

**Editor and Author:**

**Eric T. Stafne**

**Contributors:**

- Eric T. Stafne

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# Mississippi *Vaccinium* Journal

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## Warm Waters Abound

In just a few short weeks we will be in Hurricane Season. I capitalized those words for a reason — it appears we may be in for a doozy of a year. Atlantic waters are warmer than ever and the number of predicted storms is record-breaking. Now we wait. Right now everything looks great. The blueberry crops looks excellent (with a few exceptions), so if we can get the weather to cooperate things will be looking up. In this issue I show some examples of cultivar crop progress on our Poplarville station (both rabbiteye and southern highbush) and invite you to watch the recorded virtual workshop from earlier this year. Exciting news also at USDA-ARS in Poplarville as they are in the process of hiring a new Research Leader. Come and have some input if you are so inclined (I'll be there!). And lastly, don't forget about the Blueberry Jubilee. Even though I am no longer involved with it, I hope you can visit and enjoy some fresh blueberries.

## Blueberry Jubilee 2024

**Eric T. Stafne, Fruit Extension Specialist, MSU-ES**

The 2024 Blueberry Jubilee in Poplarville is on for this year. It will take place on June 8. If you are interested in participating as a vendor go to this website and download the application forms:

<https://blueberryjubilee.net/applications>

The blueberry jubilee in Poplarville is a good way to interact with consumers — and they all love blueberries!

P.S. I am no longer in charge of the Blueberry Products section.

## 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.

To view this and the following 2 presentations go to this link:

<https://vimeo.com/913490716/18ed7f6c58?share=copy>

## 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.



## Blueberry Cultivar Crop Progress

Eric T. Stafne — Fruit Specialist, MSU

As of April 25, 2024 the blueberry crop looks very good. I have noticed a few bushes that do not have as much fruit as I expected. My thought is it could be drought related, as they were not irrigated last summer. Another thing to look out for — just because a bush looks great right now does not mean it might not have problems later as a delayed effect of the drought. If you start seeing seemingly healthy bushes with full crops die suddenly then it may be due to a reduced root system from extreme heat and drought last year. On the next few pages are photos of different blueberry cultivars on the Poplarville station.



Sapphire



## Blueberry Crop, cont.



Austin



Alapaha



## Blueberry Crop, cont.



Star



Springhigh



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Coastal Research and Extension  
Center

South Mississippi Branch  
Experiment Station  
810 Hwy 26 West  
Poplarville, MS 39470

Phone: 662-769-9708

E-mail: [eric.stafne@msstate.edu](mailto:eric.stafne@msstate.edu)

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## **USDA-ARS Hiring New Research Leader**

**Eric T. Stafne, Fruit Extension Specialist MSU-ES**

The Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory is excited to announce the upcoming Seminar/Interview for new Research Leader.

Seminar sessions will occur Thursday May 2 at 8:00 am and 12:30 pm and on Friday May 3 at 8:00 am.

Q&A session will follow.

You are invited to attend the seminar sessions with Q&A to follow.

The address for the TCSHL is 810 Hwy 26 West, Poplarville, MS 39470

Blueberry growers or any other interested party are invited to attend. Each seminar will last approximately 1 hour.

If you are interested in attending virtually, please let me know and I can forward that request along to the USDA-ARS folks.