

# Garden expo shows off fall opportunities



Bonnie Coblenz

By Bonnie Coblenz

The North Mississippi Research and Extension Center threw open its doors and gardens Sept. 28 to welcome visitors to the North Mississippi Garden Expo.

Crofton Sloan, event organizer, said threatening weather from Tropical Storm Isidore didn't keep about 450 people from coming, and rain held off for the day to be a success. Visitors could preview the entire event by participating in walking tours of the facility led by Lee County Master Gardeners.

From there, visitors could tour the gardens in more detail, take part in hands-on demonstrations in the Magnolia Botanical Gardens Pavilion, hear seminars indoors, or visit the information booths and plant sales set up under tents outdoors.

Early visitors got to see Extension horticulture specialist Lelia Kelly demonstrate how to craft with garden and native materials. Later in the morning, Tim Needham, Extension county director in Tippah County, demonstrated plant propagation techniques.

Seminars inside were from Margaret Gratz, the "Earth Lady," talking about discovering the natural world in backyards, and Eugene Randolph of the Memphis Bonsai Society discussing the art of bonsai.

Throughout the event, visitors stopped and smelled the roses as they browsed, admired, picked up tips and asked questions while they made their way through the various stops at the garden expo.

Special features were the vegetable and herb plots, pizza farm, ornamental greenhouse, rose gardens, butterfly tent, turf plots, annual and perennial beds, fruit trees, vegetable greenhouse, shade area and native plant garden.

Inside the main exhibit tent, several MAFES and Extension specialists answered questions on a variety of topics including composting, soil preparation, pesticide safety and plant diseases. They also helped gardeners identify unfamiliar plants and diagnose plant illnesses.

The North Mississippi Garden Expo is sponsored each fall by MAFES and the MSU Extension Service, with the help of several corporate sponsors and area volunteers.

## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual FALL FLOWER & GARDEN FEST

*Crystal Springs / Oct. 18-19, 2002*



Marco Niconich

Thousands of visitors to the Truck Crops Branch Experiment Station in Crystal Springs were treated to another outstanding year of spectacular displays and educational opportunities at the 24th annual Fall Flower & Garden Fest.

More than 2,000 people walked the grounds each day of the two-day event. Weather challenges from a tropical storm and a hurricane in the months before the event made organizers nervous, but by the time gates opened on Oct. 18, most of the flowers and vegetables were impressive.



Marco Niconich