



# VISTA MATTERS

## - March Edition -

### Pollinator Pot Party Perfection

A high time was had on February 2 when a dozen VISTA gardeners joined our resident Florida Native Plants expert, Vicki Kuse, for an informative and fun session about growing [pollinator plants in pots](#).

For those with only a balcony or small patio, Vicki's presentation was especially helpful. She skillfully showed techniques for choosing the correct pot size, using the right type of soil and selecting the "thriller-filler-spiller" plants. Wondering what that means? Be sure to talk to Vicki the next time you're at the garden and she'll be delighted to walk you through the process.



The session ended on a fun note with a drawing for the pot Vicki filled and planted (congratulations Donna Birnholz). Other winners were able to choose one of VISTA's large empty pots to take home. In addition, those who attended could select several pollinator plant seedlings to plant in their home gardens.

If you missed this cool and groovy event, stay tuned. All of our events are emailed to our members, placed in the newsletters and posted on

the signposts scattered around the garden. See ya next time, dudes!

## Did you know?

More than 80 percent of flowering plants require pollinators.

Without pollinators we could lose many fruits, nuts, berries and even chocolate and coffee. Each of us can help by protecting pollinators from pesticides and providing pollinator habitats (even pot-sized habitats).

## March Edible Plants

### EDIBLES TO PLANT IN

# March



Easily Survives Transplanting

Arugula, Boniato, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Swiss Chard, Tomatillo, Tomatoes



Transplant Carefully

Spinach, Sweet Potatoes



Use Seeds

Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peanuts, Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon

### Central

Arugula, Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Gingers, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches

### South

Arugula, Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Endive, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches

Amaranth, Calabaza, Celery, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Spinach, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca

Amaranth, Calabaza, Celery, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca

Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Chayote, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon

Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Chayote, Corn, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon

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## Seasonal Plant Suggestions

### Fall

Kale, carrots, Chinese cabbage, collards and celery, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers

### Winter

Beets, turnips, radishes, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes

## Spring

Japanese eggplant, Japanese melons (specific varieties), Malabar and Egyptian spinach, okra, Japanese long beans

### Wildflower Fun Fact

Tickseed, better known by its genus name *Coreopsis*, have been used as dyes in native fabrics. The flowers were also boiled into teas by the natives of North America before the introduction of coffee.

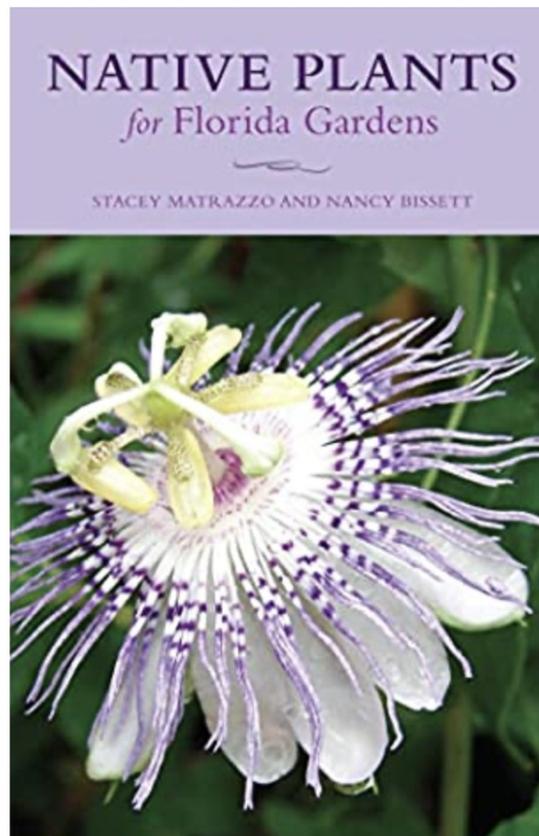
The name *Coreopsis* means “*always cheerful.*”

