

# Mississippi *Vaccinium* Journal

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## Good Times

I don't know how many of you remember the TV show 'Good Times', but I sure do. The most well-known character was JJ, played by Jimmie Walker. His famous exclamation "Dy-no-mite" was always good for a laugh. This year, the blueberry crop was "Dy-no-mite" too. Good yields, few reports of disease and insect problems, and prices held up too. All in all things took a turn for the better this year compared to the last couple of years. And, boy, did we sure need a turnaround. 'Good Times' was a short-lived show, only going on for a few years; however, people still remember 'Dy-no-Mite'. Hopefully our own good times in the Mississippi blueberry industry remain 'Dy-no-mite'!

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## New Soil Testing Pricing

Effective July 1, 2016, the cost for soil samples received in the MSU-ES Soil Testing Lab for a routine soil analysis will increase to \$8.00 per sample.

As always, contact your local county Extension office for more details and instructions on how to properly take a sample.

If do not know where your closest county Extension office is, have no fear and just click here: <http://extension.msstate.edu/county-offices>

## New Research and Teaching Orchard includes Blueberries

Jeff Wilson

MSU-ES, Horticulturist, Verona, MS

A new demonstration and teaching orchard that includes blueberry cultivars Alapaha, O'Neal, Star, Titan, and Vernon was planned and installed during the winter months of 2016 in Verona, MS at the North MS Research & Extension Center (NMREC). We determined a need for a place to have hands-on trainings for Extension Ag Agents, commercial horticulture producers, and the general public. A USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant was submitted in the previous year and approved to help fund this project.

A one acre block was set aside for this planting. The weeds were eliminated in early fall and the ground was plowed and disked in preparation for the wet winter months. The trees and vines were installed in March of this year. The plants will be used to educate clientele on numerous fruit production methods, such as: planting, fertilizing, watering, pruning, and insect and weed control, and harvesting.

A total of 165 plants were installed with numerous cultivars of each fruit type. We planted blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, grape, Muscadine, peach, apple, pear, plum, persimmon, and pecan. This orchard will hopefully be a positive addition to the NMREC and to the surrounding area for years to come.



Fig. 1. Smoothing the row middles and shaping the beds.

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## New Orchard, cont.

Jeff Wilson

MSU-ES, Horticulturist, Verona, MS



Figs. 2-4 Blueberries  
in place with mulch,  
June 2016.  
Photos by Jeff Wilson



## Blueberry Anthracnose

Eric Stafne, MSU-ES

Anthracnose on blueberry is also sometimes called ripe rot. It is caused by a fungus (*Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*) that infects leaves, canes, blossoms, and fruit. This disease has been found on 'Farthing', a southern highbush variety, in Florida and Georgia. 'Farthing' is not grown in Mississippi so this is of little concern. However, it has also been reported on 'Brightwell' rabbiteye blueberry, of which there is a considerable amount in Mississippi.

According to Dr. Barbara Smith of the USDA-ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory in Poplarville, this disease has not been a significant issue yet in Mississippi — at least it has not been reported as such. Why has this disease problem been growing in Georgia and Florida. It appears that fungicide resistance may be to blame, primarily resistance to strobilurin fungicides. (i.e. Abound, Cabrio, Pristine).

Symptoms will show up on over-ripe and late season fruit after rainfall. If anyone out there in Mississippi has had a significant problem with this recently, please let me know. We need to keep on top of this issue. A report of thousands of pounds of fruit being rejected because of the disease has been made from Georgia. Obviously, we want to head off any influx of this disease here before it can gain a foothold.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Phil Brannen, UGA

## Society of St. Andrew Gleaning Network Information

Society of St. Andrew, with its partner farms and volunteers, has delivered more than 750-million pounds of nutritious food to hungry Americans. We glean and gather the food, distribute it through our network of partnerships and feeding agencies, and then provide a year-end statement to the farmer/donor.

My name is Andy Lemmon. I am the new Program Coordinator for the largest gleaning network in Mississippi, Society of St. Andrew. I am currently seeking out farmers, growers, providers, grading houses, and anyone else who would like to participate in helping to prevent waste and feeding the hungry in Mississippi.

Here's how it works:

Contact Us: Contact your local Gleaning Program Coordinator, Andy Lemmon, or go to our website at <http://endhunger.org/donate-crops> to learn about benefits and procedures and to connect with your closest office.

Discuss Opportunities: Feel free to give me a call any time. I would love to explore ways we can work together to prevent nutritious crops from going to waste and how we can help to feed the hungry in our state. We utilize crops of all kinds.

