



VISTA MATTERS

- July Edition -

VISTA is Going NUTS Over Nutsedge!

Our resident nutsedge expert, Marty Kleiner (Chair of the Infrastructure Committee), answered our questions:

Q: Should we mulch the pathways now?

A: No. Please do not put any mulch down for the next month. We want to be able to see the new nutsedge sprigs coming up so we can remove them. We will mulch the whole garden before the next growing season in August/Septemb



What is going on in the northeast corner of the garden? Why are those beds being dug up? What were Marty and his student volunteers doing under that blue tent?

All good questions. Here are the answers:

That section of the garden has been invaded by the nasty NUTSEGE weed. Nutsedge is a very aggressive and persistent weed that commonly infests lawns, vegetable and flower gardens, and

er.

Q: What are all those orange cones and caution signs for?

A: Please be careful when walking on loose and uneven soil areas throughout the garden where nutsedge has been dug up already. Heed the warnings of the 12 signs and 10 orange cones throughout the garden.



home landscapes. It can be very difficult to eradicate, and control is likely to be a long process. In Florida, nutsedge can be an issue year-round. It is one of the most difficult weeds to control. If nutsedge were a bug, it would be categorized as “social” because it grows in large colonies, forming an extensive root system that can reach as deep as four feet. Nutsedge spreads and propagates through an extensive underground network of rhizomes, bulbs, and small, starchy tubers or “nutlets.” Within a single growing season, one tuber can give rise to hundreds of shoots in a dense patch 3–6 feet across, and form over 1,000 new tubers! If you pluck a specimen out of the ground, you’ll notice the roots of nutsedge (called rhizomes) grow horizontally, fanning out to form new sedges. At the end of the roots are small, round tubers, known as nutlets, which are a tell-tale sign that you have nutsedge growing in your garden.

So, what to do?

Marty and his band of volunteers are digging up the nutsedge section by section in each infested bed, and filtering each section by hand to remove the root systems including those that don’t have a weed attached. Some of the rhizomes stretch over two feet connecting one plant to the next! After a section is thoroughly filtered, Marty waits a week and digs up any new weeds. They grow quickly. Then he repeats this process twice more. After the third week, that section should be free of the nutsedge and ready for planting cover crops this summer. The nutsedge may continue to pop up. If you see a single sprig that has popped up, remove it with a shovel or pitch fork ensuring you get the whole root system and not just the greenery. Don’t ever put mulch over nutsedge, not even over a single sprig. This encourages the roots to go out further to search for a place to pop up. At this point the nutsedge should be very localized.

In areas where nutsedge is growing in the pathway next to the bed, Marty needs to dig about four or five inches into the bed to remove any rhizomes that are starting to grow into the plot.

Several people have asked about putting the black weed block down. This should not be done. We have photos of the nut sedge root system going right through a stick. With the weed block the root system starts on top and then burrows through and the rhizomes spread under the weed block. This makes it impossible to properly weed without removing the weed block, which Marty has had to do throughout different places in the garden.

NOTHING kills nutsedge. Neither salt water, vinegar, nor even the forbidden glyphosate-based herbicide RoundUp® will kill nutsedge. It will just suppress it. So, we dig up the roots instead. These weeds do pop up fast (within a few days). When you do plant your cover crops, just be prepared to dig up one or two plants if the nutsedge does pop up near them.

With Marty's approach, we hope to completely control nutsedge at VISTA. Next time you see Marty, please thank him for freeing VISTA Gardens of that nasty nutsedge!

What's Growing for Fall 2023-Extended

Mark Gardiner and fellow volunteers are making plans to raise organic seedlings for VISTA Seasonal Members to grow in their raised garden beds at VISTA Gardens.

Orders can be placed through July 15th [here](#).

Mark your calendar for these transplant dates: September 16 (eggplants and peppers), September 23 and 30 (tomatoes), and October 7 (broccoli, Brussels, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale).

Now is a great time to plan for your Fall 2023 garden and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange's Garden Planner makes it easy by helping you space vegetables and flowers and create a diagram for your 4x8 or 4x16 garden. Try their 7-day free trial at <https://gardenplanner.southernexposure.com/>



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AT VISTA

VISTA's annual Membership Renewal is fast approaching. The 2023/2024 planting season begins September 2023 and extends through July 2024. We receive all seasonal members' dues between now and August 1, 2023. At this time, there is no action required for our social members.

