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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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"Of course everything is blooming most recklessly: if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night."

--- Rainer Maria Rilke, Austrian poet and novelist



[Texas Olive Tree \(*Cordia boissieri*\)](#) (Liliana R. Cracraft photos above & below)

SPECTACULAR YEAR FOR TEXAS OLIVE TREES!

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

LILIANA R. CRACRAFT —best known for her *Houston Cactus & Succulent Society* work – sent these [Texas Olive Tree \(*Cordia boissieri*\)](#) pictures (above & right). I have long wanted one, so jealous every time I visit Buchanan's Native Plants (where a spectacular one has delighted

customers for decades!)



TEXAS OLIVE TREE (*Cordia boissieri*) — not a "real" olive (or a cacti) — is a Chihuahuan Desert native. Prune into a large shrub or leave as 25+/-' tree with butterfly-attracting blooms throughout year, most heavily late spring- early summer, then off/on when weather's right. Birds, deer & cattle love the olive-like fruits, (not tasty to us). Also called Mexican olive and Anacahuita.

(**Note:** No Texas olives at **WED. APR. 23: GROWING CACTI AND SUCCULENTS FROM SEED** by **JACOB MARTIN**. But **Liliana** will be there! 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society. Free. hcsstex.org)

* * *

IN OUR SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE BELOW, TERRA BURNS details the successes Montgomery County Master Gardeners are having with **Square**



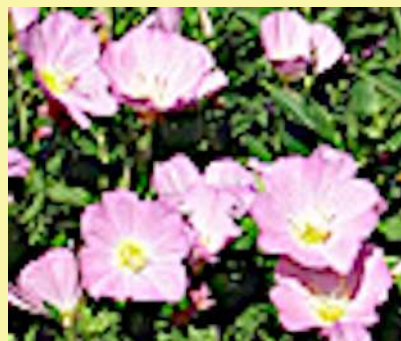
Foot Gardening. (Side note: back in the '70s, my Daddy [the late Walter Beust] became a strong SFG advocate, His garden is still thriving today!) So it's with pleasure I share this MCMG article by Terra who will give a more-detailed presentation on ...

- **THURS., MAY 8: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING** by **TERRA BURNS**, Texas A&M Extension AgriLife Extension Service -- Montgomery County, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. mcmga.com. (Terra will also speak on 'Square Foot Gardens' during MGMGA's Open House, 8:30-11am Saturday, June 7).

* * *

Potpourri

- **TIP O' THE TROWEL TO MOWERS!**
Have you noticed how many more pink evening primroses (*Oenothera speciosa*) and other oft-unseen native wildflowers are decorating our streets & highways? Obviously powers-that-be (local, city, county, highway, homeowners etc.) have decreed ignoring or volunteering-not to-mow areas of 'bulk' wildflowers.



This has been extra-nice since many usually-spectacular bluebonnets were somewhat overpowered by weather conditions, etc. Whatever the cause . . .

THANK YOU!!!: Encourage this phenomena! Write your County

[Precinct Judge](#) that you noticed and approve!

- **MEA CULPA, CLEMATIS!** Thanks to **MARGARET CHERRY** who pointed out last week I mis-identified my beloved clematis, right. Margaret says mine (right) is a ***Clematis crispa***, (swamp clematis) which, she adds, needs to be grown more in our area.



Margaret recommends potting these in gallon container for another season before early spring planting in ground. [Clematis texensis](#) (right) also do well here. An added benefit: there are many excellent, easy-to-come-by hybrids such as, pictured, Duchess of Albany, left, and Princess Diana, especially good ones for us!



- **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 top of calendar). Otherwise, they may be held for reformatting. PS. Apr, 14 National Gardening Day. - [You take it from here!](#)

* * *

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

* * *

Spotlighting . . .
Montgomery County Master Gardeners
Lazy Gardener and Friends Newsletter



Grid evident and plants by portals. L to r: Basil, kale, Micro Tom tomatoes and taquito peppers. 'Little pickler cucumbers next to wire trellis. Right: What happens when you don't pay attention to the details: over-growing its box

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING

BY TERRA BURNS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENER
MGMG Square Foot Garden Manager

WHAT IS A SQUARE FOOT GARDEN? A

way to grow a variety of edible plants in a small space. This method is useful because it saves you water, time, space, effort and money (as far as the purchase of seeds and soil and tools) How to do it?

- Choose an area that gets 6-8 hours of direct sunlight, good drainage.
- 4ft x 4ft is the standard size but varies with preference.
- Choose a bottom: weed mat, landscape fabric, cardboard.
- Construct a box 8"-12" high from material of your choice. This can range from bricks, to wood, to plastic, to metal, to cinder blocks etc....
- Fill the box with a home made soil mixture (Mel's Mix of 1/3 vermiculite, 1/3 sphagnum peat moss or coconut coir, and 1/3 compost from at least 3 different sources) or store bought garden soil.
- Select and install what you plan to use for watering, whether using drip irrigation, a soaker hose, hand watering or a sprinkler system
- Put a grid in place that denotes each square foot. This can be made with cord, wood, or any material of your choosing.
- Select plants that do well in your area and that are compact. Decide if you will direct seed or buy existing plants.
- Put plants/seeds in the soil based on recommended spacing for the mature plant in a square foot garden taking in consideration where the sun is located in reference to shading, where taller plants won't shade shorter plants.