Supply Food: You can call me any time at 769-233-0887 or email [gleanms@endhunger.org](mailto:gleanms@endhunger.org) and we can collect surplus food in bulk, or we can arrange a time to send supervised volunteers into your fields to collect remaining food.

Receive Tax Benefits: We keep accurate records of all donated produce and gleanings to provide you with a statement of contributions at the end of each year for tax-purposes.

Simply put: Farmers notify Society of St. Andrew when the harvest is done, and edible food remains in the fields. We will coordinate volunteers to pick and deliver the food. We will arrange collection and delivery of the food to local food banks, food pantries, hunger relief agencies, and neighborhood ministries. We then keep careful records to send you a year-end statement.

We protect the farmer in every way possible. The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996 protects farmers from any civil liability from donated produce. We also have our 25,000+ volunteers sign waivers before every event to help us care for them fully and to provide protection to you, the farmer. Typically, these gleaning events are planned on Saturday mornings from 8am-12pm. However, we can schedule the events to fit a farmer's schedule. Our aim is to keep things as simple as possible as we prevent waste and glean the fields.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to know more about what sets up apart and more about our goals.

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### Blueberry Jubilee 2016 in Poplarville

Eric T. Stafne, MSU-ES

I was in charge of getting vendors for the 2016 Poplarville Blueberry Jubilee. This year we had about 20 vendors selling blueberry products and other related things. We had a little quick downpour, but everyone soldiered on in the sweltering humidity. There were plenty of fresh blueberries to be had this year. Below are a couple photos of the event by the courthouse in downtown Poplarville, MS. Crowds were excellent this year and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves immensely.



## University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture releases “Norman,” a new southern highbush blueberry

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — “Norman,” the third blueberry variety released from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture fruit breeding program, offers a firm, tasty fruit suitable for all berry markets.

John R. Clark, Distinguished Professor of horticulture and director of the division’s fruit breeding program, said “Norman” is named for James Norman Moore, Clark’s mentor and predecessor. Moore founded the division’s fruit breeding program in 1964 and began crossbreeding blueberries in the 1970s. That work led to the release of “Ozarkblue” in 1996 and “Summit” in 1999. “Norman” was officially released in late 2015.

“Before leaving home for college, Dr. Moore was widely known as ‘Norman,’” Clark said. “In college and ever after, he became known as ‘James’ or ‘Jim,’ but he told me he always liked ‘Norman.’”

The new blueberry is a southern highbush variety with semi-upright plants and good vigor, Clark said. The berries average about 1.7 to just over 2 grams from plants grown in test plots at the Fruit Research Station at Clarksville. They have excellent color and flavor and are firm, making them suitable for commercial fruit shipping operations as well as local fresh markets, including on-farm and farmers markets.

Yield is comparable to “Ozarkblue” and “Summit,” Clark said, and “Norman” ripens in mid-June, about 8 days before “Ozarkblue.”

“This is a high quality berry for Arkansas growers,” Clark said, adding that “Norman” is well adapted to growing conditions in all parts of the state, and especially in central and southern areas.

Clark said “Norman” begins bud swell early, which may make it susceptible to late winter freeze and spring frost damage to developing buds or flowers in some years. He said this was because “Norman” has lower chilling requirement than “Ozarkblue.” But in most years, Norman has been very productive at the Fruit Research Station near Clarksville.

“Norman” will be available from North American Plants, Inc., to licensed nurseries in the fall, said Cheryl Nimmo, fiscal support analyst for the Division of Agriculture.

Information about Division of Agriculture blueberry, blackberry, grape, peach and nectarine varieties, including lists of licensed propagators, is available online:

<http://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/horticulture/fruits.aspx>



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### **Must Have Resources**

Eric Stafne, MSU-ES

There are just some resources that a grower (and an Extension Specialist) can't do without. Luckily, we have such great publications to draw from in the Southeast region. Below are three updated publications for 2016, plus a link that is the source of them. These guides are for Organic blueberry production, use of growth regulators, and IPM. Extremely valuable information for any scale blueberry grower.

[2016 Southeast Regional Organic Blueberry Pest Management Guide A Guide for Managing Diseases, Insects, Weeds and Wildlife in Blueberries in the Southeast](#)

[Southeast Regional Blueberry Horticulture and Growth Regulator Guide](#)

[2016 Southeast Regional Blueberry Integrated Management Guide](#)

Small Fruit Consortium:

<http://www.smallfruits.org/SmallFruitsRegGuide/index.htm>