



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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MDAC Hosts Seed-to-Table Themed Freshly Picked Podcast Featuring Special Guests from Staple Establishments in Hinds County

JACKSON, Miss. – The latest episode of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce’s (MDAC) Freshly Picked podcast featuring special guests Jonathan McCraw, manager of the Mississippi Farmer Market in Jackson, and Billy Hutto, co-owner of Hutto’s Home and Garden Center in Jackson.

These special guests hold conversations with Host Claude Nash about the importance of shopping local and how their respective establishments positively impact consumers, producers and their communities. McCraw discusses how farmers markets provide a place for farmers to sell fresh produce, including specialty crops like greens, tomatoes, blueberries, watermelons and carrots, directly to consumers. In comparison, Hutto sheds light on his garden center where farmers and gardeners can purchase seeds, fertilizers, nursery plants and other essentials to support their farming and gardening projects. Both businesses are valuable to the average consumer and considered essential to Mississippi’s food system.

The Mississippi Farmers Market, located off High Street in downtown Jackson, was established in 2006 and has served as a popular gathering place for farmers, producers, artisans and consumers around central Mississippi for 18 years. McCraw says the farmers market not only connects farmers with the community, but also provides shoppers an educational experience by talking with vendors to gain practical knowledge on gardening, soil prep and more. The market also hosts multiple events throughout the year to promote seasonal crops, harvest time and holidays. McCraw goes on to discuss the unique presence of the Genuine MS® Store, located inside the Mississippi Farmers Market. He describes the store as an asset that allows guests to shop products grown, raised, crafted and made in Mississippi year-round.

“The Genuine MS® Store is absolutely beneficial to the Mississippi Farmers Market,” says McCraw. “It has true value by allowing businesses that are a part of the Genuine MS® program who aren’t capable of making it every Saturday to the market to have products available for purchase in the store front throughout the week, as well as on Saturdays.”

Hutto’s Home and Garden Center has been around since 1968 as a one-stop shop for all customers in need of seeds, tools and services for their farm or garden. Today, consumers can expect a range of items from

vegetable seeds and fruit trees to gardening tools and sharpening services, as well as expertise on the best farming practices. One of the ways the center educates the public is by hosting an annual seminar every February which includes sessions on pruning, selection, care, common issues and more. Hutto emphasized that this annual seminar is free and open to the public. His passion for supporting the small farmer and gardener stems from his respect for the lifestyle, saying “gardeners strengthen our society.” He goes on to describe one of his favorite parts of the job – watching people from all walks of life come together with the common purpose of gardening. Hutto recalls looking out over the crowds during their Fruit Trees Seminar and seeing people of different classes, races and religions all focused on the singular goal of growing produce and horticulture.

Tune in to today’s episode, titled “From Seed to Table: Celebrating Mississippi's Specialty Crops,” at 9:30 a.m. by visiting www.msfreshlypicked.com or on any major podcast platform. For more information on the Mississippi Farmers Market and MDAC’s Genuine MS® Store, visit www.msfarmersmarket.com and www.genuinems.com, and follow their accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X. Find further details on Hutto’s Home and Garden Center at www.huttos.net and on Facebook.

The Freshly Picked podcast series, developed by MDAC, will feature 24 episodes and include specialty crop farmers, experts, entrepreneurs and/or chefs as they tell the stories behind their farms, businesses and the unique products they offer. Listeners can find new episodes every Thursday through February 2025 at www.msfreshlypicked.com, Spotify, Apple Podcasts or other major platforms.

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Photo attached.



The latest episode of MDAC’s Freshly Picked podcast, titled “From Seed to Table: Celebrating Mississippi's Specialty Crops,” airs today at 9:30 a.m. Pictured L-R: Billy Hutto, co-owner of Hutto’s Home and Garden Center in Jackson; Jonathan McCraw, manager of the Mississippi Farmer Market in Jackson, and Claude Nash, podcast host and editor of the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*.