



Village Institute for Sustainable Technologies & Agriculture

VISTA MATTERS

-October 2025 Newsletter-

**creepy crawlies
in the garden**

Are you brave enough for:
Insect Encounters
Haunted Scavenger Hunt
Insect Crafts
Ant Tasting
Carnivorous Plant Demo
Bug Crawl Nature Walk
Face Painting
and more!

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 18TH
9 AM - 12 PM**

**FREE
EVENT FOR
ALL AGES**

**BUG OUT AT THIS EDUCATIONAL EVENT!
VISTA GARDENS - 13572 S. VILLAGE DRIVE**

VISTA Met Its Match

Thanks to the generosity of
VISTA members and
community friends, VISTA



met the July/August match goal established by Diana and Mohan Rao and Jennifer Grebenschikoff and David Kirschman. Among the many worthy causes to support, you continue to appreciate VISTA Gardens with your financial contributions. Together, we are

cultivating a vibrant and sustainable community for generations to come and we thank you for your ongoing support! As we enjoy the wonderful success we have experienced, we look forward to how we can continue to thrive. Everything that is special about VISTA is due to you, our members, our volunteer Board members, and our volunteer Committee Chairs who dedicate time and energy and enthusiasm to help make VISTA such a happy place. [Read more](#) here about your Board and how VISTA functions.

Q: How does VISTA spend the dues and donations it receives?

A: The dues we pay for our Seasonal or Community membership pay for all of VISTA's operating expenses like liability insurance (required by the County), the portable potty, low cost repairs, accounting software, website management, garden soil for the beds, etc.

For almost all the bigger projects we request donations. Donations, grants, and Eagle Scout projects have paid for the upgraded solar powered pump system, the solar powered entrance gate, the pergolas, the creation of the wildflower garden on the berm, the native plant garden around the pavilion, the original work in the woodland area, the cut-flower garden, etc.

While we appreciate all new project ideas, VISTA has a process to start new projects that cost over a couple hundred dollars. In May and June as we approach the beginning of each new fiscal year (July 1- June 30) each committee submits a budget. Project ideas above the budget are placed on a wishlist. That is the list we use in our July Giving newsletter.

VISTA's Grants and Marketing Committees of volunteers then solicit grants or other funding sources for the projects. In July this year we were so fortunate to receive funding from four generous members for a solar powered ceiling fan for the pavilion. The funds received from other members and community supporters who donated during our match this year and who added donations to their dues payments will go toward numerous other projects to help make VISTA a wonderful place for all of us to enjoy. THANK YOU!

Guide Our Amazing Volunteer Team!

- Are you a natural leader?
- Do you like to give directions?
- Is coordinating people and projects your strength?

If your answers are yes/maybe, then VISTA has the job for you! Rick and Jane Jackson are moving to Lithia and won't be able to

continue to lead the twice a month volunteer days with the Sickles High School National Honor Society students. These kids are smart, engaging, energetic, and fun to work with. This volunteer job is easy to do since the student leaders in the NHS handle all the paperwork and scheduling, etc. And this is a perfect way for you to complete your monthly volunteer hours. Intrigued? Contact [Jennifer](#) to discuss this "job" at VISTA.



Recipe of the Month

Have a favorite recipe to share. [Submit here.](#)

Simple Vinaigrette

Contributed by Corey Soberanis

It's radish season - and what better way to enjoy it or any other veggies than with a simple vinaigrette? This is an easy recipe in which parsley can be substituted with dill, mint, or cilantro.



Ingredients

- 1/3 C - Lemon juice w/ zest
- 1/2 C - Rice Wine Vinegar
- 2 Tbsp - Dijon Mustard
- 1/3 C - Honey
- 1/3 C - Chopped Parsley
- 10 Fl Oz - Olive Oil

Preparation

- Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, scraping sides as necessary.

Use this [VISTA members only link](#) or use <https://forms.gle/4ceW5GjT8aW3q78z1> to submit your favorite harvest recipe!

