

Third Place Winner (tie): Mississippi State Univ-South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station, Poplarville, Mississippi



Participation in the AAS Display Garden Challenge is a highlight of the year for the dedicated volunteers at this garden. In planning, they decided to include a diverse mix of games as well as both old and new AAS Winners planted in a myriad of ways. Since June is the peak for both color and performance in South Mississippi, they planned June as the month to feature all the Games in the Garden. The games were positioned to bring visitors to the main display garden to see the AAS trials. From there, visitors saw the first game (Ring Toss) that played homage to AAS winning vegetables. Nearby, American Dream corn made the perfect 'corny' backdrop for their Corn Hole game. Next to that was a tic-tac-toe game using pool noodles for the game matrix and labeled frisbees: a Master Gardener logo (for the X's) and an AAS Winner logo (for the O's).

An AAS trivia game was extremely popular with all visitors who were given a card with questions related to the AAS Display Garden. For example, "Which AAS rudbeckia was a 1961 winner?" (Answer: Gloriosa Double Daisy) In order to determine the answer, visitors would have to find these plants in the garden and scan the QR code found on each label. Each QR Code goes to that AAS Winner's webpage. As an added bonus, visitors who turned in a completed trivia card were presented with an AAS plant to take home. These free plants included Mega Bloom Pink Halo and Mega Bloom Polka Dot, among others. All in, they incorporated 26 ornamental and 18 vegetable varieties as part of the challenge.