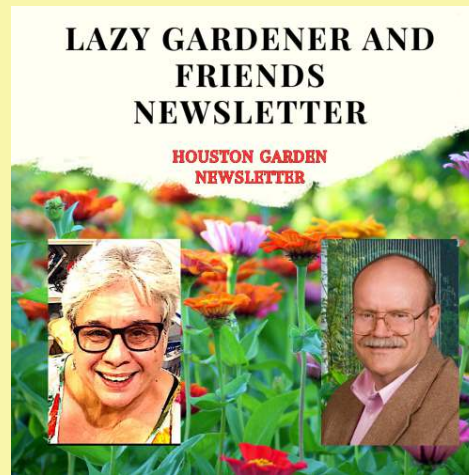


Nature's Way Resources is proud to bring you this free weekly newsletter. While we don't run ads, generous sponsors help support this project as a public service. Their names are listed below, please consider showing your appreciation by supporting their businesses!

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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Plumtopia

(Selman, 2008) rich grape purple with ruffled white edge above yellow-green throat, 5.5" bloom, 25" tall, M

LOOKING FOR "DIFFERENT"? SHOP 'PLANT GROUP' SALES!!!

BET YOU GET SECOND LOOKS AT THESE DAYLILIES!

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

Considering what we're all doing now (ordering seeds, hitting the nurseries, etc.), thought good time to give a little extra publicity to our upcoming plant sales. These (and the great special sales independent nurseries put on this time of year!) make April an ideal time to see what's new, even if you don't "intend" to buy! (Please note: I'll deny any accusation I'm responsible for your -- hopefully not TOO extravagant -- purchases!

So, with further ado, here's what I have so far. Use this EXACT format when submitting group notices. Not negotiable! Delay if I have to reformat an entry. Check calendar below, too. If yours is not in, either because rules at top of calendar not followed, or you're outside the 12-county Greater Houston area (our limit). Keep checking calendar at end of column for added sales.

SAT., APR 11: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY PLANT SALE, 9am-4pm;
*Pearland Lumber & Ace Hardware, 2027 N Main St.,
Pearland. lonestardaylilysociety.org, 281-331-0162.*

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

CHECK!!!!: Many more Great Gardening Events in calendar (below) may include sales not mentioned in submissions. Contact them. My main goal here is to help smaller & speciality groups get a little extra publicity. They may be your best advice source ever!

APRIL IS OUR MAIN 'START PLANTING' MONTH! But remember, some unique conditions here might not influence other areas, even within Texas borders. South Texas may be in the 90's when it's snowing in the Panhandle! As we just saw, severe thunderstorms may pass through northern (or southern) areas but just barely touch us. North and East (or South and West) parts of our area tend to separately get more heavy rains that more quickly pass through us. West Texas, as usual, is drier, with both very hot and very cold spells. All depends on our changing climate's whim.

This affects our planting, however. To be safe (save money/backache), for individual plants, check local guides, such as the "2026 URBAN HARVEST PLANTING GUIDES or YOUR LOCAL MASTER GARDENER OFFICE.

The urge to garden gets really strong now! Best advice: take a really good look around your yard BEFORE hitting above (and/or at your area nurseries). Plants in commercial nurseries are carefully pruned to be eye catchers and may not look the same growing up in your garden. Spending a significant amount on a particular plant? Be sure to ask for care suggestions, anything particular about that plant you should know? Sun? Shade? Specific pruning? etc. Independent nurseries especially want (NEED!) your repeat successes so you'll become a regular customer!

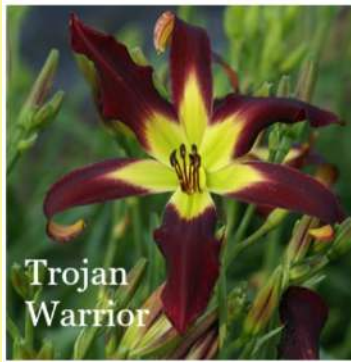
- **EVER CHECKED OUT [Houston Botanic Garden's Facebook Page?](#) It's a wealth of gorgeous pictures!**
- Predictions say we're past our last frost. But as we "older" gardeners know too well, Mother Nature marches to her own drummer and loves to spring surprises on us. It's been 9 years since our last April Freeze and the (*really brave*) weather predictors don't expect one this year. That's what I wanted to hear!

THINK YOU KNOW DAYLILIES? Recognize these that will be among the for-sale ones at the SAT., APR 11: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY PLANT SALE!



