

If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

# Little Red Wagonful

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



## December 2021

The gardening season officially begins on January 1st, and ends on December 31. – Marie Huston

**D**ecember is the month we experience the least amount of daylight. Take time for walks in the cooler weather to enjoy nature. Please support your local charity and shop local small businesses this season. Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's Gift shop has unique gift ideas for all ages. Not sure what to purchase? Consider a LRWNN Gift Card.

## Butterfly of the Month



### White Peacock

While much of the rest of the country may be dreaming of a white Christmas, here in Tampa Bay, we're dreaming of White Peacock butterflies instead.

White Peacocks, part of the brush-footed family of butterflies, are an easily recognized medium-sized butterfly whose top white wings have light brown (almost golden) markings including gold tips on the clubs of their antennae. (See Photo 1.) The bottom of its wings are also white but its markings may be either brown, tan and gold (some say orange instead of gold – you can decide for yourself). The butterfly's front wing has one round black spot while its hindwing has two smaller black spots. Native to the Deep South, White Peacocks are sub-tropical butterflies that are year-round residents of Central and South Florida. In late spring and early summer,

White Peacocks disperse and colonize areas to the north (especially along the coasts), with sightings regularly recorded in Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas.

Female White Peacocks lay single green eggs on host plants which include frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*) and water hyssop (*Bacopa monnieri*). Adults nectar on plants that include the underappreciated garden workhorse, Spanish needles (*Bidens alba*). *Bidens alba* is the #3 ranked nectar source in Florida for butterflies.

White Peacocks' native habitat includes open, moist areas. They are frequently found along the edges of ponds and streams, weedy fields, and roadside ditches. They're commonly seen throughout the Tampa Bay Area. If you spot one this holiday season, why not tag us on Facebook @LittleRedWagonNativeNursery and let us know the details? We'd love to hear from you.

## Monarch Migration Update

Good news comes from The Xerces Society announcing that the 2021 Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count surpasses 100,000 butterflies across California overwintering sites so far. This is a good sign for the Western monarch migration as the 2020 count results were less than 2,000. The count is still underway.



The official monitoring period for the 2021 WMTC runs from November 13th to December 5th, so there is still time for this number to increase. There is a really good blog on Western monarchs that also talks about effects of rearing monarchs and how it may impact migrating monarchs: <https://xerces.org/blog/bounciness-of-butterflies>.

The Western Monarch Count is a community science program through the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. You can read more about the count here: <https://www.westernmonarchcount.org/>

We expect to start receiving updates in early December from the Eastern Monarch migration overwintering sites in Mexico. Follow Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation on Facebook and LRW on Instagram and Twitter for more current information.

## Host Plant Of The Month





### Christmasberry (*Lycium carolinianum*)

Christmasberry is a woody evergreen shrub with a somewhat whimsical growth pattern. It is a wetland species that is highly salt tolerant. It grows 3-7' tall. It is best suited for coastal landscapes, but is very adaptable and can be acclimated to a variety of sites. It loves the sun and produces delicate flowers that vary in color from bluish-white to deep lavender. Flowers are most common in the fall, although in the Tampa Bay area they can flower intermittently throughout the year. I have seen blooms and berries on the plants in my garden nearly every month this year! If you have an opportunity to visit St. Marks Lighthouse area or Cedar Key in late October to mid-November you will see this plant all along the coast with lots of butterfly and bee visitors. The birds are also seen enjoying the berries. This plant gets its common name from the bright red, egg-shaped berries that it produces in abundance in late October through December helping our winter bird population when little else has berries. It has also been referred to as Carolina desert-thorn, which is a reference to the occasional thorns borne on its branches. Although less thorny than most rose bushes based on my vast rose growing experience.

