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# Little Red Wagonful

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



**April 2021**

*Earth laughs in flowers.* — Ralph Waldo Emerson

April 22 is Earth Day. With this year's theme of "Restore Our Earth," celebrate and plant a Florida native garden to help our wildlife and our much-needed pollinators.

## Butterfly of the Month



**Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charithonia*)**

April 26th marks the 25th anniversary of the Zebra Longwing as Florida's state butterfly. Zebra Longwing, or Zebra Heliconian, is named for its striped wing pattern. This coloration is a warning to predators that the butterfly is toxic. Their toxic nature comes from chemicals called cyanogenic glycosides that taste bitter, and if ingested, are bad for one's health. The nasty chemicals derived from the hostplant – the Passion Vine – protect caterpillars as well. The caterpillars are white with black spots and black spines and are conspicuous, because they too signal to predators, "Don't eat me!" Caterpillars pupate on or near hostplants and the chrysalis looks like a dry leaf and is hard to find.

Unlike most other butterflies, male Zebra Longwings mate with a female before the female has a chance to emerge from its chrysalis. So, even though the chrysalis is hard to find, male butterflies manage to do so. Once males find a chrysalis, they visit it repeatedly and perch on it. This begins way before mating happens. If a male senses chemicals that indicate a female pupa, the male continues to return more and more frequently. Intruding males are fended off by an opening of the wings. Mating happens for several hours, and the female emerges during this process to expand her wings. No other males attempt to mate with this female afterwards because during mating, the male repellent is transferred to her.

It is also easy to attract to your garden: simply plant some Passion Vines in a shady area of your garden with nectar plants nearby. These beautiful butterflies will visit your garden over and over. The Zebra Longwing has a wide range of habitats, including hardwood hammocks, thickets, and gardens. The Zebra Longwing is found throughout the state, although it is more common in south Florida, particularly in the Everglades National Park. In 1996, the state legislature designated the Zebra Longwing as the official state butterfly.

**Celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Zebra Longwing with us!**

**Join us for butterfly releases: April 23, 24, 25 at 3:30 PM**

## Plant of the Month



### Florida Anise – *Illicium floridanum*

This is a rapid-growing, spring-blooming, low-maintenance evergreen shrub with spectacular dark glossy green foliage that is a very dependable shrub in the Florida shady landscape. Its red blooms in the spring are followed by star-shaped seed pods which cling to the stems. The leaves give off a lush anise fragrance when bruised or crushed. You can propagate this plant from cuttings or seeds (seeds come from a pretty star shaped pod). It can grow 10'- 15' tall with a 6'-10' spread in width. Plant this in a damp shady area and enjoy the Florida shade in the springtime while enjoying this beautiful bloomer!

Do not cut the spent blooms, though, as the flowers shift to star-shaped pods that hold the bean-like seeds. Once mature, the seeds will burst and send the seeds all over. These seeds germinate readily and provide an easy means of propagation. New plants can also be obtained from mature or hardwood cuttings that root easily.

If desired, the shrub can be trained into a small tree by removing some of the lower limbs. For a more rounded, shrublike form, tip prune to encourage branching, especially when young. If a hedge is desired, plant on 10-foot centers for compactness. In a mixed shrub border, allow about 15 feet between Florida anise and other shrubs to maintain the individuality of each specimen. Florida anise fits well into naturalistic landscapes in damp, shady areas.



Do not use *Ilicium floridanum* or *I. parviflorum* as spices. Both are toxic and should not be ingested. Enjoy the beauty.

**\$35.00 / 3 GAL**

**SHOP NOW**

## Garden Swag

**Get your Swagon!** Select Florida native plants from Little Red Wagon Native Nursery, then begin planting a beautiful garden for pollinators.

National Gardening Day celebrates a satisfying pastime that many people enjoy. There's no better feeling than getting outside in the sun and soil, whether we're working in large landscapes or in a few containers on a front stoop. Gardening is one of the most rewarding hobbies you can do, with long-lasting positive effects to yourself, your community, and to the world at large. Spending time in the garden also provides physical activity and an opportunity to join with nature. And there are emotional benefits, such as connecting with your kids when you garden as a family and the joy of watching a seed grow into a plant from your efforts.

No matter how you garden, plant in the ground, in containers, in straw bales or a square foot gardening box...just garden!

Visit our Gift Shop for a wide array of gardening tools, accessories, books, and so much more.



Treat yourself!

**Items starting at \$3.00**



You deserve it!

**SHOP NOW**

## Design with Vines

### Corkystem Passionvine (Passiflora suberosa)

This perennial vine is a host plant for the long wing butterflies - Gulf fritillary, Zebra longwing and Julia.

This is especially a favorite for the Zebra longwing as it will grow in shadier conditions and the Zebra



heliconia likes it a bit cooler (don't blame them). Bloom color is green and the flowers are a little larger than a dime in size. The plant likes shadier conditions to sun and grows in moist to dry soils. The berries can contain small amounts of cyanide when green and when they turn dark purple they are ripe for the birds to eat.

