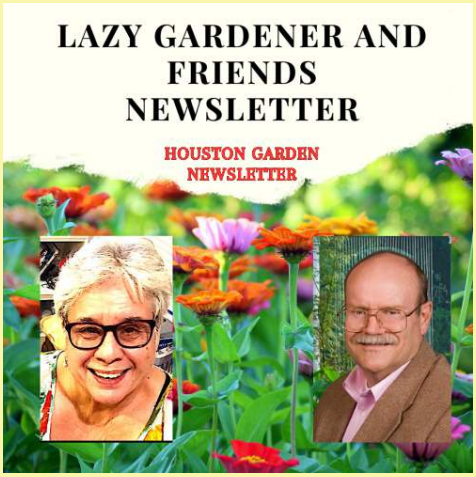
October-7-2026 | Issue 656

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



By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

Bet **SANDRA GEISER** isn't the only rose gardener who, these days, is asking: "Why do Knock Out roses look terrible now ... ? Should she fertilize them? What about pruning? Sandra lives in Zone 8, but Greater Houston includes that area plus Zones 9a and Zone 9b. Baxter's responses below cover all of us in the Greater Houston area!



IT'S FALL! YOUR ROSES EXPECT YOU TO DO THE RIGHT THINGS!

BY BAXTER WILLIAMS
HOUSTON ROSE SOCIETY

Leaf loss is often normal in a time such as this . . .

As the fall season occurs, there are two or three things that bring about this action in the rose bush:

1. Lack of water. We have had so very little rain that the plants are in stress, if they are the least bit under-watered. Manually give them an abundance of water, and then dig down with a trowel to see just how much water has actually gotten into the root zone --- you might be surprised to see that moisture under the mulch (The bushes are mulched, aren't they?), is only a half-inch or so deep.

Put a garden hose near the base of the bush and just let it run for most of the day, and then check again with a trowel. A cheap moisture/pH meter would be a good purchase. The importance is to get water TO THE ROOTS!

(2) Less daylight. We have passed the point at which the sun is shining less than half a day (the Fall Equinox), so the bush doesn't have the amount of energy for which it is designed.

(3) Important. You might have given the bush a good shot of fertilizer, when *ALMOST NONE IS REQUIRED AFTER MID-SEPTEMBER*! There should be one more attempt to grow blooms. If so, leave spent blooms ON THE BUSH, and don't feed again until late January. The frosts and freezes in Houston will have passed by then, and therefore new growth will not be "burned".

DON'T PRUNE ANY ROSE BUSHES DURING THE FALL. Wait until the ground begins to warm in late January, then feed existing bushes. Feed newly-planted AND CLIMBERS bushes after the first bloom in the Spring, and then at 6-7 weeks' interval thereafter.

And read the Houston Rose Society's "Rose-Ette" monthly newsletter. The first article every month is what to do this month so that your bushes look better than those of your neighbors'! www.houstonrose.org

Editor's Note: Everyone who grows roses in this area needs the Houston Rose Society's CALENDAR .... but especially new-to-roses-HERE folks. We are not like other areas, and wrong steps are easy to take. Check the calendar out at **houstonrose.org/HRS27Cal.pdf.**

* * *

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

This week we have a guest article from Rakshit Manga. Rakshit, founder of DOTDAY, is a landscape fabric subject matter expert who wrote the June 2026 Landscape Trends column in Turf Magazine. He writes about how fabric performs in gravel, gardens, landscapes and heavy-use ground.

He is happy to answer reader questions on gravel, drainage and standing water.

Keeping gravel paths and drains from sinking into Houston clay

By Rakshit Manga

Founder & Managing Director

DOTDAY Professional Grade Landscape Fabrics

Anyone who has laid a gravel path in Houston knows the sequel: a few months on, there's a muddy dip and stones that seem to have vanished. Our gumbo clay swells when it's wet and shrinks when it dries, and it slowly swallows whatever sits loose on top of it. Water is usually the real culprit, so a few habits go a long way.

1. Decide where the water goes first.
Before you lay a single stone, make sure the ground slopes gently away from your foundation and the path. Downspout extensions, a shallow grassy swale, or a rain garden in a low corner give rain somewhere to go besides under your path. For a soggy spot, a trench sloped toward a low area and filled with coarse gravel is the simple old-fashioned drain.

2. Dig out, then build a firm base.
Gravel set straight onto soft clay sinks. Remove the loose top soil, then add crushed rock a few inches at a time, tamping each layer firm before the next. Finish with decomposed granite or smaller gravel on top.

3. Edge with stone or wood.
A border of stone, or rot-resistant wood like cedar, keeps the path from spreading and helps hold its shape when the clay moves.

4. Time it, then check it.
Work when the soil is damp but crumbly, not soggy and not baked hard. After a heavy storm, walk your path and drain. Look for puddles, low spots, or washed-out edges, then rake and top up. For an informal garden path, shredded wood chips or oyster shell are easy on the eye and the budget. Just refresh them once a year.

Small fixes made early are far easier than rebuilding a path in July.

Rakshit Manga, Founder of DOTDAY, Houston, thedotday.com









Photos: Built by Bri, courtesy of DOTDAY

More Info



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!**

OCTOBER

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: HERBS FOR PEOPLE AND POLLINATORS by ANGELA CHANDLER, 10am–noon, Mainland City Centre,10000 Emmett F Lowry, Texas City, $29. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; Register

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

SAT., OCT. 10: FBCMG VEGETABLE AND HERB PLANT SALE, 9-noon or until sold out, Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg. https://fbmg.org/fall-vegetable-herb-plant-sale/

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

WED., OCT. 14: LUNCH & LEARN: BROMELIADS 101 by **MITCH FONTENOT**, 12-2pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

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

SAT., OCT. 17: FALL BONSAI SHOW by **HOUSTON BONSAI SOCIETY**, 10am-2pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

TUES., OCT 20: 'HOW GARDENERS CAN SUPPORT UPPER TEXAS COAST HUMMINGBIRDS, by **MARTIN HAGNE**, 10am. 702 Burney Rd., Sugar Land, Free, sugarlandgardenclub.org

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

FRI., OCT. 30: SPOOKY PLANTS GARDEN TOUR by **JACOB MARTIN**, 9-10am, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

NOVEMBER

SAT. NOV. 7: 53rd ANNUAL HERB FAIR by **THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, SOUTH TEXAS UNIT. 9am-2-pm,** Southside Place Clubhouse, 3743 Garnet St., **Free.** herbsociety-stu.org

SAT., NOV. 7: PLANT WALK & GARDEN TOUR: BOTANY OF THANKSGIVING by **ZOE MATRANGA**, 10-11am, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

FRI., NOV. 13: MERCER GARDEN TOUR by **MERCER STAFF**, 9-10am, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

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

SAT., NOV. 21: COMPANION PLANTING by ANGELA CHANDLER, 10am–noon, COM League City,1411 W. Main St, League City, $29. College of the Mainland. 409-933-8461; Register

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DECEMBER

WED., DEC. 9: LUNCH & LEARN: FLORALS & FIZZ MOCKTAILS by **GABI KANU**, 12-2pm, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd. Free. pct3.com/MBG

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

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

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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, 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.

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