



# VISTA MATTERS

-November 2024 Newsletter-

## Found! “Creepy Crawlies!”

Researchers from the USF Agroecology lab show families their insect specimens.



VISTA Seasonal Gardener, Bonnie, helps a little girl select a project from the craft table.

So many children and their parents found those creepy crawlies at the "Creepy Crawlies in the Garden" event presented by Fiona the Forest Witch and The Mad Bug Scientists. This spooky education event brought frightful fun with crafts, insect tasting, a beetle encounter, mad scientist presentation and a bug hunt.

Representatives from the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery tell a mother and son more about their insect specimens.



Vegan "Dirt Pies" prepared by Iron Chef Corey, also a VISTA Seasonal Gardener, for participants to snack on.

## VISTA Wins Another Award



VISTA Gardens was honored at the 2024 Hillsborough County Fair Harvest Awards in the Urban Agriculture category on October 24th. This annual event recognizes outstanding individuals and organizations that play a vital role in Hillsborough County's and Florida's rich and diverse agricultural industry. At VISTA Gardens we are committed

to both preserving the environment and the agricultural heritage of Hillsborough County. What was once a greyfield site, an abandoned water treatment facility, and an overgrown eyesore is now restored to a beautiful, sustainable community garden, Hillsborough County's first garden park.

We are grateful to the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation department staff for allowing us to continue using this urban site for our community garden agriculture. We are also grateful to all our members, volunteers, and community partners, donors, and sponsors for their continued interest in and support of this wonderful agriculturally green oasis in northwest Hillsborough County!

## Puddlers in VISTA's Florida

# Native Plant Gardens

We provide the moisture and minerals butterflies need by including puddling stations. Making a puddler is an easy at-home project to make your garden more attractive and beneficial to butterflies, as well as other pollinators. Fill a shallow dish with sand, add a few rocks, and keep the sand moist.



## Central Florida's Autumn Colors

The flowers of [Blazing Star, \*Liatris\*](#) and [Muhlygrass, \*Muhlenbergia capillaris\*](#) in VISTA's Wildflower Garden.



*Photo by Rick Jackson*

## Our Gardeners



**Corey Soberanis**  
gardens in AW7-S.

Corey recently volunteered at VISTA's children's event, presenting vegan "Dirt Pies" for great snacks. Ask him for his recipe!

**What is your favorite crop?**

TBD this is my first time planting, but I pray my leeks will grow!

**How does your time at VISTA feed your soul?**

Collaborating with others in a vibrant, life-filled garden nourishes my soul, fostering a deep sense of belonging and shared purpose.

**What do you cook up with your harvest?**

This is my first year harvesting, and I'm thrilled! I plan to grow everything I need for a classic French vegetable stock.

**What new information/learning have you acquired as a result of gardening at VISTA?**

I learned for the first time about the different types of Cover Crops and their essential benefits.

**What is your favorite social, exercise, or other non-gardening activity?**

I enjoy the gym & reading self-development books and practicing the piano. I'm also an avid tea enthusiast.

# Mark your Calendar

## November Events



### **Sunday, Nov 3, 10a-2p**

1st Annual Community Garden Tour. VISTA joins other Tampa Bay community gardens and welcomes guests to tour.

### **Wednesday, Nov 6, 4p**

New Member Orientation - Reserve with [Beverly S.](#)

### **Friday, Nov 8, 8-10a**

Join volunteers maintaining the native plant garden at Carrollwood Village Park.

### **Saturday, Nov 9, 8-11a**

Volunteer to work alongside Sickles High School National Honor Society members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

### **Saturday, Nov 9, 10a-12p**

VISTA Open House – Come greet visitors from the community! Share information about what you are growing, and the volunteer work you do at VISTA.

### **Sunday, Nov 10, 10a**

Brunch Q&A - All Your Questions Asked and Answered! BYOBrunch.

### **Sunday, Nov 17, 9-11a**

Volunteer to work alongside USF Rotaract members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

### **Saturday, Nov 23, 8-11a**

Volunteer to work alongside Sickles High School National Honor Society members as they complete planned projects at VISTA.

### **Saturday, Nov 23, 10a**

New Member Orientation - Reserve with [Beverly S.](#)

### **Q: When should I give up on a plant?**

A: Nicole Jagusztyn, VISTA's Education Chair, says, "Sometimes it is better to remove a sick, damaged, or struggling plant so you can make space for a new one. If it's sick, pull it gently out of the ground and try to leave as much soil as possible. If it's damaged beyond repair, cut the stalk at the ground level and leave the roots to decompose in your soil."

*I think connecting to nature and to all of the arts is so important for all people, but especially children.  
—Eric Carle*

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

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