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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. *Sketches by Pedro Alvarez*



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"My yard is not the beautiful landscape some may think. It's a "lazy gardener's garden" — more of what Felder Rushing, in "Maverick Gardeners," describes as everyday folks who cultivate their yards with passion and 'unique' techniques." See below! BBS -- [Felder's Blog](#)



DECADES AGO, someone asked me what do I mean by a "Lazy Gardener"? Sort of an oxymoron? Not being a serious gardener then (or now), I said if I did what experts say to do and a plant dies, obviously it's NOT my kind of plant. Reporter as I was back then, I tried to think of important points to save me time, energy and money but still produce an acceptable, low-care garden. Below, from my "Lazy Gardener's Guide," what I learned.

I. Thou shall appreciate the Upper Texas Gulf Coast's unique subtropical ecology with often extreme weather changes and shall follow LOCAL gardening advice — not that for Texas in general or, worse, for national audiences

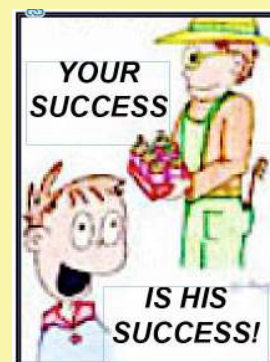
II. Thou shall not insist on growing "northern" plants in the middle of the Gulf Coast's tropical summer.

III. Thou shall get to know thy neighborhood nurseryman.

IV. Thou shall learn sun and drainage requirements of plants BEFORE planting them in the ground.

V. Thou shall put plants requiring "normal" to "excellent" drainage in beds raised at least eight to ten inches above ground level . . . especially natives from Central/West Texas & Mexico

VI. Thou shall mulch well all beds. ALL beds do better with mulch. Our winters have gotten so much colder, summers hotter. A healthy,



ORGANIC mulch is well worth the effort.



VII. Thou shall focus more on healthy soil and strong root growth than on what is going on above ground.

VIII. Thou shall not treat for insect or disease problems. Thou shall remove plants with unacceptable insect/disease damage and replace them with plants that don't have unacceptable insect/disease problems in your area!
(Remember, talking LAZY gardeners here.)

IX. Thou shall NOT allow fertilizers and other landscape treatments from your yard to drain into sewers or ditches where they contribute to flooding and other problems.

X. Thou shall, above all, have FUN! It's YOUR garden. It needn't be a mirror image of other gardens around you. It should be what YOU want and it should make YOU happy!

* * *

Potpourri

- **MY FAVORITE EARLY-BLOOMING PLANT**

Spiraea prunifolia, a native of Eastern Asia (they think, iso old no one knows for sure), has masses and masses of delicate white flower clusters, (ideal for "bridal wreaths")! Graceful arching branches and profusion of flowers bring a touch of classic beauty to gardens, whether as a stand-alone specimen, a focal point in mixed borders, as a backdrop for other flowering shrubs, hedge borders or mixed in with azaleas. Long-lived plants. Prune ONLY immediately after blooming. Like azaleas, after only a brief rest, they start producing buds for next year's blooms!



- **KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON TREES!**

SIGNS TIME TO CHECK WITH TREE EXPERTS . . .

- Cracks in trunk or peeling bark (pictured)
- Mushrooms growing near tree roots or base of trunk
- Multiple branches that have no living buds
- Sticks/bark on ground
- Leaning over
- Open Wounds

We've just been through a blistering hot summer, prolonged drought, vicious hurricane, unusual cold, snow and ice and more. Hat's off to trees that survived Beryl's 80-90 mph winds. SEVEN of our all-seriously tall trees didn't survive (including a pine that fell on part of house).



