

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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*"Hummingbirds are a gardener's favorite sign of a healthy, blooming garden."
— Anonymous*



Learning how to handle a hummingbird is one of the treats at the "Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, 299 Highway 332 W, Lake Jackson, Patty Brinkmeyer photo

**NEVER TOO YOUNG TO LEARN
WHEN IT COMES TO HUMMINGBIRDS!**

I hope your hummingbird experiences this year are as wonderful as mine have been! It's only taken me almost all my 83 years to suddenly lure them to our yard! Now they're actually sheltering in one of our trees and daily enjoying our hummingbird feeders!

Don't ask what I did right. I'm not sure. I've tried so many different things over the decades; the mind boggles! Very little luck, just occasional sightings that thrill, but don't remain even overnight! Thing is: this year they've been here for months, flying in and out of our trees and quietly swishing around feeders filled with plain ol' sugar water --- exact same "lure" I've used on so many other occasions!

Fortunately for those who need more help, we have our annual upcoming GCBO's annual Hummingbird Extravaganza! Saturdays, Sept. 12 & Sept. 19, in Lake Jackson. Headlining these delights of nature is one possible thrill! Click link for more info!

NAME CHANGE -- BUT STILL FOR THE BIRDS!

Since visiting and resident birds are such a big part of our gardens, thought you'd want to know our 52-year-old Houston Audubon Society has changed its name to "Birds Houston"

(birdshouston.org/programs/birding/gallery/index.html), marking its first name change since its founding in 1969. So don't be surprised when you hear Birds Houston when "Houston Bird Week" starts Sept. 19.

We're lucky. "Birds Houston" now operates 18 Nature Preserves across the Greater Houston area. Click on the link; surely there's one near you.

Do you know all the benefits of attracting birds to your garden? Besides the delight of watching them? Perhaps best of all: they're a natural (safest & free!) "pest control," attracting more welcome backyard wildlife like bees and butterflies while helping to get rid of destructive insects and rodents. Win-win! Hope our Spotlight Article below helps you attract hummers to, in turn, help your gardens!

* * *



DESIGNING WITH HUMMINGBIRDS IN MIND!

by KAYLA PRINGLE

Education Assistant
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
gcbo.org

More than just colorful visitors, hummingbirds serve as vital pollinators when gardens are designed with their needs in mind. To create a garden that truly serves their needs, think beyond generic nectar plants. Flower structure matters: tubular blooms such as Gulf Coast Penstemon (*Penstemon tenuis*), Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*), and Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) align perfectly with a hummingbird's long bill and tongue.

Stagger bloom times across early, mid, and late seasons to ensure uninterrupted nectar availability throughout migration.

Feeders remain an excellent supplement but require upkeep and cleaning. Use a simple solution of four parts water to one part sugar. Do not use any honey, sweeteners, or dyes, and clean every 2–3 days to prevent mold or fermentation.

It's best to position feeders in shade to slow spoilage and offer multiple feeders to reduce territorial disputes.

With how small hummingbirds are, protein is often overlooked; hummingbirds rely on small insects and spiders for essential nutrients.

Avoid systemic insecticides like neonicotinoids, which can contaminate nectar, and instead encourage insect populations with native shrubs and leaf litter.

Finally, design your hummingbird microhabitat with safety and shelter in mind. Dense shrubs near feeding areas provide perches and protection from predators, while minimizing window reflections helps prevent collisions. By combining thoughtful plant selection, responsible feeding, and a habitat that supports the entire food web, gardeners can ensure hummingbirds not only visit, but flourish season after season.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: FOR MORE INFO ON THIS WONDERFUL
CELEBRATION:** GCBO's annual Hummingbird Extravaganza! Gcbo.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)*

* * *

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

***Taking a break this week to share details for our annual
Fall Garden Festival at Nature's Way Resources***



Join us on-site at Nature's Way Resources in Conroe on Saturday, September 19, from 8 AM-2 PM for a day of gardening, shopping, education, live music, and family fun!

Gardening & Education

9-10 AM - Organic Bonsai Growing and Care in South Texas

Join Ashley Smith of Windward Gardens for a demonstration on growing and caring for bonsai in our South Texas climate.

12-2 PM - Live Q&A with GardenLine's Skip Richter

Bring your gardening questions and get advice from Skip on everything from fall planting and soil to lawns, trees, shrubs, and vegetables.

Throughout the Day

- Large local vendor market
- Fall plant sales
- Soils, composts & mulches
- Complimentary wine & coffee during our Sip & Shop
- Live music
- Vendor Bingo - collect stamps from participating vendors and receive a **free plant**
- Kids' scavenger hunt, free face painting + giant sandbox

Fall is one of the best planting seasons in Texas, so come get inspired, shop local, learn something new, and get your garden ready for the season ahead.

