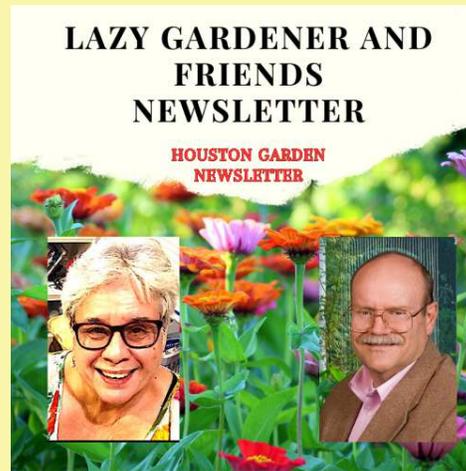


Nature's Way Resources is proud to bring you this free weekly newsletter. While we don't run ads, generous sponsors help support this project as a public service. Their names are listed below, please consider showing your appreciation by supporting their businesses!

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.

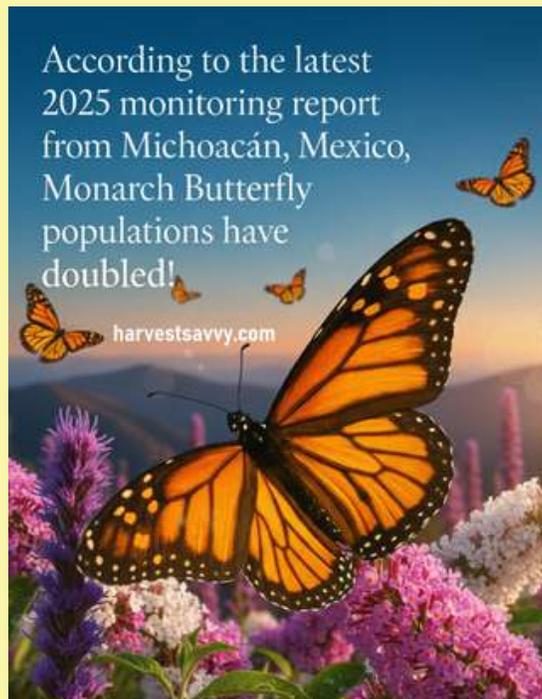


[Click here to join our email list](#)

[CLICK HERE for PDFs OF PAST LG&F NEWSLETTERS](#)

'It is ironic to think that man might determine his own future by something so seemingly trivial as the choice of an insect spray.

*"SILENT SPRING" by RACHEL CARSON (1907-1964)
American marine biologist and conservationist*



GOOD BUTTERFLY NEWS FOR 2026! (SORT OF)

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

DON'T GET TOO OPTIMISTIC, but growing excitement is visible in the Butterfly Watch arena, according to **USA TODAY**. Things have been so discouraging for so long; even a glimmer of hope is worth sharing.

This past year's encouraging-albeit-small increases in the [World Wildlife Fund's Eastern monarch butterfly count](#) are triggering hopes that past drops might be leveling off. Hard to tell now because annual counts do not measure individual butterflies. Understandable!

Rather than "count" actual populations, statistics are derived by measuring the area's insects cover (heavily treed areas) in Western/Central Mexico forests during their wintering period. This year's 4.42-acre count in occupied forest habitat is nearly twice as large as last year's!

The sad news is that such good reports did not extend to our (Eastern Mexico) pathway, where monarch butterfly populations remain far below the long-term average. The 2024 figures fell 59% from 2023 to the second-lowest level since record-keeping began. (**[Details](#)**) The [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#) monitors this Western population and reports the actual lowest count of monarch butterflies on record.

Why the difference? And how exactly do they do a "count"? Population size is determined by measuring the area of trees butterflies actually congregate in during the winter. One possibility is that migrations in the west might be moving slightly eastward for various reasons:

- Greater availability of milkweed -- essential for healthy mature butterflies, laying healthy eggs, and feeding caterpillars, as well as the health of mature butterflies.
- Climatic changes are another threat, but not so great as excessive use of herbicides and insecticides or both commercial and home landscapes. These are believed to have greatly reduced the availability of natural milkweed and other plants that adult monarchs need for food

* * *



IF YOU EVER HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY to visit one of the Mexican Butterfly Forests (that's my husband on the horse), it's a wonderful, amazing opportunity -- but unfortunately, one that now has serious safety warnings attached. We were fortunate enough to go decades ago with a Cockrell Butterfly Center group. Yes, we had horses to ride to the mountain top. As far as we could see, even on the trip up, tree trunks and branches were blanketed with monarchs. We reached the mountaintop before dawn and -- as sunlight spread over mountain peaks -- were privileged to watch the sky become

blanketed as these natural treasures awoke and took to the skies. A vision to treasure forever.

