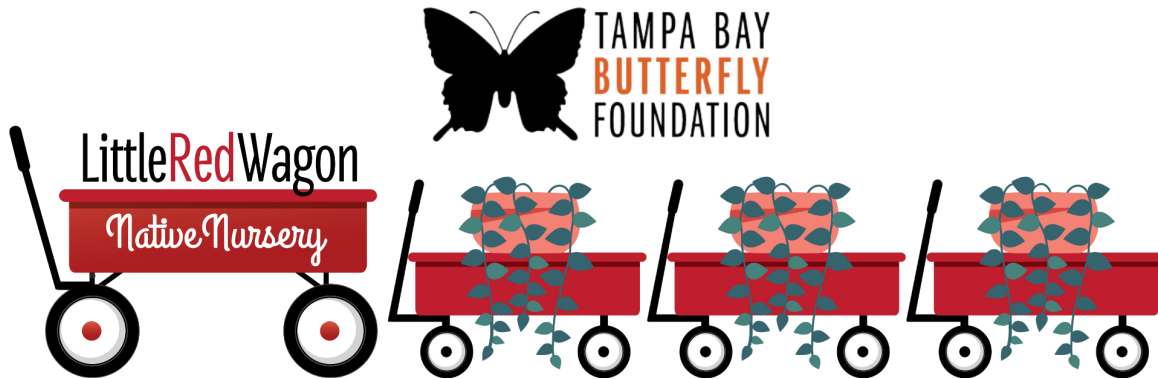


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*

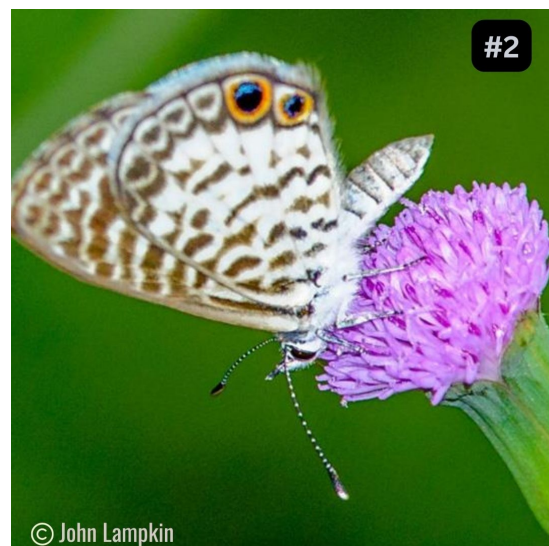
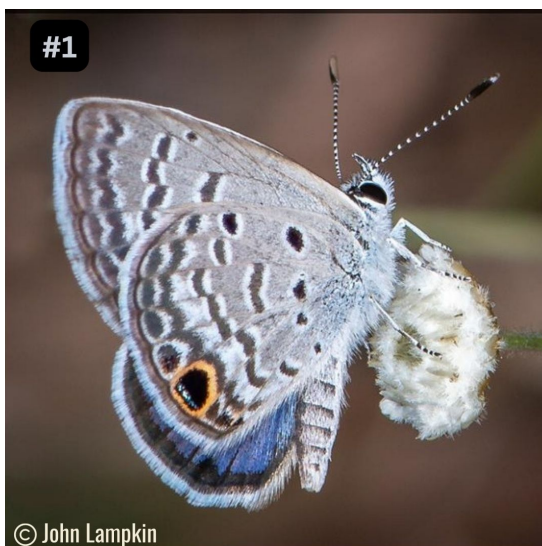


**December 2022**

"Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of winter gardening and even the most experienced gardener can learn from the unrestrained beauty around them." ~Vincent A. Simeone

**D**ecember is a wonderful time to show the people who matter to you the most, how much you care. During this season of gift-giving, consider native plants to support a butterfly garden that will be enjoyed all year round. If you make Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation your favorite charity on Amazon Smile, a portion of the sales will be donated when you shop.

## Butterflies of the Month



**Ceraunus Blue and Cassius Blue**

Ceraunus Blues are adorable little butterflies (wingspan only about 1/2 - 1 inch) that are fairly common in most parts of Florida, but require some determination to spot and identify. You see, they are quick fliers who dart from flower to flower and nectar on plants fairly close to the ground. To confound butterflies further, their close cousin, the Cassius Blue, frequents nearby areas, although Cassius Blues tend to nectar on plants higher than do the Ceraunus Blues. (Note: A key mnemonic to help distinguish them is the word Ceraunus has only one "S" and the Ceraunus has only one spot (see Photo #1) while the word Cassius has two "S" and two spots (see Photo #2).)

### **Ceraunus Blue**

The topside wings of male Ceraunus Blues are a deep but light violet blue with a dark band next to a thin white border while the topside wings of females are more of a dark brown. Females lay single bluish eggs on the flower buds of host plants which include Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), Rabbit Bells (*Crotalaria rotundifolia*), Sensitive Pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*), Tropical Puff (*Neptunia pubescens*), and Alicia (*Chapmannia floridiana*.) Sluglike caterpillars are very variable: colors range from green to red. Adults are considered generalists that will nectar from a variety of flowers including Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*), Spanish Needles (*Bidens alba*), and Powderpuff (*Mimosa strigillosa*.)

