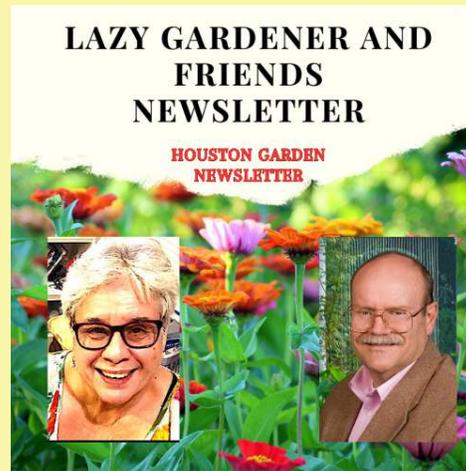


Nature's Way Resources is proud to bring you this free weekly newsletter. While we don't run ads, generous sponsors help support this project as a public service. Their names are listed below, please consider showing your appreciation by supporting their businesses!

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.



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



"DON'T SAY ANYTHING "DIED" . . . YET"

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY KNOW FOR SURE until Spring. Write suspicious plants off now and they certainly might die! Some may not reappear until mid-summer or later. Our plants often get rid of top growth as soon as possible, so all energies go into keeping roots alive. Just common logic.

Protective cover help, unless you forget to take them off when temperatures start to rise.

Think like Mother Nature. Cover plant bases with as many leaves as possible even if you didn't before. You'll be providing food, warmth, oxygen to roots below, Don't expect new green growth until spring arrives.

And, even then, it might take months. Weeds return, don't they? Don't remove falling leaves! As they decay they return nutrients to the soil. If you don't want

them on the front lawn, pile them under and over plants in the backyard!

Don't overlook your trees. If you don't know the hardiness of specific trees, leaf ID on most cellphones now can ID a tree just by a leaf closeup. Generally speaking, temps as low as 20° won't bother our toughest trees. But all plants, especially if newly-planted this year, will appreciate a good watering (nozzle to dripline only) before temperatures drop again. (Dripline = outer edge of leaf canopy where rain runs off)

PS. As we move closer to Income Tax Deadline, don't forget: Most shredded paper makes great compost! Colored paper is iffy. If possible, shred first or have the kiddos tear into strips so they decompose faster. A good dousing with water helps too.

Cold notwithstanding, this is our best tree-planting time. Check [Trees for Houston's](#) website, and our calendar below for tree giveaways (it's tree-planting time). Even better, join TFH so you get the earliest warnings. Montgomery County Master Gardeners has two big ones coming up in conjunction with area groups:

- **SAT., FEB. 28: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS & ROOTS FOR CONROE TREE GIVEAWAY, 8am-1pm, Heritage Plaza, 205 Metcalf, Conroe. [MCMGA.com](#)**
- **SAT., MAR. 14: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS & HEB WILLIS TREE GIVEAWAY, Parking lot, 12350 I-45 N, Willis. [MCMGA.com](#)**

NOW THROUGH THE END OF FEBRUARY is the best time to plant new trees. If that seems strange to you, take a look at these tree **[planting tips](#)** from the **[Houston Area Urban Forestry Council \(HAUFC\)](#)**.

Generally speaking, February's forecast seems very civilized. One can always watch the pecan trees. The ol' dears always bud out once they're sure all danger of freezes has passed. In the meantime, you might consider how color can help improve your landscape. From my **Lazy Gardener's Guide*: Color in Our Gardens**:

- Red, yellow and hot pink make us more energetic. Reds increase appetite. Yellows make us happy. Soft pinks, lavenders, blues and greens soothe, relax. Pink looks sweet and fragrant. It's said it is difficult to argue with someone in pink! Green is restful, especially on tired eyes. Blues and lavenders are cooling.
- To make a small yard look bigger, plant "hot" colors (red, orange, fuchsia) close in. In back of the yard, use pastels and white (they look farther away than they actually are). To make a too-large area look more intimate, do the reverse: "hot" colors in the back of the yard and pastels close in.
- For eye-popping front yard displays, use yellow, hot pink, fire engine red and white. These are easier to see from a passing car than lavender and muted red or pink. Use lower-growing yellow flowers around uneven pathways where folks might trip. Yellows and oranges draw the eye faster than any other color.
- When possible, coordinate garden and house colors. When gardens adjacent to the house "just don't look right," clashes may be to blame. White and/or gray

flowers or foliage with colors help create harmony. White also intensifies colors of nearby flowers and plants.

- Use white flowers/foliage around areas used in evenings when white is all you can see.

