

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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"May is the last warm season month in Houston!"

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

HARD TO BELIEVE it's May already!!! Love a line just saw on the 'net: "May is the last warm season month in Houston."

Newcomers, pay heed! From this point on, optimum word will not be "warm," but "HOT"!

While most of the nation is still in 'spring' mode, our plants (floral and edibles) are grinning with delight! Get those stakes out next to edibles that need them. Growing will be fast this month.

Best tip I ever got: When plant shopping and you're faced with an enormous number of varied, gorgeous flowers in spring displays, step back!

Study colors, shapes, etc., carefully, on the tables filled with spectacular flowers everywhere. **BUT . . .**

DON'T BUY those that first draw your eye! Instead, make a note of the ones you like. Include a star over those that really make your eyes pop. Mark its

aisle (1, 2, etc.). Then wheel your cart up and down all the aisles.

Once you decide how many you can afford (often the worst part), start over at the same beginning aisle. Some will look sad next to others you saw further down. Some will grab your heart. Must buy, but don't just "grab". Use those gorgeous flowers to find them again. BUT . . . Buy those covered with budding seeds, not massive flowers.

Flowers in bloom will quickly fade. Select instead, plants with strong, healthy stalks and leaves. Then, among those, look for barely-starting buds. This will give the plant more time to adjust to the change of environment and set roots.

When you put those plants in, you want their first instincts to be setting strong roots, not producing usually artificially forced flowers that will sap strength from the also developing roots!

THINK YOUR PLANTS GOT ENOUGH WATER LAST WEEK?



After our recent deluges (and future ones predicted), the vast majority of us don't need to worry about watering! Perfect time to allot parts of the garden to the kiddos. With the deep watering we just got, encourage kids to sow flower seeds or vegetables they like, and plant them (or seeds). Your neighborhood independent nurseries will have the vegetable and decorative plants that do well in your area. Seeds are fun, but might throw in some already-started plants, an encouragement to children who -- let's face it -- expect **INSTANT** gratification!

* * *

SPEAKING OF RECENT RAINS, too much watering can be as bad as not enough. Overwatering symptoms may appear slowly, affecting one plant one way and another differently. Some take longer to display symptoms. Wilting and yellowing leaves are common early signs. Also leaves falling off and abnormal, maybe stunted, growth. What to do?

First, don't water! Then, without disturbing the roots, try to loosen the soil (gently poking holes will help evaporation and better absorption). Restore vining plants to their former places. Staking branches upright may help plants regain their former form.

With potted plants, of course, remove damaged leaves and water from saucers. Might think about moving them out of bright sunlight for a couple of

days. Don't stomp around wet soil. You'll just pack it down, squishing out oxygen.

* * *

Plumerias safe at home in heavy rains in the Sanchez garden!



Upper left: "Red Rose"; top right: 'Lemon Chiffon'; bottom left: 'Rose Red'; and bottom right: 'White Cluster'.

A reader asked (a little late!) about plumerias in heavy rain, so I turned to my cousin in League City, Sharon Beust Sanchez (*whose yard overflows with so many plumerias - including these above*), she's started selling them!

Most important now, Sharon says, is to "*put them in the sun and don't let them get wet feet. They will rot from the inside out!*"

Sharon and husband Ernie don't "plant" their plumerias. They "pot" them first, then dig a hole 2/3-3/4 deep and bury the pots & all. Altho they lift them in very heavy rains, those plants-in-pots go back in the ground as soon as possible. Makes moving them so much easier, especially when moving their "hundreds" of these delights inside in winter or when heavy storms threaten.

NOTE: *The Sanchezs are happy to answer your plumeria questions and help readers identify plants. Sharon doesn't mind calls and can be reached at 409-795-0017.*

* * *

SPEAKING OF HEAT-LOVING PLANTS . . .



GIVEN OUR HEAT PREDICTIONS AT COLUMN TOP, thought folks might be particularly interested in planting more cacti and succulents, (such as pictured *Astrophytum asterias* (at top) and *Gymnocalycium mihanovichii* (right)) that will be among the array available at the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society's rapidly approaching sale:



FRI.-SAT., MAY 15-16: HOUSTON CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY SPRING SALE,

Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. 9am-3pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. hcsstex.com/

(See calendar BELOW for more HC&S and other area gardening events!)

