



# VISTA MATTERS

-October 2024 Newsletter-

## Creepy Crawlies in the Garden!

**creepy crawlies  
in the garden**

PRESENTED BY  
FIONA THE FOREST WITCH  
AND  
THE MAD BUG SCIENTISTS

**SATURDAY  
OCTOBER 19TH  
9 AM - 12 PM**

**FREE  
EVENT FOR  
KIDS**

**A SPOOKY EDUCATIONAL EVENT**  
9AM - CRAFTS, INSECT TASTING & BEETLE ENCOUNTER  
10AM - MAD SCIENTIST PRESENTATION & BUG HUNT  
VISTA GARDENS - 13572 S. VILLAGE DRIVE

Inside...



## More Seedlings and Seeds!

Get ready to plant your cooler weather seedlings! The cool weather seedlings you pre-ordered from the VISTA store will be available for you on Saturday, October 12, and Sunday, October 13, 8:30-10:30a and Monday, October 14, 4:30-530p. Seeds will be available for purchase at these times as well. Cash or check preferred. If you aren't able to pick up your seedlings by Monday evening, they will be placed on your raised garden bed.



## VISTA Wins Award!

Florida's 13th Commissioner of Agriculture, Wilton Simpson, will highlight the 2024 Hillsborough County Fair Harvest Awards, at the fairgrounds, 215 Sydney Washer Road in Dover, October 10th at noon. 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 for their achievement and commitment to agriculture and to the preservation of Hillsborough County's agricultural heritage.



## VISTA is in the Weeds!

*“Weeds and invasive plants impact the world around us and our daily lives. They can reduce crop yields, choke waterways, trigger allergies, disrupt the natural habitats of plants and animals, create fire and safety hazards, and reduce aesthetic and property values.”- Weed Science Society of America*

WEEDS! They're everywhere we look because they love our Florida climate. Anyone at VISTA who uses a bed to grow vegetables or flowers knows that they should be keeping their bed free of weeds. BUT- all of us are also responsible for keeping the surrounding pathways of our beds free of weeds too. This job is yours, and not the responsibility of our student volunteers. Each time you are at VISTA, take a look around your bed. See a weed, pull a weed. In addition, if you see soil peeking through the mulch in the pathways around your bed, get some mulch from the mulch pile in the concrete bin and cover the pathway.

What to do with the weeds and any other green trimmings you cut? Either take them home to your yard waste if they are flowering or producing seeds or, if they have no flowers or seeds, scatter them (singly, not in clumps) onto the green common area far away from the vegetable and flower gardens, as well as our native plant landscapes. (VISTA has no trash or yard waste pick up.)

**PLEASE-** Do your part to keep all our pathways weed-free and covered with mulch!



# The Wildflower Committee invites you!

**When: Wednesday, October 23 5:30-6:30p**

**Where: Carrollwood Cultural Center**

Discover how insects and plants co-evolved and survived! For more than a decade, John Lampkin has been photo-documenting thorns and thistles and chemical cocktails, as bugs and bloomers battle it out. The result is a visually delightful, fun, and educational exploration of a 450-million-year-old "arms race."

*John Lampkin is an avid naturalist and Nature photographer with credits in many field guides, books, journals, websites and blogs. He has won many awards and prizes, including first prize in the 2020 "American Butterflies" magazine photo contest. As a professional composer, his woodwind quintet, "Insects: A Musical Entomology in Six Legs" won the Grand Prize in a Composers Guild international competition. John also constructs crossword puzzles for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and the LA Times and other venues, with many of his puzzles having Nature themes.*

**Ask a Wildflower Garden committee member about raffle tickets to win gift cards and starter plants.**



## Mark your Calendar October Events

**Wednesday, October 2 4p**

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

**Friday, Oct 4 8-10a**

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

**Sunday, Oct 6 9-11a**

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

**Thursday, Oct 10 12N-2p**

Hillsborough County Fair Harvest Awards Presentation and Luncheon in Dover

**Friday, Oct 11 6-7p**

Happy Hour Q&A - All Your Questions Asked and Answered! BYOB.

**Saturday, Oct 12 8-11a**

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

**Saturday, Oct 12 10a-12p**

VISTA Open House

**Saturday and Sunday, October 12th and 13th 8:30-10:30a,  
and Monday, October 14th 4:30-5:30p**

Pick up cool weather seedlings ordered in advance. Seeds available for purchase.

**Wednesday, Oct 16 5:30-6:30p**

Tia Silvasy, Residential Horticultural Agent with UF/IFAS Extension, presents ways to identify Florida native plants and distinguish them from their non-native look-alikes.