Starting July 1st, current VISTA Seasonal Gardeners will receive a renewal email containing the 2023 VISTA Membership Form and a link for membership dues payment. Dues must be paid by August 1st. For a 4x8 garden space, the annual due is \$80 and for a 4x16 garden space, the annual due is \$150.

If you are no longer able to garden in the Fall 2023 season, please email Rolfe and Keshia at vistagardentampa@gmail.com so we can reassign your raised garden bed to another eager gardener.

We are excited to welcome our newest members, **Suzanne Donoghue** and **Cynthia Schermerhorn**.



VISTA Beds and Boards

While your bed soil is resting and re-energizing this summer, VISTA is busy repairing and replacing the boards that are falling apart. In May Marty Kleiner (Infrastructure Committee Chair) and Evans Bostick (Garden Committee Chair) inspected all the beds to determine which beds require attention. Some of the beds need only end and corner repairs; other beds need the long sides bolstered. You will see these repairs happening this summer. The



expense for this project comes from our member dues budget.

You will have noticed that some members have built a second riser onto their beds. Most have done this to make it easier to reach their soil and plants. Others feel it has helped their root vegetables thrive more successfully. VISTA doesn't pay for these risers. Each member who has a riser has paid for the additional lumber and materials required, and for the soil to fill the bed to the top of the second level. The approximate cost for these additions is \$300 for a 4'x16' bed. For advice about adding a second level to your bed, please contact Marty or Evans for guidance and suggestions.

And a reminder- The addition of any structure in the garden requires Board approval. If you plan to add a second level riser to your bed, please submit your plan to Board Secretary Keshia Arlinghaus so she can add it to our next Board meeting agenda



AARP® Florida



AARP® Florida sponsors two raised garden beds at VISTA Gardens. During the 2022-2023 growing seasons AARP volunteer gardeners, Ron, Jennifer, Doug and Theresa, raised 175 pounds of fresh produce and donated it to the Community Food Pantry at Village Presbyterian Church in Carrollwood

Village, a partner of Feeding Tampa Bay. This year the focus was on raising healthy greens as the Community Food Pantry especially appreciates receiving fresh collard, lettuce, kale, mustard and turnip greens, Swiss chard, and Pak Choi. **READ MORE**



Mark your Calendar! Yoga, Lemonade and Summer Volunteer Days at the Garden

Yoga in the Garden - Saturdays, July 8, and 22, at 9:00 a.m. Bring a mat or towel and drink. Donations gratefully accepted.

Mia's Lemonade Stand

Saturday, July 8 starting at 8 a.m.

New Seasonal Gardener Welcome and Orientation

Saturday, July 8, 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 23, 9:00 a.m.

Volunteer to keep VISTA beautiful - sign up for recurring volunteer opportunities to help create compost or tend the Native Plant Landscape and Wildflower Gardens. Also available are opportunities to guide high school and college volunteers when we host them this summer on these dates:

Saturday, July 15 and Sunday, July 23

Saturday, August 19 and Sunday, August 20

There's no time like the present, and no present like the time.

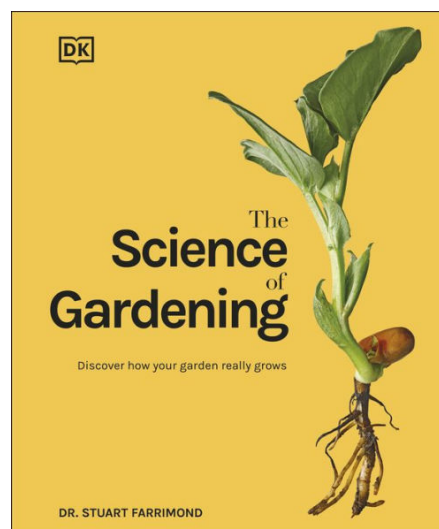
– **James Durst**



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

"Big Tree" is a masterful tale of the natural world as profound as it is beautiful. Breathtaking illustrations complete Selznick's transcendent story of two tiny seeds and their epic journey through space and time. A modern classic, it is a must-read for all ages.



"**The Science of Gardening**" gives hands-on, practical advice, to an exploration of the mental health benefits of gardening, while also covering topics such as the positive impact gardening can have on the earth during a time of climate crisis. In between, *Science of Gardening* debunks myths and reveals the latest science only taught at horticultural college.

As a passionate newcomer to gardening, daunted by the mountain of often conflicting advice in gardening manuals, Dr. Stu has set about testing the scientific basis of so much conventional wisdom and practice so you too can garden like a pro.

Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing.
-Mahatma Gandhi

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

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