



Through the Grapevine



Message from the President

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Special points of interest:

- RSVP for Fall Landscape Symposium
- Landscaping School in September
- Food Preservation Workshops offered
- Ideas or Topics of Interest for Newsletter, Please share!!
- Remember to turn in Volunteer Hours

Greetings to all.

I have been traveling primarily for fun and relaxation. I have had the opportunity to see a variety of gardens and landscapes. I am very appreciative of the work Concho Valley Master Gardeners have continued in my absence. Preparation of two sections of the pathways has been completed. The 2 cubic yards of mulch for the portion of the walkway have been ordered from BesTex. **I am looking for a volunteer to transport the mulch from BesTex to the 4-H Building.** I will be pursuing sources and new prices for the crushed granite. Also on the plans for the remainder of the year is signage. I took pictures of various signs during my travels and will be sharing signs by a variety of folks. Several weeks ago a small group of us were weeding in the Texas SuperStar bed and pulled up what we thought were weeds. We could not identify them and they appeared to be taking over the

bed. Later we discovered that they were test plants from 2011. Obviously they do well in our setting!

Ron Knight and his committees have been working hard to make the September 22 Fall Landscape Symposium a successful event. Three speakers have been lined up. Tony Huston will be presenting principles of landscape design in keeping with the speakers following him. Bill Neiman will be presenting information on the ecological approach to creating outdoor living spaces. Chris Wiesinger from The Southern Bulb Company is the keynote speaker and will be presenting information on the finding of bulbs. Please see the attached flyer and share the information with friends and colleagues. Ron has requested that the MGs call in their RSVPs to the Extension office as soon as possible to help in estimating the attendance.

Sandy Rogers has volunteered

to chair the Nominating Committee. **The Nominating Committee needs two more members!** The Nominating Committee will be slating candidates for President, Treasurer, and one State Director. The slate of candidates should be announced in the October newsletter and the elections taking place at the Annual meeting in November. Please let me know if you are willing to serve on this committee. Nominating Committee members must be active Master Gardeners not currently serving on the Executive Committee.

As always, let me know of questions, concerns or suggestions.

Carolyn Mason

President

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Demonstration Beds

The Demonstration Area at the 4-H building is meant to be an area designed by the CVMGs to exhibit some ideas about plants, soil preparation and material for use in the landscape, both for Master Gardeners and the public.

The Texas Superstar bed is the bed that is long and narrow (40 feet by 10 feet). Plants are selected for this bed in two ways. The first plants were selected based on plants that Allison was given at the 2011 annual agents meeting to test in the region of Texas. We still have some of those plants in the bed. She also brought back plants from this year's agent meeting. These plants are spread out throughout the



demonstration beds based on sunlight needs and space.

The second method of selection is identifying plants on the Texas Superstar® list that should do well in our region of Texas. This list can be found at on the webpage for Texas Superstar® plants (<http://texassuperstar.com/>). This website lists the plants that have been tested and selected based on their performance in different regions of Texas. The website provides information about the plants, how the plants were selected, growing tips, and possible retailers of the plants.

This bed was also conceived to test the benefits of amending the soils with expanded shale and of using mulch. The middle twenty feet of the bed had expanded shale in addition to compost and topsoil. We have added expanded shale to many of the beds for its water retention properties. According to the Aggie-Horticulture website (http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/newsletters/hortupdate/hortupdate_archives/2003/nov03/



[Expdshale.html](#)), the shale is mined ground and kiln-fired. The heating of the shale results in cavities being left behind. These cavities are thought to absorb moisture in the presence of water to be released slowly at a later time. When the beds were first planted we only mulched the half of the bed closest to the parking lot. Plants were replicated in each quarter. Within two weeks we had weeds that were waist high. Pictures were taken and the bed was weeded and mulched! Because of the quality of the soil used in the bed initially, the impact of the shale is limited moisture retention and release.



