

VISTA Matters is the weekly community newsletter for garden members. Included are key dates and communications necessary for all members to know and be involved.



VISTA Gardens News - December 1, 2016

Winter bounty at VISTA Gardens



Bok Choy from the garden of Corinna Edwards

Teaching + Learning = VISTA!

With our mission to provide educational resources for our members and the greater community, VISTA Gardens was delighted to host two groups of kids in November. Seven scouts from Cub Scout Den 329 and their families toured the garden with members Jos Marks and Jennifer Grebenschikoff. The Cubs tasted some of our vegetable plants, watched the bees and put their hands in the compost piles. They also planted cucumbers in one of our plots.

A week later a group of middle school girls who participate in a start-up group, Girls Rule School, visited VISTA with several of their Moms. Jennifer and Josh helped them learn about the different vegetables, how we power our water supply with solar energy, the value of the bees and butterflies to the health of our garden and all stages of compost production. It

was great to see the kids learning where their food comes from and what it takes to grow vegetables and fruits. We hope other kids' groups will visit the garden to help us fulfill our mission to share our knowledge about sustainable and organic gardening. Please enjoy the photos below from the two groups.



Useful Gardening App from UF IFAS

App Name: Florida Fresh

Do you want to know if it's the right time of year to plant a vegetable? Want to buy Florida produce but you don't know whether it's in season? UF/IFAS has a new app to guide you.

It's called the "Florida Fresh" veggie app, and you can now download it for free on your mobile device.

Sydney Park Brown, an associate professor emeritus with the UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, said the idea for the app emanated from one of the most popular Extension documents ever written: "The Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide."

It's pretty simple: You enter your Zip code, and the app tells you what vegetables to plant at that time of year.

"This type of information is really popular, so we thought it would be cool have an app," said Park Brown. "We see it as useful to gardeners who see vegetable seeds and plants for sale, but don't know if it's really the right time to plant them."

But the app's uses go way beyond timely planting of vegetables. You can also discover the seasonal availability of Florida-grown produce.

And there's more. If you touch any of the photos, the app provides lots of information about each fruit and vegetable, including planting tips, best varieties for Florida and nutritional value. Additionally, the app gives you links to Extension documents about the plants. They come from the UF/IFAS Electronic Data



Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam is also excited about the app.

"Florida is blessed to be able to grow an abundance of healthy, wholesome fruits and vegetables year round," Putnam said. "And now, with UF/IFAS's Florida Fresh app, you can find information on the best times to plant your own produce and the availability of Florida-grown products at your local store."

The app can be downloaded from the following sources:

- UF/IFAS: <http://m.ifas.ufl.edu>
- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.ufl.ifas.planting>
- iOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/florida-fresh/id1061646911?ls=1&mt=8>



Cucumbers for Adoption!

In the earlier article we discussed how Cub Scouts Den 329 recently planted cucumber seedlings. We were fortunate to have Stevie Aucoin from Village Lawn Care allow us to use his log plot at Blueberry Hill 1 - 4 which is the middle log plot of the three nearest the front gate.

There are about seven cucumber plants along the south edge of the plot, and now Ciro Sinagra from an adjacent plot has placed pepper and lettuce plants in Stevie's plot. You are welcome to transplant any of these plants to your garden plot, or adopt the plants where they are by helping to regularly water and feed them. Enjoy the bounty!

Ongoing Activities

Saturday Work Parties

Fulfill your community volunteer requirement by joining fellow gardeners on Saturday mornings to tackle the maintenance needs of the garden at large. It's a fun time and you get some exercise and the garden stays looking great. Keeping the garden regularly maintained prevents us from major intermittent workload. The party starts at 9 a.m. every weekend, weather permitting.

Compost Thursdays

Committee members meet at the garden Thursday's at 8 a.m. to turn the compost. Please join the team if you would like to learn more about composting.

Compost Materials Needed

General reminder: To produce high quality input the community needs to provide a steady supply of material! This includes vegetable waste (garden or kitchen). Please bring your waste to the garden, don't let it go to the landfill! **NOTE: We are at capacity for leaves, cardboard and shredded paper right now. Please do not bring any more for the foreseeable future.**

Keep in touch with VISTA

We are working hard to streamline communications to ensure you receive the right content in the right place when you need it.

1. Facebook: Like "VISTA Gardens" to receive updates on key activities throughout the week

If you do NOT use Facebook please reply to this email and you will be added to a

separate email distribution list. The team will do its best to email any time sensitive updates requiring community attention to this list when a post is made to Facebook.

2. Tuesday email: Summarizes key activity and news for the upcoming week
3. Monthly newsletter: More detail into topics of interest and education (see link above!)
4. Web site: Our address is vistagardentampa.org (note: no 's' in garden). A repository of membership information, detailed education, links to articles on shared topics of interest. Plus much, much more.

VISTA Gardens | comms@vistagarden.org | vistagardentampa.org

STAY CONNECTED:

