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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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*"Just as I wonder / whether it's going to die, / the orchid blossoms
and I can't explain why it / moves my heart, why such pleasure
comes from one small bud / on a long spindly stem. . . ."*

Sam Hamill (1943–2018), American poet

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH



QUEENS OF THE GARDEN, that's what experts say about orchids, and they seem to have lots of reasons to do so. Orchids apparently have been evolving on Earth for over 90+ million years. They served humans as medicinal, symbolic and aesthetic benefits for millennia in ancient China and Greece. Beauty aside, they were long fascinating to horticulturists and other experts for their "unique adaptations, diverse forms, intricate pollination mechanisms and ability to thrive in various environments."

Whatever the draw, you can bet [**GALVESTON BAY ORCHID SOCIETY**](#)'s May 10-11 **ORCHID SHOW & SALE** is sure to attract a crowd. Go early! In our Spotlight Article below GBOS's **JOYCE McMILLAN** takes a look at orchids on display and for sale Saturday & Sunday May 10-11 Show and Sale, Sat. 9am-5pm; Sun. 10am-4pm. Webster Civic Center, 311 Pennsylvania Ave, Webster. bit.ly/4iUjjHh. (P.S. 2025 is GBOS's **50th** anniversary, it was founded

in 1975!)

* * *

MILLIE SIMPSON (South Houston) wants native milkweed but "*so many different ones! **Where** do I get them?*" Most of Texas 30+ native milkweeds said good in gardens. (*Disagree? Speak up!*) Good source: [Texas Native Plant Society chapter's website](#). Or. [npsot.org](#)). Click on Chapters. Most chapters have sales or can send info. Check John's column & calendar below (listed if sent in). ([Native milkweeds good for Houston area](#)) & ([Posters of Texas native milkweeds](#)) &



Pictured: 'Antelope Horns' (Asclepias asperula).

* * *

MORE CHAOS, LESS PEFECTION (national gardening groups say) is the predicted focus for 2025's summer trends. Made me think of [Felder Rushing's](#) DIGs (Determined Independent Gardeners) in his "Maverick Gardeners" book ("*. . . those who prefer simple, hands-on approach to gardening, particularly focusing on preparing the soil and digging in a way that's back-friendly and efficient*") Suddenly "lazy gardening" became "OK!" (...Sort of)

Still, most gardeners do take things seriously, especially at beginning. Not bad. But sometimes, we often create our own problems by . . .

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting garden out of sight• Planting too much• Planting too soon (or too late)• Planting in just any old soil• Planting where there's not enough sun (or shade) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crowding plants• Planting far from water source• Not watering plants if no rain• Forgetting to harvest• Not googling a plant to see what it needs to survive! |
|--|---|

* * *

Potpourri

- **PS. ON LAST WEEK'S FIREFLY SIGHTING**
[ARMAND BAYOU's FIREFLY HIKES](#) are underway on May 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18 (*Register - a must!*)
Other sites to check: [OYSTER CREEK PARK](#) & [TERRY HERSHEY PARK](#) Want to help stop firefly decline? Join these folks:
<https://greensourcedfw.org/articles/texans-urged-convert-firefly-habitat-offset-decline>



- **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*

* * *



INTIMIDATED BY ORCHIDS? YOU'RE NOT ALONE BUT YOU SHOULDN'T BE!

BY JOYCE McMILLAN
Galveston Bay Orchid Society
Galveston County Master Gardener

Many people long to grow exotic orchids but shy away because it seems too intimidating. With the popularity of Phalaenopsis in garden centers and grocery stores, more orchids are purchased for their beauty and long-lasting blooms. After they finish blooming, buyers get frustrated because they don't bloom again when expected.

Most orchids bloom once a year. Patience is required to get to rebloom. Orchids typically rebloom within 8-12 months, depending on the orchid's energy levels depleted during flowering. After a rest period, new blooms can develop.



Terrestrial orchids, such Cymbidium Golden Elf, do well in landscaped gardens. It can survive both droughts and freezes, and blooms two to three times a year.