Grateful for those still standing but no guarantee they didn't suffered enough internal damage to demand close watching from now on. My joy at seeing green leaves sprouting from the remaining trees is tempered by the knowledge that results of tree trauma can take years to become obvious! Dying trees can and will produce new green leaves. Only time will tell, but please, keep an eye on yours! [Texas A&M's list of danger signs in your trees](#)

- **AFTER BERLE WIPE OUT SO MANY OF OUR TREES**, hopes were not high for my usually gorgeous Bridal Wreath, so named for obvious reasons throughout history in many cultures. She has good reason to dread winter. Unexpected temperature fluctuations can damage buds, disrupting dormancy. But she's one tough broad with her whimsical white reflective glow, especially in a full moon. About only way you can make her mad is to prune anytime except right after she blooms. She immediately starts setting buds for next spring. Pruning too late may stop that! She may be old (records date WAY BACK). But she still marches to her own drummer!



- **ATTN. GARDEN/PLANT GROUPS --** [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. Great time to visit!



- **SUBMITTING CALENDAR EVENTS?:** For next upcoming newsletter, submit in our exact format (see calendar). Otherwise, they may be held for reformatting. PS. April 4 is National Carrot Day; Apr. 5 is National Dandelion Day, Apr, 14 National Gardening Day. - [You take it from there](#)

* * *

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

* * *

OHBBA

Urban Design Day 2025

Reimagining Our Cities



About the Conference

Join us for an inspiring event featuring three sustainability experts who will share their knowledge on creating a greener, healthier, and more vibrant city! From homes and public parks to water detention, commercial spaces, and beyond, discover how we can transform our urban environment into a more livable, joyful, and sustainable place for all.

What You'll Learn

- Effective watershed design
- Working with + understanding the ever changing nature cycle
- Regenerative solutions in urban design and sustainability
- Supporting biodiversity



TED MAAS

Owner of Maas Verde Landscape Restoration. Ted educates + applies ecological principles to design, build, and function to urban landscapes.

TOPIC: Landscaping in a Changing Climate: Developing Water Wise, Functional, and Aesthetically Pleasing Landscapes



ANDREW MILLISON

Globally Renowned Permaculture teacher and practitioner, media maker, and gardener. Founder of Oregon State University's Permaculture Design program

TOPIC: How Watershed Design is the Answer to Flooding, Drought, and Extreme Heat.



MARY KEILERS

Innovation & Research Principal at Clark Condon, with extensive experience managing complex projects across diverse ecological and urban environments.

TOPIC: Design Considerations for Resiliency, Stewardship, and Innovation: A Landscape Architect's Perspective on the Urban Landscape

FRIDAY
MAY 9, 2025
FROM 9 AM - 4 PM

UNITED WAY OF
GREATER HOUSTON
50 WAUGH DR
HOUSTON, TX 77007

MEMBERS
\$75

NON- MEMBERS
\$90



FOR MORE INFORMATION + TO REGISTER: **[OHBAONLINE.ORG/REGISTER](https://ohbbaonline.org/register)**

Urban Design Day 2025

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 8 – 8:45 AM | Registration, Coffee + Tacos, Visit Exhibitors, Networking |
| 9 - 10:30 AM | Andrew Millison Presentation |
| 10:30 – 11 AM | Networking |
| 11 AM - 12 PM | Mary Keilers Presentation |
| 12 – 1:30 PM | Lunch, Visit Exhibitors, Networking |
| 1:30 - 2:15 PM | Ted Maas Presentation |
| 2:30 - 4 PM | Andrew Millison Presentation |

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FOR MORE
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FOR EVENT:



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 323

Subject: prescribed fire GRAS glyphosate & dementia fungi mutualism

We have all seen on the news pictures of wildfires from Texas to California that caused billions of dollars in damage. This was caused by mismanagement of our land. In nature flammable fuel is not allowed to build up as small fires would occur every 2-3 years removing the fuel and revitalizing the ecosystem.

Today we can copy nature by using prescribed burns to prevent wildfires and restore the natural environment. The link below is a short video on how beneficial controlled burns (prescribed fire) is to restoring our land. Texas and Oklahoma fire experts created this video and gives an introduction to all sides of Prescribed Fire.