**Saturday, Oct 19 9a-12p**

Creepy Crawlies Event at VISTA

**Saturday, Oct 19 10a**

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

**Sunday, Oct 20 9-11a**

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

**Wednesday, Oct 23 5:30-6:30p**

***At the Carrollwood Cultural Center***

Coevolution of insects and plants - how they survive in a hungry world! John Lampkin, Speaker

**Saturday, Oct 26 8-11a**

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

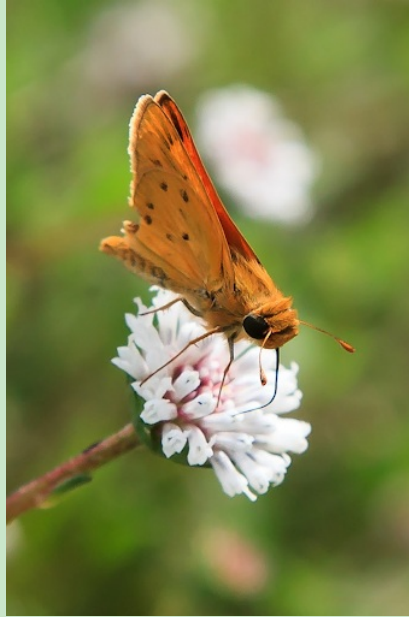
***Save this date in November:***

***Sunday, November 3 10a-2p***

VISTA joins other Tampa Bay community gardens  
and welcomes guests to tour.



# “Salt and Pepper” (of a sort) Grows in our Wildflower Garden!



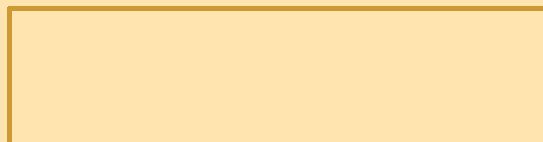
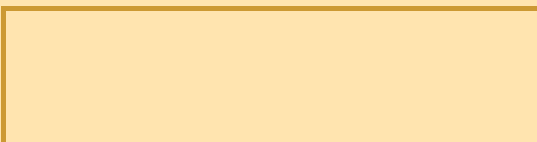
Can you see how this plant got the name *Salt and Pepper*? Rick Jackson photographed a [Fiery skipper \(\*Hylephila phyleus\*\)](#) nectaring on one of its blooms.

One of 4 Dwarf Snow Squarestem (*Melanthera nivea*) shrubs in VISTA’s Wildflower Garden, below. This plant grows in full sun and partial shade, thrives in loam, sand, or even soil composed of lime rock. It blooms during warm weather months. Drought tolerant once established, Snow Squarestem serves as a wonderful nectar plant for a wide diversity of butterfly species and other important pollinators that support our vegetable gardens.



## New in the Little Free Library

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





From Newbery Medalist Cynthia Rylant comes a vibrantly illustrated, poetic picture book tribute to the beauty and magic of a rainy day. Ages 3-8 [Read More](#)



One person creates a beautiful green space in the heart of the concrete jungle and brings together an entire community. Ages 4-8 [Read More](#)

## Gardener Highlight



**Janet Stanko gardens in CW2 and is Chair, VISTA's Pond Committee**

### **What is your favorite crop?**

Kale! I grow a lot of it. Although it isn't my very favorite, broccoli is also great. Did you know that broccoli leaves are as nutritious as the broccoli head itself?

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

After gardening organically for many years, I wanted to be involved in an effort bigger than myself to make a broader statement about sustainable gardening. Also, I have learned much more along the way.

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

I recently made Zuppa Toscana which is an Olive Garden recipe using a lot of chopped kale. I add kale to my smoothies.

### **What new information/learning have you acquired as a result**

### of gardening at VISTA?

I learned more about soil maintenance and the importance of protecting the soil. In addition, my knowledge of native plants has increased because of presentations and conversations with fellow gardeners.

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

I am active in the Sierra Club and spend a lot of time with my granddaughters. They have an interest in the environment and enjoy coming to the garden.

### Q: How much water does my vegetable garden need?

**A: Seeds and seedlings have different water needs.** Seeds need to remain in moist soil to germinate, so you will need to water more frequently to ensure the soil does not dry. Seedlings need more moisture as well until they grow into mature plants. A full 16'x4' plot needs about 40 gallons of water per week, ideally applied over two separate waterings for mature plants. If you are hand watering, this is about one inch of water per week (or 1/2 inch per watering). You can use a rain gauge or a tuna can to help measure the water (or determine if the rain has done the watering for you). If you are using an irrigation system, you can use the "finger test" and some trial and error. Run your system for ten minutes and then wait ten minutes. Stick your index finger all the way into the soil next to one of your plants to check the moisture level. If it is saturated, that is enough water. If still dry, add five minutes of watering time until the soil is saturated.

**"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."**

*-Audrey Hepburn*

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

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

**Connect with us**







Try email marketing for free today!