



**FARM SMART.  
GROW SMART.**  
Produce More & Better  
With Less.

## Program.

Fifth Annual Conference  
On  
Sustainable Growing  
Practice

*You Can't Afford Not To Know*®

February 8th and 9th, 2013

**CASA DE PALMAS  
HOTEL**

McAllen, Texas

www.TexasPlantAndSoilLab.com

### February 8<sup>th</sup>

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Registration & Welcome

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

**W** *Noel Garcia* – Soil Testing: The Ideal  
Extraction & How To Maximize Inputs

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

**E** Break

11:00 - Noon

**D** *Willie Durham* – TCEQ - Soil Health:  
Soil Organic Matter & Cover Crops

**N** Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Luncheon

**E** 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

**S** *Steve Diver* - Practical Methods For  
Managing Soil Biology & Organic Matter

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

**D** *Andrew Sparda* - Soil CO<sub>2</sub> Respiration

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

**A** Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Y** *Larry Zibilske* - Sulfur Management in  
Crop Production

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Social Time

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Dinner

### February 9<sup>th</sup>

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

*Noel Garcia* - **ASK THE PLANT**®  
Maximizing your plants' genetic potential.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**T** *Gerald Wiebe* - Amino Chelation &  
Phosphate Fertilization

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

**H** Break

11:00 - Noon

**U** *Larry Zibilske* - Role of Soil Life In  
Healthy Crops

**R** Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Luncheon

**S** 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

**D** *Craig Hoelscher* – Irrigation &  
Fertilization Management in a Drought  
Year – Experiences in West Texas

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

**A** *Sabino Cortez* - Water: The New Gold

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

**Y** Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Questions & Answers

5:00 p.m.

End Conference

## Speakers



**Sabino Cortez** is known around the world for his innovative organic techniques in both large and small-scale agriculture. Sabino began his company, Erath Earth, Inc. in 1989 which has since expanded in a global business that specializes in consulting work with the overall goal of creating more sustainable and healthy food sources for the world over.

Sabino is responsible for the production of many ground-breaking agricultural practices for farming and ranching and can often be seen touring the nation giving talks regarding his work.



**Steve Diver** earned BSc and MSc degrees from Oklahoma State University prior to working as Extension Horticulturist in Northeast Oklahoma and managing an organic farm in Missouri.

He was a senior agriculture specialist with ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service in the Arkansas office for 18 years. He then relocated to Texas where he was R&D Scientist with Sustainable Growth Texas, LLC. In 2010, he established an independent firm, Agri-Horticultural Consulting, based in Austin, Texas. Steve served on the NOSB Compost Tea Task Force in 2003-2004 and is a current

board member of Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Texas Organic Farming Research Center, and the Science and Technical Advisory Committee for The Organic Center.



**Willie Durham** is the State Conservation Agronomist for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas. Willie graduated from Texas A & M University, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Entomology in 1985 and a Master of Agriculture Degree in Agricultural Chemistry in 1987.

After graduation, Willie worked as a field sales representative for Helena Chemical Company and Terra International, Inc. in the Rio Grande Valley and become a Certified Crop Adviser. He later accepted a position as a Regional Agronomist for Novartis Seeds (Syngenta) working the States of Texas, Oklahoma and the Mexican State of Tamaulipas.

In 2001, Willie joined the USDA NRCS as a Conservation Agronomist, working on irrigation concerns in the Edwards Aquifer Area of Texas. He later became certified as a Professional Agronomist by the American Society of Agronomy.

In 2006, Willie was promoted to Resource Team Leader responsible for USDA NRCS Program and Technical Assistance in the counties of Uvalde, Medina, Kinney and Maverick.

In 2009, Willie was selected as State Conservation Agronomist becoming part of the Ecological Sciences Section for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Willie lives in Temple, Texas.



