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# Little Red Wagonful

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



## July 2022

If the first of July be rainy weather,  
It will rain, more or less, for four weeks together.  
~English proverb

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**T**he month of July marks the midway point of the year. As we celebrate Independence Day, enjoy patriotic colors in nature like the red-banded hairstreak butterfly along with the white and blue native plants featured this month. July is also national grilling month and family reunion month. Pick up native plants and stop by our gift shop for accessories to make your outdoor space especially inviting this month.

## Butterfly of the Month



© John Lampkin

### Red-banded Hairstreak

Hairstreaks are some of the most fun butterflies to watch. They're tiny (typically 3/4"-1.5") and somewhat delicate looking with very thin tails that extend from their hindwings. (Interestingly, hairstreaks are known for moving their hindwings up and down when perched. With tails that can be mistaken for antennae on the hindwing, the motion directs predators' attention away from the butterfly's real head and towards the butterfly's outer wing, giving the butterfly a higher probability of surviving an attack.)

The Red-banded Hairstreak is no exception. This adorable butterfly has a wingspan that's only 7/8"-1 1/4" and two threadlike tails on each hindwing. Distinguishable from other hairstreaks by a postmedial white line edged with a wide, bright reddish-orange band that is visible when its wings are closed, the Red-banded Hairstreak also has a bright blue spot and at least one black eyespot near its tails. (See Photo.) If you're lucky enough to glimpse this butterfly in flight, you'll likely see a flash of blue that is somewhat similar in color to that of the upper wings of the Ceraunus Blue.

Females lay flat whitish eggs on the underside of fallen leaves of host plants. Once they emerge, the hairy, pinkish-brown, slug-like caterpillars eat these dead leaves; older instar caterpillars may also eat the buds and new leaves of host plants, which include plants in the Bayberry (*Myricaceae*), Beech (*Fagaceae*), and Cashew (*Anacardiaceae*) families. Some of the host plants native to our area include Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*), Swamp Candelberry (*Morella caroliniensis*), Chapman's Oak (*Quercus chapmanii*), Sand Live Oak (*Quercus geminata*), and Winged Sumac (*Rhus copallinum*).

Adults are generalists that will nectar on a range of plants with small flowers such as [Coastal Sweet Pepperbush](#) (*Clethra alnifolia*) and [Milkweeds](#) (*Asclepias spp.*)



Red-banded Hairstreaks are found state-wide with at least three generations per year. Historically, these beauties were found in and around scrub oak forests, their edges, and in hammocks behind coastal dunes from Florida north through Long Island and west into eastern Texas. Today, the butterfly is expanding its range north and can also be found in utility right-of-ways, successional fields with thick vegetation, and gardens.

According to iNaturalist, people have recently sighted Red-banded Hairstreaks at Bell Creek Nature Preserve, Morris Bridge Conservation Park, and Hillsborough River State Park. How about you? Reach out to us on Facebook and let us know where you're seeing them.

(Fun tidbit: It's thought that the Red-banded Hairstreak's scientific name, *Calycopis cecrops*, derives from Cecrops, the name of a king in ancient Greek mythology who was traditionally depicted as a man with a serpent's tail instead of legs.)

## Host Plant Of The Month



### Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*)

Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) is an erect, multi-trunked evergreen understory shrub. Found along the Coastal Plain from southern New Jersey to Florida and west along the Gulf Coastal Plain to eastern Texas and southeast Oklahoma, Wax Myrtle is an early successional species that is highly adaptable to a range of conditions: it can be found growing in fresh to slightly brackish banks and shores; pine flatwoods; marshes; wet prairies; hammocks; swamps; and dry xeric uplands.

The shrub is clonal and spreads via underground runners; in its native habitats, Wax Myrtle can easily form thickets that are over 20' tall by 8' wide. In landscaped areas, Wax Myrtle can be pruned and maintained as a privacy hedge. The plant is symbiotic with bacteria that fixes nitrogen from air. Wax Myrtle consequently tolerates poor soils extremely well. It can also tolerate some salt-spray, hurricane-strength winds, soil moisture levels that range from very wet to very dry (once established) and shade. (Plants grown in full sun will be denser than those grown in shade.)

