

Nature's Way Resources is proud to bring you this free weekly newsletter. While we don't run ads, generous sponsors help support this project as a public service. Their names are listed below, please consider showing your appreciation by supporting their businesses!

Nature's Way Resources honors the contributions of our late founder, John Ferguson. "The Lazy Gardener" Brenda Beust Smith, and Shelby Cassano welcome your feedback and remain grateful to the many horticulturists who share their expertise.

LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



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The Rose & the Butterfly

(*Aesop for Children*)



Rosa 'Gaye Hammond', a shrub rose hybrid named for former Houston Rose Society President, grows 59: tall and 55 inches wide!

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

NORMALLY, our Spotlight Articles (*usually written by local, treasured resources*) are primarily aimed at experienced Greater Houston area gardeners wanting to expand gardening horizons. Given our yo-yo-ing weather, today moving **Gaye's Spotlight** below up to column lede to be sure also seen by new, less-experienced gardeners who too-often are misled by advice not applicable with our often-unique challenges!

GAYE HAMMOND, former *Houston Rose Society* President (among many other notable achievements), addresses readers worried about possible

damage to their roses during our area's recent below freezing dip. Should they have been covered? Gaye's assurances and recommendations . . .

* * *

PREPARING ROSES IN ADVANCE . . .

By GAYE HAMMOND

Houston Rose Society

In the last couple of years, Houston has experienced extreme winter weather conditions – including last year's 8" of snow. While roses can tolerate temperatures down to 28 degrees for short periods of time, getting them prepared in advance for these conditions will help them get through eventual freezes with reduced damage. Some things you can do:

- *Increase the mulch layer in rose beds to 3 – 4 inches. This puts an “extra blanket on the bed” and moderates the soil temperature and that of the roots underneath the soil.*
- *Pile leaves up in a mound around the base of plants and over the bud union (if plants are grafted). This insulates the heart of the bush and protects the bud union and base of the plant from freezing.*
- *For tree roses, (1) wad up newspaper into balls and pack them between the canes, (2) cover the entire canopy with burlap or a sheet and tie in place under the canes (3) use foam pipe wrap to encircle the “tree” trunk and tape in place with duct tape. Tree roses are easily damaged from freezing winds and require special attention.*
- *Roses grown in containers should be moved into a protected location. If moving the container is not possible, insulate the outside of the container with bubble-wrap, and add extra mulch.*
- *Newly planted or immature roses may need to be covered with freeze cloth or an old sheet when temperatures are predicted to be below 28 degrees.*

ROSE LOVERS' LOSS: Memorial City Mall's long tradition of hosting an annual HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY SHOW--- has ended.. Wanted to make special note of this since it has been a Houston tradition for as long as --at least for me -- as I can remember! It will be very missed!

<https://www.read.gov/aesop/119.html>

* * *



Ingrid Hamilton's Photo

"The beauty of a rose is matched only by the grace of a butterfly in flight."
(Original author unknown)

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

A TREAT FOR THE EYES! INGRID HAMILTON sent in these beautiful pictures of monarchs in The Woodlands. We are lucky in that our area naturally supplies a lot of essentials such as habitats, milkweed and other nectar sources for butterflies, especially the second wave which usually runs along the Texas coast starting in early September and extending throughout the fall. These zinnias are in Ingrid's Sts. Simon & Jude at Glenloch Woodlands church.

If you've never visited the Texas-based [**National Butterfly Center**](#) in Mission, TX, now's a good time. Why is it in far South Texas? The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) explains: *"The Rio Grande Valley is home to the greatest volume and variety of butterfly species in the United States."*

DON'T make the mistake of assuming this is a tourist-delight "butterfly house," (altho it is this too!) Rather, this is *"the largest botanical garden in the USA focused on propagating native plants for pollinators in formal gardens and wildscapes."* [Texas A&M's recently-completed report](#) was made with the goal of "supporting the recovery of monarch populations, which studies show have declined by more than 80% since 1990. Stay in touch on NBC's [HOW CAN I HELP](#) webpage.

