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Mississippi State University Extension Service

Fall Flower, Garden Fest set for October

MISSISSIPPI STATE -- The 29th annual Fall Flower and Garden Fest in Crystal Springs to be held Oct. 12 and 13 will delight garden and horticulture enthusiasts with acres of vegetables, flowers and herbs.

The two-day event will be held at the Truck Crops Experiment Station and will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission and parking are free. Features will include a huge plant sale, and wagon ride and walking tours throughout the fest. Specific topics for the guided walking tours are plant diseases, trees, and adaptations for accessible gardening as well as tours through the flower garden and vegetable garden. A self-guided tour on backyard conservation is also planned.

Additional plots include banana trial, ethnic, shade, hummingbird and butterfly gardens, the Mississippi Medallion Winners Garden and the All-American Selection Winners Garden.

The theme of the 2007 flower and garden fest is better health and nutrition with fruits and vegetables. Several seminars will focus on this topic including Cooking Healthy with Fruits and Vegetables, Adding Value to Mississippi's Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and Nutritious is Delicious.

The Southern Fruit Fellowship is also scheduled to deliver six talks on fruit crops. Topics to be covered are Mulberries and Chinese Che, Figs for the South, Pear Rootstocks, Dwarfing and the Perfect Southern Pear, Fruit Breeding for the Amateur, and Citrus for Climate Zones 8A and 8B followed by a question and answer session on citrus plants.

New this year, *Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi* will be onsite to kick-off the fest with a one-mile walk on Oct. 12 from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Entry is free. The first 300 walkers will receive a free pedometer.

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Sponsored by the Mississippi State University's Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the event attracts more than 6,000 people from across the region every year. In addition to the garden tours, visitors can view educational displays and demonstrations. Seventeen garden seminars on a wide variety of topics will be held each day.

Some of the demonstrations and workshops include pond management, climbing vegetables and flowers, ornamental grasses, beekeeping, backyard wildlife habitats and shade gardening. The "Corn Meal Man" and Master Gardener programs are also on the agenda.

The Truck Crops Experiment Station is located on Highway 51 in Crystal Springs, 25 miles south of Jackson. Take exit 68 off Interstate 55 to get there. For more information, visit the event Web site at <http://msucares.com/fallfest> or call (601) 892-3731 or the local county Extension office.