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)*

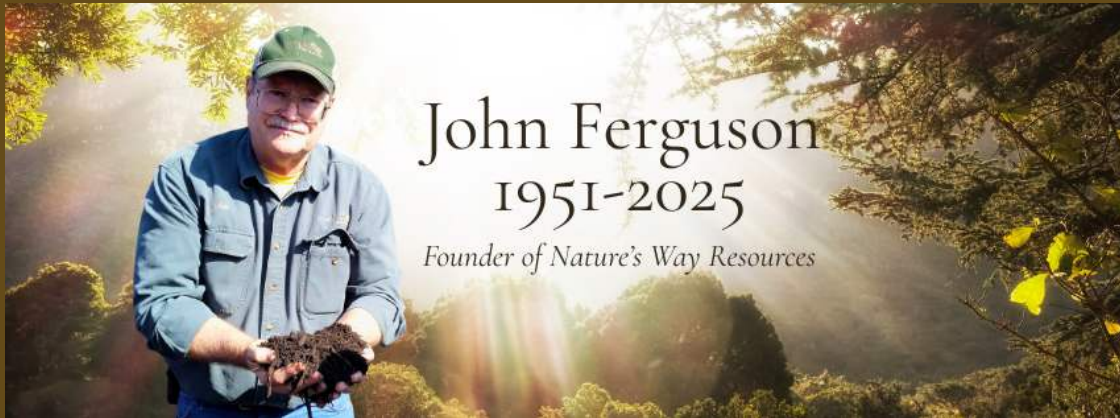
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Want to receive The Lazy Gardener & Friends weekly newsletter?

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*



John's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

Today, we are exploring elements 48-55 on the periodic table and what they do for your health. Often, we dismiss or take for granted the minerals that go into our bodies, or those that don't. We thought we would shed some light on a few, not-so-thought-of elements with a past article by John from 1/14/22.

Please note that this article has been condensed from its original publishing for clarity and ease of reading.

MINERALS - The Elements and What They Do

by John Ferguson, originally published 1/14/22

Today, we continue our look at elements 48–55 on the periodic table and their roles in human health, soil, and gardening: **cadmium, indium, tin, antimony, tellurium, iodine, xenon, and cesium.**

Cadmium (Cd) is a toxic heavy metal found naturally in rocks, coal, and some fertilizers. It accumulates in soils, plants, and animal tissues, especially kidneys. Cadmium mimics zinc in the body and can interfere with DNA repair, mitochondrial activity, and enzyme function. Excess exposure has been linked

to cancer and many degenerative diseases. Artificial fertilizers, sewage sludge, coal ash, and black mulch products can increase cadmium levels in soils. Some vegetables, mushrooms, and tobacco readily absorb cadmium, especially in acidic or salty soils.

Indium (In) is widely used in electronics, touch screens, and LCD displays. While it has no known biological role in humans, small amounts can stimulate metabolism, but larger amounts may damage the kidneys, liver, and heart. In soils, indium can inhibit nitrogen-fixing bacteria at elevated levels and is associated with sewage sludge contamination.

Tin (Sn) has been used for over 5,000 years in bronze, solder, food cans, and electronics. Tin is considered an essential trace element in small amounts, but too much can interfere with zinc absorption and damage the liver and nervous system. Tin tends to accumulate in plant roots and organic-rich soils. Coal ash and industrial contamination are common sources.

Antimony (Sb), a metalloid often associated with lead and arsenic, is used in batteries, flame-resistant products, and semiconductors. Historically, antimony poisoning has been linked to health issues dating back to ancient Rome. While plants readily absorb antimony, toxicity is usually only seen at very high concentrations. Coal, sewage sludge, and smelters are major contamination sources.

Tellurium (Te) is a rare semi-metal used in electronics, Blu-ray players, glass, and oil refining. Some tellurium compounds may have antioxidant and anti-tumor properties. Plants absorb tellurium easily, with onions and garlic naturally accumulating higher levels. Coal ash and smelters are the primary environmental sources.

Iodine (I) is essential for human health, especially thyroid function, metabolism, brain development, and immune support. Deficiencies are widespread worldwide and linked to goiter, fatigue, reduced IQ, developmental issues, and increased cancer risk. Fluoride, bromine, nitrates, and some pollutants can interfere with iodine absorption. Organically grown foods, seaweed, seafood, eggs, and grass-fed dairy are important iodine sources. Healthy soils rich in organic matter help support iodine availability to plants.

