



# VISTA MATTERS

- November Edition -

We love to see you happy  
while volunteering!

Even though we are always looking for new information about the best ways to farm and garden, we find there is wisdom that goes back hundreds of years.

Richard and Donna Birnholz (CW5) are two members who have contributed in many ways to our thriving garden. In addition to tending their own bed, they spend many volunteer hours leading the team that is planting, renovating, and tending the beautiful Flower Garden, behind the House of the Rising Seeds.



Richard is now Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Schaarai Zedek in Tampa and recently published an article in *Jewish Press of Tampa Bay* about how the wisdom of the ancient laws regarding best practices of farming and gardening are still relevant today, and how those laws relate to his and Donna's activities at VISTA Gardens.

As Richard writes,

*"It is amazing how a new experience can breathe life into what I previously considered outdated and irrelevant."*

We invite our gardeners to learn about Richard's learnings; [click here](#) to read his article.

## November's Edible Plants!



[Click here to learn more](#)

## Members make it happen!

You come to the garden one day and see that there is fresh mulch on the pathways around your bed. And you see lots of herbs and wildflowers newly planted. And you get a yellow bucket full of compost to work into your soil. Those wonderful results didn't happen by magic. No, dear reader, it was MEMBERS (and volunteers) who helped to make all that happen.



We want all our members to know that it “takes a village” to make VISTA Gardens look so great. Each of us agreed when we became members that we would devote at least two hours per month to the myriad of garden activities. Those are hours in addition to whatever time you spend on caring for your own bed and its plantings.

There are so many activities you can be involved in: working in the House of the Rising Seeds, tending the Flower Garden behind the seed house, maintaining our many native plant and pollinator gardens, caring for the herb garden, turning compost. For those who prefer something a little less energetic, we have many members who work behind the scenes: by serving on the Board and as Committee Chairs, maintaining our membership lists, creating our newsletters, updating our website, writing the history of VISTA. The opportunities are endless. We count on you to find an activity that interests you and jump in.



A great example of a no-muscle-needed activity is our newly formed Volunteers Committee (chaired by Lauren with members Mike, Angela, Janet, Barb, Mercedes, Vince and Amanda). They will be responsible for coordinating the tasks and activities of our high school and university volunteers.

**Check our available  
volunteer  
opportunities!**

Active participation by every member is vital for VISTA's continued success.

It isn't unusual for VISTA to have 20 students on a Saturday morning all involved with different VISTA members on garden tasks. We found that the responsibility to coordinate all that activity was too much for one member to do every Saturday, so now we have this new committee with eight members who have volunteered to rotate the responsibility!

When you join VISTA, you not only receive a garden plot, you make a commitment to actively support the community's goals and maintenance needs.

Help us keep VISTA Gardens a thriving community.

[Sign Up Today!](#)

So, [click here](#) to check out our Board and Committee Chairs page on our website and contact us about your interests. We'd love to hear about your special talents and skills!

## Six Tips for Successful Gardening

- 1.** Water "low and slow" and, ideally, early in the day.
- 2.** Study the irrigation & fertilization needs of the plants you are growing. [Click here](#) and then click "Download File" for detailed information on each variety of VISTA-grown plants. Know your plants!
- 3.** Become acquainted with your garden neighbors and arrange to alternate weeding and mulching the pathways you share.
- 4.** Watch out for plant pests and alert our Garden Steward, Karen Rose, [kewrose@gmail.com](mailto:kewrose@gmail.com), who will suggest remedies.



- 5.** VISTA sourced seeds and plants that have disease resistance and are well suited for our climate. If your plants do

develop serious fungal issues, they need to be removed. [Click here](#) to check out all the seeds available in our online store!

### 6. Plant in succession!

Examples: Plant a few new bean or beet seeds every 2-4 weeks for continuous harvests; when cucumbers finish in November, gardeners replace them with Sugar Snap peas that prefer cooler weather.



## Welcome our newest members!

### Dianne:

A full-time CNA private caregiver, also volunteers at Humane Society of Tampa, providing foster care to dogs.

As she has limited room to garden home, Dianne is happy to garden in one of VISTA's 4 x 8 garden spaces and looks forward to learning more about growing vegetables.



### Steve:

Working full-time in sales and distribution, Steve relocated from Rhode Island five months ago to be closer to his children and grandchildren.

Steve enjoys gardening and looks forward to learning about growing in our climate.

## Vivian:

Vivian retired five years ago from a career in Information Technology to help care for her grandchildren.

Now that they are starting school, she has time to expand her gardening interests. She raises herbs at home and looks forward to growing and harvesting vegetables at VISTA.



## Miriam:

Miriam is a new VISTA gardener and volunteer with the Infrastructure Committee, led by Marty Kleiner, who was Miriam's Teaching Assistant in USF engineering school.

As Miriam says, "That is how we initially met. Several years later, Marty introduced me to his childhood Hebrew school friend, whom I married." A successful rose grower, Miriam is new to vegetable gardening.

**Order your lettuce seeds online!**



The House of the Rising Seeds selected several heat tolerant varieties that you can plant sooner in our lingering heat.

They include "tried and true" Butter King and Buttercrunch, as well as limited quantities of two new varieties, Italienischer and Sweet Valentine (Romaine-type). They'll sell out fast!