[A Land in Balance](#)

The USDA and FDA, etc. often uses a term called GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe), which means they do not test foods for safety and just assume a food is safe to eat. Another way of stating it is that the food is substantially equivalent to the natural food.

It is used by many companies to describe a category of food substances that are not subject to premarket approval by the FDA and allows for its distribution without any safety testing.

For example, genetically modified soy plants were given the GRAS label and used all over the world and we were told that they were safe. Research is now showing that GM soybean oil damages the liver and kidneys in animal studies providing proof that it is not substantially equivalent. The researchers also found that urea and triglycerides were significantly higher in GM fed rats. They found it only took 90 days for significant damage to occur.

Open Access: Taheri H, Mesgari-Abbasi M, Khordadmehr M, Rahimi Mamaghani A, Abbasalizad-Farhangi M. Effect of genetically modified soybean oil consumption on biochemical and histological changes of liver and kidney in rats. Int J Drug Res Clin. 2024; 2: e11. doi: 10.34172/ijdrcl.2024.e11.
<https://ijdrug.com/Article/ijdrcl-3048>

Have you ever wondered why we are so sick as a society in the USA? Over 90% of the soy-based products sold are GMO varieties. The reason for purchasing organic foods continues to grow.

Note: The new leadership team at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has identified over **3,000 substances** the FDA allowed to be dumped into our food supply under the GRASS label. Many or most of these are linked to the numerous health problems we see in society today.

A report in the Journal of Neuroinflammation (2024) found that exposure to the herbicide glyphosate found in products like Round Up, is pro-inflammatory. "Glyphosate exposure exacerbates neuroinflammation and Alzheimer's disease like pathology despite a six-month recovery period in mice."

The bottom line is that "glyphosate exposure serves as an accelerant of Alzheimer's pathogenesis..."

Most cereal grains from wheat to rye (over 90%) are sprayed with glyphosate to kill the plants so they dry quicker and evenly making them easier to harvest. Hence, unless one buys organic, the breads and cereals you are consuming, contain glyphosate.

Researchers at the University of Maryland have found that when two separate species of fungi are found in the soil, they work together to protect plants from damaging abiotic stresses like drought or poor nutrients and harmful insects. Together they will parasitize bad insects and kill them but not by themselves. Journal PLOS Pathogens (2024)

If one uses a fungicide, they lose this benefit that explains why those using organic methods, have less insect issues.



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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

WANT EVENT IN RIGHT AWAY? FOLLOW RULES! GREATER HOUSTON AREA EVENTS ONLY!

3-LINE (max) **EXACT FORMAT** (our re-formatting = *delay!*)

DAY, DATE: TITLE (by **NAME if talk**), time, site. Sponsor (*if not in title*).
website/phone (**NOTE CAPITALS VS lower case**)

- **Gardening/plant events ONLY! No harvesting, cooking, shows, etc.**
- **ONLY events sent SPECIFICALLY TO US FOR CALENDAR are used!**
- **NO events picked up from flyers. NO PDFS! TYPE IN EMAIL ONLY.**
- **No city unless not "Houston" -- Don't add "Houston" or "Texas"**
- **Submit to: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com. Check published entry!**

WED., APR. 2: GARDENERS BY THE BAY APRIL PLANT SALE, 9am-noon,
Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W. NASA Road 1, Webster. gbtb.org

SAT., APR. 5: KINGWOOD GARDEN CLUB GARDENFEST, 10am-2pm, 4102
Rustic Woods, Kingwood. Free.

**SAT. APR. 5: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OPEN
GARDENS & PLANT SALE**, 9am-noon, AgriLife Extension Bldg., 9020 Airport Rd.
Conroe. 938-539-7824

SUN., APR. 6: BACKYARD GARDEN TOUR, Noon-4pm, (register) Durham Elementary School, 4803 Brinkman St. Plaza Garden Club event. [Plaza Garden Club Backyard Garden Tour](#)

WED., APR. 9: GROW YOUR BEST ROSES 2025 by **SUZANNE GILBERT**, Noon–2 pm, Visitor's Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

THURS., APR. 10: RESTORING HISTORICAL ROSES by **BURLING LEONG, HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY**, 7pm.

