



LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS

Houston Garden Newsletter



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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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FELDER "SLOW GARDENING" RUSHING COMES TO TOWN!

*"Gaudy is when you do something people don't like,
but they think you know what you're doing so they
cut you some slack; tacky is when you just don't
know any better, bless your heart."*

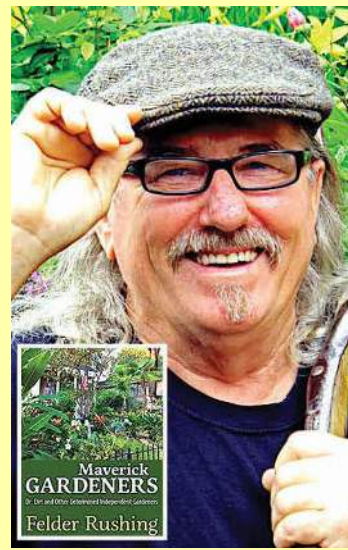
-- FELDER RUSHING, "MAVERICK GARDENERS," 2021

by BRENDA BEUST SMITH

Back in the 1970s, when popular Houston Chronicle's garden writer Alice Hodges moved away, Editor Don Pickels asked for a volunteer to at least continue her "What to Do in the Garden This Month" column until he could "...hire a real horticulturist."

I had a new house, planted few things, saw chance to write humor, it would be only 'til new expert was hired. I volunteered to find an expert, interview, write, but (with Don's ok) called it "The Lazy Gardener" (so no one would think I knew anything about gardening). I tackled it as any reporter would.

Fast-forward: 50+/- years. To my amazement, I'm STILL working as the Lazy Gardener, even though I never did become "conventional." Instead, I discovered from [Felder Rushing](#) and others that it is OK to be open and honest about my haphazard, certainly "relaxed," sometimes embarrassing approach to gardening. (*I used to dig up blooming wildflowers and replant them in my own gardens right before parties.*)



Felder's writings helped me realize while expert advice is helpful and needed, it is also ok, as Felder puts it in his new "**Maverick Gardeners**" book, to continue my "*less precise, corner-cutting 'make-do' approach followed blissfully by garden variety gardeners.*" My instant, pre-company wildflower beds sure qualified!

Houston area gardeners can meet this internationally-recognized guru of "slow gardening" in person at his book signing Sunday 1-4 pm at [The Arbor Gate](#), 15635 FM 2920 in Tomball. I love Greg Grant's review that notes this book is "*a constant reminder that we all get to choose what beat we march to.*"

Felder cheerfully admits his book is more about attitude than advice, about "*quirky, odd-sock*" gardeners who are "*not rebellious nonconformists; they are merely other-motivated.*" They may or may not be joiners, but they do seem to march to a different drummer. Felder calls them DIGs (Determined Independent Gardeners), who primarily love flowers, sharing plants and accessorizing -- as in gnomes, chimes, bottle trees, etc. I have all 3 and tons of fairy silhouettes in my yard (*see below*).

DIGs are really into Slow Gardening. They:

- Spread out chores, "doing a little as you go"
- Plant for the senses (including emotions)
- Prefer quiet tools over "noisy machines"
- Understand (probably subconsciously) and embrace (tho maybe not knowingly) [Koten engei](#) and [wabi-sabi](#) (*Look them up*)
- Create hodge-lodge areas usually with "*an old queue of pots of stuff waiting to be planted (often in vain)*"
- "*...deal with weeds by just planting stuff that's taller.*"

*(Be still, my beating heart! I swear Felder's been stalking me!)
I've been collecting cosmos seed to spread in front of a messy bed!)*

Decades ago, Felder and others made me fall in love with [bottle trees](#). The first Chronicle story I did on bottle trees, along with their fascinating history, drew this note from a reader: "*Why don't you just haul in a bunch of rebar and dump it on your front lawn?*" I immediately bought a bottle tree for my yard. Sadly lost that one in a hurricane, but replaced with this one.

Felder's writings also inspired me to share that reader's tacky note in talks to groups, along with my gardening



mistakes, failures, stupid decisions and more. The first time I confessed these, I thought I was forever blowing future speaking engagements. Instead, they multiplied. (Pictured, my bottle tree with fairy on mushroom.)

Still, I confess I never had any urge to copy Felder's most famous garden experiment which you can actually see Sunday at his Arbor Gate's book signing.

Hearing someone complain about having no place to garden inspired Felder to

"plant" [the bed of his now historic '87 F-150 pickup truck](#) The amazing, thriving traveling botanical wonder has traveled back and forth crossed the country, enough to have logged 300,000+ miles.