Terrestrial orchid, *Bletilla striata* (Chinese ground orchid), can be found at the nursery centers or online. Small, cattleya-like pinkish-purple, light pink or white flowers bloom in spring.



Oncidium genus of orchids do well outdoors both in pots and mounted. A favorite, **Sharry Baby**, blooms twice a year with long, arching bloom spikes of small maroon and white flowers that produce a lovely chocolate scent.



Maxillaria tenuifolia, the “coconut orchid,” known for its coconut-scent and grasslike foliage, makes an attractive houseplant even when not in flower.

Many different orchid hybrids and species grow very well in our semi-tropical climate. Orchids on slabs of cork or wood hung outside under trees get filtered light (mimicking their original habitat): natural bright light (not direct light), breezes (air movement) and rainfall which they love.



Dendrobium Aggregatum, which can be grown in pots or mounted on cork (I do both). The beautiful clusters of flowers that bloom in the spring are spectacular.

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTE: All these and many orchids will be available (along with experts to answer questions) at the big **SAT.-SUN, MAY 10-11: GALVESTON BAY ORCHID SOCIETY ORCHID SHOW & SALE**, Sat. 9am-5pm; Sun. 10am-4pm. Webster Civic Center, 311 Pennsylvania Ave, Webster. bit.ly/4iUjjHh

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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

FRIDAY
MAY 9, 2025
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UNITED WAY OF
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50 WAUGH DR
HOUSTON, TX 77007

FOR MORE
INFORMATION +
TO REGISTER
FOR EVENT:



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL
AND PLANTS # 328

Subject: native plants dangers of soft drinks dangers of mosquito spraying glyphosate

I finished reading a couple books this weekend. One was about native plants and fun to read, while the other was about the soft drink industry that is killing millions of people each year.

The Texas Native Plant Primer -225 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden by Andrea Delong-Amaya and The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Timber Press, 2025, ISBN: 978-1-64326-110-2

This book is for both newbies as well as experienced gardeners. The focus is on plants from central Texas though most will do well in the Houston area if given well drained soil. The book is divided into seven sections:

Ground covers and Turf
Perennials and Annuals
Grasses and Grasslike Plants
Cacti and Succulents
Shrubs and Small Trees
Large and Shade-Producing Trees
Vines

This book has lots of photographs that show the various flowers and plants. It starts with a short paragraph on how to grow each plant followed by a short summary of the benefits to wildlife followed by tips on maintenance and a few notes about the plant. It is written in a very easy to understand format.

From the publisher:

From Texas's leading native plant organization comes an accessible and colorful guide to planting native for home gardeners at every level of expertise.

Do you want a garden that makes a real difference? Choose plants native to our Texas. The rewards will benefit you, your yard, and the environment—from reducing maintenance tasks to attracting earth-friendly pollinators such as native birds, butterflies, and bees. Native plant expert Andrea DeLong-Amaya and the world famous Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center make adding these superstar plants easier than ever before, with proven advice that every home gardener can follow.

This incomparable sourcebook includes native ferns, grasses, wildflowers, perennials, vines, shrubs, and trees. It's everything you need to know to create a beautiful and beneficial garden.

Note: For those who live in The Woodlands area, most of these plants qualify for the \$300 rebate to plant native plants.

One of the reasons people garden, is for our health. I haven't had a soft drink in many years as they are one of the fastest ways to destroy one's health, not that I did not love them on a hot day after working in the garden. After reading this book all I can say is the soft drink industry led by Coca Cola makes the tobacco companies look like saints.

SWEET AND DEADLY – How Coca Cola Spreads Disinformation and Makes Us Sick, by Murray Carpenter, MIT Press, 2025, ISBN: 978-02620-49504

From the publisher:

How Coca-Cola makes Americans sick—and makes sure we don't know it.

If we knew that Coca-Cola was among the deadliest products in our diet, would we continue drinking it in such great quantities? The Coca-Cola Company has gone to extraordinary lengths to make sure we don't find out, as this damning exposé makes patently clear. Marshaling the findings of extensive research and deep investigative reporting, Murray Carpenter describes in *Sweet and Deadly* the damage Coke does to America's health—and the remarkable campaign of disinformation conducted by the company to keep consumers in the dark.