[Click here to order!](#)

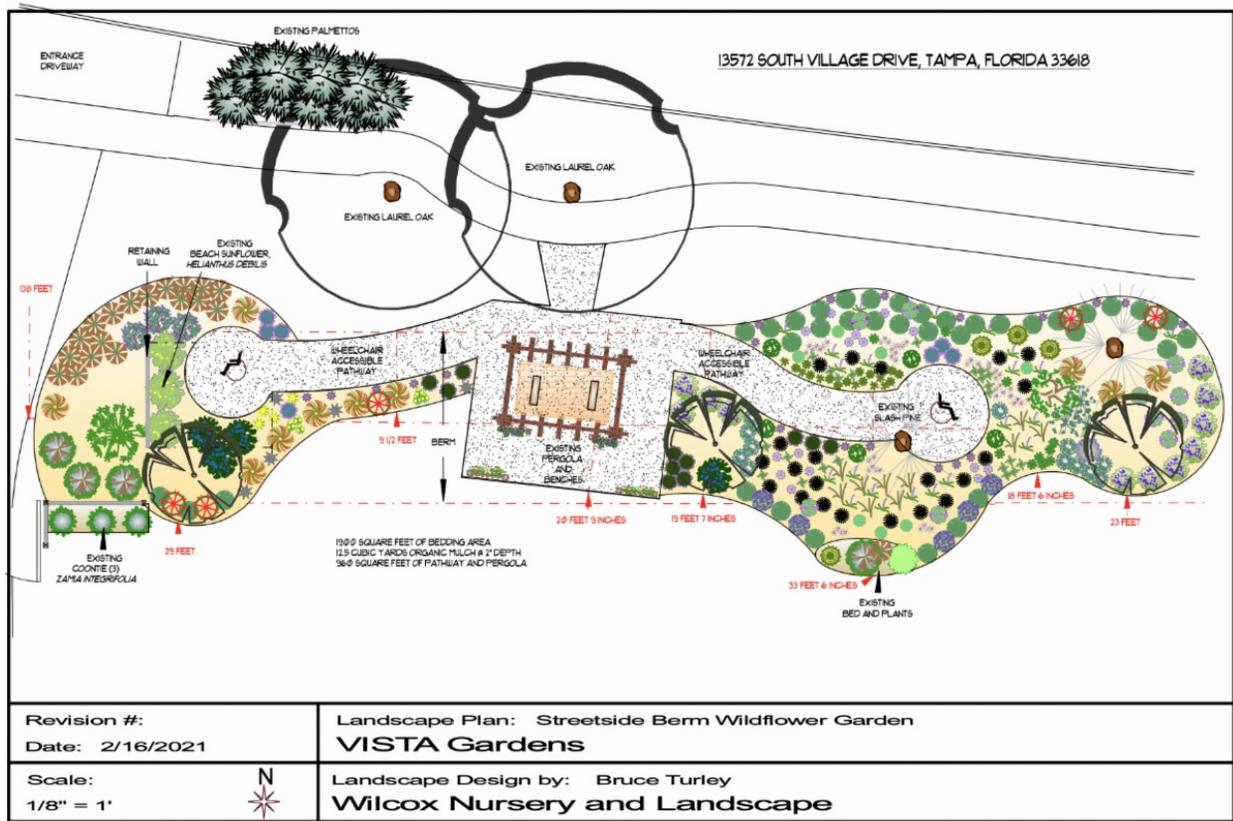
**Let the planting begin!**  
**VISTA's Wildflower Garden is underway.**



We thank the University of Tampa PEACE Center volunteers and VISTA gardeners who transplanted 105 native trees, shrubs, bushes, grasses and wildflowers of 13 varieties on October 23.



It was the first of three planting events. USF Rotaract (affiliated with Rotary International) volunteers assisted with adding 102 wildflowers of 9 varieties. On November 6, Sickles High School National Honor Society members will help the last 148 wildflowers of 13 varieties.



## New plants available!

Nasturtium and Calendula are starting to be available from the House of the Rising Seeds.

If you are growing collards, plant a calendula to reduce the risk of aphids.

**Calendula Fact Sheets**

If you are growing zucchini, plant a nasturtium to reduce squash bugs.

**Nasturtium Fact Sheets**





## Watering Optimally

### Gardeners: Reset your timers!

Please reset timers to irrigate your garden 2 to 3 times a week (every other day or every third day) when your plants are established.

Seeds that are germinating and new transplants need twice daily watering in our heat, but as the plants mature watering every day is not healthy for them.



Overwatering deprives plants of oxygen. Roots take in oxygen from the soil to survive. If water saturates the ground, there is little or no oxygen available and problems like powdery mildew, fungal disease, or root rot can emerge.

*Note: On some rainy days VISTA shuts off the water supply to preserve the backup batteries on our solar-powered system.*

If you succession plant (arugula, radishes, beets, lettuce, turnips, etc.) and sow seeds among established plants, only water the specific areas where your seeds are germinating or where you have younger transplants.

[Click here](#) to read more, including optimum amounts of water for the vegetables you are growing.

[Here](#) is another helpful resource.

**Beginner Canning Class Alert!**

The art of canning has been around for centuries as a way to preserve the nutritional value in food.

**Hillsborough County Extension Service** is offering it for free! Attendees will learn what equipment is needed for canning, how the sterilization process works, and information on food safety.

Preserve your favorite fruits or veggies in time for the holidays!

The workshop will be offered virtually on  
**Wednesday, Nov. 10, from 10 a.m. to noon.**

Attendees must register in advance by visiting the registration page.

[Register](#)

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## Solar Power Irrigation System Support Needed:

We need a couple of volunteers to assist with the solar-powered irrigation system to cover for Marty Kleiner when he is not available.

If you know how to use a **digital multimeter (DMM)** and have a basic knowledge of **electricity (Power = Current x Voltage)** or if you just want to learn more about solar power please contact Marty Kleiner at 813-404-3140.

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**Both VISTA and our community appreciate [Forever Friends](#) for the grant to purchase books for the Little Free Library.**

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**[Click here](#) to submit your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.**

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**VISTA Gardens**  
13572 South Village Drive  
Tampa, Florida 33618

Connect with us