The stars of "Maverick Gardeners" are stories of his "DIGs" (Determined Independent Gardeners) from all walks of life and economic strata. Hands down, he writes, *"the most conspicuous of them all ... a man who called himself Dirt."* Dirt's celebrated Southern yard featured Felder's favorite garden design - - one laid out for views from the house or, especially, from the front porch -- rather than from the street. Mine is too! (*Dirt's favorite recipes are also included*). "DIG" Jessie successfully used centuries old German Hugeliculture to garden atop of concrete. Look it up: [Hugelicultur](#) ([pdf download](#)).

In another section, Felder's "Passalong Triarchy" defines how he judges his own worldwide selections of these historically-treasured plants. They must be:

1. Valuable -- for flower, fragrance, memories triggered, wildlife value, etc.
2. Easy to grow across a wide range of conditions
3. Easy to propagate

Can you guess which passalong flower he's found is the #1 favorite across the globe? Check in next week's column or ask the yourself at:

Felder Rushing — Book Signing
Sunday 1-4 pm — free Party on the Patio /
The Arbor Gate — 15635 Farm to Market 2920 in Tomball

PS. If you're looking for actual gardening advice in Felder's book. . . it's in the last chapter. I like that he puts attitude first!

* * *

TIP O' THE TROWEL TO MARY CAROL EDWARDS, winner of the Native Plant Society of Texas 2021 Lynn Lowrey Memorial Award for horticultural achievement. Mary Carol, and her [Green Star Wetland Plant Farm](#) in Alvin, were honored for wholesale/retail commercially-growing wetland plants crucial to flood-mitigation and water-quality projects coastal areas. Click for [All 2021 awards](#).

* * *

*Brenda's LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER
column is based on her 40+ years as Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener
Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com*

* * *

Hummingbird Habitats

with Abbie Ince-Hendrickson M.S.



@ Nature's Way Resources

9:00 AM - 10:30AM

on Saturday, September 18th, 2021

Join us for a 45-minute talk about Hummingbird Ecology and Feeding behaviors, centered around native plants. After the presentation, a segment on Hummingbird Field ID will be taught, so bring your binoculars and a sugar rush! You will need it to keep up with the hummers!



Please remember to bring water and sun protection!

Please RSVP, as class size is limited.

(936)-273-1200 or email us at nwnursery@gmail.com



OHBA

HOUSTON
ARBORETUM &
NATURE CENTER

FORAGING FOR FOOD & KNOWLEDGE

with Mark Merriwether Vorderbruggen, Ph.D.



Become a forager! Join us for a hike in the trees, along with snacks & a fabulous presentation at the Houston Arboretum! Discover edible weeds and what their presence tells you about your soil.

SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2021 • 5:00–7:00PM**HOUSTON ARBORETUM & NATURE CENTER**
120 W LOOP N FWY, HOUSTON, TX 77024

• 610 ENTRANCE •

TRAIL MIX & WATER PROVIDED!

TICKETS:**MEMBERS: \$30****NON-MEMBERS: \$40**4:40–5:00PM Meet & Greet
5:00–6:00PM Hike & Forage
6:00–7:00PM Mark Presentation**REGISTER HERE TODAY:**
OHBAONLINE.ORG/REGISTER

Thank You Sponsors!

For any event questions please contact Erica B. at erica@ohbaonline.org

John's Corner



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS # 166

Five years ago, we did a series of articles that covered all 79 elements found in the human body. We looked at what they did in society, for soils, microbes and of course plants, animals and humans.

Since that time many new studies have been published on the importance of these elements to our health, hence it is time to review all the new information.

Example: Five years ago, the rare earth element Europium (Eu) had no known biological role, however new studies found that only 1-2 ppb (parts per billion) when fed laboratory animals, Europium increased their lifespan by 100%.

Example: I was reading a paper this morning on a study done by the Bionutrient Association on the nutrient content of various vegetables. Even in the same species of vegetable, they found mineral nutrition varied from 4-18 times! When they analyzed health giving compounds like antioxidants and polyphenols, they found variation of over 200 to 1. In other words, the best carrot they found has 200 times the number of beneficial polyphenols as the worst carrot.

Many scientists are now beginning to answer the question “WHY”. Internationally, a growing field of research is on nutrient density in our food or lack thereof. Hundreds of human health problems are a direct result of the low quality of our food supply as explained by many of the books I have reviewed over the last few years. As a result, vegetable gardening has exploded over the last few years. This may include vegetables, fruits, herbs and even edible flowers or roots.