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the single item in the American diet that most contributes to the epidemic of chronic disease—in particular, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease—and Coca-Cola is America's favorite sugar-sweetened beverage, by far. Carpenter details how the Coca-Cola corporation's sophisticated shadow network has masterfully spread disinformation for decades to hide the health risks of its product from consumers—risks disproportionately borne by Black, brown, and low-income communities. Working from a playbook of obfuscation and pseudoscience that has worked well for other harmful products, from tobacco and trans fats to opioids, Coca-Cola has managed to maintain an aura of goodness and happiness. This eye-opening book finally and fully reveals the truth behind that aura.

The American Horticultural Society had a nice article on mosquitos in their May/June issue p. 36-37 of the magazine "The American Gardener". It spells out the propaganda spread by the chemical companies, much like the soft drink industry above.

"Mosquito spraying propaganda follows a well-worn playbook of false product marketing: 1) name a target; 2) spread myths about the target; 3) invoke guilt by association about other misunderstood targets (usually ants and mosquitos; 4) promise a paradisiacal existence once all targets are eliminated."

There are 200 species of mosquitos in the USA but only 12 carry disease causing pathogens. Most of these help with pollination and food for many other animals.

When we blanket spray of mosquitos it allows for mosquitoes like those that carry West Nile to proliferate spread quicker as there is no longer competition for resources. Chemical spraying also kills dragonflies that eat mature mosquitoes to aquatic beetles that eat the larva. Since they multiple much more quickly the mosquitoes return in much greater numbers as there are no longer any predators to stop them.

It takes a million droplets of insecticide to kill one mosquito. These toxic chemicals have been linked to cognitive problems, reproductive issues, and increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease.

Glyphosate, the world's most widely used herbicide, may significantly raise the risk of an increasingly common chronic liver disease—even at low exposure

levels, according to a new review of more than 40 scientific studies published over the past 17 years.


A growing body of research links exposure to glyphosate, and products that contain it, to metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD).

From the “US Right To Know” e-newsletter:


Glyphosates’ harmful impacts to the liver include inflammation, oxidative stress, and scarring (fibrosis), all markers of MASLD, according to the review. Even small increases in exposure may have significant health impacts over time, especially for people with other risk factors for liver disease, the researchers say.

Read Pamela Ferdinand’s reporting, [Glyphosate may be tied to liver disease epidemic, study warns](#)

The reasons to garden organically and live an organic lifestyle continue to increase daily.






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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!

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](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/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 BAY 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, Carbide Park, 4102-B Main,. (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/

TUES., MAY 20: LANSCAPING WITH BROMELIADS IN HOUSTON by **JOANNE WOOLSEY**, 7 pm, West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray, Free, Bromeliad Society/Houston. bromeliadsocietyhouston.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

SAT., June 7: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS' OPEN GARDENS DAY, 8:30-11am. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe. 938-539-7824. Free. mcmga.com

SAT., JUNE 14: SUCCESSFUL CONTAINER GARDENING by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. 9-11am AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Register, 281-309-5065

SAT., JUNE 28: WOODY SHRUBS & TREES, 9-11am & **SPECIALTY PLANTS** 1-3pm, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. Discovery Garden, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), Carbide Park, La Marque. Free. Register: galveston.agrilife.org/events/ 281-309-5065

SAT., JUNE 28: HEAT PROOFING YOUR GARDEN by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 10am-noon, 10000 Emmett F Lowry, Texas City, \$29. College of

Mainland, 409-933-8461. Register: [Heat Proofing Your Garden online](#)

SAT., JULY 12: SQUARE FOOT GARDENING – NOT BY THE BOOK! by **ANGELA CHANDLER**, 10am–noon, 10000 Emmett F Lowry, Texas City, \$29. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; register: [Square Foot Gardening](#)

***If your event didn't get in right away,
PROBABLY NOT In our EXACT - NEVER CHANGING format.
REFORMATTING (WE WILL!) delays 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,
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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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