



VISTA MATTERS: March Edition

Unveiling VISTA's Enlivened Entrance-- A big thanks to Evans and Lucio!



This past October, Evans generously took on the herculean task of removing invasive torpedo grass, redesigning the garden entrance planter boxes, and installing plantings selected in consultation with Bruce Turley of Wilcox Nursery and Landscape.



As you come and go from the gardens, take a moment to watch for the emergence of bright yellow Dune Sunflowers, cascading down the retaining wall, soft purple Beach Verbena blooms spilling from the highest planter box, and all the colors and forms in the lower planter box - red, pink, and white Tropical Sage, bluish-green Elliott's Lovegrass, silvery Silkgrass, and the showy yellow flowers of the Starry Rosinweed that mirror the predominant yellow blossom in VISTA's logo.



Lucio Carrillo-Perkins kindly cleaned, mulched, and created a paver border on the west side of our entrance and planted Coreopsis, Calamintha, and Trailing Porterweed, with plans to add some "volunteer" Tropical Sage that self-seeded in our pollinator gardens. Watch these plants grow and fill this space, beautifying the ground beneath our interesting Bahama Cassia tree that blooms each autumn.

Welcome to our newest gardeners!



Justice, Brittany, and 8-month-old Amare are planting their spring garden. Brittany is finishing her Public Health degree at USF and working for the Health Department. Justice has his own recycling business, Responsible Recycling and Resourcing.



Pictured are new Social Members Lauren and her son, Lukas, who are on our waiting list along with Lauren's husband Mirko. Lauren works in the biotech industry and Mirko is a personal trainer (ask him about his free boot camp!).



Kathy joined as a Social Member and is on VISTA's waiting list. A Cardiac-care nurse turned-health-educator (in Tampa Bay schools) Kathy recently retired from Tampa General Hospital.

Drop off your leaves!

Let's create "black gold!"

We are happily receiving fallen leaves collected by gardeners and



Carrollwood Village neighbors. Leaves provide carbon (brown) necessary for decomposition in our compost piles at VISTA.

Compost data point:

Almost ten years ago, it was reported that Americans generated about 251 million tons of trash and recycled and composted almost 87 million tons of this material, equivalent to a 34.5 percent recycling rate in one year. On average, each American composted 1.5 pounds of just over 4 pounds of waste each day. Do you think we've improved that rate in the years since?

[Learn More](#)

Compost Project-Would you donate?

Our Compost Committee has proposed a major upgrade to the compost system and is seeking donations from Vista Garden members to accomplish this needed project. The project will achieve a more efficient composting operation, produce more compost for members and will assist the community food pantry by accommodating additional materials generated by their operation. The food pantry dramatically increased its food distribution during the pandemic and they need additional assistance with the disposal of their out-dated compostable food items.



The Compost Committee has already secured \$400 in donations and is seeking an additional \$1,000 to fund the costs for building materials. Committee members have volunteered to construct the new bins.

Opportunities at the Garden



Yoga and Tai Chi

Join us for yoga and tai chi 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: March 13, from 10 to 11am

Tai Chi: March 4 and March 20, from 10-11 am



Friday 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.

Fridays, from 4:30-5:30 pm

March Planting Recommendations

VISTA's House of the Rising Seeds (HRS) carefully sources seeds and organically raises seedlings.

HRS volunteers are at the gardens Mondays at 4:30-5:30 pm and Saturdays at 10-11 am to assist members in selecting seeds and seedlings.

Feel free to stop by and volunteer or ask questions [Download the March infographic here.](#)

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN
March



North	Central	South
 <p>Arugula, Boniato, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Swiss Chard, Tomatillo, Tomatoes</p>	<p>Arugula, Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Gingers, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches</p>	<p>Arugula, Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Endive, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches</p>
 <p>Spinach, Sweet Potatoes</p>	<p>Amaranth, Calabaza, Celery, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Spinach, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca</p>	<p>Amaranth, Calabaza, Celery, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca</p>
 <p>Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peanuts, Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon</p>	<p>Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Chayote, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon</p>	<p>Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Chayote, Corn, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon</p>




 For more information, please visit GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

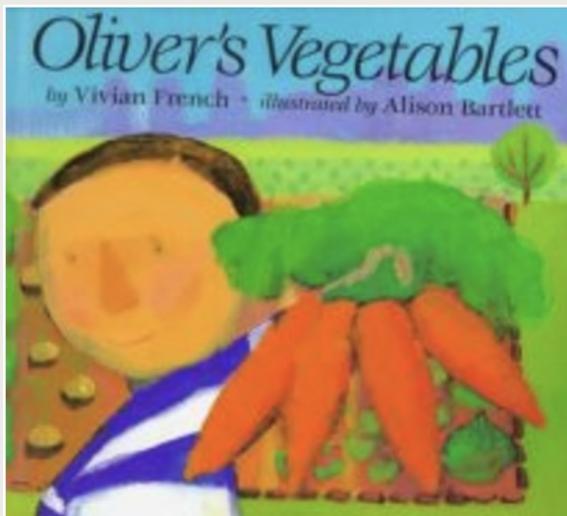


Happy Reading at the Little Free Library

Check out the new books at our Little Free Library!