Three Outstanding Nurseries in San Antonio Area

By *Carol Diminnie*

Carolyn Mason and I have made several trips to San Antonio in the last two months for surgery and follow-up visits for my right hand. In order to make these treks more enjoyable, we have made it a point to visit garden shops or arboretums in the San Antonio vicinity. This article will describe three of the garden centers that we visited.

There are two Rainbow Gardens in San Antonio. These two stores offer "10 acres of gardening heaven" between them. The Bandera Road location (8516 Bandera Rd at Guilbeau Rd.) is the larger of the two (6 acres). This nursery was voted San Antonio Express News Reader's Choice

Award for 2011. It is designed to recreate the experience of strolling through a park. The garden center specializes in low water, low maintenance plants. Annuals, perennials, fruit trees, grape vines, succulents, rose bushes, fountains, and garden statues are arranged along snaking trails. There are butterfly gardens and



a water-wheel equipped koi pond.

Signage on the plants includes light requirements, water needs, and soil modifications as well as blooming characteristics. Many of the rose signs give a brief history of the origin of the plant, while the herb signs offer the history and uses of the plant.

The Thousand Oaks nursery (located at 2585 Thousand Oaks at Henderson Pass) is based on the Bandera Template. Both nurseries offer fountains and garden art, pottery imported from the Far East, paving materials and mulches. The staff is very knowledgeable about

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Oh, The Places I Have Gone!

Dallas Arboretum

The Dallas Arboretum (8525 Garland Road, Dallas, 214-515-6500, www.dallasarboretum.org) is an interesting place to visit on its own. Now through November 5 Dale Chihuly has glass sculpture works interspersed through the gardens. Chihuly does his sculpture in glass. I went during the day and the sun did a god job of lighting the pieces. The arboretum is also open several evenings a week and the pieces are lit.



[“ Chihuly Dallas Arboretum”]



The International Rose Test Garden in Washington Park, Portland, Oregon

The International Rose Test Garden is a public rose test garden established in 1917. It is maintained by 5 staff horticulturist and over 100 volunteers including many Master Gardeners. The volunteers refer to themselves as the dead-headers and responsible for keeping the roses dead-headed and assist with the pruning. The rose garden is divided into several ‘rooms’ with different varieties of roses in each of the ‘rooms.’ To look out over the garden and see all the blooms is amazing. The roses are in bloom late May through September.



Aran Islands, Ireland

The last place I wanted to mention is the Aran Islands. Our group visited the largest of the 3 islands. The island was approximately 25 square miles and has several thousand miles of rock fences. When they want to clear a field they just build more fences or add to existing fences. The topsoil is very thin. In their gardens they layer seaweed and sheep dung and plant primarily potatoes in the layers. Sheep dung is easy to come by as there are more sheep than people on the island. Seaweed is left behind with the changes in the tides.



[“ International Rose Test Garden”]



Compiled by Carolyn Mason



Ron's Ramblings

We are right smack in the middle of another typical hot and dry west Texas summer. And yet, God provides us during this season with some of the most beautiful and spectacular colors of the year. One of my favorite plants in our landscape thrives in this harsh climate. *Pavonia lasiopetala*, is better known as Rock-rose. The flowers are clear pink, 2 inches across, numerous and open every morning and close every afternoon. The flowers are obviously related to the hibiscus family, and a member of the mallow family, according to Sally Wasowski, author of Native Texas Plants. This beauty will bloom from late spring to frost. Usual height is 2-3 feet. It reproduces freely by seed, and we let a few seed-

lings survive each year so they'll eventually replace the mother plants. While technically *Pavonia* is a perennial, it grows like a shrub, because it is woody-stemmed at the base, it branches like a shrub, and it doesn't die back to the roots except in very cold winters. Whenever the plant becomes leggy, it can be trimmed back anytime from February to October in order to maintain a bushy shape. Join me in giving thanks for the spring rain that we received, and pray for the rain that is to come.



May each of you bloom where you are planted!

Leviticus 26:4 I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit.

