



VISTA MATTERS: May Edition

Gardening Suggestions

1. During dry weather water 3x week. Test the soil with your finger to see that it is moist below the surface. Some deep watering may be required. Follow [irrigation recommendations](#) for the vegetables you are growing.
2. Control pests. For example, cucumbers are prone to pickleworm. [Click here for more info](#). Treat with Bt, which is considered safe to use around bees and other pollinators. Spinosad is another environmentally friendly insecticide treatment.
3. Harvest. Take home and enjoy those ripe vegetables before birds or pests sample them!
4. Now is the time to consider what you enjoyed growing this season, your gardening successes, and what you want to plant for the Fall growing season.

Just a friendly reminder. The leaves in the compost area are for compost only. We need them to make compost for the garden. They are not to be used as mulch between the garden beds. There is plenty of mulch to use around the beds.

Welcome to our newest members!



This mother-son gardening duo, Dorothy and Scott, along with Monica, grow beautiful sorrel, among other vegetables, in CE6-N.



Jama, a lab technician at Tampa General Hospital and a Realtor, is a Social Member and on VISTA's waiting list for a raised garden bed when one comes available.



Clara, a retired engineer technologist in the textile and garment industry, is a Social Member and on VISTA's waiting list for a raised garden bed when one comes available. She's already a regular volunteer helping vacationing gardeners and tending the herb and native plant landscape.



Mary, a retired teacher and nurse, is a Social Member and most excited about walking from her neighboring condo to enjoy VISTA, especially the herbs, butterfly, and flower gardens!

C. David Schneider, Beekeeper, informs us that a USF research student, studying virus and other health issues with bees throughout Florida, is taking a sample of bees at VISTA Gardens. She will just use a butterfly-style net to capture a very small number of our flying bees and will not be opening the hives. David said, "The best part for us, we will get a detailed report on the overall health of the sample she collects."



This is a photo of the USF researcher collecting bees. The research is part of a long-term project involving a variety of locations around the state. Results for this Spring 2021 survey/sampling are anticipated during the Summer of 2022.

Garden Activities



Yoga in the Garden

Join us for yoga in the garden!

Come in comfortable clothing, and bring water, a mat and a towel to place underneath your mat (in case the grass is damp).

Yoga: May 8, from 10-11 am



Friday 5 pm Happy Hours

Are you new to the garden or would you like to socialize outdoors in our amazing Florida weather?

Join your fellow garden members for a socially-distanced Happy Hour at the garden.

Please bring a chair, if you'd like,

and also your favorite drinks
and/or snacks.

All Insects Should Not Bug Us!

A recent New York Times "In The Garden" column caught the attention of Jennifer Grebenschikoff, founding gardener at VISTA.

It featured the book, "Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden" by Jessica Walliser, winner of the American Horticultural Society 2021 Book Award.

Here's an excerpt:

"There is seldom a season in the vegetable garden without a pest infestation. As organic gardeners, Ms. Walliser recommends that we develop a realistic tolerance for some pest pressure. She also urges that we do our part by practicing good garden hygiene, removing faded or diseased foliage as it appears."

[Read More
Here](#)

Garden Hygiene Tip: Sanitize garden tools with a solution of one part household bleach to nine parts water (after cleaning off soil and organic matter, which may neutralize the chlorine in the bleach). We provide spray bottles of sanitizer inside our garden shed.

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Barn Quilt Project

At the recent Earth Day event, VISTA's Garden Art Committee launched a new project and gardeners began signing up to paint a Barn Quilt. Watch for more information about the opportunity to add your touch to this creation.

[Check out an example of a Barn Quilt.](#)

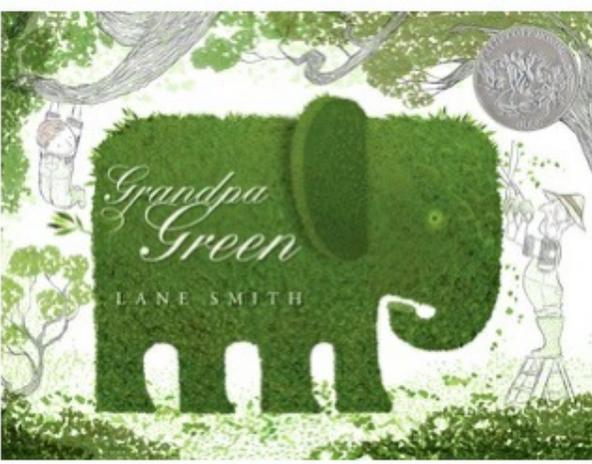
"Little Free Library" Spotlight

Grandpa Green

Written and Illustrated by Lane Smith

From the creator of the national bestseller *It's a Book* comes a Caldecott Honor-winning timeless story of family history, legacy, and love.

