

HighLights

Trial Gardens and HortResearch at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

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Spring variety trials are well underway, as well as planting for summer trials, at the experiment station in Poplarville. Plants will be evaluated several times during the season for flowering, foliage color, habit, durability, uniqueness, and pest and disease resistance. Identifying varieties of annuals and seasonal perennials that perform well in the heat and humidity of late spring and summer in south Mississippi is important to nursery producers, landscapers, and home gardeners.



Viola 'Sorbet XP Morpho'

Cool season variety trials have now concluded. Two new varieties of viola from PanAmerican Seed that provided outstanding performance were 'Sorbet XP Morpho' and 'Sorbet XP Primrose Blotch'. These two varieties received top ratings at every evaluation during the 6-month evaluation period due to their continuous production of flowers and tidy appearance. The unusually cold weather we experienced during the winter did not stop these varieties from providing a constant display of flowers.



Spring variety trials underway in the gardens.

All plant varieties under trial are identified by bed markers with the plant name and source. Some varieties are new on the market, while others are scheduled for release next year. Participants in our 2014 variety trials include:

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|---------------------|-----------------------|
| AgriStarts | Kieft |
| American Takii | PanAmerican Seed |
| Ball FloraPlant | Proven Winners |
| Benary | Selecta |
| Burpee Home Gardens | University of Florida |

FIELD DAY

Mark your calendars for the 41st Annual Ornamental Horticulture Field Day to be held at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station on Thursday, October 2, 2014. Variety trial results from Mississippi State University and research updates from the USDA-ARS will be included.



Viola 'Sorbet XP Primrose Blotch'

Text and photos by Dr. Gene Blythe