LESSONS LEARNED:

- If you continue to plant the same family of plants in the same area, plants become diseased and decline in productivity. Rotate your crops!
- If using drip irrigation, place the seeds/plants where the portals are located. Symmetry and spacing in a box is less important.
- Tendrils from vining plants can't wrap around bulky trellis parts that are

too wide.

- Watch for and don't ignore bugs; they just continue to multiply.
- Read the detailed information about what you are planting, otherwise you may end up with something that takes over the garden and won't stay in its designated box.

Great resource: "Square Foot Gardening"
by [Square Foot Gardening Association](#)



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EDITOR'S NOTE: Want to know more?

- **THURS., MAY 8: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING** by **TERRA BURNS**, 6:30pm, Texas A&M Extension AgriLife Extension Service -- Montgomery County, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. Montgomery County Master Gardeners. mcmga.com
- **SAT., JUNE 7:** Terra will also speak on **Square Foot Gardens** during MGMG's Open House, 8:30-11am, same location.

* * *

OI-HBA

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://ohbaonline.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

FRIDAY
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FOR MORE
INFORMATION +
TO REGISTER
FOR EVENT:



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 326

Subject: How Can I help corn plants and water glyphosate atrazine

Doug has done it again and written an easy-to-read book that answers most people's questions on how to garden in a way that is good for nature.

How Can I Help? Saving Nature with Your Yard by Doug Tallamy, Timber Press, 2025, ISBN: 978-1-64326-471-4

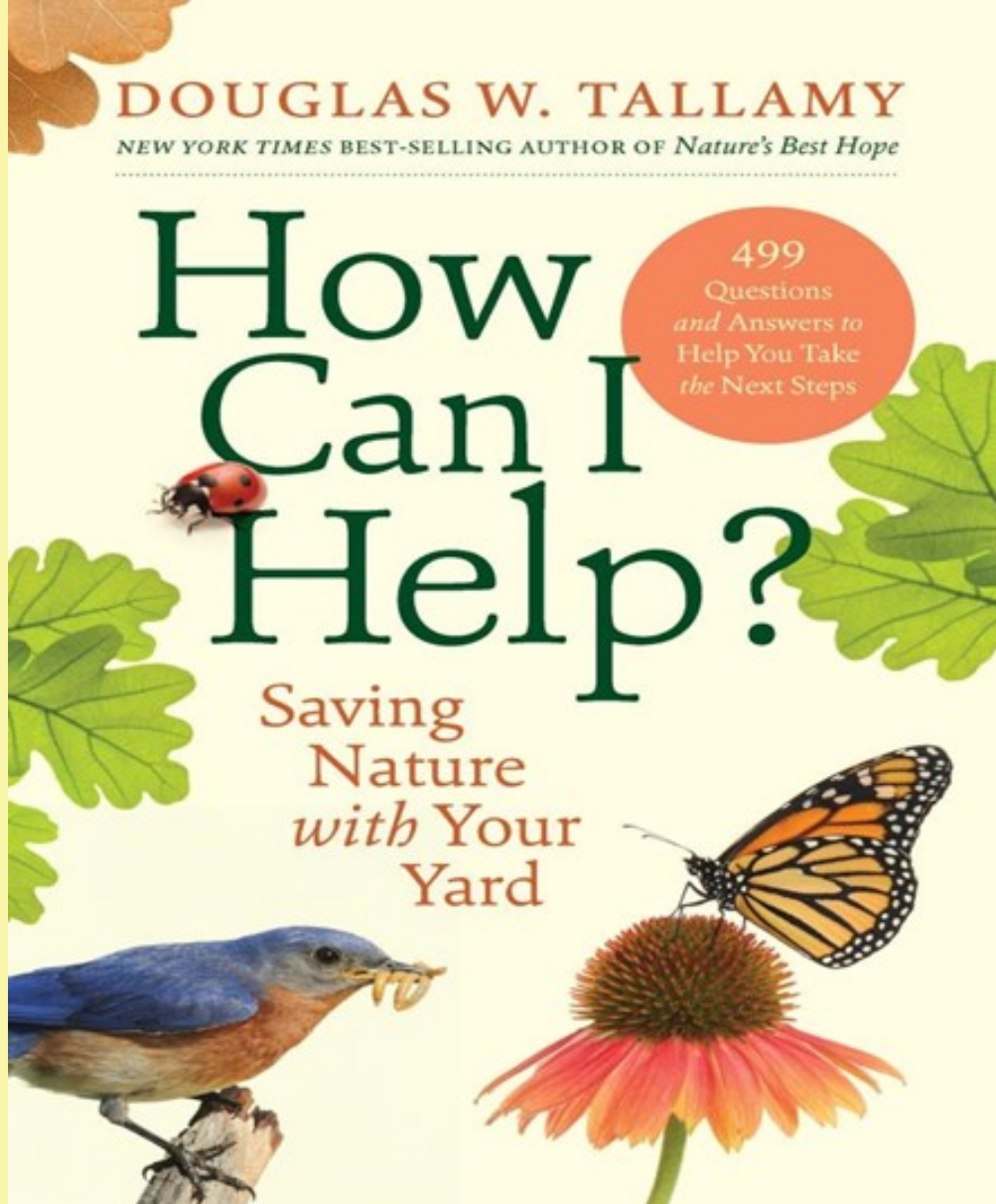
He states that there are 135 million acres in the USA that are residential landscapes. Everything we plant, don't plant, or apply to our yard impacts the greater ecosystem in which our yards exist, and thus everything that depends on that ecosystem.