PS: PLANTING TREES NOW? INGRID HAMILTON'S 10' tall, very healthy Ginkgo Biloba tree was accidentally cut down! When to replant? While not positive about that tree (ALWAYS double-check sources), MOST trees should be planted in winter when dormant, so can focus on underground growth. Our soil seldom (if ever) freezes as far down as tree roots want to grow.

Mulch well (NOT flush up against the tree base, that always needs to be open) a foot or so outside the base to protect developing roots and encourage them to spread out. Always water at the 'dripline' (line on which rain water rolls off the leaf canopy and hits the ground where the roots that need water most.)

* * *

- **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 A CALENDAR EVENT?** *For best chance of getting it in next upcoming newsletter, submit in exact requested format (see top of calendar below. Reformatting by us may = delay in publication)*

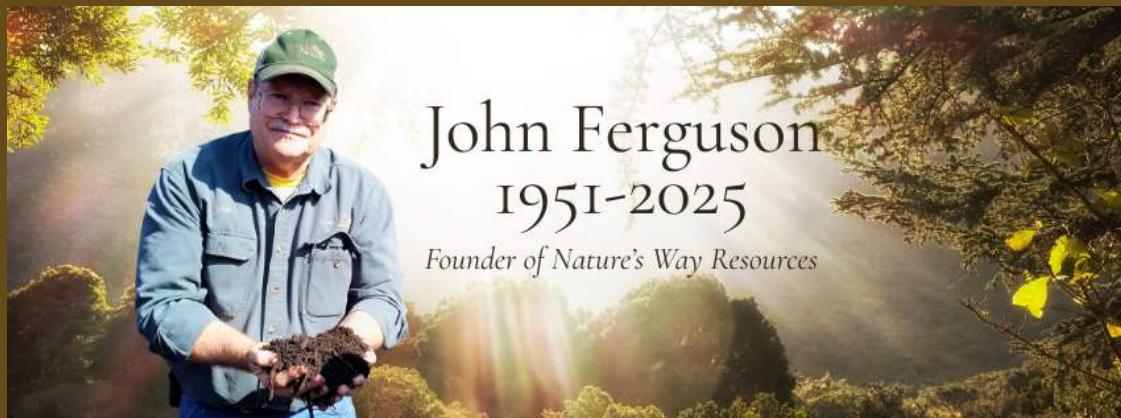
* * *

Want to receive The Lazy Gardener & Friends weekly newsletter?

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Address questions, suggestions, and your successes to lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com

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



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS
#138

Please take a moment to honor John's legacy by revisiting his words and sharing in the passion that guided his life's work.

We encourage readers to request their favorite past articles from John's Corner to be republished.

SUBJECT: Organic Waste Recycling

We often talk about environmental issues in this column, like water shortages, global warming, toxic chemicals, poor-quality food, etc. One of the best ways to solve many of these problems is by composting.

In our area, over 50% of the material going into our landfills is organic waste (grass, leaves, manure, food waste, etc.). In a landfill, these organic materials generate a lot of odors and greenhouse gases, including methane and nitrous oxides that are molecule by molecule 28 and 300 times worse than carbon dioxide.

Landfills try and capture some of the gases produced after a cell is closed and covered, but over 90% of the greenhouse gases are released before the landfill cell is covered.

Our metropolitan area is growing rapidly with more and more people, hence more and more waste. Landfill space is decreasing, and disposal costs are steadily rising. New landfills will have to be located farther out, increasing transportation and disposal costs, thus generating more greenhouse gases. As a society, we need to recycle these organic wastes (over 20 states ban organic waste from landfills).

Cities from Seattle to Austin are now recycling their food waste by composting. Additionally, at Nature's Way Resources, we often get calls from restaurants, small businesses, and homeowners who want to recycle their food and other organic waste.

So, for those who want to be part of the solution, there is a new company in our area that will provide collection services for food and other organic waste called "Moonshot Compost".

