 15: FRUIT & TOMATO VIRTUAL PLANT SALE**, Friends of Mercer Botanic Gardens, 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 Public](https://FortBendMasterGardeners2025FruitTreeSale-Open-toPublic)
- **SAT., FEB 15: SOUTHEAST FRUIT TREE & TOMATO SALE** by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-1pm (or sell-out), 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Pre-order online Feb 3-13. txmg.org/hcmga/shop
- **MON-TUES., FEB. 17-18: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SPRING FLING! PLANT SALE**. Online Details & shopping: galvestonmg.square.site/.
- **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](https://Ft.BendMasterGardenerSpringVegetable&HerbPlantSale)

BEST PART -- LATEST 'NEW IMPROVED' VERSIONS OF FAVORITE PLANTS!

Area January & February sales often are our first link to new-on-market varieties of both edible and ornamental plants. Two great examples below!

[Friends of Mercer Botanic Garden's Feb. 14-15](#)

FRUIT/TOMATO VIRTUAL PLANT SALE's surefire winners include **Ground Cherry – Cossak Pineapple**, husked cherry tomato-like fruits with “little bursts of pineapple flavor,” left, and **Orange Hat Tomato**, right, a prolific, compact tomato that can be grown in pots or in the ground.



[Galveston Master Gardeners'](#) Feb 17-18 Online sale includes (left) [Texas Superstar®](#) **Mexican Bush Sage** (*Salvia leucantha*), and **Improved Meyer Lemon Tree**, along with Dwarf Improved- and full-sized Improved Meyer Lemon Trees.



Potpourri

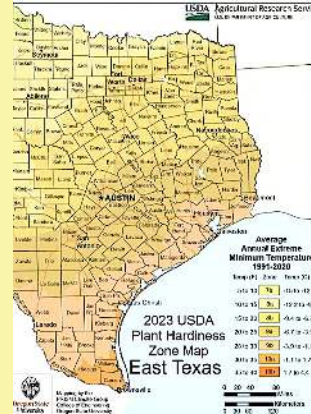
- **DO YOU HAVE YOUR "NEW" [USDA PLANT HARDINESS ZONE MAP](#)?** (Fairly new: 2023)

Handy free download. Zones far more complicated than before. Note! Online plant companies/resources often use these Zones as guides on plant sale labels. So good to know. Greater Houston is still in

Zones 8-9-10, but these are now divided into various sub-zones. Good luck! My eyes are permanently crossed looking at it!

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/planting-zones/texas-planting-zones.htm>

* * *



ANCIENT WARNING gardeners-of-old used to give new gardeners -- *who, of course, didn't buy plants full of bloom stimulators, growth hormones, etc.*)! My guru, Mother Nature, still lives by this with natives! Remember, if you collect seed (especially of natives):

"Sleep" = They're setting roots.

"Creep" = First green shoots appear.

"Leap" = into growing plants!

PERENNIALS (ESP. NATIVES!)
THE FIRST YEAR THEY SLEEP
THE SECOND YEAR THEY CREEP
THE THIRD YEAR THEY LEAP!

* * *

- **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

* * *

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



Doug Tallamy

Professor and Chair of the
University of Delaware
Department of Entomology

TOPIC Bringing Nature Home



Erin Mills

Houston Botanic Garden
Entomologist + Associate Director
of Family Programs

TOPIC How to Foster Beneficial
Insects in Your Garden



Keiji Asakura

Asakura Robinson Company LLC
Landscape Architecture

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



Preston Swor

Hunter Industries
Irrigation Expert

TOPIC Irrigation Technologies
and Water Conservation



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 # 314

Subject: Glyphosate, Wastewater and Worms, Insect Control, Epigenetics
feminization

I read in an article published by the alliance for Natural Health, that the
Department of the Interior purchases over \$1 BILLION worth of the cancer-
causing chemical glyphosate (Round Up) to spray into the environment each

year. What a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Researchers in Chile have developed a system to recycle wastewater from wineries and other industries using earthworms. Winery wastewater is high in sugars which bacteria and earthworms love.

Earthworms work well on other waste streams from the production of milk, cheese, ice cream plants, slaughterhouses, and others that have a lot of sugars, proteins, and fats. These are excellent feedstocks for earthworms who convert the waste into useful products (vermi-compost) for our gardens.

Scale insects known as cochineals are major pests of prickly pears in Mexico. Nopales are a form of an extremely nutritious vegetable made from the soft pads of underdeveloped prickly pear cacti.

Research by the Entomological Society of America has found that they can be controlled without toxic chemicals. They found that autonomous biologic control could be retained by using agroecosystem principles that retains structural complexity and diversity of species. Journal of Environmental Entomology (2016).

