



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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MDAC Releases Freshly Picked Podcast Featuring Guests from Lee and Rankin Counties

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) releases its latest episode, “Growing Smarter: How Education and Innovation Shape Mississippi Horticulture,” as part of the Freshly Picked podcast series to promote Mississippi specialty crops. The horticulture-themed episode features special guests Dr. Jeff Wilson, assistant horticulture professor and state consumer horticulture specialist with Mississippi State University Extension Service located at North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Verona, and Bill Rivers, owner and operator of Rivers Nursery in Brandon.

Dr. Wilson also serves as the state master gardener coordinator where he oversees educational programs for 1,500 master gardeners in 62 counties across Mississippi. In this episode, he discusses groundbreaking advancements and how to nurture personal connections within the horticulture industry with Podcast Host Claude Nash. Rivers Nursery is a family-owned business that has been thriving since 1979 and specializes in homegrown flowers, vegetable plants, shrubs and more. Bill talks about the important role nurseries play in shaping local horticulture. Today, his operation consists of 80 greenhouses at a wholesale location and an additional 10 greenhouses at a retail garden center.

“Whether you’re a gardening enthusiast or curious about the future of Mississippi agriculture, this episode offers fresh insights, practical tips and plenty of inspiration to help you grow your own plants,” said Host Nash.

Tune in to this special episode now by visiting www.msfreshlypicked.com or any major podcast platform.

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 “Growing Smarter: How Education and Innovation Shape Mississippi Horticulture,” airs today at 9:30 a.m. Pictured L-R: Bill Rivers, owner and operator of Rivers Nursery in Brandon; Dr. Jeff Wilson, assistant horticulture professor and state consumer horticulture specialist at Mississippi State University; and Claude Nash, podcast host and editor of MDAC’s *Mississippi Market Bulletin*.