Saturday, September 19
8 AM-2 PM

Nature's Way Resources
101 Sherbrook Circle, Conroe, TX 77304

Admission is free!



[Learn More + RSVP](#)



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5TH ANNUAL FALL GARDEN FESTIVAL

At Nature's Way Resources

September 19th 8AM-2PM

- ✓ Local Vendors
- ✓ Childrens Activities
- ✓ Sip&Shop
- ✓ Expert Garden Q&A
- ✓ Plant Giveaways!
- ✓ Exclusive Plant and Soil Sales

101 Sherbrook Circle,
Conroe, TX 77385
natureswayresources.com
Office: 936-273-1200

NATURE'S WAY
RESOURCES
Products Made for Superior Growth

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.

No spam. No soliciting. Just real updates, soil insights, 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!

SEPTEMBER

FRI., SEP. 11: MERCER GARDEN TOUR by **MERCER STAFF**, 9-10am, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

SAT, SEPT 12: SEED HARVESTING by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-11am, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., SEPT. 12: T-BUD GRAFTING by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9-11am. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque. Free. <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>

SAT., SEPT. 12: GROWING STRAWBERRIES by **GALVESTON COUNTY MASTR GARDENERS**, 1-3pm. AgriLife Extension Bldg., Carbide Park, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque. Free. Register: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>

WED., SEP. 16: LUNCH & LEARN – BANANAS UNPEELED by **CHRISTY JONES & KELSEY WILLIAMS**, 12-2pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

SAT., SEPT. 19: FALL GARDEN FESTIVAL by **NATURE'S WAY RESOURCES**, 8AM-2PM, 101 Sherbrook Cir., Conroe. 936-273-1200. <https://www.natureswayresources.com/garden-events>

WED. SEPT. 23: PARASITIC PLANTS THAT ATTACK CACTUS AND EUPHORBIAS by **PROF. JIM MAUSETH**, 7pm. Multi-purpose Metropolitan Center, 1475 W. Gray. Free, Houston Cactus and Succulent Society. hcsstex.com

FRI. SEPT. 25, 9 am-5 pm, and SAT. SEPT 26, 9 am-3 pm. HOUSTON CACTUS AND SUCCULENTS' SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE. Multi-purpose Metropolitan Center, 1475 West Gray. Free admission and parking, Houston Cactus and Succulent Society www.hcsstex.com.

SAT. SEPTEMBER 26: GARDEN WALK: ESCAPE INTO THE GARDEN by **LEAGUE CITY GARDEN CLUB**, League City, 10-4 pm, Tickets \$20, www.leaguecitygardenclub.org.

OCTOBER

SAT., OCT. 3: PLANT WALK & GARDEN TOUR – SPOOKY PLANTS by **ZOE MATRANGA**, 10-11am, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

SAT, OCT 3: NEW HOMEOWNER LANDSCAPE BASICS by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-2PM, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

FRI., OCT. 9: MERCER GARDEN TOUR by **MERCER STAFF**, 9-10am, Visitor Center, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. For more information: pct3.com/MBG

SAT, OCT 10: FALL PLANT SALE by **MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-noon, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 9020 Airport Rd., Conroe 936-539-7824, mcmga.com

SAT., OCT 10., ANNUAL FALL PLANT SALE by **WALKER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9:00 am -12:00 pm, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, [102 TAM Road, Huntsville](#), [936-435-2426](#). [link](#).

SAT, OCT 10: ROOT A ROSE WORKSHOP by **HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY**, 2pm-4pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, [1819 Heights Blvd](#) or HRS Facebook Livestream, <https://www.houstonrose.org/hrsmeet.htm>

THURS.-SAT, OCT. 8-10: 84TH BULB AND PLANT MART by **GARDEN CLUB OF HOUSTON**, Thurs., 5-7pm, Thurs; Fri. 9am-4pm, Sat. 9am-1pm

SAT., OCT 24: The BUTTERFLY & POLLINATOR FESTIVAL by **WALKER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-noon. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 102 TAM Road, Huntsville, 936-435-2426, [link](#)

SAT., OCT. 24: POLLINATOR PLANT SALE., 8am-3pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble. Free. friendsofmercer.org, 713-274-4166

WED. OCT. 28: GROWING CACTUS & SUCCULENTS FROM SEED by **JACOB MARTIN**, 7 PM, Multi-purpose Metropolitan Center, 1475 West Gray. Free, Houston Cactus and Succulent Society. hcsstex.com

NOVEMBER

WEB. NOV 18: CACTUS AND SUCCULENT PLANTS - CONSIDERATIONS by **DAVE THOMAS**, 7PM, Multi-purpose Metropolitan Center, 1475 W. Gray. Free, Houston Cactus and Succulent Society. hcsstex.com

[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!
& please patronize our Newsletter & Calendar sponsors below!

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 -- 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, Nature's Way Resources contributes John's past articles and new information 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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