Squidward Tentacles

(Elliott, S., 2013) unusual form, double, chartreuse green with green throat, Diploid, 9" bloom, 41" tall, M Re



Trojan Warrior

Trojan Warrior

(Gessard 2012) unusual form, wine red with yellow-green throat, Tetraploid, 10.5" bloom, 43" tall, M Re



Violet Spring

(Trimmer, J., 2013) violet purple with violet white edges, Tetraploid, 8.8" bloom, 28" tall, M Re



Off To See The Wizard

Off To See The Wizard

(Hemington, K. 2009) unusual form, amethyst purple with darker purple eye and white necks, Diploid, 5.5" bloom, 33" tall, M Re



Cool Confections

Cool Confections

(Saler 2008) cream pink with yellow gold edge, Tetraploid, 6" bloom, 26" tall, EM Re



Glowing Lantern

(Bell, T., 2014) intense red orange with wide yellow applied throat and yellow edge, Tetraploid, 5.25" bloom, 27" tall, M Re

* * *



OLDER GARDENERS among you will understand this. It's so sad to see plants we treasured, played under, and learned to love as children now labeled as invasive, with warnings not to plant them. I frequently have to drive by a huge wisteria. When in bloom, it's gorgeous. I always give a sad sigh. We had one in our front yard, planted all by itself, so the long branches arched over, creating a wonderful "house" to play under. The scent was like perfume and flowers,

gorgeous beyond words. Now, wisteria is a major villain in the South, smothering and killing other trees.

Ditto for Chinese tallows, although these are really nasty plants, despite their beautiful fall color. They scatter seeds fatal to other plants far out around them to protect their territory. If you're successfully growing "NON-Chinese-tallow" plants that give you gorgeous fall color, do share! Now's the best time to plant them, too.

EDITORS' NOTE: Texas Wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*) is not typically considered invasive. However, Chinese and Japanese Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) (*Wisteria floribunda*) are. All three can be found in nurseries across the region, so it is important to know which species you're buying and to avoid the latter two.

* * *

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)*

* * *

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 Ferguson

1951-2025

Founder of Nature's Way Resources

John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

Continuing with this month's theme, we will be continuing to explore what healthy soil is, how to build and maintain it, and more. Please read on to enjoy the writings and teachings of our late founder, John Ferguson.

Subject: What Is A Healthy Soil – Part 5

Continuing our discussion of what is a healthy soil we are going to discuss item #4 below: Air & water.

Organic matter from almost fresh to totally decomposed in the form of humus (humins, humic, fulvic acids)

Minerals (nutrients, sand, silt, and clay)

Soil life (microbes and macrobes)

Air & water

Plant choices

Care for and do not destroy the health of the soil one has

Air & water – this is the 4th components of a healthy soil. Plant roots and soil life forms require air (oxygen and nitrogen) and water. For the soil to breathe, which healthy soil does, there have to be pore spaces for the air and channels through which air can flow, sort of like air conditioning ducts in our house, a characteristic we call permeability.

Additionally, the carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by the respiration of microbes and other soil life and the breakdown of the carbon stored in the organic matter

has to escape the soil and let oxygen back in, or the good life dies.

How do we get air into the soil? We have a few options:

Tilling – a temporary solution at best- destroys long-term soil structure, creates a hardpan layer, and kills soil animal life and the beneficial fungus that makes soil healthy. Accelerates the breakdown of organic matter, causing the soil to lose its ability to hold and store water and nutrients, greatly accelerating erosion.

The only time one should till is to mix ingredients together when forming a new bed.

Core Aeration – another temporary solution which can provide short-term benefits, especially if fine screened compost is applied to the area and allowed to fill into the holes created by the cores. The compost keeps the holes open and allows the exchange of air and water to enter the soil.

The microbes in the compost will break apart the clay particles over time, creating a more loamy soil. Best usage is on new sod grown in a clay soil. The coring breaks holes in the clay and helps water and air enter the soil.

Note: Healthy soil never needs core aeration as the microbes, earthworms, and other soil life do it for you.

Dead roots – most plants have some of their roots die every year as the soil around the root is depleted in nutrients, and new roots grow into fresh areas. As the old roots decompose, they leave tunnels that air and water can use (Note: they require oxygen to decompose). This is common in mature forest systems. Also, many of our annual weeds play a role in improving aeration in soils.

For example, Dandelions that have large, deep taproots provide this benefit. When they die, their roots decay, leaving a tunnel that air and water can use. Nature uses this plant to correct soil problems, as they grow best on tight, compacted soils.

Burrowing animals – the largest amount of aeration is caused by the insects, earthworms, and burrowing mammals. Earthworm tunnels are like the ductwork in our houses, and along with the microbes, they produce chemicals that glue soil particles together, forming a friable crumb structure, honeycombed with voids for air and water.

Water is stored in the soil in several ways.

First, it is bound chemically by the clay and humus in the soil, next it is stored as a film or coating on soil particles, and last it is stored in the void or interstitial

spaces between grains of soil (too much and we call it a waterlogged soil as the air is displaced).

There is a 4th way that we are beginning to understand, and that is in the life forms in the soil. As these life forms eat each other, the water and nutrients stored in their bodies are released into the soil.

Our largest storage vessel for water is the soil. A soil with only 3% organic matter by weight will have a 60% porosity. If 35% of this pore space is air and 25% is water, then the soil will hold over 120,000 gallons of water per acre in the top 18 inches of soil.

A really healthy soil will have over 8% organic matter and go down several feet!

