



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **MDAC Accepting Applications for Garden Grant Programs**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – As part of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce’s (MDAC) Freshly Picked campaign, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced that MDAC is now accepting applications for the school and community garden grant programs. The Freshly Picked campaign, funded through the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, is dedicated to creating more awareness for Mississippi specialty crops.

The school garden grant, *Growing Lunch*, is a great interactive and educational tool for teachers to incorporate agriculture and healthy eating into their everyday classroom. Schools and early childhood learning centers can apply for a grant of up to \$500 to purchase supplies needed to develop a school garden or to further enhance an existing school garden. All K-12 schools and pre-schools providing appropriate documentation and located in the state of Mississippi are eligible to apply.

*Let’s Plant* is a community garden grant program designed to encourage community involvement and interest in growing fresh produce. Community organizations, local governments and non-profits are eligible to apply for funds, up to \$750, to purchase supplies needed to develop or expand an existing community garden.

“I’m excited to announce our agency is currently taking applications for two garden grant programs,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Through these unique programs, our young people will learn where their food comes from and actively participate in the growing process, teaching them valuable lessons that will last a lifetime. Communities will also have the opportunity to come together and plant gardens that will provide fresh produce and healthy eating habits for their families. This kind of direct exposure to Mississippi specialty crops is great because it serves all, including our agriculture and urban communities.”

Garden grants for both programs are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per school or community. Schools and communities that have received a garden grant from MDAC in the past are not eligible to apply for additional funds at this time. For more information about the program or

to view the application, visit the Alerts and Announcements section at [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov) or contact Susan Lawrence at 601-213-7542 or [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov).

To learn more about Mississippi's specialty crops, be sure to listen to the Freshly Picked podcast series featuring a variety of specialty crop farmers, experts, entrepreneurs and chefs as they tell the stories behind their farms, businesses and the unique products they offer. Tune in now at [www.msfreshlypicked.com](http://www.msfreshlypicked.com)!

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