

August 21, 2020 - Issue # 353

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.

Click here to join our email list
Click here for PDFs OF PAST LG&F NEWSLETTERS

CORONAVIRUS CANCELLATIONS

If your event in our calendar below is cancelled, please let us know as soon as possible at lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

BRENDA'S FULL COLUMN WILL RETURN NEXT WEEK WITH LOCAL EXPERTS' REPLIES TO KAREN

In the meantime, we are going to re-run an interesting article from last year (Issue 304)







"If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years left to live."

- Maurice Maeterlinck, The Life of the Bee"

GOOD TIMES AHEAD (If We Save Our Bees)

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Now's probably not the best time for in-ground plantings. But buying plants? YES! Bargains abound as nurseries make room for fall inventories. Keep new plants in pots well watered in shade until slightly cooler weather arrives.

Fall is truly our best gardening time — cooler days, fewer insects, blooms often even more plentiful than in Spring. Fall is our best time to plant almost everything so roots become established before cold arrives. This is certainly true of most of the bee-beneficial plants listed below.

I am awed by the number of readers now asking about planting for bees. What a long way we've come my early speaking dates. Back then, just the sight of a bee in a flower slide triggered almost-visible shades to descend over eyes in the audience. I guit showing any slides with bees.

In many gardens today, sighting a bee brings sighs of relief, a feeling of actually helping to save these tiny pollinators. Donald Burger is one of the few of our truly experienced gardeners who have long openly promoted beefriendly plants. His <u>burger.com</u> website is one of our best general gardening advice resources. Below are his <u>bee-supporting plant recommendations</u>, with excerpts of his observations from over the years.

Even if you don't want to add bee-attracting plants to your gardens, at least see if you already have some of Don's recommendations in your yard.

Knowing a plant may be helping to save bees might give it more value than you originally thought.

- Basil (Ocimum basilicum) Easy-to-grow annual herb planted in spring.
- Blackberry, Brazos (Rosaceae 'Brazos') Blackberries bloom on current year's canes. To avoid that bramble look, prune off old canes after fruiting.
- Black & Blue Sage (Salvia garanitica) Recommended: plant in groups of at least seven, close together, to attract bees.
- Bulbine (Bulbine frutescens) Recommended: plant at least three (five better) to make bees' visit worthwhile
- Catmint (Nepeta faassenii) Bees love as much as cats do.







L to r, blackberry, catnip, crown of thorns and duranta

- Crown of Thorns (Euphorbia splendens) To get early blooms when few other nectar plants are available, move pots inside on freezing nights. Best in clay pot, 12" in diameter or above.
- **Duranta** (*Duranta repens*) Donald's favorite bee plant. Beloved by honeybees, bumblebees and butterflies.
- Goldenrod (Solidago ssp) Another plant that, for bees, signals the

honey flow in and around Houston. Bees, of course, love the bright yellow flowers, Donald adds.

• **Grapefruit (***Citrus x paradisi* 'Rio Red') - Want a small plant? Donald advises getting a variety growing on Flying Dragon root stock.









L t r, gaura, hamelia, kumquat, lace cactus

- Gaura (Gaura lindheimeri) VERY well drained site.
- Hummingbird Bush (Hamelia patens) Fall bloomer, may take a while to come back out if dies back in winter. Bees like regular and dwarf varieties.
- Kumquat (Fortunella margarita x japonica) Don has a small version of this tree on Flying Dragon Root stock (keeps it dwarf).
- Lace Cactus (Echinocereus caespitosus) Small (3"), but bees love.
- Lemon (Citrus limon 'Meyer') Bees love blooms.
- Lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*) Susceptible to freezing. Donald wraps with old-fashioned Christmas lights and freeze cloth.









L to r, Mexican heather, penta, poppy, portulaca

- Mexican Heather (Cuphea hyssopifolia) Perennial. Donald cuts back in late April so not too "leggy" after bees have feasted.
- Pentas (Pentas laceolata) Nectar plants for butterflies, honey bees and bumble bees.
- Poppy (Argemone albiflora) Bees love white version. Plant in groups.
- Portulaca (Portulaca oleracea/purslane) Bees love yellow flowers.









