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Mississippi Inmates Harvest Over 143,000 lbs. of Produce

JACKSON, MS - Mississippi inmates have concluded a highly productive summer harvesting 143,000 lbs. of produce, such as broccoli, okra, corn, and peas, providing a significant addition to the inmates' meal trays.

Inmates across the state dedicated their days to their horticulture projects, spending hours in greenhouses and gardens, and tilling gardens wherever available at Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, Marshall County Correctional Facility, Walnut Grove Correctional Facility, Delta Correctional Facility, Mississippi Correctional Institute for Women, and Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

"The program is designed to teach inmates how to garden so that upon release, they can provide food for their families and cut the cost of healthy living, and we are helping to feed ourselves," said MDOC Commissioner Burl Cain.

Showcasing their diverse agricultural skills, inmates harvested varieties of produce based on irrigation abilities, and availability of space and seeds. The crops included:

- South Mississippi Correctional Institution: 24,123 lbs. of blueberries on 25 acres.
- Mississippi State Penitentiary: 118,140 lbs. of produce due to the acreage for row crops; the facility leads production.
- Delta Correctional Facility: wildflowers, fruit trees, grapes, honeydew melons, and more.
- Marshall County Correctional Facility: 89.25 bushels of butter beans and counting.
- Walnut Grove Correctional Facility: numerous pounds of tomatoes.
- Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and Mississippi Correctional Institute for Women: multiple gardens, providing hundreds of vegetables.

MSP Inmate Will Washington expressed gratitude for the horticulture program. Washington, who is eligible for release this year, plans to start his own landscaping business. “I have to give thanks to this program for showing me my love and passion for the horticulture industry. The program promotes positivity amongst inmates involved in horticulture, which benefits the culture of the prison as a whole; it brings us joy to see what we grew from a seed benefiting the lives of others.”

Washington confirmed inmates are looking forward to their next agricultural endeavors, eagerly preparing for their fall and winter crops while still basking in the success of their summer harvests.

Media note:

<https://www.facebook.com/MississippiDepartmentOfCorrections/>

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Inmates load fresh watermelons from a field at MSP.



Gardens of various sizes can be seen in a variety of areas on the grounds of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman Farms. Inmates use them to practice skills in horticulture.



Inmates at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution sift through thousands of blueberries as part of a harvest of 118,140 lbs. collected over 25 acres during the summer.



Land at the Delta Correctional Facility in Greenwood includes a variety of horticultural products whose growth allow inmates to learn skills that can benefit them during and after incarceration.



Vegetable gardens are popular means of growing food for supplementing meals at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and the Mississippi Correctional Institute for Women. The inmates also gain skills in how to cultivate the gardens and harvest products.



This sunflower brightens the gardens at the Walnut Grove Correctional Facility where inmates tend to their tomato plants until harvest time. Their time spent in the gardens provides outdoor exercise while also learning horticultural skills that benefit them during and after their incarceration.