



## VISTA MATTERS: February Edition

Welcome to our newest gardeners!



**Doug Kostelnik and Jennifer Cummins,** gardening in BW8-S



**Eric, Keshia and Arlo Arlinghaus,** gardening in BW4-N



**Gigi, Kyle, and Naomi Yeun-Reed,** gardening in BW4-S

Welcome to our Social Members!

A warm welcome to Ruth Wedoski and Lynn Burke, our new Social Members. They eagerly await the availability of a raised garden bed.



# Help us create "black gold" compost!

# WANTED



## YOUR LEAVES!

Don't let those pesky leaves go to the landfill, bring them to VISTA for our compost committee. The leaves collected over the next few months provide essential fuel for the composting process. Simply add your bags to the pile you see in the compost corner and the team will take care of the rest. Thank you!

## Join us at these upcoming events



### Yoga in the Garden

Join us for yoga and tai chi in the garden!

Come in comfortable clothing, and bring water, a mat and a towel to place underneath your mat (in case the grass is damp).



### Happy Hour

Pop in to say hello! Join your fellow garden members for a socially-distanced Happy Hour at the garden.

This is an excellent opportunity to meet your fellow gardeners.

**Yoga: February 12 and February 13, from 10 to 11am**

**Tai Chi: February 6 and 20, from 10-11 am**

Please bring a chair, if you'd like, and also your favorite drinks and/or snacks.

**Fridays, from 4:30-5:30p.m.**

## What's new? VISTA'S Flower Garden



A new shared space for our members, VISTA's Flower Garden, will support a healthy ecosystem, increase our pollinator habitats, provide floriculture education, and add beauty at VISTA Gardens.

“Long term plans are to have the garden anchored by a wooden pergola in the center, surrounded by a wildflower garden on the west, an edible flower garden on the north, and a cut flower garden on the east. The cut flowers will make gorgeous bouquets, the edible flowers will add flavor to our soups, stews, and salads, and the wildflowers will highlight the charm of old Florida's native plant life.” Richard and Donna Birnholz.

Over twenty VISTA members supported and continue to help



A team of volunteers gathers most Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m., including Caroline Serra, Gene Murdock, Marilyn Collins and Mitch Rose. Sue Mao and her daughters, Vivan and Kaydence, as well as Karen Rose, Sierra Shellabarger and Stephen Bagley also helped rehabilitate the site, sow seeds, and transplant cut flowers and wildflowers native to Central Florida.

It took strenuous digging to remove invasive weeds and grasses in this area, and we especially thank Rolfe Evenson and Evans Bostick who make hard work look easy and did the lion's share of this work.

Thanks to Marty Kleiner and Doug Kostelnik, the Flower Garden will be irrigated by digitally controlled above and below ground systems connected to our solar powered well pump.

In addition to the pergola, plans are to install special pathways and signage. To that end, we are

Richard and Donna, who lead the development and care of the Flower Garden.

grateful to VISTA's grant writing team - Jennifer Grebenschikoff, Mary Ellen Dallman, and Vanitha Venugopal - for seeking grant opportunities and developing a proposal to possibly fund future development of the Flower Garden.

## Little Free Library

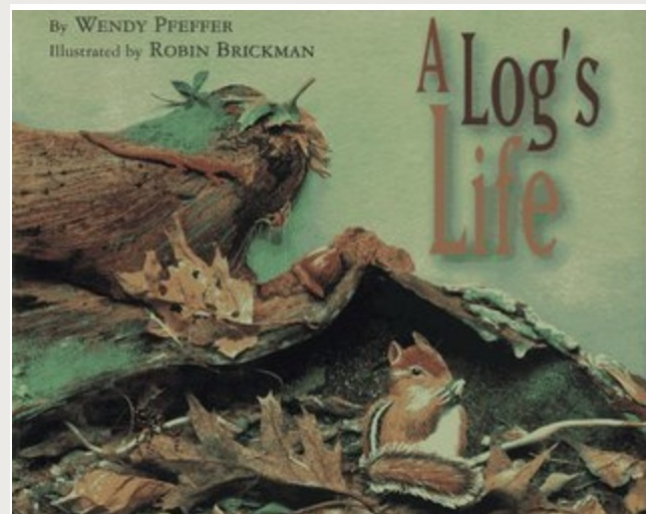
Enjoy our new selection; one with a special surprise. Periodically, we ask VISTA gardeners to place a note inside books, adding a bit of the personal touch. One of these books has a special note about the Eastern Bluebirds we enjoy in our gardens. Happy hunting!

One stormy day a strong wind rages through the forest, causing an old oak tree to bend and sway. Lightning strikes; the tree crashes to the ground. Now it's a giant log.

Informative, lyrical text complemented by stunning, three-dimensional paper sculptures showcase the forest ecosystem and inspire a closer look at the trees—and logs—in our own backyards and at VISTA Gardens.