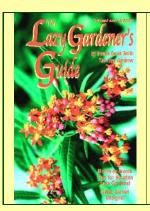
L to r, rosemary, Russian sage, purple heart flower (wandering Jew) and torenia

- Purple Heart (Setcreasea pallida) Has to be grown in sufficient numbers for bees to find attractive. Bees work pink/purple blooms spring into summer.
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) Bees love both upright and prostrate versions. Prostrate version seems to flower better.
- Roses (Rosa ssp.) Only single blooms (4 toe-tight petals) and semidoubles (9-to 16) draw bees.
- Russian Sage (Perovskia atriplicifolia) Blooms summer-fall.
- Satsuma (Citrus unshiu) Bees love the abundant blooms.
- Tallow (Sapium sebiferum) Blooms trigger start of "honey flow" for beekeepers. Now considered invasive. (Brenda note. We raised bees. Husband always watched for tallows to bloom, said they made the best honey.)
- Texas Sabal Palm (Sabal texana) Our most freeze-tolerant palm.
- Torenia (Torenia fournieri 'Catalina Midnight Blue')
- Water Lily (Nymphaeceae ssp) Bees seem to always work these even when there is only a single bloom.
- "For the rest of the story . . ." (growing tips, care, etc.) about these plants, log onto Donald's website: burger.com/beeplant.htm.
- Don't recognize local bees landing on your plants? Check these two websites:
 - Texas A& M txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/public/bee-identification.
 - National Butterfly Center Native Bees of Texas <u>nationalbutterflycenter.org/</u>

* * *

Brenda's column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN

NEWSLETTER is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener



Free PDF download of Brenda's now-out-of-print —

"LAZY GARDENER'S GUIDE"

Lazy Gardener Guide Front Cover

Lazy Gardener Rest Of Covers

Lazy Gardener Guide Book Pages

In exchange for this free book, all I ask is
that you be safe . . . PLEASE WEAR A MASK!

Protect yourself and the rest of us!

이નB^A Organic Online Workshop Week

REGISTER ONLINE @
OHBAONLINE.ORG/WEBINAR-EVENTS

6 FABULOUS ORGANIC EXPERTS:



DANIEL MILLIKIN

Do you know about Summer dormancy? This 1 hour webinar will teach you about the transition from Summer to Fall. Daniel will also talk about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats for Fall gardening. Join us for some helpful tips on dealing with the seasonal transition!

AUGUST 18™ @ 5:00PM CST



BRAD PHILLIPS

Trees are the most valuable plant assets on all properties. Come learn the best practices for sustainable tree care in & out of the landscape. You will learn how to reduce cost, improve results and increase property value of all types in this one hour special presentation.

AUGUST 20™ @ 5:00PM CST

WATCH 4 OF OUR PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ZOOMINARS ON THE OHBA WEBSITE UNDER 'WEBINAR EVENTS':



Mike Serant Love Mother Nature



Suzanne Wainwright The Buglady



Betsy Ross
The Rain Dance



Molly Pikarsky Summer Plants

Links for live Zoominars will be sent out one day prior to the event, via email. After watching the 6 presentations, take a small quiz & earn the very first OHBA Organic Workshop Week Certificate! Submit your quiz by August 28, 2020 @ 4:00 PM.

For more information head to OHBAonline.org





NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS 127

I was listening to a lecture on mycorrhizal fungi the other day and the speaker had a few tips:

- 1. One ounce of spores will inoculate between 2,000-3,000 square feet of lawn or landscape bed.
- 2. Do not mix spores into compost tea during the brewing, only add at application time, as the brewing process will kill the spores.
- 3. Weeds do not like soils high in fungus levels in general, and especially those with mycorrhizal fungi.
- 4. Mycorrhizal fungi have the ability to absorb heavy metals from the soil

and convert them to an inert form so plants cannot absorb them.

We have talked about the toxic chemicals in our municipal water supplies that kill microbes and hurt plants numerous times and why one needs to filter their water.

