



VISTA MATTERS

- May Edition -

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Events

VISTA Gardens Celebration

Saturday, April 30, 11:30 a.m. RSVP [here](#) (scroll to second item).

For more event details, please see [April's VISTA Matters](#).

Yoga in the Garden

Saturday, May 14, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 28, 9:30 a.m.

Growing Summer Cover Crops

Saturday, May 14, 10:30 a.m.

Growing a Gardener

by Ellen Whitaker

I always thought I had a brown thumb.

I used to watch my amazing mother sitting on a stool in the sweltering Florida sun weeding her beautiful flower beds and thought, ugh, that does not look fun!



Fast forward a few decades and I surprised myself and my husband when *I joined VISTA* and found a *passion and a community* I never knew existed. The more experienced members spent countless hours supporting and nurturing me here.



It was the veggies that excited me most. I was told by a master gardener at VISTA that radishes were foolproof, so I started with those. I was *completely hooked* when I saw those first seedlings erupt from the richly amended soil. I was in awe of our resident master gardeners and the depth of knowledge they so readily shared.

Soon I was growing carrots, lettuce, beets, tomatoes, onions, squash, eggplants, cucumbers and herbs—just to name a few.

I volunteered in the House of the Rising Seeds, the herb garden and with youth volunteers.



These jobs made me feel even *more connected to the community*.

Life took me away from Tampa and from VISTA. I love my new home in north Georgia (and the raised beds in my backyard) but miss the gardening community terribly. I was delighted when I was recently accepted to the master gardener program through the University of Georgia.



So now I've shed my dull brown thumb for a (mostly) vibrant green one! Thanks to all the wonderful people who brought me to this next step.

Cover Crops



Cowpeas as a cover plant.

Now is the time to consider planting a cover crop in your garden bed.

Cover crops help control weeds, prevent soil erosion from heavy rainfall, retain and restore nutrients and provide a habitat for beneficial insects.

They allow your garden bed to rest and rejuvenate during the

summer while you do the same!

Learn more about cover
crops

Behind the Scenes at VISTA

Whether it's a Broadway show or your favorite restaurant, lots of activity happens behind the scenes. It's the same at VISTA Gardens. When you visit the garden and tend your plants, it may look like things just happen to be in the right place at the right time. But *many hands are working behind the scenes to ensure the garden functions well and meets our gardeners' needs*. Even in the summer, when most garden beds rest, VISTA is still buzzing with a host of activities.

What's happening behind the scenes?

Good question! An example would be what members **Marc Perkins-Carrillo**, **Lori Vella** and **Mary Bryant** do. The VISTA website and monthly newsletters are all due to this team's focus on communicating with gardeners and the community.

Another example is how **Susan Baxter Gibson** handles all our financial, budget and tax reports. Susan pays the bills and accounts for all revenue and expenses.

There are numerous other members who put in many hours handling committee responsibilities that keep our garden such a special place for all of us.

So, if you aren't able to commit your required volunteer time pulling weeds, or carting mulch or turning compost, there are plenty of other interesting behind-the-scenes activities for you.



Pond Committee meets at VISTA

For committee information, [click here](#) and look for the More Information button at the bottom of the page.

See you backstage soon!

Like a Garden Trellis



Wildflower Garden Committee meeting

Some of our members may not know that the garden is governed by a volunteer board of directors. This board functions much the same as a trellis in the garden. It provides the important structure that allows the garden to flourish.

VISTA's board operates within a set of bylaws that spell out when we have meetings, how our directors are appointed, and the various committee functions.

The seven-member board includes: President Jennifer Grebenschikoff, Vice President Marty Kleiner, Treasurer Susan Baxter Gibson, and Secretary Keshia Arlinghaus.

The other board members are: Barb Mahlmeister (also Chair of Education), Steve Taylor (also Chair of Marketing/Public Relations), and Evans Bostick (also Chair of the Garden Committee).

Bill West, who founded the garden in 2008 and was President until 2021, is now **Chair Emeritus**.

Each of VISTA's 12 **committees** has a volunteer chairperson who reports to the board monthly about what that committee is doing and what resources it needs going forward.

One more crucial task concerns our status as a Hillsborough County Park. VISTA Gardens is on county land, and that requires us (i.e., Bill, Jennifer and Marty) to meet all the county requirements (e.g., annual reports, meetings with county staff, lobbying for funds, plus fiscal, insurance and regulatory compliance.)

Like all of the other behind-the-scenes work, the board's activities keep our garden humming along.

Nicole's Serene Evening Tea

Recipe:

5 peppermint leaves
5 lavender leaves
Teaspoon local honey
Slice of lemon

Add hot water and steep
for five minutes.