Grandpa Green wasn't always a



[Click to Discover](#)

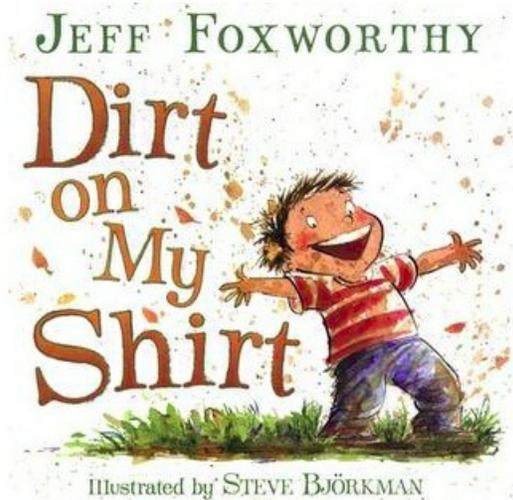
gardener. He was a farm boy and a kid with chickenpox and a soldier and, most of all, an artist.

In this captivating new picture book, readers follow Grandpa Green's great-grandson into a garden he created, a fantastic world where memories are handed down in the fanciful shapes of topiary trees and imagination recreates things forgotten.

In his most enigmatic and beautiful work to date, Lane Smith explores aging, memory, and the bonds of family history and love; by turns touching and whimsical, it's a stunning picture book that parents and grandparents will be sharing with children for years to come.

Dirt on My Shirt

by Jeff Foxworthy and Illustrated by Steve Björkman



[Click to Discover](#)

In this hilarious collection of poems, comedian Jeff Foxworthy creates a neighborhood filled with fun, family, friends, and more.

Here you'll meet Cousin Lizzy, Uncle Ed and Aunt Foo Foo, cows with horns that don't go beep, dads in sweaters, also sheep. From the thrill of flying to the imaginary planet Woosocket to bonding with a friend over a shared hatred of spinach, these poems capture the very essence of being a kid.

Filled with sly humor and always affectionate, *Dirt on My Shirt* is sure to delight kids, big and little, everywhere.

Both VISTA and our community appreciate **Forever Friends** for a grant to purchase books for the Little Free Library.

Would you like to turn or sift compost?

We request that every able-bodied member of the garden sign up for



Compost Fit at least once a year. If you can stand....you can sift.

We all need to do our part to contribute to the production of The Black Gold.

Unfortunately, a few members are having to carry the burden for the entire garden. STEP UP.....PITCH IN.

From 8-9 am or 9-10 am: **May 27, 28, and 29.**

[Click to get "Compost Fit!"](#)

Gardener Huddles*

During the month of May, the Garden Committee welcomes VISTA gardeners to join one of our thirty-minute huddles to share gardening "lessons learned" and ideas for the next gardening season. You will find out why someone mulched their garden "floor", why someone else planted nasturtiums among their vegetables, favorite tools and how they are organized, fertilizers that worked well, etc.

The Garden Committee is especially reaching out to "first year" garden members to participate, although experienced gardeners are welcome to come to one of the following huddles:

Saturday, May 8, 9:15 a.m. (before Yoga)

Thursday, May 13, 9:15 a.m.

Tuesday, May 18, 7:45 p.m.

Friday, May 21, 7:45 p.m.

*We will redefine "huddle" by respecting social distances.

Off Grid Solar Living

VISTA currently has four solar powered systems: (1) The Well Pump, (2) The Irrigation Pump, (3) The Green House Fan, and (4) The Pond Recirculating Pump. In addition, we are considering a solar powered fan and lights for the new pavilion and possibly a solar powered electric gate. Currently, Marty Kleiner is the only one at VISTA that is familiar with these. VISTA needs a few other people that

know how we get our water and electricity.

If you would like to help out or even if you just want to learn more about solar power, please text Marty Kleiner at 813-404-3140.

If there is enough interest, we will have a mini-class on solar power in general and our systems.

In Search of: Volunteer Coordinator

Can this be you? If interested, please contact a Board member [here](#).

Organize and lead monthly Volunteer Day at VISTA Gardens, engaging member gardeners in various tasks. Recruit and manage community volunteers from local colleges and organizations, as needed for special projects.

Destruction Junction

Do you know how to use a Jackhammer or do you want to try?

VISTA needs some help clearing the trench around the property that feeds into the retention pond. Our property had several structures on them a long time ago and there are a couple of concrete slabs that are blocking the flow of rain water. This is a problem during the summer rainy season as it causes flooding around the garden. If we can get a couple of strong people to help out, then we could rent a Jackhammer for a day and break out the concrete that blocks our trench.

If you are willing to give it a try then text **Marty Kleiner at 813-404-3140** and we can arrange a time for some serious destruction! If you know someone in the construction industry that can help us out for free that would be great too!

Have anything to add?

Submit your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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Connect with us