Eric D. sent in this tip: "I did some searching on Amazon and did run across this filter. It is a bit expensive (\$57.98), but might be helpful.



It is also available direct from the <u>manufacturer</u> for \$56.99. The literature states that the Plus model will treat 45,000 gallons of water removes chlorine (99%), chloramine (87%), fluoride, mercury and other heavy metals, DDT, and some other pesticides.

I often get asked about sustainable methods of weed control. One now has several options:

1) There is a new class of soap-like organic herbicides introduced in recent years based on fatty acids. The most common is from beef tallow. Basically, they smother and seal the pores so the plant cannot breathe, essentially suffocating them. The one I use around the house is a brand called Mirimichi Green which works well on a wide range of weeds. It is also available in 2.5-gallon jugs of



concentrate that can be mixed into a pump-up sprayer that is far cheaper to use. San Jacinto Environmental is the distributor for our area.

- 2) Agricultural vinegar (20%) kills all plants and is very effective. In cool weather use full strength, in hot water it can be diluted down a little and still be effective. There are several brands on the market. The ones that contain molasses tend to work even better.
- 3) Made from cinnamon bark, AgraLawn Organic Crabgrass Killer is an all-natural herbicide used as a spot-treatment to control crabgrass, basket grass, chickweed, clover and other similar weeds. Safe for use around people, pets and the environment. It also has a nice cinnamon scent.

Applying this product with dew on the leaves or after wetting the grass helps the powder stick better. It does not kill St. Augustine or Bermuda lawns; however, it may yellow them for a few days.



I have found that a very effective tool to apply powdered products like crabgrass killer, diatomaceous earth, etc. is the Dustin Mizer shown below. Turning the crank generates the airflow that quickly propels the dust out in an

even cloud and quickly covers large areas.



- 4) Corn gluten meal can be a very effective pre-emergent natural herbicide and also provide some fertilizer benefits due to its nitrogen content as it biodegrades. Corn gluten meal only works well within a certain range of soil temperatures in mainly cool soils.
- 5) Flame weeders are becoming very popular and available in many sizes. I have been using one at my house for many years. It uses a standard one-pound propane bottle that screws into the handle as shown below. It has an electric spark to ignite the propane. The intense heat kills small weeds in only 1-2 seconds, as the weed gets bigger it takes longer.

I use it on the cracks of my brick patio and on the joints on the side walk. Often during the winter when weeds like chickweed sprout everywhere, in the morning with dew on the ground, I can just stick it into my flowerbed between the plants and zap them. I can clear a 100' x 6' bed in just a couple minutes.

From my camping days I have a device from Northern Tool that lets me refill my 1-pound canisters from my big 5-gallon propane tank. I purchased my hand-held flame weeder from them also. When one does their own refills, it is very inexpensive to use.

TIP: If one places the empty 1 -pound propane bottle in the freezer overnight and then refills it when it is still cold, it will allow you to transfer more liquid propane into the bottle so it lasts much longer.





The one I use looks like the picture above without the propane bottle (canister).

This advertising above came in as I was writing this article from another company that has a handheld torch that attaches to a large propane bottle. However, it does not have the electric start but a striker is included.

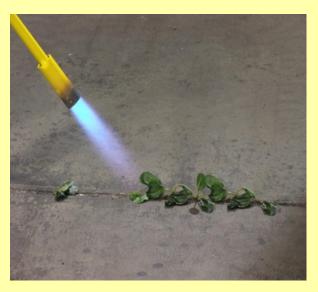
For larger areas there are weeders with a bigger head that connect directly to a 5-gallon propane cylinder as shown below. They can be placed on a dolly or just sat in the back of an RTV. Many places will refill the propane cylinders for you for a small fee.











For large acreage there are tow behind units that work great for keeping fencelines cleared. Just use after a light rain or early in the morning while there is still dew on the ground and high humidity to prevent wildfires.