Ron Knight

FALL LANDSCAPING SYMPOSIUM— SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

Speaker Biographies



Tony Huston

Tony is a licensed Landscape Architect who grew up near San Angelo, Texas. He is married and has 9 children - 5 girls and 4 boys. After graduating from Texas Tech University in 1988, Tony relocated to Southern California where he gained broad knowledge and experience in many areas of Landscape Architecture—areas such as urban planning, community development, construction management, design/build, and residential landscape planning to name a few. Life in California was never intended to be permanent, and he returned to Texas in 1994, bringing a California girl and daughter back with him. Soon after his return to San Angelo, he started A. G. Huston Landscape Architecture which specializes in residential landscape planning.



Bill Neiman

Bill Neiman started his first company in 1974 when he was nineteen years old. He borrowed a shovel, a rake, and lawn mower and advertised offering "total outdoor care." After fifteen years in the landscape and nursery business, Native American Seed was formed. Today, he continues to specialize in the harvest and sale of seed harvested entirely from native plants. Bill is a leader in the movement to conserve natural resources and to restore and maintain the health of the environment. He is passionate about preserving night skies, has recently started living on total rainwater and is an inspirational and entertaining speaker.



Chris Wiesinger

Chris is a 2004 graduate of Texas A&M University, where he majored in horticulture and floriculture, and was a member of the Texas

A&M Corps of Cadets. Chris founded the Southern Bulb Co. from a college project upon graduation. Bulb collecting adventures turn into a life altering quest, as Chris searches for heirloom bulbs across the South. After graduating from college with a horticulture degree, Chris finds himself living in a little red cabin by a lake, farming bulbs, and growing in life and plant knowledge. This talk shares the stories of collecting, conveys horticulture knowledge of bulbs, offer ideas and examples for using bulbs in the landscape, and delights the listener with a journey filled with beautiful forgotten places. This is a life that no matter how far the travels take him, always lands him back home to the red cabin.



Tomatoes: Safe Handling, Preserving and Recipes

Tomatoes are the most popular garden vegetable crop in Texas. They are a good source of vitamin A and fair source of vitamin C. Fresh tomatoes are popular in salads, on sandwiches and sliced. They can be cooked and used in many ways.

Texas gardeners can grow a variety of small- and large-fruited tomatoes. Varieties suggested for the Concho Valley by Allison Watkins, CEA are Large fruit (12 oz)-Super Fantastic or Celebrity; Medium (4-11 oz) – Carnival, Celebrity, Champion, First Lady, Porter Improved, Sunmaster, Bingo; Small – (<3 oz) Cherry Grande, Small Fry, Sweet 100.

The old adage "Waste not want not" applies for sure in these days of exorbitant food prices. And those of us who grow our own have always known the value of preserving nature's bounty for off-season use. Occasionally, fresh fruits and vegetables can become contaminated with harmful bacteria or viruses known as pathogens. Examples of pathogens include salmonella, E. coli and Hepatitis A. This contamination can occur at any point from the field to the table.

Storing: Always store whole tomatoes unwashed. Be sure to keep the storage areas clean and dry. When storing or ripening tomatoes at room temperature, keep them separate from household chemicals. In the refrigerator; keep tomatoes separate from raw beef, poultry, fish and seafood. Store raw meats on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator in a tray or pan. This will prevent juice or blood from dripping onto the tomatoes. Throw away tomatoes that touch raw meats, blood or juice. Check tomatoes regularly for signs of spoilage such as mold and slime. If spoiled, tomatoes should be thrown out.

Be sure to refrigerate tomatoes within 2 hours of cutting them. Store them in plastic bags; in clean, airtight containers; or tightly covered in plastic wrap. Keep your refrigerator clean and cold (40 degrees F or below).

Washing and serving: To prevent spoilage and mold growth during storage, it is best to wash tomatoes just before you eat or prepare them. Before handling fresh tomatoes, wash your hands with hot, soapy water for 20 seconds. Dry them with a paper towel. Wash and sanitize all food preparation areas and utensils with a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water.

