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By: Rachel Sullivan

Hay House prepares for annual tour

For the 17th year, Hay House is hosting its annual tour of homes and gardens. Recently named one of the top 20 events in the Southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society, the event consists of three separate tours through various locales in Macon.

“This year we are featuring homes in north Macon for the garden tour,” said Katey Brown, director of the Hay House. “We choose different areas every year and we think people will really enjoy wandering through some of the beautiful estates there.

“There are many wonderful secret and hidden nooks around Macon,” Brown said. “We’ve picked out some that we know people will enjoy seeing. There are a variety of plants and décor and a lot of people really like these tours so that they can get ideas for their own gardens.”

Heidi Ream, the chair of the tour, agreed.

“This is a wonderful way to see beautiful private gardens typically not open to the public,” Ream said.

The Historic Home Tour “highlights some of the really amazing architecture around north Macon,” Brown said. “There are four homes on this tour, all located in the North Highlands and Shirley Hills historic districts.”

The last tour, the Moonlight Tour, is geared toward romantics and features strolls through Historic Downtown Macon at twilight on Friday and Saturday evenings.

“There are four locations,” Ream said. “All of them are lofts. There are a lot of longtime residents of Macon who are unaware of loft living opportunities in downtown and we think they’ll enjoy the tour.”

Brown agreed. "This tour is showcasing some of the fun and funky ways that people can live in loft spaces and really make them their own."

All the tickets include a tour of Hay House as well. In addition to the actual tours, Hay House is hosting a Garden Market on its lawn.

"The market is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday," Brown said. "There will be tons of vendors selling everything from flowering plants, herbs, perennials, garden art, birdhouses, to home accents and all sorts of things in between.

"It's completely free and I encourage any gardeners to come and check it out," Brown added.

Lastly, the weekend will include seminars given by landscape designer Tara Dillard, whose self-described mission statement is to look outside her own home windows and think, "Ohhh, woow!" The seminars include Vanishing Threshold: Combining Life, House and Garden at 11 a.m. May 1, and Beautiful by Design: Stunning Blueprints for Harmonious Gardens at 2 p.m. May 2.

"This is one of the main fundraising events we do each year," Ream said. "The proceeds go toward the support and programming of the Hay House, including the ongoing renovations project."

"This has always been a successful event," Brown said. "We're all looking forward to it this year."