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- Eric T. Stafne

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Another Tough Year

No other way to look at it — 2023 was a disastrous year for blueberries in Mississippi. A late frost coupled with excessive heat and drought conditions led to a failed crop and dead bushes. Unirrigated bushes were severely damaged in some cases, especially if they were mostly planted in mulch. Even on our research station in McNeill we lost numerous bushes because the irrigation system was broken for the summer. On the bright side, we can replace it with new plants and new varieties. But what does the future bring? Will the devastating drought of 23 lead to poor cropping in 24? Maybe, it's difficult to know for sure right now. However, we will keep learning and adapting. In 2024 we will continue our annual blueberry workshops — one in-person and one virtual. You can find the details within this newsletter. Let's hope for a prosperous new year.

2024 Annual Blueberry Education Workshops

The Mississippi State University Extension Service will be hosting 2 workshops for blueberry growers in 2024 — an in-person workshop in Hattiesburg and an online workshop . The dates and times for the in-person workshop will be February 8 from 9-12pm. The Virtual workshop will be February 15 from 1-2pm.

Right now things are in the planning stages with more information to follow.

If you have received this newsletter via email, you will get notification of the workshop details. The workshop will also be advertised via other outlets as well. Stay tuned for more information.

Look on Pages 2-4 for information on committed virtual workshop speakers and their topics. Registration link is on Page 6.

2024 Virtual Blueberry Workshop Speakers



Dr. Eric T. Stafne

Extension and Research Professor
Coastal Research and Extension Center
Mississippi State University

Title: Changes in Plant Hardiness Zones and Ramifications for Mississippi Blueberries

Description: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently updated their plant hardiness zone maps. These maps are based on 30 years worth of weather data. Unsurprisingly, the zones in Mississippi have changed. What does this mean for blueberry plants? Can we start to grow some varieties that were not possible in the past? We will discuss these and more questions.

2024 Virtual Workshop, cont.



Jenny Ryals

Research Associate II

South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

Mississippi State University

Title: Blueberry Propagation Techniques and Tips

Description: This presentation aims to offer advice and methods to enhance the success of growers in propagating blueberries through various techniques. Tailored for both novice and seasoned gardeners and growers, the talk will provide insights applicable to a broad audience with diverse levels of experience.

2024 Virtual Workshop, cont.



Haley Williams

Research Associate I

South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station

Mississippi State University

Title: Blueberry Wine and Blends With Other Small Fruits

Description: This presentation will focus on blueberry wine and blends with other small fruits, providing information on their unique qualities along with some production tips. Whether a hobbyist winemaker or someone simply curious about wine, attendees will gain insights into the possibilities of combining the flavors of blueberries with complementary fruits, expanding their knowledge of fruit-based wines.

2024 Mississippi Blueberry Education Workshop

Where?

MSU Forrest County Extension Office
952 Sullivan Dr, Hattiesburg, MS 39401

When?

Thursday, February 8, 2024 from 9-12PM

Who?

Dr. Eric Stafne — Mississippi State University

Topic: Back to Basics: What to Know About Blueberries

Dr. Blair Sampson — USDA-ARS Poplarville

Topic: Pollination and Pollinators of Blueberry Flowers

Jenny Ryals — Mississippi State University

Topic: Blueberry Propagation Techniques and Tips

Haley Williams — Mississippi State University

Topic: Blueberry Wine and Blends with other Small Fruits

How much?

Free

How to Register?

No prior registration necessary, just show up at the stated time and place.



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Register for the 2024 Virtual Blueberry Workshop

Eric Stafne, MSU-ES

If you wish to attend the virtual blueberry workshop on Thursday, February 15, 2024 you must register in advance. The good news is that it is very simple to do! Just go to the link below and fill in the blanks:

https://reg.extension.msstate.edu/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0081-0004-ea34062480fe4baba07187a241024498

Once you are registered you will receive a confirmation email. As a bonus, you will also receive not 1, but 2, reminders before the event (1 hour before and 5 minutes before).

I hope to see you there.