[Pre-K, K, 1st-2nd Grade teachers may be interested in these lesson plans.](#)

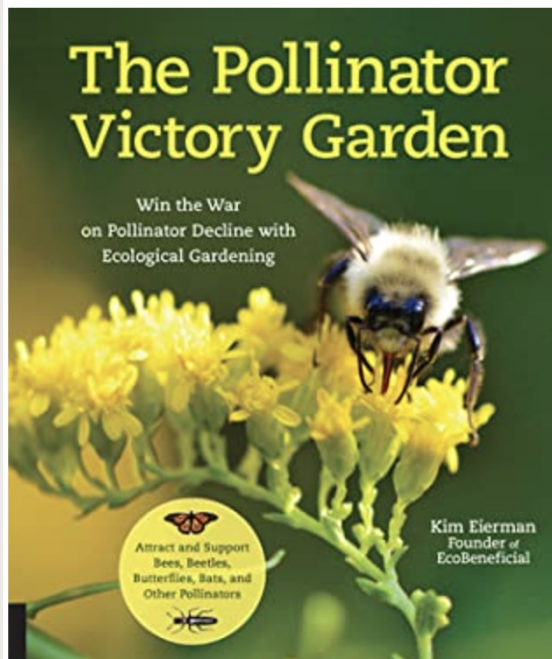
### **A Log's Life by Wendy Pfeffer** Illustrated by Robin Brickman



Click to  
Discover

### **The Pollinator Victory Garden by Kim Eierman**

Learn how to transition your landscape into a pollinator haven by creating a habitat that includes pollinator nutrition, larval host plants for butterflies and moths, and areas for egg laying, nesting, sheltering, overwintering, resting, and warming. A wealth of information to support pollinators an improve the environment around you. Every yard,



community garden, rooftop, porch, patio, commercial, and municipal landscape can help ameliorate pollinator decline using The Pollinator Victory Garden as a guide.

[Click to Discover](#)

Ages 6 and older

Mags and her younger brother, Cody, spend summers on their grandparents' farm, where bluebirds grace the fence bordering Grandma's garden. After Grandma's death, Gramps sells his wheat fields and new houses replace the trees in which the birds used to nest. Weeds overtake the garden, until Mags and Cody, engage their grandfather in coaxing back the bluebirds. The story ends with convincing optimism that the flock will reappear the following spring and inspires honoring personal legacies while coping with loss.

***Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators' 2001 Golden Kite Honor Book Award Winner***

**Bluebird Summer by Deborah Hopkinson**  
Illustrated by Bethanne Andersen



[Click to Discover](#)

All books were purchased through a grant VISTA Gardens received from Forever Friends.



## Volunteers Needed!



Looking for a fun outdoor activity?

Take a turn and be "Compost Fit!" We ask member gardeners (even those not on the compost committee) to help with composting for at least one hour once a year. It is rewarding to create "Black Gold" and it feels great being outdoors.

Book online or add your name to the sign-up sheet on the shed to volunteer on any one (or more!) of these days from 8-9am or 9-10am: **February 25, 26, 27; March 25, 26, 27; or April 29, 30 and May 1.**

Click to get "Compost Fit!"

## Herb Spotlight: Borage

### Borage, *Borago officinalis*

Borage is said to provide courage and was given in drinks to Crusaders at their departure. This may be due to the high content of calcium, potassium and mineral salts and research suggests that



This herb can be easily recognized by its sparkling blue flowers which are extremely attractive to bees. The leaves are oval and covered with prickly, white hairs.

[To learn more about Herbs and their uses, sign up online for Herbs; Cultivation and Conversation.](#)

borage works on the adrenal gland, where courage begins. Borage was also slipped into drinks of prospective husbands to give them the courage to propose.

The flowers and young leaves have a cucumber-like flavor. Add borage to drinks or chop finely and add to salads, dips, cucumber soup, yogurt, pickles, soft cheese and sandwiches. Cook with spinach or add to ravioli stuffing.

The flowers can be used as a garnish and can be crystallized for cake decorations.

## Member Spotlight-Meet Sierra Shellabarger

Sierra (and her boyfriend Stephen) are very active and regularly volunteer to turn compost the last weekend of the month, tend herbs on Tuesday mornings, and plant and keep the Hugelkultur weed-free on Saturday mornings.

Sierra participated in VISTA's December 13th Bike Ride on the Upper Tampa Bay Trail, and she brought her mother who was a welcome guest.

Sierra and Stephen recently volunteered to help transplant the wildflower section of VISTA's new Flower Garden.



### More About Sierra

A graduate of Robinson High School's IB program in Tampa and a National Merit Scholarship finalist, Sierra is a freshman at the University of South Florida.

After discovering Vista Gardens on her own, she became a member in July 2020. Besides gardening, Sierra enjoys dance, aerial silks, bicycling, cooking, and outdoor activities.

# VISTA Bike Ride

Join us for a casually-paced bike ride on the Courtney Campbell Causeway!

Our Path: Start at Skyway Park, 3901 George Rd, Tampa, 33634. Ride a paved trail from the park to the Causeway and go as far as you want.

The ride is about 5 miles to the bridge overpass (if you turn around there, it's a 10 mile round trip).

Afterwards, meet up for a drink/lunch/snack on the beach at Whiskey Joe's to socialize safely outside.

**Sunday, Feb 21 at 11:00 am**

Please RSVP to Laurie Kleiner (813-758-9457) so she knows to wait for you.

## Pavilion Update

The county inspection will occur this week. If all goes well, the cement pad will go in the following week!

A big thank you to Bill West for helping to complete the job!



## Marketing Report Anthony's & Bonefish Fundraisers

Thank you to everyone that participated in the Anthony's and Bonefish restaurant fundraisers. VISTA received approximately \$80 from each event. VISTA will continue to seek additional fundraising opportunities.

Have anything to add? [Submit](#) your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.



VISTA Gardens  
13572 South Village Drive  
Tampa, Florida 33618

Connect with us