One of the common factors to all edibles as well as our ornamental plants or our turf, is that a plants growth and health is directly tied to the health of the soil. Plants grown on mineral rich soils are more nutritious, have less insect or disease issues, they grow faster, and are more resilient to weather extremes from drought, flooding, and heat or cold. Hence the gardening proverb: Healthy Soil = Healthy plants = Healthy people.

A major component of this movement is the minerals in the soil. These minerals contain the 79 elements found in the human body and assumed that we need to be healthy. When reading labels, we need to be careful as geologists have identified thousands of minerals while there are only 84 naturally occurring elements. As an example, there are over one thousand minerals that contain the element calcium (Ca) along with the few other elements that make up the mineral, but only one major nutrient, calcium. So, depending on context, the word mineral may be misleading.

A common mineral that most gardeners know about is limestone (sometime just referred to as lime) which chemically is known as calcium carbonate. The symbol for calcium carbonate (short hand) is easily recognized as CaCO_3 . For the non-scientists Ca is the short hand notation for calcium shown above. The element carbon is just the letter “C”, and the “O” stands for oxygen. Understanding a few basics that are very simple will help all gardeners read the label on a bag of fertilizer, soil amendment and many other products in life.

This mineral above calcium carbonate, CaCO_3 tells us from the symbol, that this mineral has one atom of calcium (Ca), one atom of carbon (C), and three atoms of oxygen (O). Some folks prefer words and other prefer the shorthand hence I will be using both as we go through this study.

Many of us older (experienced) gardeners remember many of our gardening books recommending New Jersey greensand as a soil amendment. Greensand

is actually an extremely mineral rich material that is high in calcium (Ca), iron (Fe), and many other elements that plants need to be healthy. If you want more information on greensand there is a paper on my website at <https://www.natureswayresources.com/infosheets/greensand.html>

Greensand was one of the first mineral packages recognized as very beneficial for plants and originally only found in New Jersey hence was very expensive. Since then, several deposits of greensand have been discovered in Texas and are now very inexpensive for us Gulf Coast gardeners.

Other rock dusts that have proven very beneficial are basalt and granite sands, each provides benefits that greensand does not. As a result of many requests from our customers we have all three blended together into one product that we just call Remineralizer.

There is an international organization called “Remineralize The Earth” where one can learn more about the importance of minerals.



Remineralize the Earth

Our Mission Remineralize the Earth (RTE) promotes the use of natural land and sea-based minerals to restore soils and forests, produce more nutritious food, and remove excess CO₂ from the atmosphere. Our Vision Given the immediate and growing...

[Read more](http://www.remineralize.org)

www.remineralize.org

Using minerals greatly increases the growth rate of trees and the amount of carbon sequestered in the soil (4X) plus many more benefits. One paper I found using minerals, researchers were able to reverse and cure the disease Sudden Oak Death in California by using rock dusts (minerals).

Now that I have given you an introduction to the role of minerals in soil and plant health, we will start looking at each of the individual elements that minerals are composted of and especially the 79 elements found in the human

body. If they are not in the soil, microbes cannot release them and plants cannot absorb them.

For those that want to get a jumpstart on the subject there is an old video on minerals and health from 1994 on U-tube called "Dead Doctor's Don't Lie", by Joel Wallach, DVM, DO whom was a nominee for a Nobel Prize.

The talk is not only informative but at times funny with his country boy humor to make a point.



* * *



Pines and Prairies Chapter

*Please join us at the
Recreation Center at Rob Fleming Park*

*Saturday, September 25, 2021
9am to noon*

*for our Fall Plant Sale as part of
The Woodlands Landscaping Solutions*

Plant inventory

Plant information



*Funds raised are used for research, grants, scholarships, education,
demonstration gardens and preservation of native plants*

* * *

LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

SUBMITTING EVENTS? PLEASE READ!

- *Only events submitted specifically for this calendar publication will be used*
- *Put your group's FULL name in email subject.*
- *Very long links will be shortened, but full link activated when clicked*
- *Submit events to: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com*

SAT., SEPT. 20: GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN OPEN GARDEN DAY, 8:30-11am, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road. Online plant sale: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>

SAT., SEPT. 25: FALL IS FOR PLANTING, 10am, Wabash Feed & Garden, 4537 N Shepherd Dr. Free. [Register](#). 713-863-8322, wabashfeed.com/

SAT., SEPT. 25: LEAGUE CITY GARDEN CLUB'S GARDEN TOUR, "Renaissance in the Garden," 10am-4pm, Tickets \$15, Nana's Attic, 501 E. Main, League City, leaguecitygardenclub.org.

