

## **Master Gardener Update**

### **Bobby Smith, Morgan County Extension Agent**

The Morgan County Master Gardeners have organized and are plowing ahead full steam. They are meeting on the first Monday of each month at different locations including here at the Extension office. They have an optimistic agenda to try and complete over the next year. If you are a Master Gardener looking for a local group to actively join give us a call and we will give your information to our Officers.

Want to know more about Master Gardeners? The Master Gardener program is conducted throughout the United States and Canada. The Master Gardener Program in Georgia is a volunteer training program designed to help UGA Cooperative Extension Agents share research-based information about gardening and related subjects with the public by training home gardeners. Master Gardeners currently are active in most Georgia counties. In part, local Master Gardener Associations exist to educate and many times assist in funding community organizations with gardening projects. Master Gardeners teach the principles of horticulture and garden maintenance to members of the organization as well as to the public.

Generally, Master Gardeners do not perform long term maintenance but educate local groups in performing maintenance tasks effectively and efficiently and when requested assist by funding worthy projects. Through this program, volunteers benefit from the initial training classes sponsored by UGA and County Extension Offices as well as ongoing training is the latest in horticulture research. In addition, Master Gardeners have the opportunity to share their knowledge with others and the community benefits from their service. A fee is involved which includes a comprehensive training manual, a name badge and membership in the local as well as the Georgia Master Gardener Association for the year following graduation. Class topics include vegetable and food gardening, plant disease and identification, insect control, ornamental shrubs, tree care, turf grass management, annuals, perennials, pest identification, pest control and Xeriscaping.

Master Gardener training Classes are offered in several counties throughout the state. The Classes usually begin in January and consist of three months training, two days a week for 3-4 four hours per session. Upon graduation, to become a certified Master Gardener volunteers must complete 50 hours of volunteer service to the community and 25 hours thereafter to remain certified. If you love gardening and would like to contribute to your community this could be a program for you. For more information about the Master Gardener program in your area, contact the Cooperative Extension office nearest you by calling 1-800-ASK-UGA1, 1-800-275-8421. Sign up for local classes at the Georgia Botanical Garden by contacting the Clarke County office for an application at (706) 613-3640.