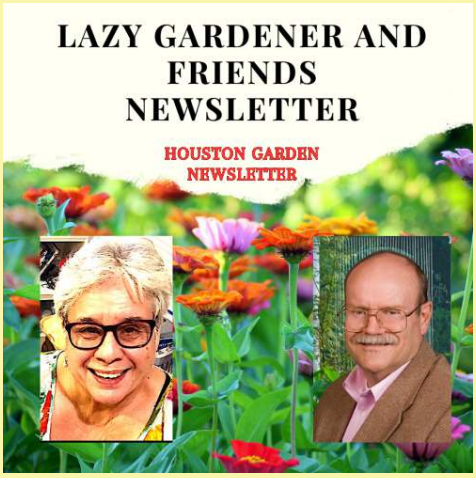
October-14-2026 | Issue 657

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Microlife Biological Fertilizers
The Rice Organization, Inc.
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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WELCOME TO ONE OF OUR BEST TIMES TO PLANT MANY THINGS!

By Brenda Beust Smith | The Lazy Gardener

WOW! Isn't this weather wonderful, especially after this past summer? Take advantage! Many longtime Greater Houston gardeners agree Fall (not Spring) is our PRIME planting time for so many plants -- more than newcomers will certainly expect!

That may surprise those not-in-the-know, but we longtime Houstonians have learned easily that new (appropriate-for-here!) plants that thrived summer have to toughen up before our early freezes (which are usually very quick, mildly

serious threats until early December. Usually rapidly growing roots underground -- of the right plants! -- will easily survive and toughen up before serious prolonged cold arrives).

Of course, it depends on the plants you choose. But with the right choices, most plants will go dormant or slow growth over winter and pop out just fine in spring.

Knowledgeable area plant-growers like PATTY ALLEN -- best known by this column's longtime readers for her incredible crinums (among other often-hard-to-find treasured bloomers) just starting to show color now.



Pink Powderpuff

DON'T TRY TO TELL Patty that this isn't one of our best flower blooming times. Instead, visualize her enthusiasm over what's coloring her garden these days, including her (pictured above) reliable dwarf pink powder puff bush, yellow bells, bright yellow citrine rain lilies, and red oxbloods.



Red Oxbloods

Patty has been one of my major go-to gardeners for decades. A quiet gardener who sells plants privately and by appointment only, her main focus is searching out and seeing what will grow in her tiny North Harris County gardens and multitude of various-sized greenhouses. When Patty praises a plant, I listen and ever have since I first met her and her fabulous crinums (is that what we met over? I can't remember)!

Right now, Patty's eyes are glistening over the four plants listed here. They are what we are all looking for at this point, flowers that bloom in October and won't be killed by the coming winter challenges.

Feel free to text or email me, and I'll forward your notes to Patty

"Let me tell you about the virtues of the Dwarf Pink Powderpuff Bush!"

BY PATTY ALLEN

Guest columnist

The combination of the ‘strawberry’ color of the little ‘berries’on the bush enhances the shape and color of the small bright green leaves. Should be called Dwarf Strawberry Bush!

Second wonderful thing: the ‘berries’ burst open into little pink ‘brushes’, with little yellow tips of pollen on the ends of some of the ‘brushes’, which supplies another element of surprise to this bush.

Third: It is a repeat bloomer! Two or three times since I’ve grown this shrub, in freezing weather, it did not bloom. But if the weather moderates and gets

warmer, you can count on berries and blooms being on it at the same time again, and it will do this almost continually all year long. Maybe about 2 weeks in between bloom periods. If there's a plant you need in your flowerbeds where you can enjoy almost continual bloom, this is your baby!! No noticeable aroma, but with all this going on, who really notices? Goes from a gallon to about 31/2' tall in 3-4 years (only because it has stayed in a 4-gallon pot til I decide where I want it or can get some new ones started from it. WINNER!!

* * *

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's Corner

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS



HARTSFIELD COMPOSTING PILOT, Vimeo.com

Highlighting Zero Waste Houston: Closing the Loop

By Shelby Cassano
Marketing Director, Nature's Way Resources

Check out this video highlighting a pilot program between Zero Waste Houston and Hartsfield Elementary School.

Zero Waste Houston is working with this school to bring compost and recycling knowledge to the younger generations in hopes of creating young advocates for sustainablity and reducing the waste cycle in our public schools.

We are excited to partner with Zero Waste Houston as their food waste drop off site. Food waste is one of the 4 main ingredients in our famous and original *Leaf Mold Compost*.

Together we are closing the loop and educating the next generation of sustainable leaders. "Closing the loop" is a term used in a few settings, however, in this case we mean the recycling loop; creating high-quality material without losing the value of the product post initial use.

Zero Waste Houston is a machine in furthering sustainability programs and education in the Houston area and owner, Leo Brito is a driving force for their success.

He has pioneered a new program with the *Houston Zoo*, recycling highly-enriching zoo animal manure, and through our composting partnership we now offer **Wild Waste**, which is our famous Leaf Mold Compost with the addition of the zoo manure.



Wild Waste on display at the Houston Zoo Plant Sale on October 3rd. Currently available for purchase at Nature's Way Resources and the Houston Zoo. Photo: Michael Spurlock

Editor's Note: *Nature's Way Resources offers hands-on educational tours to all age groups and regularly welcomes schools with students as young as 2nd grade to get a first-hand look at a commercial composting facility that focuses on soil health and biology in addition to closing the loop.*

Zero Waste Houston



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. 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

NATURE'S WAY RESOURCES
Products Made for Superior Growth





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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