In areas of blasting hot sun (such as near water), pale pastels often become washed out.

- Variegated plants may look like they're dying if used all alone. Strong, solid greens, reds, oranges, yellows, etc., may compete better.

- Color has a much greater impact when coupled with hardscapes (rocks, birdbaths, fences, benches, etc.). Large rocks pull us back to nature by anchoring us to Mother Earth. Their strength offers sort of a metaphysical protection from the stresses of everyday life. Locate at least one large interesting rock somewhere near the site where you sit outside at night.

(*The Lazy Gardener's Guide is now out of print. For a free PDF copy, email Brenda at lazygardenbrenda@gmail.com.)

* * *



**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR: AZALEAS!** Fri.-Sun.
March 6, 7 & 8, 2026, 11 am to 5
pm River Oaks Garden Club Azalea
Trail. \$35/pp includes 4 private home
gardens in Tanglewood/Memorial,
Bayou Bend Garden, Rienzi and
ROGC's
Forum. www.riveroaksgc.org.

* * *

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!



- **GOOD NEWS FOR BUSY/LAZY GARDENERS:** Curbside pickup is now available in the [Nature's Way Resources](#) nursery, and we're offering plant preorders for special requests. Call in your order, pick it up when it works for you, or let us try to source the plants you're looking for on upcoming shipments. *Find inventory sheet [here](#).*
- **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)*

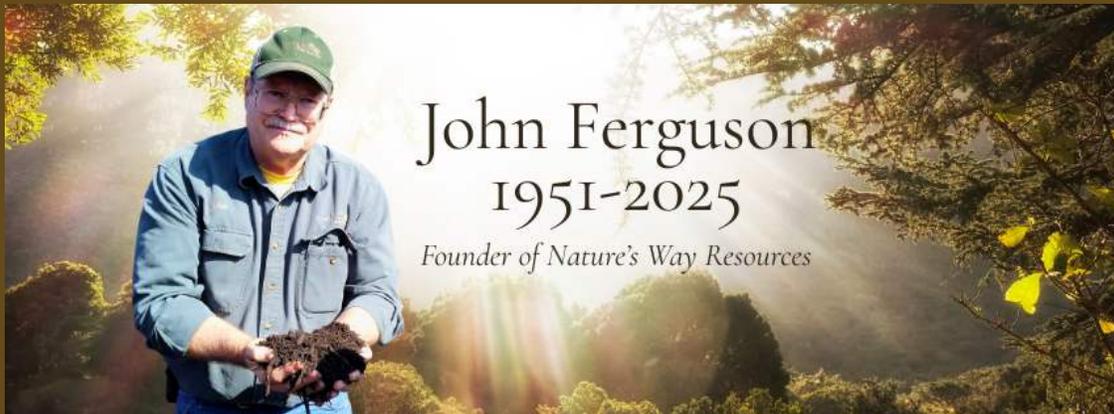
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*Brenda Beust Smith's column in the
LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER
is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle's Lazy Gardener
Email: lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com*



John Ferguson
1951-2025

Founder of Nature's Way Resources

John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

Please take a moment to read a past article of John's regarding Greensand, and its value as a mineral soil amendment. John formulated a soil remineralizer made and sold by Nature's Way Resources.

Subject: Greensand

Over a year ago we talked about greensand as a soil amendment however it is much more than that since it is loaded with nutrients.

Greensand has been used for over 100 years as a natural source of a slow release fertilizer and soil conditioner. The slow release of potash and phosphate does not burn plants and the minerals improve the moisture holding properties of soil.

For years many gardening books and horticultural publications talked about the importance and value of New Jersey greensand. However shipping it into Houston was extremely expensive as it can weigh over 3,000 pounds per cubic yard. About 15 years ago several deposits of greensand were discovered in Texas and now it is only pennies per pound! It is the most economical way of adding a huge range of nutrients to your soil.

Origin of Greensand

Greensand was formed in anoxic (without oxygen) marine environments that are rich in organic detritus and low in sedimentary inputs. As in fish emulsion, seaweed and other products from the ocean it has all the nutrients (elements) found in seawater (see chart below). The geological formation is a sedimentary rock known as "Glauconite". It is often an olive-green colored sandstone like rock found in layers in many sedimentary rock formations of marine origin. It is called a sand due to its crumbly and grainy nature, but in reality the minerals are very similar to clay minerals.

Since greensand was formed under pressure in deep oceans and without oxygen the mineral complexes become unstable after being mined and exposed to oxygen at atmospheric pressure, hence these nutrients are released into the soil.