From their flyer:

Moonshot Compost specializes in providing clean and simple methods for diverting food waste from Houston landfills. Why? The case for diversion is straightforward. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, between 30 to 40 percent of the food supply is estimated to result in food waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that approximately 20 percent of what goes into municipal landfills is food waste. And once there, food waste decomposes anaerobically to produce methane gas, which is at least 28 times more damaging to the atmosphere than carbon emissions.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has implemented a Food Recovery Hierarchy that identifies an order of preference for managing excess food.

Logically, the best methods are to reduce the volumes of surplus food generated, to donate any excess food to feed hungry people, and to divert food scraps to feed animals. It is even possible to utilize food waste to recover energy. After these activities are exhausted, the next best alternative is composting.

According to data from the 2015 Report on Commercial Food Waste prepared for the Houston-Galveston Area Council, approximately 5.47 pounds of food waste per person per day was being deposited in Texas landfills. One of the biggest barriers to large-scale diversion of food waste in Houston is the lack of food waste collection companies. Houston is a progressive city when it comes to quality-of-life issues, including the environment. Many other cities have extensive composting programs, including Denver, Seattle, and San Francisco.

Why not Houston?

When compost is placed on top of existing soil, there are many benefits, because compost adds valuable nutrients, leading to healthier plants; enhances soil structure, increasing water retention; and grows healthier plants, increasing the amount of carbon dioxide drawn from the atmosphere. When compost is added to soil that grows crops to feed people and animals, there are several benefits for our nutrition. Because the soil is rich and complex, that complexity is passed along to the food that is harvested. Savvy gardeners have been using compost for years to maintain beautiful and healthy gardens, whether residential or commercial.

Moonshot provides services for both residential and commercial clients, and we are excited by the interest in each program. Some of our commercial entities include ConocoPhillips, Ostia, Henderson & Kane, Rice University, St. John's School and Annunciation Orthodox School. Word is spreading, and we are ready to meet the challenge.

The company delivers organic feedstocks for composting to select collection facilities, including Nature's Way Resources in The Woodlands-Conroe area. Earned compost is returned to subscribers twice a year, in the fall and spring. All the valuable nutrients and benefits of compost stay right in here in the Houston community.

Moonshot also reports diversion amounts for all clients because the company believes you cannot change what is not measured. In our experience, we collect between 10 to 12 pounds per week from a family of four. Check out Moonshot Compost at www.moonshotcompost.com..

[Newsletter Archive](#)

Career Opportunity at Nature's Way Resources

Nature's Way Resources is currently seeking an Outside Sales Manager to support the continued growth of our compost, soil, mulch, and native plant operations. This field-based role focuses on building relationships with

landscapers, municipalities, nurseries, contractors, and other professionals who rely on high-quality organic materials.

Ideal candidates have experience in outside sales, especially within horticulture, landscaping, composting, or related environmental industries, and are comfortable working in both field and site-based settings. Responsibilities include business development, client outreach, coordinating with internal teams, and representing the company at industry events.

Those interested can review the full job description and apply directly through Indeed: [Click Here](#)



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LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER CALENDAR EVENTS

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

Expect delay if we must reformat: 3-LINE (max) **EXACT FORMAT:**

DAY, DATE: TITLE (by NAME if talk), time, site. Sponsor (if not in title).

website/phone (NOTE CAPITALS VS lower case)

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

SAT. JAN 10: WEDGE GRAFTING, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. 9-11am, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM519), La Marque. Limited space. Free. Reg. txmg.org/galveston/events/

SAT. JAN 10: GROWING GREAT TOMATOES, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**. 1-3pm, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM519), La Marque. Free. Register: txmg.org/galveston/

SAT., JAN. 31: BRANCHING OUT: AN ORCHARD GROWER'S SEMINAR by **WALLER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-3pm, 811 14th St, Hempstead, Free. txmg.org/wallermg. Register: (opens Dec.15).

