2004 Garden Academy Begins March 5

January 8, 2004

**What is this new program that the Master Gardeners are planning?** Master Gardeners and local Extension Agents are planning an exciting new program for middle Georgia gardeners - the 2004 Garden Academy.

Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who answer garden questions, conduct garden programs and help to make Georgia a better place to live. The Master Gardener program is taught during the day and most of the opportunities to volunteer are available 8 to 5 during week days. This makes it difficult for those working traditional jobs to participate in the Master Gardener program. Some gardeners want to learn more but cannot attend the Master Gardener class. This is one of the reasons Master Gardeners have planned the 2004 Garden Academy.

The Garden Academy is a seven week long program designed for those who love to garden and want to learn more. Gardeners can learn more about pruning, vegetable gardening, house plants, wildlife management, lawn care, composting and much more. The Academy is taught at night to allow working gardeners to attend. There is no volunteer hours requirement for The Garden Academy as required for Master Gardeners.

The Garden Academy is an extended course planned and taught by Master Gardeners, Extension Agents and other gardeners. Though not as in-depth as the Master Gardener series, the Garden Academy provides advanced training for gardening lovers in middle Georgia.

The Garden Academy is planned for Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. from February 5 through April 1. Classes will be taught in the Commissioners Board Room at the County Annex in Warner Robins.

The class fee of $100 includes all sessions, handouts, a 2004 Central Georgia Gardener’s Calendar and two pest management handbooks. The class is limited to 35 participants.

Interested in learning more about this new and exciting class? Contact the Houston County Extension Service to receive registration materials. We can be reached at 542-2020 or uge2153b@uga.edu For questions, contact Master Gardeners Lois Wills (987-7649 or loiswills@aol.com ) or Deborah Blaylock at 987-2089.

**When will the next Master Gardener training be held?** Some gardeners like to learn and want to be involved in sharing what they know through volunteering. Master Gardeners help other gardeners in many ways.

Master Gardeners started a Junior Master Gardener program in 2004, assisted with the Georgia Grown exhibit at the Georgia National Fair, planted flowers at the Church Home for the Aged, helped with a landscape training conducted in Spanish and answered many of your garden questions.

The next Master Gardener training for the Macon-Warner Robins area is planned for early in 2005. To be a Master Gardener, a person must complete the training, pass three quizzes and volunteer 50 hours in the first year after they graduate. Master Gardeners volunteer their time to help others and do not use their status to promote a business or to make money.

If you would like to be notified when we plan the next class, send your mailing address to your local Extension office. Then you will receive a registration form when we advertise the class – probably in December of 2004.

Whether you want to be involved as a Master Gardener or attend the Garden Academy, the UGA Extension Service has a program that could be of interest to you. We hope to see you at one of these exciting programs.