



VISTA MATTERS

-September 2025 Edition-



Tips for Successful Transplanting

If you have ordered transplants from VISTA, they will be ready to go into the ground right away. If you are growing your own seedlings, make sure you harden them before transplanting by gradually exposing them to outdoor conditions over 7-10 days.

- Try to plant early in the morning or late in the afternoon to avoid transplant shock.
- When you are ready to put your plants in the ground, dig a hole slightly deeper than the depth of the starter tray. Put a little compost into the hole and then plant your transplant. Except for tomatoes – dig a deep trench and place the plant into the ground sideways with just the top leaves exposed. This promotes better root growth!

- Water deeply immediately after transplanting. Keep the soil moist but not soggy for the first 7-10 days.
 - Adding mulch* around the transplant is a good way to retain soil moisture and regulate the soil temperature.
- *The mulch in our cement block bins is for use in pathways only, as it is not food grade tested. Many VISTA gardeners purchase at the member discount [Grow!t Organic Coco Coir](#) mulch from Urban Roots, a [VISTA Community Partner](#).**
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Connections and Collaborations

A community garden grows more than just food and flowers; it cultivates connections, nurtures neighbors, and harvests hope. VISTA is grateful for its collaborations with so many community groups and organizations. Did you know that VISTA is connected with:

- The Coalition of Community Gardens, where we are one of 50+ community gardens
- Numerous local restaurants that give us a percentage of their receipts on special VISTA Days there
- Student volunteer organizations, such as Carrollwood Day School Composters, Sickles High School National Honor Society, USF Rotaract, and UT PEACE Volunteer Center
- Community Food Pantry, where VISTA receives discarded food items for our compost activity
- Generous partners/sponsors/donors featured on our [Community Partners page](#)
- Groups who tour VISTA, such as Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at USF, garden clubs, master gardeners, local schools, and scout troops

We are grateful for collaborations that ensure a thriving community with valued connections among VISTA members and beyond.

VISTA Members August Work Day

Yes, it was hot, sticky and windless. But they got it done. The shed got cleaned, the Coast of Maine bags got delivered, the compost got moved, the HRS got spiffed up, the cover crops got chopped and dropped, and the pathway and perimeter weeds got pulled. With many thanks to your fellow members for their energy on August 16! Join us on Saturday, September 13, for our next Members Work Day.



Eryngium Aquaticum

Eryngium aquaticum has interesting common names, attracts many pollinators and is especially important for native bees, like the green Sweat bee in this photograph by Rick Jackson.



Committee News

Meet VISTA's New Marketing Chair!

Barb Mahlmeister, one of VISTA's founding members who gardens with Jennifer and her family at AW1, BW1, and BE1, has stepped forward to become Chair of Marketing. Barb has had many other VISTA leadership roles over the years including her activities in education, video production and working with student volunteers. Barb will be reaching out to local businesses and organizations to ask for their support of VISTA's many programs and activities. If you have an interest in working with Barb or you have an idea for her, please contact her via [email](#).



Wanted: Foster Parents for the Cut-flower Garden



Remember this gorgeous picture from August's newsletter? Now, that flower bed can be yours! Two beds are available for all our members to adopt and enjoy growing beautiful flowers that attract pollinators and serve as bouquets and arrangements. Contact Committee Chair [Richard Birnholz](#) or by phone at 813-205-3184 for information on becoming a Flower Foster Parent.

Mark Your Calendars

September Events

Wednesday, September 3, 4-5p.

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

Friday, September 5, 9-10a. Join volunteers maintaining the Florida Native Plant garden at Carrollwood Village Park.

Sunday, September 7, 8-12 Noon

VISTA members are invited to join USF Rotaract volunteers when we collaborate with [Oyster River Ecology](#) for our 3rd event making oyster ragpots, contributing to the health of the Manatee River.



Saturday, September 13, 8:30-10:30a

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!

Saturday, September 20

9-10a Come to the Pavilion for a presentation about "Plant Spacing, Companion Planting and Watering"

10-11a New Member Orientation - Reserve with [Beverly S.](#)

10-11:30a Potluck brunch at the Pavilion. Celebrate the new growing season and socialize with your garden buddies. Bring your own

beverage and a favorite treat to share.

Sat & Sun, September 20 and 21, 8-10a

Seedling transplants (warm weather crops) that members ordered in advance will be available for pickup at VISTA.



SAVE THESE OCTOBER DATES

Saturday, October 4, 8:30-10:30a

Member Work Day for all VISTA members. Bring your gloves and water to drink.

Sundays, October 5 and 19, 9-11a

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

Saturday, October 11, 8-10a

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

Saturday, October 18, 9a-12p

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

Sat & Sun, October 18 and 19, 8a-10a

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

Saturday, October 18, 9a-12p

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

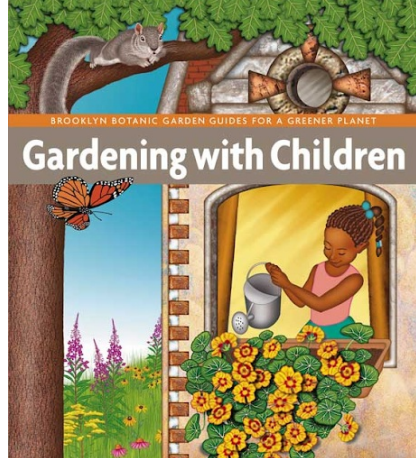
New in the Little Free Library

Both VISTA and our community appreciate

Forever Friends

for the grant to purchase books for the Little Free Library





Scores of fun projects for families outdoors and indoors. Share the joy of watching plants and the animals that live among them grow and flourish as you guide children in the discovery of nature's cycles and communities.

[READ MORE](#)



Beautifully illustrated journal to guide your observations of nature wherever you find it—in gardens and yards, city parks and vacant lots, or the sky—enhanced by inspiring prompts and the wisdom of Margaret Renkl, NY Times. [READ MORE](#)

Gardener Highlight

Susan Weiskopf gardens in DE2 and volunteers with VISTA's Cut-flower Garden.

Susan calls VISTA Gardens her happy place and says, "Being there always lightens my mood and gives me purpose." Susan's favorite crop is lettuce and she's been known as "The Lettuce Queen" due to her abundant harvests. She also grew broccoli, bok choy and eggplant successfully, resulting in delicious eggplant parmesan and stir fry dishes on her menus.

Susan said that she started at VISTA in 2023 with very little knowledge and learned virtually everything from more seasoned gardeners and from trial and error, including soil prep, planting, pruning, fertilizing and pest control.



A voracious reader, Susan has her own book club that she started from scratch four years ago. She has also been working on her cooking skills since fully retiring a year and a half ago.

See other Member profiles [here](#).

Q&A

Q: I'm a new member at VISTA. What can I do to make sure I get my monthly volunteer hours completed?

A: All of our members are required to become a member of one of our 17 committees and commit monthly hours of service. There is something for everyone to do at VISTA. Visit the [Committee Information pages](#) to learn about each committee and how to contact the Chairs.

Turn off the news and get in the garden.

-quote on a sign noticed by Evans, VISTA's Garden Committee Chair and a fine grower of carrots, tomatoes and other delicious fresh eats!



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

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