For example, "when we plant an invasive plant (e.g. Chinese tallow), we are harboring ecological tumors whose offspring escape our landscape, negatively affecting our neighbor's property as well as the natural space around us."

From the publisher:

In *How Can I Help?*, Tallamy tackles the questions commonly asked at his popular lectures and shares compelling and actionable answers that will help gardeners and homeowners take the next step in their ecological journey. Topics range from ecology, evolution, biodiversity and conservation to restoration, native plants, invasive species, pest control, and supporting wildlife at home. Tallamy keenly understands that most people want to take part in conservation efforts but often feel powerless to do so as individuals. But one person can make a difference, and *How Can I Help?* details how.

Whether by reducing your lawn, planting a handful of native species, or allowing leaves to sit untouched, you will be inspired and empowered to join millions of other like-minded people to become the future of backyard conservation.



Plants know how to find water with their roots, it is built into their DNA. However, I was reading about a study that found that some varieties of high yielding corn plants **have lost** a portion of this ability to find water. The researchers examined 250 varieties of corn that are commonly used today.

A paper in the journal Scientific Reports has found that exposure to the glyphosate molecule (found in the herbicide Round Up), impaired glucose regulation, which is a major factor in the development of type-2 diabetes.

Ever wonder why there is so much dementia in society today? A couple contributing factors are glyphosate which is in almost all breads, cereals, candy bars, fast foods, etc. and atrazine which are used on our food supply. More reasons to go organic.

Another study published in the Journal of Neuroinflammation shows that exposure to glyphosate can lead to significant and lasting negative effects on brain health. Animal studies revealed significant brain inflammation after

exposure to glyphosate. These pathological changes persisted for at least 6 months after exposure.

A recent study in the Journal Research found significant neurotoxic effects of the herbicide atrazine on the hypothalamus area of the brain. This increases the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.



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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 w/plants events ONLY! No harvest, 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. 23: GROWING CACTI AND SUCCULENTS FROM SEED by **JACOB MARTIN**, 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society event. Free. hcsstex.org

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., APR 26: ROSE SHOW, HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY, 10am-3pm, Free. Memorial City Mall (by Dillards)

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

FRI-SAT. MAY 2 & 3: HCSS SPRING SALE, Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat., 9am-3pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Cactus and Succulent Society event. Free. [hcsstex.org](#)

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. Free, [lonestardaylilysociety.org](#), 281-331-0162.

SAT., MAY 3: "BUTTERFLY CELEBRATION, 9am-noon. 1402 Band Road, Rosenberg. Fort Bend Master gardeners. Free. [fbmq.org](#); 281-342-3034

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

THURS., MAY 8: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING by **TERRA BURNS**, 6:30pm, Texas A&M Extension AgriLife Extension Service -- Montgomery County, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. Montgomery County Master Gardeners. [mcmga.com](#)

THURS., MAY 8: IT'S 110 DEGREES...NOW WHAT DO I DO? by **LOU PAVLOVICH**, 7pm, Houston Rose Society. Free. [9785pwd=JrgelM9cJYNz0mKP2lb05byOSxgGxp.1&omn=86592085512](#)

SAT., MAY 10: HOUSTON HEMEROCALLIS (DAYLILY) SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW AND DAYLILY PLANT SALE, Sale: 8am-3pm; Show 1-3pm, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 4040 Watonga Dr., Free, [ofts.com/hhs/](#)

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](#)

SAT., MAY 10: BE A SUPERSTAR WITH PERENNIALS & PRE-ANNUAL, 9-11 am and **PLUMERIA PROPAGATION**, 1-3 pm, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM

519), La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/events/ 281-309-5065

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

FRI., SAT., MAY 16-17: AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY, SHOW AND SALE, 9am - 4pm, Hilton Garden Inn Willowbrook, 7979 Willowchase Blvd. Free, begoniahouston.org/

FRI., MAY 23: SHADE GARDENING, 1-2:30 p.m. Online. Fort Bend MG. Registration required: fortbend.agrilife.org/landscape-success, 281-342-3034

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 . . .
THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
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If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us
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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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