Oliver's Vegetables by Vivian French

Illustrated by Alison Bartlett



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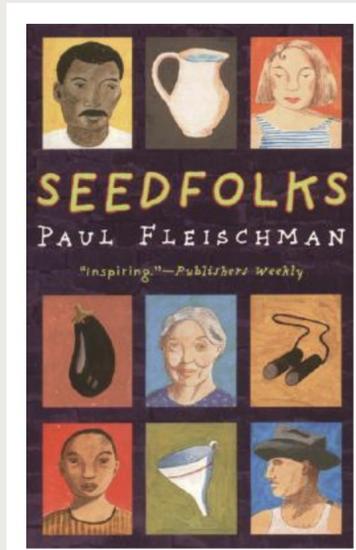
Even french-fry-aholics can enjoy fresh vegetables, according to this optimistic tale of a boy and his adventures in produce. When Oliver spends a week at his grandfather's house, he makes a deal: "If you want french fries," said Grandpa, "You must find the potatoes. If you find something else, you eat that..." Oliver digs in Grandpa's garden and finds the likes of beets, carrots, cabbage and even declares "That was good" after eating a salad made from harvested spinach.

Debut illustrator Bartlett makes the lush, leafy plants look eminently palatable in her sunny, full-spread acrylics. Her splendid varieties of green and her broad strokes of paint-piled layer-on-layer, with details like the outlines of flowers scratched on the surfaces-set the stage for a garden's victory rather than just a victory garden.

Ages 3-6

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman
Illustrated by Judy Pedersen

Newbery-winning author Paul Fleischman uses thirteen speakers to



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bring to life a community garden's founding and first year. The book's short length, diverse cast, and suitability for adults as well as children have led it to be used in countless one-book reads in schools and in cities across the country. A book used to teach tolerance, read in ESL classes, promoted by urban gardeners, and performed in schools and on stages from South Africa to Broadway.

Grades 6-12



A special thanks to *Forever Friends* for providing the funds to purchase books at the Little Free Library.

Visit the website here:

<http://www.foreverfriends.org/>

Enjoy the weather & create "black gold!"



Is it your turn to "turn?"

Let's get "Compost Fit!" Not only is it rewarding to create "Black Gold," but it feels great being outdoors while getting some exercise.

Book online or add your name to the sign-up sheet on the shed to volunteer on any one (or more) of these days from 8-9 am or 9-10 am: **March 25, 26, 27; April 29, 30 and May 1.**

Click to get "Compost
Fit!"

Thankful for past donors!

In 2020, VISTA was the delighted recipient of many donations from members and others. **We are so grateful to all of our members and our outside donors for their generosity.** Some of the cash donations were given in honor of a friend or relative and others were given to support specific projects and programs, such as the new pump, the herb garden, and community outreach and education. Another category of donations was for in-kind services and products, such as donations of a bench, a geo-bin for the compost area, and a micro-irrigation system.

Our annual expenses are not met by our membership dues. That is why donations are such a critical part of our budget. In 2020, cash donations ranged from \$10 to \$3500. There are so many ways you can donate to VISTA:

- Drop a check in the black mailbox inside the shed (where you place your dues checks).
- Make a donation from your PayPal account.
- Find out if your employer matches donations to not-for-profit organizations and double it.
- Set up a Qualified Charitable Distribution directly from your IRA.
- Name VISTA Gardens in a bequest in your Last Will & Testament or Revocable Living Trust.

VISTA Gardens is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our Tax ID Number is 26-2532379. ****Please make sure to check with your financial advisor and/or estate planning attorney about the best way for you to donate to VISTA.****

And, most importantly,..**thank you!**

Please find the [donate button](#) on the front page of the VISTA website under Experience VISTA Gardens.

Herb Spotlight: Milk Thistle

Milk Thistle, grown as an annual or biennial, develops purple flowers in summer. Used to treat liver disorders since Roman times, it contains the active ingredient, silymarin, which acts as an antioxidant.

The young shoots and leaves are edible, and the roots can be cooked like parsnips. The base of flowerheads, stems and seedlings are also edible.



Pavilion Update



The concrete has been installed, we passed the County inspection, and the Garden Committee is planning the planting of the last phase of the Native Plant Landscape. We are getting ready for the Grand Opening!

Have anything to add? [Submit](#) your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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Connect with us