Greensand in our area is a dark greenish gray color when dry and turns almost black when wet when it is first mined. Greensand is a very heavy mineral with a density of approximately 90-120 pounds per cubic foot (2,500-3,000 pounds per cubic yard) depending on moisture content.

The minerals are normally released slowly over time but occur much faster in organic rich soils full of beneficial microbes (microbes produce organic acids as they break down organic matter which facilitates the release of the minerals for plant absorption). The pH of greensand varies from slightly acidic to slightly alkaline depending on the source and has little effect on the pH of soils. Some greensands can contain up to 12% iron (Fe). As greensand weathers (starts to breakdown and oxidize) the iron combines with oxygen (O) and the color becomes rusty looking.

Note: This oxidizing process of iron is what gives many of the iron rich soils in East Texas their reddish color.

Most of the soils around Houston and along the Gulf Coast tend to be very nutrient deficient. We are located far from any areas where the weathering of igneous rocks would release the required minerals and allow them to be deposited in our soil for plants to use. Historically, we also receive a lot of rainfall. The slight acidity of rain tends to make these minerals soluble and allows them to be leached out of the soil. The result is our area soils tend to be very low in the minor and trace elements. This is why it is so important that we have lots of organic matter in our soils to feed the microorganisms. These guys will absorb the nutrients into their bodies and prevent them from leaching. As they eat each other the nutrients are released into the soil and the plant roots can get them. For example fungus will form calcium oxalate crystals on their hyphae and store it into the soil till it is needed. Blossom end rot on tomatoes is an example of a calcium deficiency and some weeds like Dandelions require soils low in available calcium.

Traditionally, we were taught that plants can grow with only 16 elements. However recent research has shown that plants grown with a much wider assortment of nutrients have less disease and insect problems, use less water, taste better, have larger and more fragrant flowers, etc. The human body has 90 elements in it and if they are not in the soil then plants cannot absorb them and we do not get them when we eat the plants and fruits, nuts, etc. and many health problems are the result.

There is an excellent lecture available on CD on the importance of trace elements. It is called "Dead Doctors Don't Lie", By Joel Wallach, DVM, N.D, (available at many health food stores or online). It explains why we have so many health problems are associated with the lack of nutrients in our food supply. Almost all of Dr. Wallach's statements have been confirmed by other researchers since this lecture was recorded many years ago. This is a fun lecture to listen to, as Dr, Wallach has quite a sense of humor as he explains the importance of trace elements for both animal and human health.

In December I was able to attend a multi-day workshop on advanced soil science. During the seminars several of the speakers talked about the role of these micro and pico-nutrients working as co-factors in enzyme reactions for both plants and animals including humans. The research showed that a lack of these elements prevented the enzymes systems from working properly and led to more insect and disease problems in plants and health problems in animals and humans.

Additionally I was given a copy of the newest edition of a book on diagnosing plant health and nutrition problems that goes well beyond the obsolete 16 nutrient model of plant health.

Plant Analysis Handbook III – A Guide to Sampling, Preparation, Analysis, and Interpretation for Agronomic and Horticultural Crops, Multiple Authors, Micro-Macro Publishing, Inc., 2014, ISBN: 978-1-878148-01-8 .

Uses of Greensand

Greensand often has the consistency of sand but is able to absorb 10 times more moisture which makes it a good amendment for use in agriculture and

horticulture for many soils types. Greensand does not burn plants and helps the beneficial microbes to grow in the soil. It also has been found to be a good conditioner to help loosen heavy and tight soils and help bind loose soils.

Recommended application is 2-4 pounds of greensand per 100 square feet, 40 pounds per 1,000 square feet or 1 ton per acre. For potting soils 5-20 pounds per cubic yard can be beneficial. It is a good idea to repeat this every few years to replace the nutrients that have been used up or leached from the soil.

Many gardeners add a few cups of greensand to their compost bins to increase the nutrient density. I like to sprinkle a little greensand in my worm bin (vermicomposting) to add some mineral roughage that helps the worms eat the feedstock and it increases the nutrient content of the castings.

A field test by Rutgers University in a sandy loam soil with greensand applied in the row at the time of planting, found that the application of greensand increased the yield of potatoes by 16%.

The benefits of greensand, largely unexplained by scientific research are far more than a laboratory analysis would indicate. However numerous greenhouse and field studies have shown significant improvement in the growth of plants. Other studies have shown that the use of greensand improves the taste, color, nutritional value, the health of plants and the health of soils.

