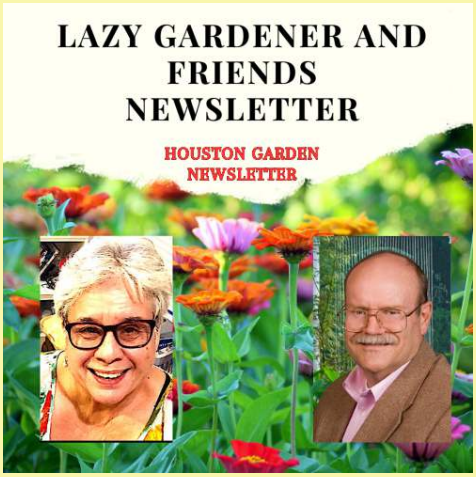
September-16-2026 | Issue 653

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 love Scarlet Sage (Salvia splendens), above, and coral vine (bottom)

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

I've never had hummingbirds nesting so close to our front picture window and visible so often at our nearby feeders. What an incredible gift from nature!!!!

AND I'm not alone. Frankie in San Felipe reports she *"had to purchase two more feeders"* to her already large collection that she's been *"...cleaning, refilling twice daily"!* That's what I call real love!

My first experience with hummingbirds was back in the 1960s with Etha Mae Dubuisson, who lived down the street from my then soon-to-be husband Bill in

Rose City, TX (Southwest of Vidor). From her 3-sided back patio roof hung dozens of hummingbird feeders, all always visited by dozens of these native delights, and I tried for decades without success to at least attract one of them!

The *International Hummingbird Society* (IHS), based in Sedona, AZ, has already hosted this year's celebration. The 2027 *13th Annual Sedona Hummingbird Festival* will be July 23–27, 2027 (in case you're interested), a great place to get experts' take on hummingbird "houses."

From all I can discover, these are fine as decorative pieces for your yard. But don't get your hopes up; they'll create a destination point for our delightful little friends. Has anyone seen actual hummers using them? Not likely.

To quote the experts: Hummers like "tiny, stretchy, cup-shaped" nests, made out of spiders' silk and fibers from plants and attached to open tree branches or shrubs. Enclosed spaces don't appeal.

My hummers are roosting in a tree near our hummer feeders (positioned in front of our picture window). We're seeing more of them this year than we have ever seen in our 61-year-old marriage. Not sure why. But certainly not complaining!

Which brings us to hummingbird houses. They're a fairly new promo and -- despite the fact they're now available everywhere and *"ain't cheap!"* -- hummer experts say NO! Not if your goal is to attract hummingbirds. Turns out, no one except sellers are in favor of these. They are cute. Just Google*: "Are hummingbird houses worth the price?"* Answers from experts are unanimous: NO! But they are pretty if nothing else! To make sure, went to the top of the tree, the *International Hummingbird Society* (IHS) in Sedona (perfect location!) for confirmation.

Their take: *Hummingbirds don't use “birdhouses” for their nests, because they are not cavity nesters."* Ah, but with typical commercial cleverness, someone has come up with *"Hummer Helper®",* said to be a practical nesting material (available at many bird stores and garden centers).

International Hummingbird Society: *Walk-in office: 2756 W State Rte 89A, Suite 1, Sedona AZ 86336; Mail: PO Box 4222, Sedona AZ 86340*

* * *

Love it when readers send in tips. Usually, the best ones come from experienced LOCAL gardeners who are accustomed to our unique climate that

never exactly fits any of Texas' 4-5 other growing climates! Thanks to El Niño, our first cold spell is expected in early December. But don't bet money on it.

Good example: Lake Jackson Garden Club president **SUSAN CHAPPELL** is particularly generous in sharing her successful "tricks": Plants watered by her soaker hoses down her fence, now recipients of water that runs from her rain barrels (which collect not only rainwater but water from AC drains), reach plants. Thinking ahead, Susan also already . . .

- ***Once our snapdragons start blooming . . . "I always enjoy showing parents and children how snapdragons actually 'snap'".***
- *Been doing it for years, and most of the younger generation doesn't know the trick.*
- *I tell the kids to put their finger in front of the bloom to see if the dragon is hungry enough to try to take a bite, then I squeeze the base and the flower "snaps" at the finger. The kids love it and say, "do it again".*
- *My grandmother taught me about snapdragons, along with making clover chain jewelry, hollyhock or hibiscus dolls, checking persimmon seeds for forks or knives, making whistles out of a blade of grass, making wishes and blowing dandelion puffs, and more. I would be interested to hear what the grandparents of your readers taught them about having fun with plants.*
- *ME TOO!*

NOTE TO READERS: *I really appreciate your sharing successful gardening tips. But must ask that you do not text them. Always email them to lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com.*

* * *

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

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

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.

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

WED., OCT. 7: HIBISCUS THE SHOWSTOPPERS OF YOUR GARDEN by **MARTI AND GREG GRAVES**, 9:30-11:30 am, Webster Presbyterian Church, 201 W NASA Pkwy Webster. Free. **Gardeners by the Bay** www.gbtb.org

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 17: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS FALL CUTTING EXCHANGE, 10am-1pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd. Free.

SAT., OCT 24: The BUTTERFLY & POLLINATOR FESTIVAL by **WALKER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**, 9am-noon. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, 102 TAM Road, Huntsvile, 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

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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

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 -- 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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