- 6) It is well established that many of the species of plants we call weeds require soils that are bacteria dominated hence most weeds do not like soils high in fungus levels in general, and especially those with mycorrhizal fungi. Using a composted (aged) Native Mulch, if made properly, is very high in good fungi, thus is a natural deterrent for many weed species. This type of mulch is loved by earthworms and many of them eat weed seeds in addition to producing chemicals that suppresses the germination of some weed seeds. Additionally, this type mulch over time will turn even heavy clay into beautiful rich loam.
- 7) The newest weed control method is called Weed Blasting. This is done using tiny pieces of abrasive organic grit. The grit is applied by using an air compressor that supplies the air pressure similar to how a sand blaster works. A study at the University of Illinois found they eliminated 69-87 percent of the weeds on a unit towed behind a tractor! The grit comes out at a high velocity and just shreds the plant it hits. Grit sources include walnut shells, granulated maize cob, soybean meal, greensand, etc. The smaller the seedling the more effective is the treatment.

Numerous times we have talked about the extremely poor quality of our food supply (one of the worst in the entire world), and why it is important for gardeners to grow as much food (fruits and vegetables) for their families as they can.

Mike Serant, the owner of San Jacinto Environmental and the makers of the great Microlife TM line of organic fertilizers shared this article from CNN (see link below) and his comments.

"A thoughtful article that looks at America's food policy and why America has the most deaths due to covid of any country in the world. Poor diet, foods filled with fats/sugars/salts/pesticides/GMO virus/MSG/preservatives/dyes, the huge reliance on white flour to satisfy us all; as made America the most chronically ill nation in the world. *In all categories, not just covid.*

Advocating for Organics must be viewed as a necessity for human civilization to continue".

From the article below:

"The American food system is not broken -- it is functioning as designed, a system optimized for efficiency, not one optimized for resilience and nutrition. But our food system is killing us, and that happened long before Covid-19. It is bound to continue unless we take steps now to leverage food as medicine".

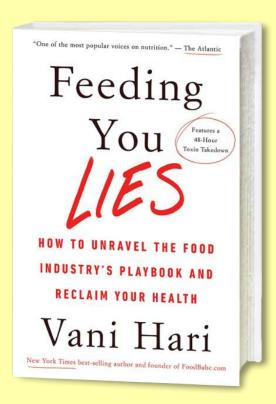
www.cnn.com

From the "Food Babe's" newsletter by Vani Hari: "To explain, look at what's happened in the past (and this is just the tip of the iceberg...)

The tobacco industry paid doctors to lie to us that cigarettes are healthy.
 They also paid scientists to counter science showing cigarettes cause cancer.

- The sugar industry paid Harvard scientists to publish a paper in The New England Journal of Medicine to say that fat (not sugar) was triggering heart disease.
- Coca-Cola's paid scientists to blame obesity on lack of exercise, rather than on drinking sodas full of sugar. They also paid professors to form a front group to downplay the link between sugary drinks and obesity.
- Monsanto (maker of GMO seeds) paid scientists who claim GMOs are safe to eat them and say chemicals like the Roundup weed killer don't cause cancer. Now it's known to cause cancer, and lawsuits are being settled in the billions.

History repeats itself, right? These shameful practices continue today. The book she authored below is a very informative book on how we have been deceived by corporations and the politicians and scientists that work for them.



I recently ran across this website that uses data from the millions of people worldwide that have been infected with the Covid-19 virus, hence our medical community has very good data to work with. With a few simple questions this link will give one your statistical risk factor of getting covid.

After the short quiz it will take one to a link where you can download this booklet. There is a condensed version however I recommend the full version.



Numerous studies have now shown that people with high levels of vitamin-D in their blood, do not have or have very minor symptoms of Covid-19. For vitamin-D to work it must have certain elements like magnesium, zinc and a

few others. If you remember from our study of the herbicide Round-Up a few years ago, when one eats foods with glyphosate (Round-Up) on them, it prevents the body from absorbing these essential nutrients (this almost any non-organic food today).

You have pesticides in your body. But an organic diet can reduce them by 70%

A new study shows that most US families consume cancer-linked glyphosate in their food. The good news: going organic rapidly reduces the levels of this toxic chemical AND it helps reduce your risk of getting covid-19. See the article below from the Guardian newspaper.

Read More...