Note: The crushing process of the glauconite ore produces both greensand and rock. The rock can be screened to different sizes and used as a landscape rock. It gives a very different look than commonly used gravels, crushed granite or basalt. The green rock portion when used on pathways packs well, is black when wet and greenish grey when dry. The greenish grey color makes yellow flowered plants (Daylilies, Tunera, etc.) stand out and really “sizzle and pop”.

SUMMARY:

Greensand is the most cost effective method of adding minor, trace, micro and pico nutrients to ones soil. Always look for screened greensand where the rock portion has been removed.

PROS:

- good source of iron phosphorous, potassium and calcium
- inexpensive
- good availability
- available in bag or bulk
- nutrients moderately available
- easy to use
- often used in compost piles to enrich it
- almost a unlimited resource
- good for all plants

CONS:

- may be dusty when dry (wear a mask)
- not a complete fertilizer
- some lower cost brands do not screen it to remove rock portion

BOOK REVIEW: I find one of the benefits of the winter and holiday season from Thanksgiving through January is that gardening slows down. As a result I get caught up on my reading from numerous books, research articles and other materials. Another book I read this winter was:

“TOXIN TOXOUT Getting Harmful Chemicals out of our Bodies and Our World”, Bruce Lourie and Rick Smith, 2013, Knopf Publications, ISBN: 978-1-250-05133-2

This is the second book by these two authors. Their first book “Slow Death by Rubber Duck- How The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Life Affects Our Health” became an international best seller.

This book reviews many of the toxic chemicals we come into contact with every day and the health problems they cause from allergies, autism, cancer, and many more. It also offers alternatives and ways to remove these toxic chemicals from our bodies. It strongly reinforces the concept that most experienced gardeners already knows: *healthy soil = healthy food = healthy bodies.*

This book is an easy to read overview of what has happened, the consequences and how to remove toxic chemicals and recover from the damage that has been done to our bodies.

To learn more about soil amendments by category, visit our website and choose from the numerous articles that John researched and wrote.

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**LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS
HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER
CALENDAR EVENTS**

**WANT EVENT IN RIGHT AWAY? FOLLOW RULES!
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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. 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

WED., FEB. 4: ANTIQUE ROSE EMPORIUM, 9:30-11:30am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W NASA Pkwy, Webster. Parking back of church. Free. Gardeners by the Bay gibt.org

TUES., FEB 10: RAINWATER HARVESTING by DOUG WINGATE, 6 pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Drive. Free. theplumeriasociety.org

Wed., FEB. 11: CAMELLIA CONNECTION by CHRISTY JONES & JEFF HEILERS, noon-2pm, Visitor Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free, Register: pct3.com/MBG

WED., FEB. 11: THE TREE COLLECTORS by AMY STEWART, 10am, Bagby Hall, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 717 Sage Rd. Free. Nancy Stallworth Thomas Lecture. Garden Club of Houston.

FRI.-SAT., FEB. 13-14: 'PLANTS FOR LOVERS' TOUR by HORTICULTURE STAFF, Fri. 9-10am, Sat. 10-11am, Visitor's Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Free, Register: pct3.com/MBG

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

SAT., FEB 14: HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY ROSE PRUNING PARTY, 2 pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free houstonrose.org/hrsmeet.htm

TUES., FEB. 17: 'MYCORRHIZA: FUNGI AND PLANT SYMBIOSIS' by LISA MORANO,UHD.10am. 702 Burney Rd., Sugar Land, Free, sugarlandgardenclub.org.

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: INTRODUCTION TO PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY by IRWIN LIGHTSTONE, 7pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Houston Cactus and Succulent Society. hcsstex.com

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: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS & ROOTS FOR CONROE TREE GIVEAWAY, 8am-1pm, Heritage Plaza, 205 Metcalf, Conroe. MCMGA.com

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 7: PLANT PROPAGATION by GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER. 9-11am, AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Register: txmg.org/galveston/events/

SAT. MAR 7: AVOCADOS, 1-3pm, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Register: txmg.org/galveston/events/

SAT., MAR. 14: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS & HEB WILLIS TREE GIVEAWAY, Parking lot, 12350 I-45 N, Willis. MCMGA.com

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

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 GARDEN SALE, 9-11AM, Discovery Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. galvestonmg.square.site

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

FRI.-SUN., APR. 17-19: 2026 KINGWOOD GARDEN CLUB GARDENSCAPES HOME & GARDEN TOUR & PLANT SALE. \$30. KingwoodGardenClub.org

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

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 ever 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.

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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 (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.



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