VG Wildflowers Fun Facts

### BOOKS OF THE MONTH

#### Native Plants for Florida Gardens

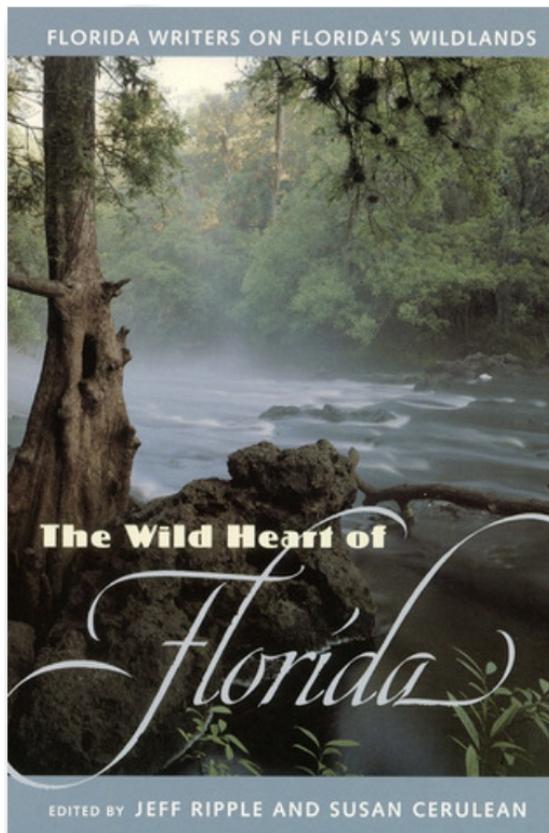
by Stacey Matrazzo and Nancy Bissett



This gardening handbook profiles 100 Florida native wildflowers, shrubs, vines and trees that can transform typical Florida landscapes. Striking color photography showcases species and flowering characteristics. With the expertise of the Florida Wildlife Foundation, anyone can create lovely, low-maintenance gardens that will tolerate Florida’s roughest conditions, resist disease, and support biodiversity.

The Book

## The Wild Heart of Florida



Eighteen of Florida's best-loved writers here share with you their affection for Florida's wild side--the beautiful heart of a state under siege from development. Coming from a variety of backgrounds--fiction, journalism, poetry and environmental writing--the writers turn their talent to one thing they have in common--a love for Florida's natural beauty and a commitment to preserve it. Their essays--some old favorites, most appearing here for the first time--are both a celebration and a pointed reminder of what we stand to lose.

All royalties from the book are being donated to the Florida chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

The Book

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

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## 3 Tips for New Tampa Gardeners

These tips are taken from a presentation David Whitwam of [Whitwam Organics](#) gave on February 5 at VISTA Gardens.

1. **Understand the growing seasons.** This may seem like a no-brainer, but Tampa growing seasons are a surprise for gardeners from northern climates. Fall, winter and spring are the seasons to plant and harvest in Tampa. Also, because we grow crops in winter, it's important to know how to prepare your plants for a freeze. See the related info [here](#).
2. **Integrate planting for multiple seasons.** Begin with fall crops but add winter crops as fall plants begin to stop producing. Likewise, add spring crops as your winter crops are near their end. This way, you'll have a nearly continuous harvest.
3. **“Rest” your garden during the summer.** Summer is the time to replenish the soil, plan for the next growing season and hide from the heat. Florida gardeners can use [soil solarization](#) techniques during summer months to eradicate pesky weeds. Also consider planting a cover crop. [Cover crops](#) fix nitrogen, reduce erosion, compaction, and nutrient runoff from rainfall, as well as add biomass to the soil.

## What's the Buzz?

### An update on our pollinator friends!

The bees are looking healthy and made it through our winter. Like most of us, they prefer warmer temps. When we were covering our plants to protect them from the cold the bees were busy generating their own heat. They keep the core of the hive around 85 degrees. That's pretty impressive when you consider the only thing separating them from the outside air is less than an inch of wood.



As spring rolls in they will begin to rebuild the food store with the spring nectar flow from all the garden and native plants in bloom. The longer daylight hours and warmer temps also will increase their population as more nectar and pollen become available.

## Cherished Coreopsis

Watch for them along roadsides or when you wander through a garden! Coreopsis, Florida's state wildflower, typically have bright yellow and gold flowers and sometimes the added touch of red, bronze or burgundy.

There are 16 species of Coreopsis in our state, several of which grow at VISTA.



Enjoy the Lanceleaf tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) in our Wildflower Garden, Leavenworth's tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*) in the Monarch Waystation Garden and near the pond, as well as Golden tickseed (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) about to emerge in the Flower Garden.

Prolific self-seeders, Coreopsis grow 12-30 inches tall, require well-draining soil, thrive in full sun or partial shade and require no fertilizer. They attract many pollinators and their seeds are commonly eaten by birds and small wildlife.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Two-day Cob Oven Building Workshop** w/ Mark Mazziotti at Sweetwater Organic Farm

- Saturday, February 26, 9:00 am and Saturday, March 5, 9:00 am. The first day involves building the base and the second day building the actual oven. Tickets required; attendees may do the second day only. Please purchase tickets [here](#).

#### **How to Integrate New Plants with Existing Plants** with David Whitwam

Sunday, March 6, 9:30 am

## Pavilion Celebration

Saturday, April 30, 11:30 am. We will finally (COVID willing) cut the ribbon on our new pavilion, honor VISTA's founders and remember those who contributed to the garden but are no longer with us. Details to come soon!

## Yoga

with Lucas

Join us on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month at 9:30. Wear comfortable clothes; bring water and a mat.

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

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Connect with us