This will make a relaxing tea that is perfect before bed.



Gardener Nicole leads a discussion at VISTA about tea making using fresh herbs.

May's Featured Florida Native Plant

The [Florida greeneyes](#) wildflower is a member of the Daisy family and just might be a nice addition to your landscape.

Sometimes called "**chocolate flowers**," the vibrant yellow blooms emit a subtle chocolatey fragrance and attract a variety of bees and butterflies.

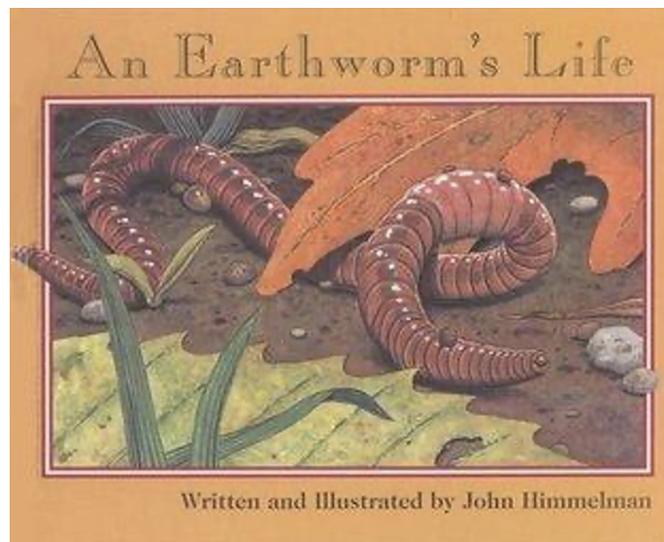


Dominic, showing off the Florida greeneyes growing in his grandparents' butterfly garden

Little Free Library

An Earthworm's Life

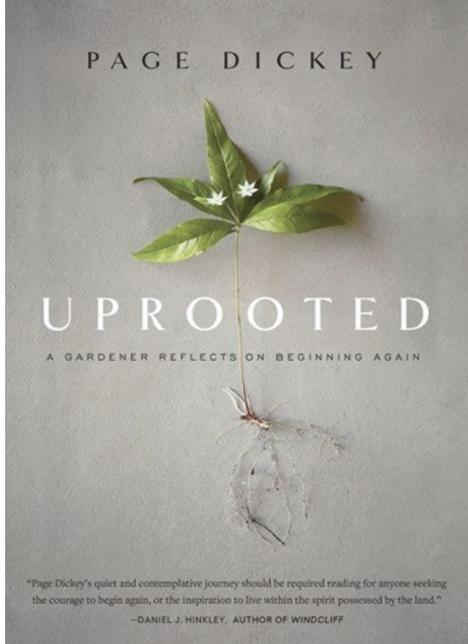
by John Himmelman



Beautiful watercolors by writer and illustrator John Himmelman depict an earthworm's world from its unique perspective. Simple text for readers ages 5-7 describes the creatures' movements and activities.

Learn
More

Uprooted
by Page Dickey

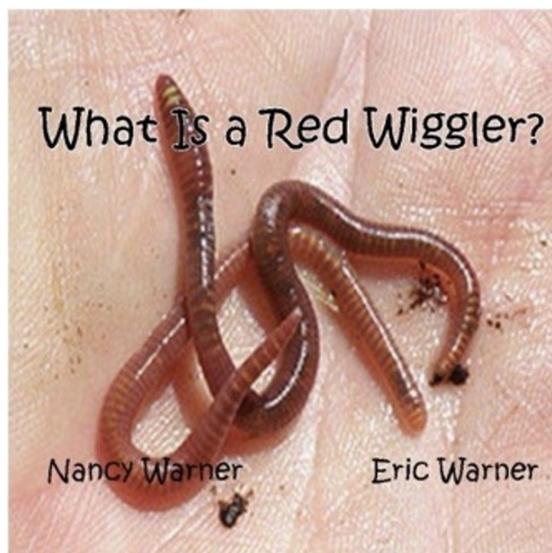


“Uprooted reveals how a late-life uprooting changed Dickey as a gardener.” —The Wall Street Journal

Follow the journey of Page Dickey’s search for a new home, discovery of the ins and outs of the landscape surrounding a new garden, establishing the garden and learning how to be a different kind of gardener in a wilder, larger landscape.

Learn
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What is a Red Wiggler? by Nancy and Eric Warner



This book shows how to set up a red wiggler worm bin and how to harvest the castings. Photos and renderings of the inside of a worm reveal the importance of this very special worm, and a journal is included

for observations about the worms.

Did you read "Worm Magic" in [April's VISTA Matters?](#)

Learn
More

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

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

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Connect with us