**\$20.00 / 3 gallon**

**SHOP NOW**

**Nectar Plant Of The Month**



©Anita Camacho

### Wild Poinsettia/Paintedleaf (*Poinsettia cyathophora*)

Wild Poinsettia (*Euphorbia cyathophora*) is an annual that typically grows to 1-3 feet. With distinctive, orange bracts that almost appear hand-painted surrounding a flower structure known as a cup-flower or cyathium (this flower structure is unique to Euphorbias), this plant is easily recognizable in its native habitats. These include hammocks, pinelands, and disturbed areas across much of the southern US. The plant can tolerate both partial and full sun and soil conditions that are normally moist to occasionally dry. In our area, the plant can bloom year-round. Its lanky nature makes this a great background plant for the native garden. Each plant produces about 4500 seeds; the plant throws these seeds up to 3 feet, which has given the plant an unfair reputation for being weedy. Simply collect most of the seed pods before they burst and you'll be able to keep this wonderful plant, which is a great nectar source for bees, butterflies, and moths under control. Notably, Mourning doves and other birds devour its seeds so you can always collect the seeds and spread them on your driveway or other hardscape to feed the birds.

The plant's genus name *Euphorbia* (as well as the family name Euphorbiaceae) refers to a Greek physician (Euphorbus) who discovered many of the medicinal properties of plants in this genus. Wild poinsettia was previously known by the scientific name *Poinsettia cyathophora*. Other common names include painted leaf, Florida poinsettia, dwarf poinsettia, and fire-on-the-mountain. It is related to the common "Christmas" poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*), which is indigenous to Mexico and bears larger, more striking red bracts.

Like other members of the Euphorbiaceae family, wild poinsettia emits a toxic, white milky sap when its stem is broken. This sap is a skin irritant and can be toxic if ingested, so please be careful and keep children away from



it.

**\$7.00 / 1 gallon**

**SHOP NOW**

## Garden Swag



Amaryllis with Sweater

Create a Christmas garden indoors with this wax-coated Amaryllis bulb that is ready to bloom within 4-6 weeks. No watering necessary! Makes a beautiful teacher, hostess or neighbor gift. Choose from 6 adorable Christmas sweater designs. Amaryllis colors vary.

**SHOP NOW**



LRWNN Gift Cards

Consider a gift card for the "hard-to-buy-for" individuals on your list. Denominations begin at \$10 which makes great stocking stuffers, gifts for teachers and for others you wish to say thank you to and show your appreciation.

**SHOP NOW**

## Design with Vines



© Cori Campos

### Snowberry - *Chiococca alba*

Let it snow, let it snow, let it Snowberry! In Tampa, Florida – it hasn't snowed since 1977. We can plant the Snowberry - *Chiococca alba*, a robust attractive evergreen long-lived perennial that is part vine/part shrub in the coffee family (Rubiaceae) and native to Florida that commonly blooms spring through fall and often all year long. The genus name *Chiococca* comes from the Greek *chion* meaning *snow*, and *kokkos* meaning *kernel* or *berry*. The species epithet *alba* is Latin for "white" and refers to the color of its berries. It is an unusual name for a plant that only grows in very warm places but the berries are as white as the driven snow. Its tubular flowers start a pale white and as the flower ages they turn yellow. It provides food and cover for various birds, small mammals, and nectar for pollinators. It is also a larval host for the Miami blue butterfly (*Cyclargus thomasi*) and Snowberry clearwing moth (*Hemaris diffinis*). This plant prefers partial shade conditions to some full sun exposure and requires some support as it grows and with support can reach 10' in height and often 10' width. It makes a nice background plant in the landscape with its showy yellow flowers and bright white fruit. It can tolerate some salty wind and salty spray but not inundation of salt water. It will handle periods of time where ground is moist during rainy season, but does well in long dry conditions. Its native habitats in Florida are coastal hammocks, pine rocklands, coastal flats and disturbed forest edges. The best part of this plant is its good looks as a buffer plant



but it can be aggressive in gardens, so it may require a little management once it is established after a couple years.

The Miami blue butterfly inhabits tropical hardwood hammocks, beachside scrub and tropical pine rocklands. Once widespread in much of Florida, the Miami blue has been extirpated on Florida mainland. It is now one of Florida's most endangered insects with a single remaining population of less than 100 individuals in the Florida Keys. It should be protected. This loss is due to ever-expanding urbanization and the associated loss of coastal habitat. Eggs are laid singly on flower buds of host plant. Caterpillars feed on flowers and may live inside the pods, eating seeds.

The Snowberry Clearwing is a large moth in the Sphinx family. It is a strong flier and can resemble birds and bees as it hovers to nectar with its long proboscis. This moth is found in many states in the southeast including Florida.