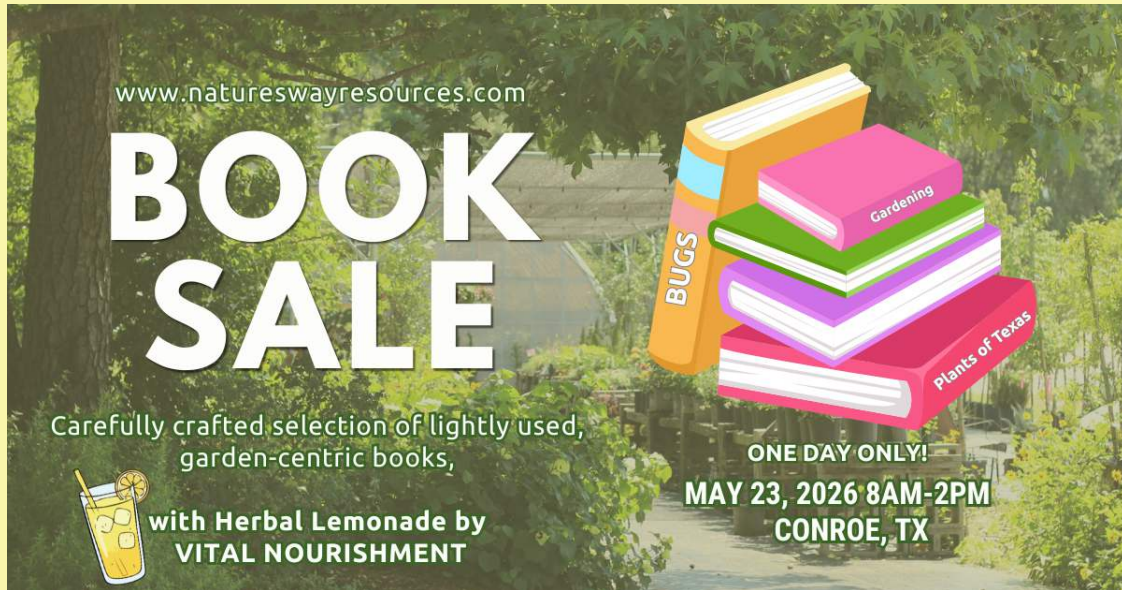
Xenon (Xe) is a rare noble gas used in specialty lighting, flash bulbs, and spacecraft propulsion. It appears to have little biological significance, though studies suggest it may have anesthetic properties. Xenon does not significantly affect plant growth.

Cesium (Cs) is a highly reactive metal used in atomic clocks and oil drilling. While it is not required by plants, some species can accumulate cesium from soils, making them useful for phytoremediation. Coal ash and radioactive fallout are common environmental sources.

John's overall takeaway: many heavy metals and trace elements become concentrated through artificial fertilizers, sewage sludge, coal ash, and industrial pollution. Building healthy organic soils with quality compost and organic fertilizers helps reduce harmful uptake while improving plant and human health.

If you would like to read the original article, please click below.

Click Here



www.natureswayresources.com

BOOK SALE

Carefully crafted selection of lightly used, garden-centric books,

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ONE DAY ONLY!
MAY 23, 2026 8AM-2PM
CONROE, TX

Books shown: BUGS, Gardening, Plants of Texas

If you're enjoying these deeper soil insights, there's another way to stay connected to what's happening on the ground at [Nature's Way Resources](#).

Soil Source is our ongoing update from NWR - sharing what's in stock, seasonal specials, upcoming events, and timely soil and planting tips based on what we're seeing in real time at the nursery.

It's not a separate philosophy from what we talk about here - it's the practical, "what's happening right now" layer that supports it.

No spam. No soliciting. Just real updates, soil insight, and what's happening at Nature's Way Resources.

Sign up anytime and stay in the loop.

Sign-up

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.

May

SAT., MAY 9: HOUSTON HEMEROCALLIS (DAYLILY) SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW AND DAYLILY PLANT SALE, Sale: 8am-3pm; Show 1-3pm, 4040 Watonga Dr., Free, www.ofts.com/hhs/

SAT., MAY 9: COMPANION PLANTS FOR ROSES. 2 pm, Houston Rose Society gathering, at Andrew's Episcopal Church, [1819 Heights Blvd.](http://1819heightsblvd.com)

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/>

SAT.-SUN., MAY 16-17 BROMELIAD SOCIETY HOUSTON SHOW AND SALE 1-5 pm Sat., 10am -3pm Sun., Judson Robinson Community Center 2020 Hermann Park Dr. Free. bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

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

SAT., MAY 23: USED GARDEN BOOK SALE, 8am-2pm, Nature's Way Resources, 101 Sherbrook Cir. Conroe. 936-273-1200
<https://www.natureswayresources.com/garden-events/>

SAT., MAY 23: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS SPRING MEETING, 10am–1pm, The Antique Rose Emporium, Brenham. Free. Presentation by Dr. Kevin Ong, Plant Disease Diagnostics. www.texasroserustlers.com

June

TUES. JUNE 9: GET THE DIRT, POT, PLUNGE OR PLANT by **PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA.** 6-8pm Cherie Flores Pavilion, Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. theplumeriasociety.org/

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 . . .
THE LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER!
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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.



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

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