**\$9.00 (1 GAL) / \$20.00 (3 GAL)**

**SHOP NOW**



## Calling All Volunteers!

### Little Red Wagon Native Nursery:

We are currently in need of garden enthusiasts to assist in our nursery.

To volunteer, sign up here:

[volunteersignup.org/W3WEX](https://volunteersignup.org/W3WEX)



## Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation



Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation regularly has a number of single-day and ongoing volunteering opportunities.

### UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

#### Encore Park Butterfly Garden Maintenance: **April 21**

Volunteers are needed to help maintain a Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at Encore Park located at 1210 E. Harrison St. (Corner of Harrison Street and Hank Ballard St.)

To volunteer, sign up here: [volunteersignup.org/WY89P](https://volunteersignup.org/WY89P)

**CFC Maintenance Volunteer Opportunities: April 29**

Anita Camacho and other volunteers performs monthly pollinator garden maintenance at the Center for Conservation (CFC) last month. The CFC is a 20-acre campus located in Apollo Beach and exists as a partnership between the Tampa Electric Company (TECO), the Florida Aquarium, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the University of Florida. If you would like to join us, the next maintenance project will be performed the morning of April 29. It's always a fun time if you can make it! To volunteer, sign up here: [volunteersignup.org/TLATX](https://volunteersignup.org/TLATX)

**ABOUT THE TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION:**

With a focus on Florida butterfly species and native plants, environmental education and local awareness in the Tampa Bay area, Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation was established to support the conservation of butterflies and pollinators and the restoration of their natural wildlife habitats. By working globally with university research partners, providing educational and research opportunities and community outreach programs, and through multi-faceted fundraising efforts, the Foundation aims to elevate public awareness of the importance of butterflies.

The Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation Inc., a 501(c)(3), is an affiliate of the Butterfly Conservatory of Tampa Bay.

## Pardon Our Metamorphosis



We're making steady progress on the construction of the Butterfly Conservatory. If you'd like a preview, you may visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit which is open Fridays to Sundays, free of charge. Please keep visiting [Butterfly Conservatory of Tampa Bay](https://www.butterflyconservatoryoftampabay.com) website for updates regarding our Grand Opening.

## Monthly Calendar of Events

April 1: *April Fools' Day*  
 April 2: *World Autism Day*  
 April 4: *Easter Sunday*  
 April 18-24: *National Volunteer Week*  
 April 3: *World Aquatic Animal Day*  
 April 7: *World Health Day & World Beaver Day*  
 April 11: *National Pet Day*  
 April 14: *National Gardening Day*. Create a butterfly garden with native plants.  
 April 17: *Bat Appreciation Day*  
 April 21: *National Tea Day, National Kindergarten Day*

### Earth Day - April 22

The world officially recognizes April 22 as Earth Day, but here at Little Red Wagon, we believe EVERY day is Earth Day! We'll be hosting butterfly releases all weekend long to celebrate:

Friday, April 23 - 3:30 PM

Saturday, April 24 - 3:30 PM

Sunday, April 25 - 3:30 PM

Let's also work together to save our Earth. Participate with us as we [#GetTrashed for Earth Day](https://www.instagram.com/gettrashedforearthday) and clean up trails and communities (see volunteer opportunities above). If you're doing this on your own, be sure to



post photos of the trash you collected on our [#Get Trashed for Earth Day Facebook page](#) or Instagram, tag us @butterflyeffecttampa, and show the world how much good we can do when we all work together..

April 26: *Zebra Longwing 25th Anniversary.*

April 28: *Admin. Professionals' Day.* Find unique gifts in our Gift Shop.

## Congratulations to all of the winners in our recent contests and raffles:

March 28th – In celebration of National Little Red

Wagon Day (March 31): Josh Phillips – winner of our little red wagon and red Tropical Sage.

Congratulations to our World Butterfly Day raffle winners on Sunday March 14th – in celebration of National Learn About Butterflies Day and World Butterfly Day:

Lisa Wallner (pictured) – won the butterfly in a pot

Marianne Godwin – won a garden flag and the wine basket

Kim Pelaez – won a garden flag



Best wishes to bride-to-be, Alexis Hanks, who held a fun, plant-focused bridal shower at our nursery on March 27th. She had some quality time with Steve – our resident Red-tailed boa. The shower commenced with a wine toast and butterfly release to commemorate the occasion. From planting succulents to holding snakes, this is the sort of get-back-to-nature event we love to host. If this is your idea of fun, why not hold that upcoming party or special event here? Contact Anita to learn more.





Little Red Wagon Native Nursery is Hillsborough County's only native nursery. Supporting Florida's native plant & wildlife ecosystem and our natural world, we are located at 4113 Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa.

You can also visit us at [LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com](https://www.LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com)

Email: [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:Info@ButterflyTampa.com)

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