SAT., SEPT. 25: 24th ANNUAL WOODLANDS LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS by THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP, 9am-noon, Recreation Center/Rob Fleming Park, 6464 Creekside Forest Dr., The Woodlands. Free. thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/landscaping

SUN., SEP 26.: SUSTAINABLE LIVING THROUGH PERMACULTURE 1, Southwest Houston site, 1-5 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/sustainable-living-through-permaculture-1-2/

SAT., OCT. 2: EASY PATH TO A BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY LANDSCAPE by THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP, 9am-noon. Free. The Woodlands Emergency Training Center, 16135 IH-45 South, The Woodlands. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., OCT 2: GROWING BLUEBERRIES by ROBERT MARSHALL, 9-11am. Free. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

MON., OCT. 4: ONLINE ORDERING ENDS for OCT. 14-16 HOUSTON BULB & PLANT MART. store.galvestonmg.org

TUES., OCT 5: GROWING HERBS FOR USE, INSIGHT & DELIGHT (Zoom) BY KAREN COTTINGHAM, 6-7:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event

FRI. OCT. 8: TREE PLANTING & HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL by NICHOLAS GRIFFIN, 10am, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman. Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

SAT., OCT. 9: FALL FAVORITE VEGETABLES by GENE SPELLER, 9-11. Free. Galveston City Master Gardener event. Pre-register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., OCT. 9: FORT BEND COUNTY FALL VEGGIE-HERB PLANT SALE, 9am-noon (or sell-out), 1402 Band Rd. fbmq.org/events/annual-sales/vegetable-herb-sale/.

SAT., OCT 9.: BOKASHI COMPOSTING: WASTE NOT, WANT NOT (Zoom) by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 9:30 – 11:30 am. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/bokashi-composting-waste-not-want-not/

SAT., OCT 09.: EDIBLE ACADEMY: FALL GARDENING AND NUTRITION WORKSHOP, 9am- 1pm., Gregory-Lincoln EC., Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/2021-edible-academy-fall-garden-and-nutrition-workshop/

SUN., OCT 10.: DESIGNING BOUNTIFUL GARDENS SERIES 1/6 (Zoom), 1-5:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/designing-bountiful-gardens

MON., OCT. 11: PLANT PROPAGATION (virtual), 10-11:30am. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners event. Register: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

TUES., OCT 12.: IN THE GARDEN: COOL WEATHER VEGETABLE GARDENING by **GABRIEL BORJA**, 6-7:30 pm. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/in-the-garden-cool-weather-vegetable-gardening/

WED., OCT 13.: TOUGH TEXAS NATIVE PLANTS (Zoom) by **PAUL WINSKI**, 10-11 am. Urban Harvest event. urbanharvest.org/stec_event/tough-texas-native-plants/

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 14-16: HOUSTON 2021 BULB & PLANT MART, St. John's Church 2450 River Oaks Blvd. gchouston.org/bulb-plant-mart-info/

FRI.-SAT, OCT 15-OCT 16: GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER FALL PLANT SALE (Online only). Noon Fri. to noon Sat. Browse begins Fri, Oct 8. store.galvestonmg.org

SAT., OCT. 16: THE LAWN CARE: GREEN WITH ENVY (virtual) by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am - noon. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

SAT., OCT. 16: THE LAWN CARE: GREEN WITH ENVY (virtual) by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am - noon. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

TUES., OCT. 19: PLANT PROPAGATION (virtual), 11am-noon. Free. Harris County Master Gardeners event. hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

SAT., OCT 30: KOKEDAMA by **KAT TONDRE**, 9-11am. \$20. Galveston County master Gardener event. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/horticulture/mgseminars/

SAT., OCT. 30-NOV. 2: 2021 TEXAS BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL, Mission, TX. texasbutterflyfestival.com/

SAT., NOV. 6: RAINWATER HARVESTING CLASS by **THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP**, 9am-noon., The Woodlands Emergency Training Center, 16135 IH-45 South, The Woodlands. Free. Register: thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/environment

FRI., NOV.12: GARDENS OF EUROPE by **VIVIANE TONDEUR**, 10am, Trinity Episcopal Church, [1015 Holman](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1015+Holman+St,+Houston,+TX+77002). Houston Federation of Garden Clubs event. houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

**SAT. NOV.13. HOUSTON FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS PLANT SALE
AND FOOD DRIVE.** 10am-1pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman.
houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

*Check contacts listed for covid-triggered changes and/or masking policies
Only events submitted specifically for publication in this calendar are used.
Links will be fully linked if clicked but word-shortened if too long.*

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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 . . .

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Complete Organic Solutions

NATURE'S WAY
RESOURCES
an organically based service company

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-project to reporting, 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, 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.

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 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.