This plant's tiny, fragrant white flowers provide nectar for bees and butterflies in spring. Its silvery-gray fruit is an energy-rich food source for more than 40 species of birds, including the Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, and the Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle") Warbler in the late fall and winter. Its seeds are an important food for tree sparrows and Carolina wrens. Additionally, Wax Myrtle is a caterpillar food source for Red-banded Hairstreaks, Bayberry Leaf-tier Moths, Cecropia Moths, Io Moths, Polyphemus Moths, and the Little Wife Underwing Moths.

Wax Myrtle berries have been used for hundreds of years to make bayberry candles, soaps, and sealing wax. Berries are edible and leaves are purported to make an excellent insect repellent. Leaves can also be used to flavor soups and stews and to make tea.

Native peoples used various parts of the plant for medicinal purposes. As examples, Choctaw used a decoction of leaves and stems to treat fevers and a decoction of roots to treat inflamed roots. Koasati used a root decoction to treat stomachaches. Micmac used roots to treat inflammations. (For more examples, please search this [database](#).) [Modern medicine](#) recently demonstrated that Wax Myrtle has compounds that exhibit cytotoxic activities against leukemia, lung and breast cancer cell lines.

Wax Myrtle pairs well with [Cabbage Palm](#) (*Sabal palmetto*), Dahoon Holly (*Ilex cassine*), Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), [Muhly Grass](#) (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), Beard Grass (*Andropogon virginicus*), [Saltbush](#) (*Baccharis halimifolia*), and Myrsine (*Myrsine cubana*).

Please note: Wax Myrtle has a high flammability fire risk rating — the leaves, stems, and branches contain flammable aromatic compounds. As a result, you should not plant Wax Myrtle within the defensible zone around your home.

**\$32.00 / 3 Gallon**

**SHOP NOW**

**Garden Swag**





### SwagOn - Magnetic Yard Signs

Yard DeSigns are the perfect outdoor accent. Vivid, and eye catching, with amazing outdoor durability. Use with metal yard stakes (sold separately) and decorate it with a new Yard DeSign magnet each season. Easy to apply vinyl address numbers included.

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**Design with Vines**



© Anita Camacho

### **White Twinevine (*Funistrum clausum*)** Also known as *Sarcostemma clausum*

White Twinevine (*Funistrum clausum*) is an evergreen twining and clamoring vine that can easily grow to 30' in length: unless maintained, White Twinevine will form dense mats covering shrubs and small trees. With clusters of showy, fragrant, star-shaped white flowers for most of the spring, summer, and fall, White Twinevine can easily be used as an ornamental gracing a trellis or pergola.

A member of the milkweed family, White Twinevine supports Monarch, Queen, and Soldier caterpillars and is an important nectar source for bees and wasps. Naturally found in swamps, moist hammocks, and wetland edges in Central and South Florida (zones 9B-11), White Twinevine requires consistently moist conditions. It can tolerate partial shade but prefers full sun.

Like many members of the milkweed family, the plant will ooze a white milky sap when cut. The sap is toxic and the sap can be a skin irritant so take care when handling and ensure it is out of reach of pets and young children.

**\$10.00 1 Gallon**

**SHOP NOW**



## Nectar Plant of the Month



© Cori Campos

### Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*)

**Blue Mistflower** (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) is a short-lived herbaceous perennial that adds a delightful pop of purple color to your fall garden. Typically growing from 2'-3' tall and about 1' wide, Blue Mistflower has flat-topped clusters sitting atop long stalks with heart-shaped leaves. Each cluster can have up to 70 tiny purple flowers; each flower looks like a miniature tufted-tassel. Flowers are nectar-rich and a magnet for pollinators: numerous native long-tongued bees, Salt Marsh Skippers, Dukes' Skippers, Obscure Skippers, Three-spotted Skippers, Long-tailed Skippers, Southern Broken-Dashes, Gulf Fritillaries, Variegated Fritillaries, Soldiers, Little Metalmarks, and lots of moths are all attracted to this beautiful wildflower. (According to one source, Blue Mistflower contains alkaloids used by some species of male butterflies to make pheromones; this might explain one of the reasons the plant is so popular!)

