



VISTA MATTERS

-January 2024 Edition-

VISTA Thanks YOU!

Among the many worthy causes to support, you continue to appreciate VISTA Gardens with your financial contributions. Together, we are cultivating a vibrant and sustainable community for generations to come and we thank you for your ongoing support!

As we enjoy the wonderful success we have experienced, we look forward to how we can continue to thrive. Everything that is special about VISTA is due to you, our members, our volunteer Board members, and our volunteer Committee Chairs who dedicate time and energy and enthusiasm to help make VISTA such a happy place.

Did You Know That VISTA Gardens...

...Is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors with a set of official Bylaws that spell out when we have meetings, how our Directors are appointed, and what the various Committee functions are.

...Publishes a Board meeting Agenda before and Minutes after every Board meeting. These are available for your review by contacting our Board secretary.

...Is on County land and that requires us to meet all the County requirements of annual reports, meetings with County staff, and fiscal and insurance and regulatory compliance.

...Has no paid employees. Your membership includes a commitment to volunteer a minimum of 2 hours monthly, although many VISTA members donate more time to committee work as well as garden upkeep. [READ MORE](#)

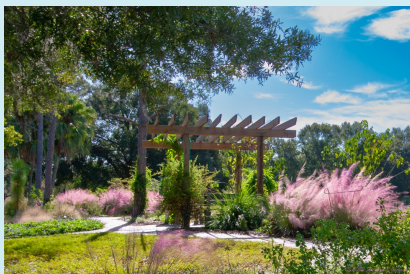
We encourage you to check out our [Board and Committee Chairs page](#) on our website as well as the *More Information* link at the bottom of that page. We'd love to hear about your special interests, talents and skills!



VISTA receives a Mini-Grant from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program

The Woodland Committee is excited to announce that VISTA received a Mini-Grant from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program for woodland restoration in 2024. During the year, with help from VISTA members and community volunteers, including USF Rotaract, Sickles High School National Honor Society and the University of Tampa PEACE Volunteer Center, we plan to remove invasive species and plant native trees, shrubs and flowers. We also plan to develop educational materials that highlight Florida native plants and common locally-invasive plants. We have member workdays on Tuesday mornings and member/volunteer weekend work days monthly. We welcome additional team members! If interested, please contact [Vicki Kuse](#) or [Elizabeth Warner](#).

Save the Date!
Saturday, April 13 10a-2p
VISTA's 10th anniversary celebration



Plant Feature

Rick Jackson photographed VISTA's Muhlygrass, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, in full bloom in the Wildflower Garden in late October-early November. We hope that you enjoyed this autumn show of nature! [READ MORE](#)

Meet Our Gardeners

Sanjay, Nathan, Mary

Where is your raised garden bed?

You'll find us on VISTA Gardens' map at CE3-South, sharing a raised garden bed with Lori and Gianni.

How long have you been a member?

We recently joined the community and have been members for 2 months.

What is your favorite crop?

I don't have a single favorite crop, but love growing a mixture of fresh vegetables. The variety is always the exciting part.

How does your time at VISTA feed your soul?

I have always enjoyed working with plants. It started in my younger days, when I worked in the garden and built a small nursery with my father. Being able to have the same experiences with my son and my wife is probably the best part of being at VISTA. Another thing I enjoy immensely is meeting new people and getting the opportunity to be part of the VISTA community.

What are your volunteer activities at VISTA?

I am looking forward to working on the seedling committee. This will give me a chance to learn about planting seasons, crops, as well as be able to grow seedlings we can all use.

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

We keep learning from all the seasoned gardeners. I recently learned about liquid fish emulsion, trimming the tomato plants properly, what crops would be good to plant when.



Recent Events and VISTA Committee Updates

Mark Your Calendars

January Calendar of Events

January 2 10a

AARP garden harvest for the Community Food Pantry. VISTA gardeners are welcome to add cucumbers, kale, lettuce, squash, etc.

January 5 8-10a

Join volunteer maintaining the new native plant garden at Carrollwood Village Park.