SAT., JAN 31: FRUIT AND NUT TREE SALE by MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., FEB 14: VEGGIE GARDENING 101 by MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-4pm, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., FEB. 21: GROWING ROSES by ANGELA CHANDLER, 10am–noon, 1411 West Main St, League City, \$29. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; [Register](#)

WED., FEB. 25: SUCCULENT TERRARIUMS by JENNIFER HARDY, 6pm–8pm, 1411 West Main St, League City, \$45. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; [Register](#)

FRI.-SUN., MAR. 6-8 (2026): RIVER OAKS GARDEN CLUB AZALEA TRAIL, 11am-5pm, 5 sites (Tanglewood/Memorial, Bayou Bend, Rienzi, ROGC's Forum. \$35. riveroaksgc.org.

SAT., MAR 14: LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVES by MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-11am, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., MAR 21: SPRING PLANT SALE by MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, 9am-noon, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., MAR. 28: SEED SNAILS by ANGELA CHANDLER, 10am–noon, 1411 West Main St, League City, \$35. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; [Register](#)

SAT., APR. 18: HOW TO FERTILIZE FRUGALLY by ANGELA CHANDLER, 10am–noon, Mainland City Centre, 10000 Emmett F Lowry, Texas City, \$29. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461

SAT., APR. 26, HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY ROSE DEMONSTRATION & SPRING FLING, Memorial City Mall.

SAT-SUN, MAY 9-10, GALVESTON BAY ORCHID SOCIETY SHOW & SALE, Sat., 9am-5pm. Sun. 10am-4pm. Webster Civic Center, 311 Pennsylvania Avenue Webster. Free. galvestonbayorchidsociety.org.

If your event didn't get in right away, probably was set aside to be rewritten in our exact, never-changing format (See top of calendar)! Your choice!

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!

A Legend Has Passed

John Ferguson



1951 - 2025

On October 31st, our beloved John Ferguson passed away and is now spreading the Organic gospel all around Heaven. His passing was quick and took us all by surprise.

We surmise that God wanted more stimulating conversation around him.

John was (is) a magnificent human being, one of the finest God every created. For John, it was always about being of service to humanity and to all of creation. John loved people, believed in the goodness of folks and cherished the environment.

John has built his career on helping people and all life that inhabits earth. His company, Nature's Way Resources, set the gold standard for improving our home, Earth, by providing the world's best Compost, Soil and Mulch that could be made. John was a dedicated scholar and relentless teacher about Human Health, Plant Health and Soil Health and how all are related. John believed in people and was devoted to improving the lives of all. His impact will be felt for generations to come.

His son, Ian Ferguson, is continuing Nature's Way Resources and is doing a magnificent job, making sure John's high standards are upheld.

John is missed dearly by the thousands of folks that he touched. John was instrumental in creating and strengthening The Texas Organic Community. One example from hundreds is that he was a co-founder of OHBA, which 23 years later is still the premier Organic education provider in all of America.

How to say goodbye to a Texas legend and someone that is irreplaceable?

John, we miss you deeply.

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





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 (at that time) 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 (lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com)

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 -- Founder, Mentor, and Friend (1951-2025)

John was a native Houstonian and had over 35 years of business experience. He passed down Nature's Way Resources, a composting company that specializes in high-quality

compost, mulch, and soil mixes, to his son Ian Ferguson. He held an MS degree in Physics and Geology and was a licensed Soil Scientist in Texas.

John 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 its products. He was 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.

SHELBY CASSANO

Shelby Cassano is the communications and marketing lead for Nature's Way Resources and the editor of The Lazy Gardener and Friends newsletter. Through her business, Leaf and Ledger, she exclusively partners with NWR to direct all marketing efforts, from strategy and planning to technical production of the newsletter. Shelby holds a B.S. in Agriculture with a concentration in Horticulture from Stephen F. Austin State University and previously managed the company's nursery.



Lazy Gardener And Friends | 101 Sherbrook Circle | Conroe, TX 77385 US

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