**Noel Garcia** is Certified Crop Adviser (Certification by American Society of Agronomy), Agricultural

Consultant, Technical Director and Vice President of Operations for Texas Plant & Soil Lab with over 22 years of experience in agriculture with a background in Computer Science and Business Management. Career started at the United States Department of Agriculture – ARS – Remote Sensing Department in software development of imagery acquisition software involved with Video and Satellite Imagery, Image Processing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Expanded experience as the International Farm Manager of an Aloe Vera Plantation consisting of over 1000 acres in Mexico and 500 acres in the US which involved training personnel, organizing and directing field management programs, crop production, plant nutrition programs, and IPM: Insects & Weed Control and quality control. Developed and improved soil and crop management programs through the use of soil testing and plant analysis for the most efficient use of fertilizer nutrients for maximum economic yields.

Noel was recruited by E.K. Chandler, CPAg – Soil Scientist & Certified Professional Consultant of Texas Plant & Soil Lab. Involved in Software Development, Field Sampling, Scouting, Trial Development, Laboratory Testing of Soil, Water and Plant Analysis, Lab Methodology Development, Farm Advisor and Development of Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition (*Ask the Plant*® Petiole Testing).



**Andrew Sparda** joined Woods End Laboratories in April of 2010 as Director of Sales and Customer Relations. Andrew joined Woods End with over 15 years of sales, direct marketing, and consulting experience in the food, engineering, and biotechnology industries.

Prior to joining Woods End Laboratories and Solvita, Andrew worked in the New York City marketplace specializing in biochemistry capital equipment diagnostics and reference laboratory diagnostic

consulting for IDEXX Laboratories over the last 6 years. Prior to that, Andrew gained valuable experience with Nabisco Brands, OTEC.COM, and The O'Connor Group. Andrew graduated from Fordham University with a BS in Sociology and a Minor in Psychology, has completed graduate work in business and attended the University of Maine Compost School.

Andrew is a member of Texas Compost Advisory Council, and the Washington Organic Recycling Council. He also holds numerous business professional certifications.



**Gerald Wiebe** studied at the University of Manitoba in the 1970's & 80's, earning degrees in Agriculture/Plant Science as well as Business Administration/Finance and returned to the family farm. Curious about the steadily increasing plant disease pressure that was being observed in the crops, Gerald began a search to understand the true causes. For the last two decades he has focused on the development, implementation and teaching of Biological Agricultural Principles for soil and water management, to clients as well as demonstrate their potential on his farm. Gerald operates a consulting business, ECOLOGICAL DYNAMICS INC. and a commercial farm as WIEBE VENTURES INC.



**Larry Zibilske** is a research soil scientist with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Weslaco, TX. His research program centers on soil microbiology and organic matter. He received a B.S. in Microbiology and M.S. in Soil Science from Texas A&M University, and the Ph.D. in Soil Microbiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was a tenured faculty member in the Departments of Plant and Soil

Sciences and Microbiology at the University of Maine for eighteen years before returning to Texas in 1998 to continue research in sustainable agriculture with the USDA.



**Craig Hoelscher** has been associated with Eco-Drip since his graduation from Texas A&M in 2004. Since that time, he has held various management positions in Abernathy and Levelland, Texas and Hastings, Nebraska. Raised on the family farm in

Garden City, TX, he learned at an early age, the value of drip irrigation as an effective tool for both deficit irrigation and fertigation in an arid growing region that is the home of drip irrigation in West Texas. When Eco-Drip began offering water soluble phosphorus, potassium, and micro nutrient fertilizers to its customers, Craig was instrumental in expanding the capabilities of drip systems to include prescription plant nutrition through a "spoon feeding" approach. In addition to his other duties, he now manages a group of several blending plant personnel and field technicians in the Garden City and Abernathy locations. Craig makes his home in Lubbock with his wife and three children. He is Chief Operating Officer and VP Sales and Marketing, Eco-Drip Irrigation Supply, Inc.

### REGISTRATION

<http://www.TexasPlantAndSoilLab.com/PDFs/TPSL-5TH-CONFERENCE-ANNOUNCEMENT.pdf>

### HOTEL INFORMATION

<http://cwp.marriott.com/mfebr/saea/>