The Herb Committee is excited to announce the planting of a [**Bay Laurel tree \(*Laurus nobilis*\)**](#) in the herb garden! Bay leaves are treasured for their rich flavor in soups, stews, and sauces, and this tree will be a wonderful long-term addition to our community



garden.

Because the tree is newly planted, we ask that no one prune or harvest from it until it has been established for at least one year. Experts recommend giving the tree this time to strengthen its root system before we begin shaping or sharing leaves.

You'll find the Bay Laurel in a pot just north of the pergola in the herb garden. With a little patience now, it will thrive for years to come—providing both beauty and flavor for the garden community. Thank you for helping us care for this new addition!



The Pond Committee

welcomes two new VISTA members, Sandra and Martha. We look forward to working with them.

VISTA members, as well as community neighbors, come to relax beside the pond and we have amenities for their enjoyment, including our new pergola.

This autumn, enjoy the green leaves turning colors on the [Red maple \(*Acer rubrum*\)](#) tree southwest of the pond

and watch for samaras (commonly known as 'helicopters,' due to their distinctive shape) spin through the air disbursing seeds. Click [here](#) to learn more about Florida's Fall Foliage.

We plan to add shade covering to make the pergola area even more comfortable. Come sit and enjoy the solitude of our pond and the surrounding landscape of Florida native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers.

The automated irrigation system added this past spring, courtesy of a generous donation, really did the job! Our committee no longer has to manually water the plantings surrounding our pond, including the [Hammock Twinflower \(*Dyschoriste humistrata*\)](#), which is a great turfgrass replacement in moist areas. We especially enjoy its tiny, delicate blue-purple flowers.



Mark your Calendar October Events

Wed, Oct. 1, 4-5p

New Member Orientation - Reserve with [Beverly S.](#) Stop by the pavilion for a tasting of Corey's vinaigrette with radishes and to welcome VISTA's newest members. (See Corey's recipe below.)

Fri, Oct. 3, 9-10a

Join volunteers maintaining the Florida Native Plant gardens at Carrollwood Village Park, adding your touch to our growing "pollinator corridor" in Carrollwood.

Sat, Oct. 4, 830-1030a

Member Work Day for all VISTA members. Bring your gloves and water. Community member Diana Rao will be taking wonderful photographs. If you haven't yet been introduced in "[Meet the Members of VISTA Garden](#)" on our website, come wearing your smile!

Sun, Oct. 5, 9-11a

Volunteer to work alongside USF Rotaract members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

Sat, Oct. 11, 8-11a

Volunteer to work alongside Sickles High School National Honor Society members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

Sat, Oct. 18, 9a-12p

Creepy Crawlies! A spooky educational event for people ages 3-103!

Sat, Oct. 18, 10-11a

New Member Orientation - Reserve with [Beverly S.](#)

Sat and Sun, Oct. 18 and 19, 8-10a

Seedling transplants (that thrive in cooler weather) will be available for pickup by VISTA gardeners who ordered them this past July.

Sun, Oct. 19, 9-11a

Volunteer to work alongside USF Rotaract members as they complete

planned projects at VISTA.

Sat, Oct. 25, 8-11a

Volunteer to work alongside Sickles High School National Honor Society members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

Save this Date!

Sat, Nov. 8, 830-1030a

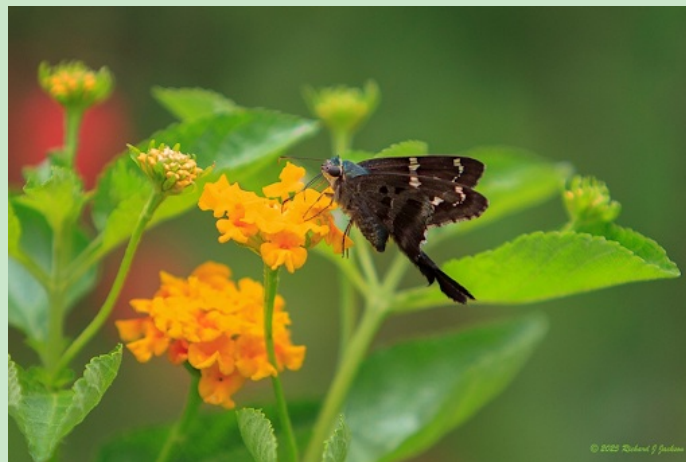
VISTA Member Work Day for all of our members. *Bring your gloves and plenty of water to drink.* We'll also host members of the Sickles HS NHS during this event. They are delightful company, and they will work at VISTA until 11a if you want to stay with them a bit longer!