* * *

Potpourri

- **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?

Subscribe

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*

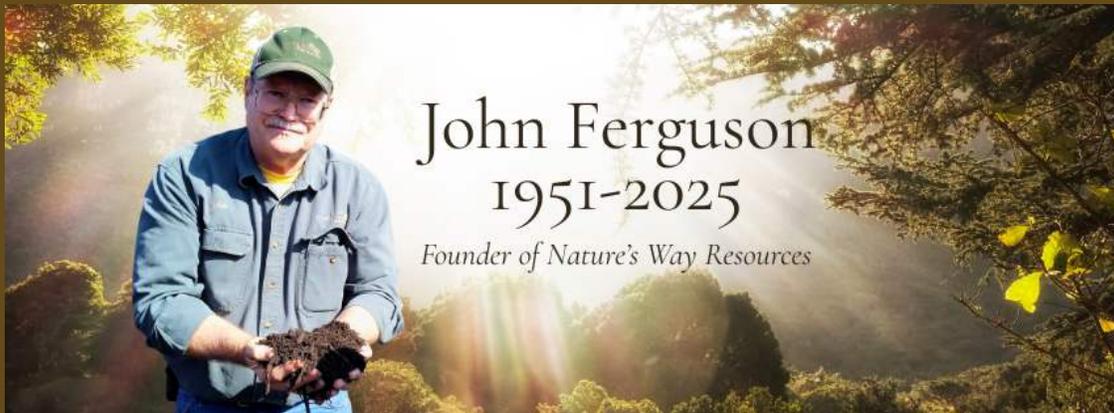


“YEAR’S END IS NEITHER AN END NOR A BEGINNING BUT A GOING ON, WITH ALL THE WISDOM THAT EXPERIENCE CAN INSTILL IN US.”

— HAL BORLAND

HAPPY
NEW YEAR

FROM BRENDA BEAUST SMITH AND SHELBY
CASSANO



John Ferguson
1951-2025

Founder of Nature's Way Resources

John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

“The start of a new year is a good time to say thank you. We’re grateful for the people who support this company and the work we do, and for the community around it. As we move into the year ahead, our focus remains on making great products and providing the best experiences we can. Wishing you a healthy year.”

Newsletter Archive



Subscribe to our Email Chain.



Sign up for the exclusive newsletter from Nature's Way Resources and be the first to receive updates on special promotions, news, events, and more! Stay informed about all things NWR.

[Learn more](#)



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/

THURS., JAN.15: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER, AUTHOR, BOTANIST JIM MCCORMAC, 10-11:30am, Museum of Fine Arts, Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet. Sadie Gwin Blackburn Seminar. Free.

SAT., JAN. 17 GARDEN PLANNING & SOIL PREP by MASTER GARDENERS. 9-10:30am, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd,

Rosenberg. 281-342-3034 [Grow Your Own 2026 - Fort Bend County Master Gardeners](#)

TUES., JAN. 20: BLOOMS, DOOM AND MURDER: A GARDEN OF DEADLY DELIGHTS by **MELODY LINDLEY**, 10am, St. Basil's Hall, 702 Burney Rd., Sugar Land. Free. [Sugar Land Garden Club](#).

FRI, JAN. 23: GROWING A GREAT LAWN by **FBC MASTER GARDENERS**, 1-2:30pm online. [Landscape Success 2026 - Fort Bend County Master Gardeners](#)

TUES. JAN, 20: HYBRIDIZING DYCKIAS by **CHRIS NGUYEN**. 7pm, West Grey Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Grey. Free. Bromeliad Society Houston, [bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](#)

SAT., JAN 24: GREAT ROSES TO KNOW AND GROW by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9-11am, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824

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 14: FRUIT AND CITRUS TREE SALE by **FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-noon, Barn H, FBC Fairgrounds, 4310 Hwy. 36 S. Rosenberg. 281-342-3034 [Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale - Fort Bend County Master Gardener](#)

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](#)

SAT., FEB 28: ARBOR DAY CONROE by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 8am-noon, Conroe Founders Plaza, 205 Metcalf St., Conroe 936-539-7824

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. 14: 2026 SPRING PLANT SALE by **WALKER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 8am-noon, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Office, 102 Tam Rd., Huntsville. 936-435-2426. [txmg.org/walker](#)

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-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.

SAT., MAR 14: ARBOR DAY WILLIS by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER
GARDENERS**, 8am-noon, HEB Willis, 12350 Interstate 45 N, Willis 936-539-
7824

*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


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 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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!