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

(See Farmers Markets at end of calendar)

ADULT GARDEN PLANT EVENTS ONLY ALWAYS CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOUR EVENT IS IN! HOWEVER . . . PLEASE READ BEFORE SUBMITTING EVENTS!

- Events NOT submitted in the EXACT format below may take 2 weeks or longer to be reformatted/retyped and added to calendar.
- FARMERS MARKETS -- Normally we do not run non-gardening/plant events.

 During this pandemic, when most gardening events have been cancelled,we are happy to publish a running list of local Farmers Markets. See at end of calendar.

Submit events to: <u>lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com</u>.

ALWAYS put group name in email subject.

CHECK WEBSITES FOR ON-SITE COVID-19-RELATED PRECAUTIONS!

THURS., AUG. 27: BIRD SURVEY by PAUL GREGG & CHRISTY JONES, 8-10am, Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Register: 713-274-4160. https://bit.ly/20n3WdT

THURS., AUG. 27: ELEMENTS OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN (virtual lecture) by BRANDI KELLER, 10-10:30am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register before 8am. hcmga.tamu.edu

□THURS., AUG. 27: UNDERSTAND THE SOIL OF THE TEXAS GULF COAST (virtual lecture) by STEPHEN JANAK, 10-10:30am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register before 8am. hcmga.tamu.edu

THURS., AUG. 27: GINGER FOR TROPICAL FLAIR (virtual lecture) by STEPHEN BRUEGGERHOFF, 10-10:30am. Harris County Master Gardener event. Register before 8am. hcmga.tamu.edu

SAT., AUG. 29: THE MERCER SOCIETY - VIRTUAL SPECIALTY PLANT SALE - PLUMERIA, 8am-8pm, Online Only. 713-274-4166. themercersociety.square.site

TUES., SEPT. 15, MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS VIRTUAL PLANT SALE. 8am - 8pm at mcmga.com. AgriLife Extension Office, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe. mcmga.com

TUES., NOV. 17: HEIRLOOM PLANTS by GREG GRANT, 10am; St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Road, Sugar Land. Free. Sugar Land Garden Club event. sugarlandgardenclub.org

LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS

- <u>URBAN HARVEST FARMERS MARKET</u>, Saturdays, 8am-noon, in St. John's School parking lot, 2752 Buffalo Speedway.
- <u>FULSHEAR FARMERS MARKET</u> Saturdays, 9am-1pm, 9035 Bois d'Arc Lane @ FM 1093, Fulshear.
- <u>THE WOODLANDS FARMERS MARKET AT GROGAN'S MILL</u>, Saturdays, 8amnoon, Grogan's Mill Shopping Center Parking Lot, 7 Switchbud Pl., The Woodlands
- **BEAUTY'S GARDEN.** Acres Homes Farmers Market Saturday, 10am-2pm, 4333 W Little York Rd.
- WESTCHASE DISTRICT FARMERS MARKET, Thursdays, opens 3pm, St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church, 10503 Westheimer Road (at Rogerdale Road, one block west of Beltway 8)
- MEMORIAL VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET, Saturdays, 9am-1pm, 10840 Beinhorn Rd.

Although normally we did not run out-of-garden events, during this pandemic period when most gardening events have been cancelled, we are happy to publish a running list of local Farmers Markets.

Send notices to lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com



For event submission rules, see top of calendar

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!

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

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



Saturdays 7-9am • SportsRadio610



Organic Fertilizers
Core Aeration
Compost Top Dressing

YearRoundHouston.com







www.bartlett.com



About Us

BRENDA BEUST SMITH

WE KNOW HER BEST AS THE LAZY GARDENER . . .

- ... but Brenda Beust Smith is also:
- * a national award-winning 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-, it then ranked as the longest-running, continuously-published local newspaper column in the Greater Houston area.

Brenda's gradual sideways step from reporter into gardening writing -- first as a just-a-fun side Chronicle assignment in the early '70s -- ed 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.

A Harris County Master Gardener, Brenda has served on the boards of many Greater Houston area horticulture organizations and has 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 as 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 have 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.

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 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.

