

# HighLights

Trial Gardens and HortResearch at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

Vol. 2 No. 21

October 28, 2015

Published by Dr. Gene Blythe

**As salad greens come into view,  
you realize, they're looking back at you!**



Maturing plants of 'Sandy' lettuce [an All-America Selections (AAS) winner for 2015 and bred by Terra Organics] have taken on an ornamental (and eye-opening) characteristic in the AAS Display Garden.

**Tomato's kin, these plants adorned  
with pumpkin orange and pointed thorns!**



*Solanum pyracanthos*, the porcupine tomato, is grown as an ornamental for its abundance of bright orange thorns on the leaves and stems. Plants are cold-sensitive, so must be grown indoors during the winter. The plants contain tropane alkaloids in their stems, leaves, and fruit, so should be treated as poisonous.

**A thick mist falls, the darkness lingers,  
and citrus fruits develop fingers!**



*Citrus medica* var. *sarcodactylis* (Buddha's hand or fingered citron), makes a most unusual container plant, with a fruit ideally suited for Halloween decorating and spooky table arrangements.



**The sorcerer's wand  
brings forth a flood,  
now let black pearls  
turn red as blood!**

Fruit of the ornamental pepper 'Black Pearl' (an AAS winner for 2006 and bred by PanAmerican Seed) turn from jet black to a lustrous red late in the growing season. Fruit are edible, but hot!

**These ghostly candles,  
white as snow,  
will draw you near  
with their eerie glow!**



Inflorescences of *Piper auritum* (root beer plant) are abundant at this time of year among the large leaves. Plants grow to around 8 feet in a shaded area of our garden and give a tropical feel, dying to the ground in winter and emerging in spring. Plants can spread rather quickly!