Then wash all whole tomatoes thoroughly in a clean sink under clean, running water, even if you do not plan to eat the skins. Gently rub each tomato with your hands to help remove dirt and bacteria. Do not use detergents, soaps or bleach to wash fresh tomatoes. These chemicals may change the flavor and could be poisonous.

When cutting or chopping tomatoes, use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meats and fresh tomatoes, or wash and sanitize them between foods. This will prevent any pathogens on the raw meat from being transferred to the tomatoes. Be sure to cut off and throw out the stem end of the tomato. This is the area at the top of the tomato where the stem was attached. Pathogens that can cause foodborne illness may hide in this area.

Since tomatoes are easy to grow and often plentiful, you may find yourself up to your ears in the ripe, scarlet fruit as frost approaches — and a few hints on the preservation of the harvest may be welcome, along with some tomato recipes to enjoy.

How to Rescue Tomatoes From Frost: Green tomatoes that are still on the vine when frost threatens can be used in recipes. Or they can be allowed to ripen in any of several ways and eaten fresh or put up later.

Last summer, when we had friends to move and leave their garden behind, they gathered all the green tomatoes — whatever their size and took the tomatoes with them. They ripened beautifully on windowsills, counters, and tables — all about the same time, so that they ended up canning most of the fruit.



On the other hand, if you don't want to clutter up your entire house with ripening tomatoes for a couple of weeks, you may prefer to wipe the fruit clean, wrap each in newspaper, and then pack the 'maters in cardboard boxes, and store them where they won't freeze. Check for ripeness each day by gently squeezing the fruit and removing those that feel soft — for use fresh, canned or however you like. This procedure can extend your tomato season by weeks.

The last method of harvesting is to uproot whole tomato vines just before frost, shake off the dirt, and hang the plants upside down indoors. The fruit will then ripen in its own time, if you're one of the people for whom this trick works well. You'll just have to experiment to find out. The only major hindrance is the shortage of canning jars. Otherwise, you're limited only by your imagination and energy. Perhaps the bounty of a good tomato crop will leave you hoping, come November, that you never see (much less put up) another 'mater! The feeling won't last long, though, and you'll find your harvest a never-failing source of good winter eating.

Tomatoes can be preserved by canning, drying, freezing, or pickling. They can also be used in creating fruit spreads like jams, jellies and marmalades. Raw tomatoes or raw tomato prod-

ucts can be kept refrigerated (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit), but will spoil over time due to bacteria, yeasts, and molds. Preserving tomatoes in oil is currently not recommended. Oil may protect botulism organisms trapped in a water droplet. Furthermore, oil may have a deleterious effect on lid gaskets and the at least one manufacturer of home canning lids recommends against it.

Canning Tomatoes:

Only boiling water or pressure canning methods are recommended for canning foods. Older methods, such as oven canning and open-kettle canning, have been discredited and can be hazardous (Equipment and Methods Not Recommended from the USDA *Complete Guide to Canning* 1994). The risk of botulism poisoning determines the choice of either boiling water or pressure canners for canning foods. In foods that are acid (pH 4.6 or lower) the microorganism that causes botulism cannot grow. Therefore it is safe to use a boiling water bath canner. All other foods must be canned using tested pressure canning processes.

Tomatoes for many years were considered high acid. However, new varieties, over-mature fruits, and tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines may have a pH greater than 4.6. The USDA and University-based researchers have determined that to ensure a safe acid level for boiling water canning of whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or ½ teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling the jars with product. Add sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. 4 TBls of 5% acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes.

Freezing Tomatoes: Frozen tomatoes will have a mushy texture when thawed and are suitable only for cooking, i.e. in soups, stews, spaghetti sauces, etc. Directions for freezing raw, juice, or stewed tomatoes are found here: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/freeze/tomato.html>. Tomato products, such as sauce, puree, catsup, and chili sauce, can be frozen. Prepare as usual, cool rapidly, pack into rigid containers leaving headspace, and freeze.

Drying Tomatoes: Tomatoes are an excellent food to dry. They do not need blanching and



Concho Valley Master Gardeners

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We're on the web!!