For humans it has been used in traditional herbal medicine to treat rheumatism and snakebites. It has also been used to treat asthma, coughs, diarrhea and as a laxative. Other uses as a diuretic to induce vomiting.

There is another unrelated plant that is known as snowberry, *Symphoricarpos albus*. This one is not native to Florida. So be sure to check scientific name to ensure you are getting the right plant.

**\$28.00 / 3 gallon**

**SHOP NOW**

## Calling All Volunteers

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



### UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

**CFC Butterfly Garden Maintenance: December 16 @ 9:30 am - 11:30 am**

The Florida Aquarium, Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and FWC's Suncoast Youth Conservation Center are looking for volunteers to assist with habitat maintenance at Center for Conservation site of the Florida Conservation and Technology Center in Apollo Beach (529 Estuary Shore Lane) as well as their Adopt a Road site along Dickman Road.

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/HXFAW>

**"Nature Wonderland" Kids' Camp Assistants: December 20-23 @ 8:00 am - 1:00 pm**

Adult or High School volunteers are needed to assist with our nature camp for children 5-11 years old. We will have a planning meeting one week in advance of the camp (date and time TBD).

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/A9KQF>

**Encore! Technology Park: December 28 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Volunteers are needed to help maintain the 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, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/HXMQQ>



### Little Red Wagon Native Nursery:

We currently need garden enthusiasts to help us support the efforts of Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation's conservation, restoration, research, and education efforts. To join our awesome volunteer team, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/9BQTJ>

### 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



Visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit during our normal business hours while the Butterfly Conservatory is being constructed. Enjoy live butterflies, their caterpillars and chrysalis as well as a few native reptiles Tuesdays through Sundays. While the education exhibit is currently free, we do accept donations for Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation for education, research, habitat restoration and conservation for butterflies and native plants in our area. Please keep visiting [Butterfly Conservatory of Tampa Bay](https://www.butterflytampa.com) website for updates regarding our Grand Opening. For updates, visit:

[www.ButterflyTampa.com](https://www.butterflytampa.com)

## Monthly Calendar of Events

December 4: *World Wildlife Conservation Day*  
December 5: *International Volunteer Day, World Soil Day--watch [Kiss the Ground](#).*  
December 6: *Hanukkah ends*  
December 8: *National Christmas Tree Day*  
December 9: *Little Red Wagon NN's Owner's Birthday*





December 10: *Animal Rights Day*

December 12: *National Poinsettia Day*--select a native Wild Poinsettia from LRWNN to celebrate.

December 13: *Ozone Action Day*

December 19: *Look for an Evergreen Day*

### December 19: Butterfly Walk

Join Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and NABA Tampa Bay on a butterfly walk at Picnic Island in South Tampa on Sunday November 19. We will start out at around the southern most part of the park at 10 a.m. and work our way to the entrance by 12:30 p.m. Join us for Free!

**REGISTER**



### December 20 - 23

By popular demand, we are offering another camp: Nature Wonderland Kids' Camp. Take advantage of this opportunity to run last minute errands while children learn about nature and have animal encounters.

**5-11 Years: \$200**

**8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**4111-A Henderson Blvd., South Tampa**



Every child will have an opportunity to release a butterfly (weather permitting). Space is limited. Click the button to download a brochure, for more information, and to register or volunteer.

**REGISTER NOW**

December 21: *Winter Solstice, National Robin Day*  
December 24: *Christmas Eve*  
December 25: *Christmas Day -- LRWNN Closed*  
December 26: *Boxing Day*  
December 31: *New Year's Eve*



Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be closed on Christmas Day & New's Day. During this holiday season, please encourage your friends and family to shop local and pick up native plants to start their own butterfly garden.

### Visit Little Red Wagon Native Nursery

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](http://LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com)

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

Hours: Tuesdays - Fridays 11-5:30, Saturdays 10-5:30 and Sundays 12-4. Closed Mondays.

This email was sent to [[contact.email]] because you've subscribed on our site or made a purchase.  
[Unsubscribe](#)



Little Red Wagon Native Nursery



@nurturenative

omnisend

Ecommerce Email Marketing