I remember as a boy growing up, my Grandmother would listen on the radio to our first gardening guy, Dewey Compton. Dewey had a saying that has stuck with me:

“It is far, far, far, far cheaper to put a one-dollar plant into a ten-dollar hole than a ten-dollar plant into a one-dollar hole.”

If one does not get the soil correct, it does not matter how much one spends on the plant material.

Even today, a colleague of mine, Randy Lemon of the Gardenline radio show, is still constantly stressing the importance of getting the soil healthy.

This issue is the single biggest mistake that gardeners make!

When one uses low-quality soils, mulch, fertilizers, etc., they will get insects, diseases, weeds, and eventually plant death.

Then they often say, “I have a Brown Thumb”.

- Coming Next Week: What Is A Healthy Soil – Part 5

To learn more, read on by clicking below

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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!

NOTE FROM EDITOR: *An overwhelming number of event notices are coming in. Those submitted in our exact never-changing format (word order, caps, punctuation, etc) will go in immediately. If we have to retype to format (we will!), they'll get in as soon as possible.*

April

WED., APR. 8: GROW YOUR BEST ROSES 2026 by **SUZANNE GILBERT**, Noon–2pm, Mercer Visitor's Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

FRI., APR. 10: TOUR "NATIVE WILDFLOWERS" by **HORTICULTURE STAFF**, 9–10am, Visitor's Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

SAT. APR. 11: TEXAS SUPERSTAR® TRAIL & TOUR, by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. 9-noon, Discovery Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St. (FM 519), La Marque. FREE. Register: txmg.org/

SAT., APR. 11: HERB FESTIVAL AT THE WYNNE HOME by **HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, TEXAS THYME UNIT**, 8am-1pm., 1428 Eleventh St., Huntsville. Free. 936-891-5024. www.texasthymeunit.org

SAT., APR 11: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY PLANT SALE, 9am-4pm; Pearland Lumber & Ace Hardware, 2027 N Main St., Pearland. lonestardaylilysociety.org, 281-331-0162.

SAT., Apr 11: Felco Maintenance Workshop by Jennifer Thomson, 2pm, Free. In person (limit 25) registration email to eeickhoff17@gmail.com and Facebook Live. <https://www.houstonrose.org/hrsmeet.htm>

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

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 18: SEED STARTING & PROPAGATION by **FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9-10:30am. FBC Fairgrounds, 4310 Tx 36, Rosenberg. 281-342-3034, fbmg.org/grow-your-own-2026/

SAT., APR 18: PRESENT PETALS AND PATHWAYS GARDEN TOUR by **SJC Master Gardeners**, 10am-3pm. Coldspring. <https://txmg.org/sjmg>

SAT., APRIL 18: OPEN GARDEN DAY by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-noon, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd. 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

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

TUES., APR. 21: 'Edible Weeds in Sugar Land' by **DR. MARK VORDERBRUGGEN**. 10am. 702 Burney Rd., Sugar Land, Free, sugarlandgardenclub.org

FRI., APR 24: USING IRRIGATION WISELY by **FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 1-2:30pm Online. 281-342-3034. fbmg.org/landscape-success-2026/

TUES., APR. 28: COMPOSTING 101 by **HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 10:30-11:30am, Visitor's Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. Register: pct3.com/MBG

May

SAT., MAY 2: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW AND PLANT SALE, Sale: 8am-3pm; Show 1-3pm, Alvin Senior Citizens Building, 309 W Sealy, Alvin. Free. lonestardaylilysociety.org, 281-331-0162.

SAT. MAY 9: PLUMERIA by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER**. AgriLife Extension Bldg., 1-3PM. Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St (FM519), La Marque. FREE. Register: <https://txmg.org/galveston/events/>

SAT. MAY 9: GROWING TOMATOES: STRESS MANAGEMENT, 9-11AM, by **GCMG**. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main St (FM519), La Marque. FREE. Register: <https://txmg.org/galveston/events/>

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

THURS., MAY 14: POLLINATORS TO ATTRACT BENEFICIALS by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 6:30- pm, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd. Contra 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

FRI.-SAT., MAY 15-16: HOUSTON CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY SPRING SALE, Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. 9am-3pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. hcsstex.com/

SAT. MAY 16: NATIVE PLANTS & BENEFICIAL INSECTS, 9-11AM, by **GCMG**. Discovery Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St (FM519), La Marque. FREE. Register: <https://txmg.org/galveston/events/>

SAT., MAY 16: POLLINATORS & COMPANION PLANTS by **FORT BEND MASTER GARDENERS**, 9-10:30am, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg. 281-342-3034. <https://fbmg.org/grow-your-own-2026/>

FRI., MAY 22: CONTAINER GARDENING by **FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**. 1-2:30pm Online. 281-342-3034. fbmg.org/landscape-success-2026/

See more

*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 . . .
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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 -- John Ferguson called immediately (the next morning!) to ask if she'd continue publishing it for his **Nature's Way Resources**. Familiar with John's international reputation as a soil/mulch expert, she jumped at the opportunity and has been writing weekly for NWR ever since! The name, she says, is STILL 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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