This is another reason to have lots of diversity in our gardens and only use modern organic methods. Toxic chemicals are not needed if we follow the guidelines that God gives us in nature.

I was reading a paper a while back on epigenetics (the study of why a certain gene gets turned on or off) that confirms what naturopaths have been saying for hundreds of years.

Researchers have established the food you eat determines which genes get activated. Basically, it can determine whether the genes that control obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hyperactivity and others whether they are turned on or off. Even a mother's diet can affect the genes of her children.

This is another reason that growing as much of our own food organically as possible is beneficial to our health. The second best is to purchase organic food whenever possible and grass fed meat and free range eggs.

We have talked about the dangers of sewage sludge and compost made from sewage sludge (biosolids) that is sold to be used in agriculture and gardening on numerous occasions. There is now another health harming example of exposure to chemicals in biosolids and compost made from them.

Researchers have found that exposure to the estrogen from birth control pills which end up in the sewage sludge can cause sex changes. They found a complete feminization of three amphibian species after exposure. Journal Scientific Reports (2016)

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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!**)
- *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. 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., 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

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

FRI., JAN. 24: GROWING A GREAT LAWN, 1-2:30pm Zoom. Free. Fort Bend
County Master Gardener event. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/landscape-success/

SAT., JAN 25: NATIVE SEED COLLECTION & PROPAGATION, 10-11:30am,
Houston Botanic Garden, 1 Botanic Lane, \$20. 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

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

SAT., JAN. 25: HOUSTON ARBORETUM ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION 10am-2pm, 120 West Loop North (7024 *(between Post Oak Blvd and Woodway Dr.)*). Free. houstonarboretum.org/event/arbore-day-celebration/

WED., JAN. 27: 10 PLANTS by **RICHARD STAMPER**, 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Family Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society event. Free. hcsstex.org

SAT., FEB. 1: FRUIT TREES, 9-10:30am, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own-2

SAT., FEB. 1: FRUIT TREES, 9-10:30am, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. Free. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own-2/

WED., FEB. 5: HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN AN ORGANIC GARDEN, 9:30-11:30am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W. NASA Pkwy, Webster. Gardeners by the Bay event. gbtb.org

SAT., FEB 8: HERBS FOR BEAUTY (9-11am) & **BACKYARD CITRUS**, (1-3pm) by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM 512), La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/events/, 281-309-5065.

MON & TUES, FEB. 10-11: 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

FRI & SAT., FEB. 14 & 15: FRUIT & TOMATO VIRTUAL PLANT SALE, Friends of Mercer Botanic Gardens, 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*](#)

SAT., FEB 15: GROWING CITRUS by **DR. MONTE NESBITT**, 8-9am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Harris county Master Gardeners event. Free. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., FEB 15: SOUTHEAST FRUIT TREE & TOMATO SALE by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-1pm (or sold out), 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Pre-order online Feb 3-13. txmg.org/hcmga/shop

MON-TUES., FEB. 17-18: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SPRING FLING! PLANT SALE. Online only. Details & shopping: galvestonmg.square.site/ .

TUES., FEB. 18: SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS** (virtual), 11am-noon, Free on Facebook Live. facebook.com/harriscountypfl/events

TUES., FEB. 18: ALL ABOUT DYCKIAS by **BRYAN WYNDAM**, 7pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Free, Bromeliad Society/Houston

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

SAT., FEB 22: GROWING AVOCADOS by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 1-3 pm. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM 512), La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/events/, 281-309-5065.

WED., FEB. 26: A LEATHER-LIKE PRODUCT DEVELOPED FROM PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS by **KARLA HALPAAP-WOOD**, 7pm, Multi-Family Service Center,

1475 West Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society event. Free. hcsstex.org

FRI., FEB. 28: LANDSCAPE BASICS, 1-2:30pm. Zoom. Fort Bend County Master Gardeners "Landscape Success" class. Free. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/landscape-success/

SAT., MAR. 1: SETTING UP A RAISED GARDEN, 9-10:30am, 4310 Texas 36 S. Bldng B, Rosenberg. Fort Bend County Master Gardeners event. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own-2/

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*

SAT., MAR. 15: BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL, 10am-4pm, The John Fairey Garden, 20559 FM 359 Hempstead. \$10 for GA, \$10. JFGARDEN.ORG; 979-826-3232

FRI., MAR. 28: FLOWERING PLANTS FOR 4 SEASONS, 1-2:30pm, Zoom. Free. Fort Bend County Master Gardener event. Register: fortbend.agrilife.org/landscape-success/

-- PLEASE READ BELOW IF YOU WANT TO SUBMIT EVENTS --

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 your publication & 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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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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