

FOCUS

Teaching, Research and Outreach in
the Division of Agriculture, Forestry
and Veterinary Medicine

Y'all Come: Lots of Reasons to Visit MSU facilities

Each year thousands of people visit the MSU campus in Starkville and the university's other facilities throughout the state. Activities of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine draw almost as many people as athletic events.

Among division events are agronomic field days, open houses and programs showcasing work with plants for home lawns and gardens at the branches of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. There are 16 of those facilities throughout the state.

Fall Flower and Garden Fest



The largest and oldest flower and garden event in the state is the annual Fall Flower and Garden Fest at the Truck Crops Branch Experiment Station in Crystal Springs. Located 25 miles south of Jackson, the two-day event has an average attendance of about 6,000, making it the largest home garden show in the Southeast.

Each year's schedule of events includes garden seminars, wagon ride tours and walking tours of the station's vegetable

and flower gardens. Research scientists with the experiment station and MSU Extension Service specialists are always on hand to answer questions.

The 2007 Garden Fest is scheduled for Oct. 12-13. More information is available on the Web at www.msstate.edu/dept/cmrec/fallgardenday.htm.

Magnolia Gardens

A popular year-round draw for those looking for ideas for their home landscape is the Magnolia Botanical Gardens at the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Verona.

The gardens are divided into outdoor rooms, each with its own theme, including roses, water plants, shade plants and shrubs. Visitors can see how plants fit into various landscape plans. MSU horticulturists use the area to evaluate plant varieties and practices such as weed control, pruning and fertilization.

The Magnolia gardens are open to the public each weekday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. They also are featured during the research and extension center's spring garden fest. Another special event at the gardens, the Scarecrow Trail, takes place each October. Scarecrows, from the traditional to the highly fanciful, are created by local school groups, businesses and organizations for display throughout the gardens.



Bob Ratliff

Ornamental Horticulture Field Day

Each fall, the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville opens its trial gardens to the public for the Ornamental Horticulture Field Day.

The trial gardens began with two small plots in 1997 and today cover several acres. The gardens are used to evaluate plant material from a variety of sources, including the Mississippi Medallion program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Arboretum and seed companies.

The trials help Mississippi's commercial nurseries decide whether they want to add a particular plant to their product line. A visit to the trial gardens also give homeowners a chance to see how plants, especially new ones, may look and perform in their home lawns.

The 2007 Ornamental Horticulture Field Day is set for Oct. 4.



Bob Ratliff

Agricultural Field Days

Mississippi row crop and livestock producers have opportunities to learn more about their enterprises at field days covering topics ranging from crop variety evaluations to pasture management.

The White Sand Unit in Pearl River County hosts the Beef Field Day, and the annual Statewide Dairy Field Day is held at Tylertown in Walthall County. Both beef and dairy producers can learn more about hay production at Hay Day at the Brown Loam Experiment Station in Hinds County.

The North Mississippi Branch Experiment Station hosts an agronomic field day for cotton, corn and soybean producers, and the annual Agronomic Crops Field Day at the Delta Research and Extension Center showcases research with the Delta's primary crops, including cotton, corn, soybeans and rice. The 2007 field day also highlighted the Delta's role in the area of energy production from agronomic crops and other feedstock sources, including ethanol from corn and biodiesel from soybeans, catfish oil and poultry fat.



Robert Wells

Campus Youth Programs Combine Learning, Fun

There are opportunities throughout the year for young people to visit the MSU campus, and some involve the whole family.

CVM Open House



Tom Thompson

For more than two decades, the College of Veterinary Medicine has welcomed people of all ages to its annual open house. Adults can learn about how CVM research and other activities help keep family pets and farm animals healthy, while young children always head for the petting zoo.

The CVM open house also gives high school students a chance to talk to veterinary students and faculty about veterinary career paths.

The open house is usually held in early April.

4-H Activities Offer Variety

Almost 90,000 young people participate in the MSU Extension Service's 4-H Youth Program. Each year, 4-H members have the opportunity to attend 4-H camps, workshops and other activities on the MSU campus or other locations in the state.

Among the most popular activities are the two entomology camps held each summer. Known to the 4-H'ers as "bug camp," the events give participants the chance to start or add to an insect collection and to learn about insects from experts. The camps are also a chance to meet new people with a common interest—bugs.

The first 4-H State Technology and Engineering Conference was held in July on campus. During the four-day event, about 50 4-H members and adult leaders from across the state chose to focus on one of five main tracks, including Web design, digital photography, Flash, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and an adult track. The adult track provided curriculum and lesson plans to volunteer leaders to use back in their home counties.

The largest gathering of Mississippi 4-H members is the annual Club Congress at MSU. The 2007 congress brought about 600 club members and volunteer leaders to campus for the celebration of 100 years of 4-H in Mississippi.



Shelly Guy

Wildlife and Fisheries Camps for All Ages

Fly tying, tomahawk throwing, trapping and tanning all sound like adventures from the pages of *Huckleberry Finn*, but for some 60 students and parents or grandparents, they were part of two intergenerational camps on the Mississippi State University campus this summer.

Hosted by MSU's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the four-day summer camps were enjoyable experiences for both young and old.

"While parents were not required to participate with their children, those that did learned about wildlife and fisheries management and experienced a number of unusual and fun activities," said John Guyton, camp organizer and an associate Extension professor. "It turned out that the adults were among the most enthusiastic campers."

The Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge played a significant role in the camp, with many of the staff involved and the refuge serving as an incredible outdoor classroom, Guyton added.

Camp started at 1 p.m. on a Sunday with campers immediately fishing for catfish.

"This was the first time many of the campers had been fishing," Guyton said.

A discussion of fishing techniques was followed by an electro-shocking demonstration. Other afternoon events included tours of the dry pond at the Wildlife and Fisheries Research and Education Facility, the opportunity to scrape a hide in preparation for tanning, an introduction to fly tying and training to use GPS receivers.

Each day at camp began at sunrise and ended with night tours and lessons in astronomy.

"Bird walks, night sounds, shooting muzzle loaders, waterfowl habitat, bird ecology and trapping, small mammal trapping, tracking, skulls and pelts, edible plants, weather forecasting, Mississippi rocks, turkey hunting and nature art were just a few of the activities campers experienced," Guyton said.

The campers also were certified in hunter education and boating safety, Guyton added.

The camp's partners and sponsors included the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; Mississippi Museum of Natural Science; Mississippi Wildlife Federation; USDA Wildlife Services; the Berryman Institute; and MSU's College of Forest Resources and Extension Service.

"We are hardwired to nature but in the last few generations, our separation from the land has become an increasing problem," Guyton said. "The camps return children to the woods and teach them how to enjoy our natural resource heritage."



Dace Ammon



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