Free. [us06web.zoom.us/j/85182587106?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85182587106?pwd=MBbprcfMq6E8dn3jO5NBUETyq6lFK9.1)

[pwd=MBbprcfMq6E8dn3jO5NBUETyq6lFK9.1. houstonrose.org/hrsmeet.htm](https://pct3.com/MBG)

FRI., APR. 11: CLEAR LAKE CHAPER NATIVE PLANT SALE, 4pm-7pm, 2700 Bay Area Blvd.

SAT., APR. 12: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY SPRING PLANT SALE, 9am-3pm, 7124 Booth Lane, Manvel. Free. lonestardaylilysociety.org, 281-331-0162.

TUES., APR. 15: A TRIBUTE TO CAROLE RICHTMYER & HER CONTRIBIONS TO WORLD OF BROMELIADS by **DR. LARRY GRIoux**, 7pm, W. Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray, Free, bromeliadsocietyhouston.org.

SAT., APR. 19: PETALS AND PATHWAYS GARDEN TOUR Sat. 10am-3pm. Coldspring Community Garden, 101 E. Cedar, Coldspring. \$10. Contact tanisfink@aol.com

SAT., APR 19: SAN JACINTO COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PETALS AND PATHWAYS GARDEN TOUR, 10am-3pm, \$10 @ Community Garden, 101 E Cedar \$12. tanisfink@aol.com

FRI., APR. 25: USING IRRIGATION WISELY, 1-2:30pm. Online. Fort Bend County Master County. fortbend.agrilife.org/landscape-success, 281-342-3034

SAT., APR. 26: 2025 OLEANDER FESTIVAL, 8am-noon, Betty Head Oleander Garden Park, Galveston. Also Plant Sale. International Oleander Society event. Free. www.oleander.org

SAT., APR. 26: GRAFTING FOR BEGINNERS by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 10am–noon, Mainland City Centre, 10000 Emmett F Lowry, Texas City, \$29. College of Mainland. 409-933-8461; register: [Grafting for Beginners online registration](#)

SAT., APR. 26: 39th ANNUAL HERB DAY by **THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT**. 8 am-2pm, Museum District. \$67. Pre-registration required: www.herbsociety-stu.org

SAT., APR. 26: QUAIL VALLEY ANNUAL PLANT SALE, 10am-2pm, The Tea Garden, 2800 La Quinta Drive, Missouri City, QuailValleyGardenClub.org

SAT-SUN., APR 26 & 27: HERITAGE GARDENERS PLANT SALE & SPRING FLOWER SHOW. 9am-4pm. 112 W. Spreading Oaks, Friendswood. heritagegardener.org & Facebook.com/FriendswoodHeritageGardeners

SAT., MAY 3: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW AND DAYLILY PLANT SALE, Sale: 8am-3pm; Show 1-3pm, Alvin Senior Citizens Building, 309 W Sealy, Alvin, TX., Free, lonestardaylilyociety.org, 281-331-0162.

SAT.-SUN., MAY 3-4: HOUSTON BROMELIAD SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE. Sat. noon-4 pm, Sun. 11am-3-pm. Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Dr. (Hermann Park). Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

SAT.-SUN, MAY 10-11: GALVESTON ORCHID SOCIETY ORCHID SHOW & SALE, Sat. 9am-5pm; Sun. 10am-4pm. Webster Civic Center, 311 Pennsylvania Ave, Webster. bit.ly/4iUjjHh

WED., MAY 14: HISTORY OF MERCER ARBORETUM & BOTANIC GARDENS by Jamie Hartwell, Noon-2pm, MA&BG Visitor's Center, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

If your event didn't get in right away, IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE you didn't submit it in our EXACT - NEVER CHANGING format. HAVING to REFORMAT (WE WILL!) delays your event 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 . . .
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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 35 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. For years he represented 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

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