



Photo by Robert Lee Long

From left, Frances Braswell, Madison-Ridgeland Academy art instructor and her granddaughter Britton Yerger, an MRA student, look over the colorful variety of springtime plants at Martinson's Garden Works in advance of the sixth-annual Gardens of Madison County, May 6 and 7.

A Cookout Under The Stars, at Summertree clubhouse kicks off the event May 5. Tours of seven area gardens are also on tap. Steering Committee member and MRA alumni Beth Yerger, husband Michael Yerger and Allen and Mimi Martinson of Garden Works look on.

Garden tour fund-raiser May 5-7

By ROBERT LEE LONG
Staff Reporter

MADISON —Strolling through the garden of their 100-year-old farmhouse, Carlton and Pam O'Keefe of Madison look like a typical couple one might see on the Home and Gardens cable channel.

However, local garden enthusiasts and greenthumbs won't have to admire the garden and surrounding 20 acres from afar or adjust the color on their television sets to appreciate the blazing beauty of the O'Keefe garden with its blooming daffodils and myriad other flowers and plants.

The O'Keefe garden and six other

homes are part of Madison-Ridgeland Academy's sixth annual Gardens of Madison County, slated for May 5-7, which benefits the school's development foundation.

The night before the tours begin, gardeners can plan to sit back and enjoy the tour's kickoff event, the Cookout Under the Stars, on Friday, May 5 from 6 until 9:30 p.m. at the Summertree clubhouse.

Cost for the cookout is \$25 per person or \$40 per couple. The gardens tour, which includes seven gardens in all, will be held Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7.

Local and state experts will discuss garden topics from roses to Mississipi

Medallion plants to container gardening.

The garden tour tickets, available at \$10 per person, may be purchased by calling 856-4455 or 856-6921. Maps to area homes will be provided.

Four gardens in Annandale will be featured including Bobby and Connie Crosswell, Martin and Kathy Holmes, David and Lyn McMillin and Dow and Cheryl Welch along with three country gardens, which include Herb and Barbara Kroeze, Ralph and Lynne Stillions and the O'Keefe's.

In the quiet country setting at the O'Keefe home, located just down the road from the historic Chapel of the Cross on Mississippi 463, visitors can

stand at the gate and look through the arch of an antique rose garden. Old fashioned trees, shrubs and flowering perennials greet visitors as well, with several plants climbing up trellis work and archways. Hundreds of daffodils are in bloom. An herb garden is in a separate area on the side, with flagstone stepping stones keeping the visitor on the right path.

Pam O'Keefe is a master gardener, herself, having followed in the footsteps of her teacher and mentor, Felder Rushing, well-known local television gardener, columnist and horticulturalist. Her knowledge of plants and trees comes in handy, she said, since she has

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