



HighLights



Trial Gardens and HortResearch at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

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Published by Dr. Gene Blythe

The Trial Gardens seem to be aflame with hot, glowing colors of the summer season. Fiery reds, sizzling oranges, and blazing yellows light up the landscape, drawing the eye to the vibrant colors of multi-colored foliage on sun coleus, crimson plumes on celosia, and the 'sacred fire' of a compact nandina.



Coleus 'Campfire' (above), a new cutting-grown variety from Ball FloraPlant for the upcoming year, is displaying hot shades of rusty orange on large leaves produced on well-branched plants while growing in full sun. Even from a distance, this new variety attracts the attention of visitors to the Trial Gardens. If grown with some shade, we suspect that the leaves will tend toward a more orangey color.



The foliage of 'FlameThrower Spiced Curry' coleus (above), from Ball FloraPlant for 2016, has taken on shades of yellow and orange, with reddish markings at the base of the leaves, while growing in full sun.



New for 2016 gardens from Ball FloraPlant is 'FlameThrower Chipotle' coleus (left). In the Trial Gardens, this cutting-grown variety has shown a dense, compact habit with foliage that is brightly colored with lime-green and golden-yellow, along with darker reddish-bronze markings. Our plants are growing in full sun beds, but the compact habit will also make this variety a good choice for containers on the patio. A part-shade location should bring out more green in the foliage.

Celosia argentea plumosa 'China Town' (right), a seed-propagated, plumed celosia that is currently on the market from the breeding company HM-Clause, is in full bloom with upright, fiery-red plumes on red-colored stems above foliage tinged with reddish bronze. Foliage may be a darker color under cooler conditions, but tends to stay on the green side under our warm summer temperatures. In Europe, *Celosia* 'China Town' earned a Fleuroselect novelty award in 2007.



Nandina domestica, 'Seika' Obsession™, provided by Flowerwood Nursery, has made a nice addition to our gardens. The variety name 'Seika' means 'sacred fire' in Japanese and refers to the bright red, new foliage produced on the dense, compact plants. The red color holds up well in our warm temperatures. This variety, discovered at the Magnolia Gardens Nursery tissue culture facility in Texas, is included in the Southern Living Plant Collection and the Sunset Western Garden Collection.



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.