<http://mastergardener.tamu.edu>

<http://txmg.org/conchovalley/>



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organic gardening. I believe you can find just about any plant for your yard at the Rainbow Gardens.

On the way from San Antonio to San Angelo on

I10, there is a delightful garden emporium in Boerne, Texas called the Hill Country African Violet Nursery. It

is well known for the best prices on plants in the Hill Country and features odd cultivars of plants, including African violets, orchids, houseplants, and citrus trees. The African violets and orchid greenhouses are must sees. This is a wonderful nursery. You should visit it and while there, enjoy a pleasant lunch in one of the several Boerne restaurants.



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are dried to a crisp. For more details please consult this Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service publication:

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/dry/csu_dry_vegetables.pdf

Pickling Tomatoes: The safety concerns of pickled tomatoes are the same as those for canning tomatoes. A pH below 4.6 must be achieved before a food can be safely boiling water canner. When pickling, commercially prepared vinegar is typically added to achieve the necessary acidity. Do not alter vinegar, food, or water proportions in a recipe or use vinegar with unknown acidity. Use only recipes with tested proportions of ingredients. There must be a minimum, uniform level of acid throughout the mixed product to prevent the growth of botulinum bacteria.

If this is your first time in canning or preserving or if it has been a number of years since you attempt to preserve fruits & vegetables, there is an excellent guide for all types of preservation at the *National Center for Home Food Preservation* sponsored by the University of Georgia

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Allison's Accents:



"Gardens are not made by sitting in the shade."

Rudyard Kipling

Well it's been another hot, dry summer but at least not as bad as last year! Thank you all so much for the hard work you do, especially in the heat of the summer. There is a lot to look forward to this autumn, including the Fall Landscaping Symposium, Lily Fest, the Earth-Kind Landscaping School, and hopefully some rain! I hope each of you realizes what an impact and difference you make in the

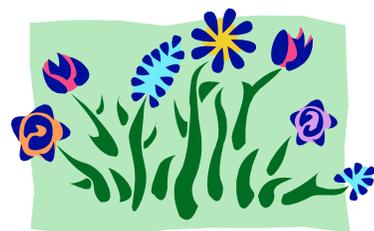
community with all of your work planning and putting on educational events, maintaining demonstration gardens, and working on the plant sale. I am very blessed to work with you!

Allison Watkins

Horticulturist



- Calendar items:**
- ➔ August 17 – *Lunch N Learn*, 12pm – Wildflowers
 - ➔ September 4 – Fall Vegetable Gardening class, 6pm
 - ➔ September 21 – *Lunch N Learn*, 12pm – Plant Selection
 - ➔ September 17, 18, 24, 25 – EarthKind Landscape School, TGC 4H Bldg
 - ➔ September 22—Fall Landscaping Symposium, Stephens Central Library





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Recipes for Tomatoes



Extension Service (<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>) There is a complete guide of canning, freezing, drying, pickling, smoking and curing along with seasonal tips and lots of good recipes. There are recipes of Tomato juice to sauce (spaghetti/Italian), ketchup, BBQ sauce, relish, Salsa and hot sauces. Recipes ideas Next!

Pickled Green Tomato Relish

- 10 lbs small, hard green tomatoes
- 1-1/2 lbs red bell peppers
- 1-1/2 lbs green bell peppers
- 2 lbs onions
- 1/2 cup canning or pickling salt
- 1 qt water
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 qt vinegar (5 percent)
- 1/3 cup prepared yellow mustard
- 2 tbsp cornstarch

Yield: 7 to 9 pints

Please read [Using Boiling Water Canners](#) before beginning. If this is your first time canning, it is recommended that you read [Principles of Home Canning](#).

Procedure: Wash and coarsely grate or finely chop tomatoes, peppers, and onions. Dissolve salt in water and pour over vegetables in large kettle. Heat to boiling and simmer 5 minutes. Drain in colander. Return vegetables to kettle. Add sugar, vinegar, mustard, and cornstarch. Stir to mix. Heat to boil and simmer 5 minutes. Fill sterile pint jars with hot relish, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. For more information see "[Sterilization of Empty Jars](#)".

Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Recommended process time for Pickled Green Tomato Relish in a boiling-water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	5 min	10	15



Tomato Marmalade

- 3 quarts ripe tomatoes (about 5½ pounds tomatoes)
- 3 oranges
- 2 lemons
- 4 sticks cinnamon (3-inch pieces)
- 6 whole allspice
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 6 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt

Yield: About 9 half-pint jars

Please read [Using Boiling Water Canners](#) before beginning. If this is your first time canning, it is recommended that you read [Principles of Home Canning](#).

Procedure: [Sterilize canning jars](#) and prepare two-piece canning lids according to manufacturer's directions.

To Prepare Fruit and Spices – Peel tomatoes; cut tomatoes in small pieces. Drain. Slice oranges and lemons very thin; quarter the slices. Tie cinnamon, allspice & cloves in cheesecloth bag.

To Make Marmalade - [Sterilize canning jars](#).

Place tomato pieces in a large kettle. Add sugar and salt; stir until dissolved. Add oranges, lemons and spice bag. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Continue to boil rapidly, stirring constantly, until thick and clear (about 50 minutes). Remove from heat; skim off foam. Fill hot marmalade into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace.

Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a **Boiling Water Canner**.

Table 1. Recommended process time for Tomato Marmalade in a boiling water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or Pints	5 min	10	15



Succotash

- 15 lbs unhusked sweet corn or 3 qts cut whole kernels
- 14 lbs mature green podded lima beans or 4 qts shelled limas
- 2 qts crushed or whole tomatoes (optional)

Yield: 7 quarts

Procedure: Wash & prepare fresh produce. **Hot pack** – Combine all prepared vegetables in a large kettle with enough water to cover the pieces. Add 1 teaspoon salt to each quart jar, if desired. Boil gently 5 minutes and fill jars with pieces and cooking liquid, leaving 1-inch headspace.

Raw pack – Fill jars with equal parts of all prepared vegetables, leaving 1-inch headspace. Do not shake or press down pieces. Add 1 teaspoon salt to each quart jar, if desired. Add fresh boiling water, leaving 1-inch headspace.

Recommended process time for Succotash in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot & Raw	Pints	60 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
	Qts	85	11	12	13	14

The Tom Green County Home Economist, Kathy Aycock will be presenting a canning program entitled, "[Food Preservation the Heart Healthy, Diabetic Friendly Way](#)" on the following dates. All interested persons are invited to join in these sessions.

When: [Sept 11](#)—"Yes You Can" covering the basics of Water Bath canning and food preservation principals.

[Sept 18](#)—"Put a Little Pressure in Your Life" covering pressure canning for low acid foods.

[Sept 25](#)—"In a Pickle—How about the Salsa" emphasizing various pickle and salsa recipes.

Where: TGC 4-H Building

Time: 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon

Cost: \$25.00, includes supplies for all 3

RSVP: To the County Extension Office at (325) 659-6527 by September 6th

What to bring: a knife & a cutting board

The Concho Valley Master Gardeners Present:
Fall Landscaping Symposium

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Presentations:

**Tony Huston - Owner, A. G. Huston Landscape
Architecture**

Residential Landscape Design Principles

Bill Neiman - Owner, Native American Seed
Eco - Logical approach to creating Outdoor Living Spaces
for Responsible Beauty

Chris Wiesinger - Owner, The Southern Bulb Co.
The Bulb Hunter: A story of seeking out botanical treasures.

Location: Stephens Central Library Community Room
33 W. Beauregard, San Angelo

Registration 8:30am - Program 9am-12pm

Cost: \$20 per household (\$15 Master Gardeners)
Refreshments will be provided during breaks

Visit txmg.org/conchovalley for parking and other information

Call to RSVP: 325-659-6522

Please RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 19

to assure seating and
handout materials

No childcare provided.