January 13 10:30-Noon

New Year's Brunch - Bring a dish to share, your favorite drink, and a chair. [Read More](#)

January 13 and 27 8-11a

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

January 13 and 27 9-10a

Yoga in the Garden - bring mat and hydrating drink. Donations welcome.

January 14 8:30a-11a

Volunteer to work alongside USF Rotaract members in the Woodland and UT PEACE volunteers in the Wildflower Garden at VISTA.

January 28 8:30a-11a

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



The Wildflower Garden

Committee hosted the [Nature Coast](#) Florida Native Plant Society Field Trip at VISTA Gardens



The Education Committee hosted two discussions. “[Gardening Lessons Learned](#)” and “[Florida Native Groundcovers as Alternatives to Turfgrass: Benefiting our Neighborhood Ecology](#)” featuring Bruce Turley and our own wildflower gardeners.



[AARP's](#) first 5 lb harvest for the Community Food Pantry. A second harvest yielded 28 lbs of donated produce.



Sickles High School National Honor Society members volunteering to remove invasive plants and plant Florida native plants in VISTA's Woodland

Compost Committee

One of the best uses for compost is to top dress garden beds – Twice a year give your bed a hearty dose of finished compost. Sprinkle it along the soil surface, especially around the drip lines of your plants. The water from the drip line soaks into the compost and provides added nutrients.

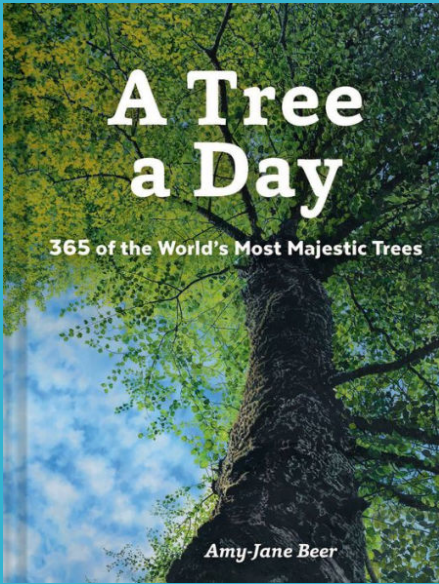
VISTA Question & Answer

Q: I'm tired of opening the gate manually. How do I get a gate opener?

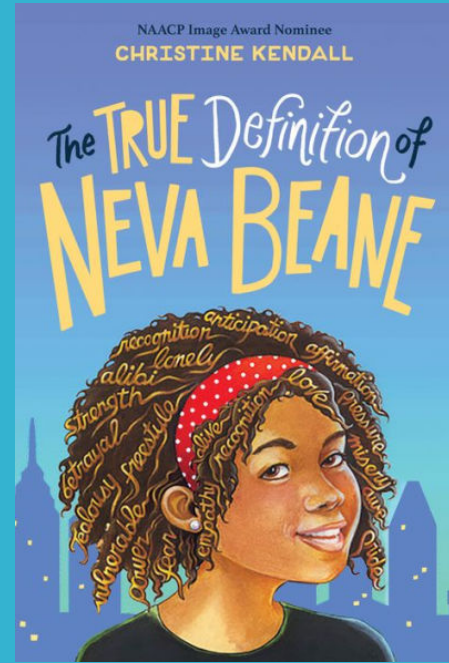
A: Pre programmed automatic gate openers are available for purchase for \$25. Contact [Susan Baxter Gibson](#) to purchase.

New in the Little Free Library

VISTA and our community appreciate **Forever Friends** for the grant to purchase books for the Little Free Library



Seasoned nature writer and journalist Amy-Jane Beer shares 365 majestic and memorable trees from around the world exploring the botany, poetry, folklore, rich history, and natural beauty of trees with award-winning photography, works of art, and detailed illustrations. [READ MORE](#)



While the pages of her beloved dictionary reveal truths about what's happening around her, Neva must discover the best way to define herself. In this wholly original story by the author of the NAACP Image Award nominee *Riding Chance*, a girl finds her voice in unexpected ways. Ages 8-12 [READ MORE](#)

Procrastiplanting: (Verb)

When you have a million things to do but ignore them all and tend to your plants instead.

[Click here](#) to submit your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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Connect with us



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