



VISTA MATTERS: September Edition

Goodbye Fellow Gardeners, From Bill West

Aloha, Fellow VISTA Gardeners,

Last Saturday was my last day as President of VISTA Gardens. My wife's and my long term plans were always to eventually move to the mountains of NC. However, the decision whether or not to maintain a Tampa home, as well as the eventual mountain home, was not finalized until this year. The decision to sell Tampa came sooner than our original plans. My wife and I are now in the interim phase; our Tampa home sold quickly, we are now living in our former rental home located in the outdoor wonderland of Gainesville FL, waiting for our mountain home to be built.

So, Saturday was a mixture of sadness and satisfaction. Sadness as when I look around the garden and see all the accomplishments, I see the people, and so many friends who have passed through or are still at VISTA. Many were there that morning and I will miss our regular chats and work days dearly. (Although I plan many frequent visits back.)

But with the sadness is the feeling of **great satisfaction** of being part of the transformation of a community eyesore, from a forest of Brazilian pepper forest and shoulder high weeds, to what it is today. All from 90% or more volunteer labor--it's amazing! However this day, the satisfaction was now in the knowing that VISTA is and will continue to be in the hands of caring, purposeful, and capable members! And as I always point out, I have been to community gardens all over this state and in other states in the SE, and there is nothing close to VISTA. **The future of VISTA is bright.**

This day was also wonderful in that we had so many high school volunteers. VISTA was a buzz of activities, all very well orchestrated by Roberta! The vision of VISTA has always been to create a place to educate and inspire. We all can be so proud of the place we have built, where folks of all ages can leave behind the static of our modern world, be immersed in the quiet miracle of a beautiful garden, and work side by side with our wonderful members. There are not many places like VISTA and I would say the escape of purposeful toil in a natural world is the broader importance of VISTA.

In regards to the view from above, Saturday was also the anniversary of the great sadness of 9/11. And in this small patch of land, I believe VISTA is truly contributing to the greatly needed positive force of rebuilding and unifying.

During this my last board meeting as president, the board voted unanimously to elect **Jennifer Grebenschikoff** as your new President. Jennifer has been with VISTA since it was started in my, and Lee and Becky Dowden's, backyards. Jennifer was part of the start up work, the lobbying of the county, the clearing of the property and so much more. She also happens to be someone who before retirement started and ran a very successful business. We recently were asked to submit resumes for a grant; goodness, the talent at VISTA is unbelievable. And the VISTA talent also extends to all our committee chairs. For new members, VISTA has a unique, bottom up, Committee-run structure, with the oversight of budget, operational duties, and other corporate duties handled by a small executive board. In effect the board works for the committees. As your new president, Jennifer will provide additional positive changes and future updates. I know you all will give Jennifer your heartfelt support.

-Bill

September 14, 2021



Mark your calendar



4th Annual Grow Gardens Conference

Friday, October 22, 2021

Trinkle Center, Hillsborough Community College,

1206 N. Park Rd., Plant City, FL

Time: 9:30—4:30 Virtual attendance available

Reception & Garden Tour to Follow

GROWING GARDENS TOGETHER

Join the Pond Committee

We are forming a pond committee. Our VISTA pond needs to be upgraded to the next level to host beneficial insects, wildlife and human communities. Join us as we learn about & plan how to attract more wildlife, improve the plants, and outreach to others in the community with an interest in ponds. If you would like to learn more or volunteer, contact [Janet Stanko](#).

Compost Fit!

Please sign up to turn compost at the end of each month. Dates are posted in compost fit volunteer section. Also, the compost crew works Thursday mornings at 9 am and welcomes others to join them. Thank you!

You are welcome to [submit](#) your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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Connect with us