East Coast Lantana



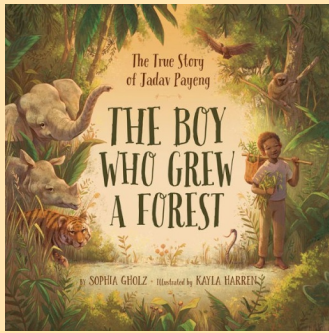
[Long-tailed Skipper butterfly \(Urbanus proteus\)](#) on the flower of [East Coast Lantana \(Lantana depressa var floridana\)](#). This Florida native plant cultivar is a large, bushy shrub with vibrant green leaves that produces dense clusters of small, bright to pale yellow flowers attractive to many pollinators. Find two in VISTA's Wildflower Garden. One is near the bench east of the pergola and another is below the Eastern Bluebird house to provide natural shelter

for birds.



New in the Little Free Library

Both VISTA and our community appreciate
Forever Friends

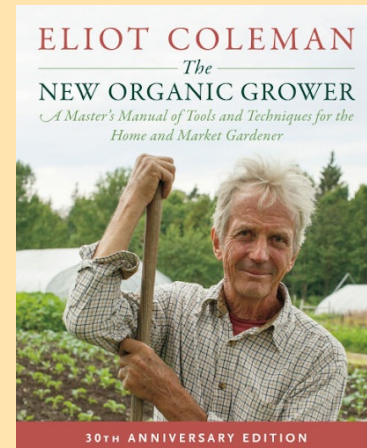


Share this [Florida Book Award Gold Winner](#) about the inspiring story of a boy with an idea to solve deforestation with readers ages 5-7. What began as a small thicket of bamboo grew to a 1,300 acre forest of native plants and animals. [READ MORE](#)



A vibrant journey through the six classification kingdoms of animals, plants, protists, fungi, archaea, and bacteria, inspiring readers ages 6-10 to explore and understand the wonders of nature. [READ MORE](#)

This comprehensive gardening manual helps organic gardeners achieve and maintain long lasting soil fertility, preserve the nutritional value of food crops and deal with pest problems. [READ MORE](#)



Gardener Highlight



Jennifer Grebenschikoff gardens in AW1 and BE1 and volunteers as the President of VISTA's Board of Directors [READ MORE](#)

Q&A

Q: I want to raise my bed so that it is double height. I want to add a permanent structure to my bed. How do I do that?

A: Any structural changes at VISTA Gardens require Board permission. This includes changes to your vegetable or flower bed such as adding another level to your bed frame and/or attaching a permanent trellis (trellises that are anchored in the pathway don't need approval). This policy also includes creating new structures in common areas of the garden such as pergolas, benches, etc. VISTA's Board welcomes discussion of your creative ideas! *FYI: Members who receive permission to double the height of their beds reimburse VISTA for the additional soil required to fill the second layer.*



Fun Fact

Wondering how the **Winged Elm (Ulmus alata)** tree near VISTA's Pond get its name and what relationship does Winged Elm wood have to Tampa's Bolts?

Well, Winged Elm trees are most easily identified by the tough, corky "wings" on their twigs, and Tampa Bay Lightning fans may be interested in knowing that the wood of Winged Elm, known to be heavy, hard, and shock

resistant, was used to make hockey sticks in the days before composite materials.

Photo Credit to **Friends of Pinchgut Creek**

Great life transformations are often gardens grown from tiny seeds that you've been planting for a very long time. -Adapted from a quotation in "The Pivot Year" by Brianna West

Click here to submit your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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