Indigenous to moist, open woods, riverine swamps, sandy coastal wetlands, cypress savannas, and wet prairies and meadows, Blue Mistflower cannot tolerate dry conditions and grows best in loamy or sandy soil. This perennial will grow in full sun or part shade, but it can get somewhat leggy and has a tendency to flop over when it gets tall. Simply stake the plant, train it on an espalier, or cut it back. In any event, when Blue Mistflower is planted in the right conditions, you'll be rewarded with two to three months of continuous blooms.

Blue Mistflower can spread rapidly by both seed and underground rhizomes, so plant it in an area where you can let it grow wild. Heavy pruning once or twice a year encourages a more compact form. Pair Blue



Mistflower with **Pink Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*), **Climbing Aster** (*Symphotrichum carolinianum*), and **Giant Ironweed** (*Vernonia gigantea*), for a pink-purple color palette, or plant it with **Fringeleaf Tickseed** (*Coreopsis integrifolia*), **Slender Goldenrod** (*Solidago stricta*), **Turtlehead** (*Chelone glabra*), and **Great Blue Lobelia** (*Lobelia siphilitica*) for a color-popping pollinators' haven.

**\$9.00 1 Gallon**

**SHOP NOW**

## KIDS' CORNER



**Kids' SUMMER NATURE camp**

**EXTENDED TIMES**

**LittleRedWagon Native Nursery**

**TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION**

**8:00 AM TO 3:00 PM**

**KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 5**

**JUNE TO AUG. 9**

**4111-A Henderson Blvd. Tampa, FL 33629**

**Discover Nature Through Fun & Creative Activities**

**For details and to register, visit:**

**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**

**Summer Nature Camps**



Come join us for our new extended hours! From 8-3pm everyday we will explore the wonders of Florida in our own backyard. Don't miss out on learning how pollinators are used in space, how pollinators behaved in the dinosaur age or wacky facts about snakes and amphibians we can find in our own backyards. Every camper will have the opportunity to meet our animal ambassadors and release a butterfly during the week.

Can't join us for a whole week? Sign up for a single day for only \$60!

**REGISTER NOW**

ABC Action News reporter, Robert Boyd, visited our Tiny Giants Summer Nature Camp during Pollinator week to learn from campers how we are teaching them that bugs are fun and necessary. [Check out the segment that aired on June 27.](#)

**“Diggin’ in to Restore Butterfly Habitat in Tampa Bay”**

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

**UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:**  
(All events are subject to change due to weather.)

**TBBF Hell Strip Habitat Maintenance:**

**No maintenance day scheduled for July - we will resume in August.**

**Encore! Technology Park:**

**No maintenance day scheduled for July - we will resume in August.**

**CFC Butterfly Garden Maintenance: July 21 @ 9:00 - 11:00 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/KJKHJ>

**Summer Kids' Camp Assistants: July - August 9, 7:45 am - 3:15 pm**

High School and adult volunteers are needed to assist with our Kids' Nature Camps this summer. A commitment for a full week of camp is preferred; we will have a meeting the week prior to provide information.

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

**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.

**VOLUNTEER WITH US!**



## Pardon Our Metamorphosis

Visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit during Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's 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 website for updates regarding our Grand Opening. For updates, visit:

[www.ButterflyTampa.com](http://www.ButterflyTampa.com)

## Monthly Calendar of Events

July 1-7     *Clean Beaches Week*  
July 3     *International Plastic Bag Free Day*  
July 4     *Independence Day*

**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.

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