

HighLights

Trial Gardens and HortResearch at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

Vol. 1 No. 8

September 29, 2014

Published by Dr. Gene Blythe

Plan to attend the **41st Annual Ornamental Horticulture Field Day** to be held at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville on **Thursday, October 2, 2014**. Tours of the trial gardens and research updates from scientists at Mississippi State University and the USDA-ARS Southern Horticultural Laboratory will be featured in the morning and conclude with door prizes in the early afternoon. Registration begins at 9:00 AM and the program begins at 9:30 AM. A \$10.00 registration fee (\$6.50 for students) includes lunch and refreshments. (Address and directions are at the bottom of this newsletter.)



The 2014 variety trials are drawing to a close. Current and upcoming varieties that performed well in cool-season trials, spring trials, and summer trials in the Trial Gardens in Poplarville will be featured at the Field Day. (The photo above shows some of the colorful beds from the spring trials.)



The 2014 All-America Selections (AAS) Display Garden in Poplarville continues to provide a colorful display of award-winning flowers. Guests at the Field Day will have a chance to view the gardens close up, learn about the new 2014 AAS winners, and have a preview of the 2015 AAS winners.

Shown at left is *Gaillardia* 'Mesa Yellow', an AAS winner from 2010 (in the foreground), along with *Angelonia* 'Serenita Pink', a 2014 AAS winner (in the center).

Colocasia 'Black Coral' (at right) is one of the several elephant ears that can be grown in full sun or part sun to give a tropical feel to the garden. Michael Anderson will share his experience with growing and using *Colocasia* and *Alocasia* varieties in the summer landscape during the 2014 Field Day.



Helenium 'Dakota Gold' (above), an improved garden variety of the Texas native *Helenium amarum*, has been grown in our Trial Gardens over the past three years and has exhibited dependable performance each summer. This annual is grown from seed and produces compact mounds of fine-textured foliage with abundant yellow flowers.



Scarlet eggplant (*Solanum aethiopicum*), native to sub-Saharan Africa, is grown as a food, medicinal, and ornamental crop. At the 2014 Field Day, Dr. Hamidou Sakhanokho will discuss the wide variety of morphological traits observed among diploid and tetraploid plants in his studies. Note the various fruit shape in photos above and to the left.

[Photos by Hamidou Sakhanokho.]



The South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station is located at 711 W. North St., Poplarville, MS 39470 (across from Pearl River Community College). From the intersection of Highways 11 and 26, go ½ mile north on Hwy. 11 and one block west on W. North Street. The Trial Gardens are open daily during daylight hours. Removal of plant materials is prohibited. For questions about the gardens, call 601-795-4525.

