Plan to attend the 41st Annual Ornamental Horticulture Field Day to be held at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville on Thursday, October 2, 2014. Tours of the trial gardens and research updates from scientists at Mississippi State University and the USDA-ARS Southern Horticultural Laboratory will be featured in the morning and conclude with door prizes in the early afternoon. Registration begins at 9:00 AM and the program begins at 9:30 AM. A $10.00 registration fee ($6.50 for students) includes lunch and refreshments. (Address and directions are at the bottom of this newsletter.)

The 2014 variety trials are drawing to a close. Current and upcoming varieties that performed well in cool-season trials, spring trials, and summer trials in the Trial Gardens in Poplarville will be featured at the Field Day. (The photo above shows some of the colorful beds from the spring trials.)

Scarlet eggplant (Solanum aethiopicum), native to sub-Saharan Africa, is grown as a food, medicinal, and ornamental crop. At the 2014 Field Day, Dr. Hamidou Sakhanokho will discuss the wide variety of morphological traits observed among diploid and tetraploid plants in his studies. Note the various fruit shape in photos above and to the left.

[Photos by Hamidou Sakhanokho.]

Colocasia ‘Black Coral’ (at right) is one of the several elephant ears that can be grown in full sun or part sun to give a tropical feel to the garden. Michael Anderson will share his experience with growing and using Colocasia and Alocasia varieties in the summer landscape during the 2014 Field Day.

Helenium ‘Dakota Gold’ (above), an improved garden variety of the Texas native Helenium amarum, has been grown in our Trial Gardens over the past three years and has exhibited dependable performance each summer. This annual is grown from seed and produces compact mounds of fine-textured foliage with abundant yellow flowers.

[Photos by Hamidou Sakhanokho.]