### **Cassius Blue**

The topside wings of male Cassius Blues are a pale blue and the topside wings of females are light blue with white patches. Females lay single, pale green eggs on the flower buds of host plants which include Wild Plumbago (*Plumbago scadens* or *P. zeylanica*), hairy milk pea (*Galactia striata*), and Cat's claw (*Pithecellobium unguis-cati*.) Newly emerged caterpillars have been described as being as tiny as grains of rice; they are green or green with white chevrons. Adults are generalists who nectar from a variety of flowers.

(Fun Fact: According to the [Florida Wildflower Foundation](#), these butterflies are in the second largest family of butterflies, Lycaenidae, otherwise known as "gossamer-winged butterflies.")

Both of these butterflies are regularly seen in our area, even in the winter months if it's not too cold. How about you? Have you seen any lately? Reach out to us on [Facebook](#) and let us know where you're seeing them.

## **Host Plant Of The Month**



### Wild Plumbago (*Plumbago scandens* or *P. zeylanica*)

Wild Plumbago (*Plumbago scandens* or *P. zeylanica*) is an understory sprawling evergreen shrub or matting groundcover that grows to about 1 foot tall and 3-4 feet wide. With bright white, tubular flowers, the plant serves as a wonderful alternative to non-native Jasmines. Its beautiful flowers attract numerous nectaring butterflies, moths, and bees. It also serves as the larval host for Cassius Blues, with females laying eggs on the plant's buds.

Wild Plumago is native to Florida, Texas, and Arizona where it grows on lime rock, coastal hammocks, and in sandy soils with moderate moisture. The plant prefers partial to full shade (higher level of sun will turn its normally deep green leaves yellow) and does not tolerate freezing temperatures.

This Florida native is a must for most butterfly gardens in our area. Pair it with Vanilla-plant (*Carphephorus odoratissimus*), Virginia Virgin's-bower (*Clematis virginiana*), Canadian Toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*), Snow Squarestem (*Melanthera nivea*), and Passion Vine (*Passiflora incarnata*) for a garden sure to #NurtureNative.

[Shop now](#)

**Garden Swag**





## SwagON

Our Gift Shop is brimming with nature-themed items and carefully curated merchandise for everyone on your list. Now through the end of December, enjoy 20% off all Christmas items in our gift shop. Proceeds from sales support butterfly conservation.

**SHOP NOW**



Gift Cards are perfect for the hard to please person on your list. Available in denominations from \$10 and up, gift cards can be purchased online and emailed. No crowds or long lines, saves you gas and postage!

**Shop now**



## Nectar Plant of the Month



### Rabbit Bells (*Crotalaria rotundifolia*)

Rabbit Bells (*Crotalaria rotundifolia*) is a delicate looking perennial that acts like an annual in areas with prolonged hard freezes. Typically growing to a height of less than 6 inches, this wildflower can form dense patches with trailing stems 3 feet long. A member of the legume family, Rabbit Bells' peak flowering time is typically April-August, although it will sometimes produce blooms throughout the year in south Florida. The plant's tiny (5/16") butter-yellow flowers open in the afternoon and last for less than a day. Despite their diminutive size, however, the plant's flowers pack a mighty punch: they are a favorite nectar source for many of our native bees.

Rabbit Bells are native to open pineleaf communities with sandy soils and dune and sandhill communities of open, coastal uplands from Florida north to southern Virginia and west to parts of Louisiana and Arkansas. The plant is the larval host plant for Ceraunus Blues and Bella moths.

Rabbit Bells prefer nutrient-poor well-drained but moist, sandy or limestone soils. The plant needs full sun and will go dormant in times of extreme drought.

Pair Rabbit Bells with Wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*), *Andropogon* spp., or Rustweed (*Polypremum procumbens*) for a native wildflower bed but please note: All *Crotalaria* species contain toxic alkaloids and

are poisonous if ingested. Please only plant in places where children, pets, and livestock can be kept away.

([Fun fact](#) from the University of Florida: Male Bella Moths convert some of the Rabbit Bells' toxic alkaloids they eat as caterpillars to a related compound (hydroxydanaidal or "HD"); females measure this HD concentration and use the information to select mates.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Design With Vines

### Florida Milk Pea (*Galactia floridana*)

Florida Milk Pea (*Galactia floridana*) is an herbaceous vine about 3 feet long that typically remains prostrate unless trained to climb. Reported as nearly endemic to Florida southeastern Georgia, Florida Milk Pea is differentiated from other *Galactia* species by its large pink flowers, densely villous-tomentose stems, and non-twining habit. (See this [article](#) for an interesting discussion of the taxonomic difficulties in differentiating members of this genus.)

Florida Milk Pea's natural habitat includes pine flatlands, sandhills, Florida scrubs, and old fields. It performs best in full sun and sandy, well-drained soils. Small butterflies, bees, and other pollinators frequently visit this flower as it's a great nectar source.

[iNaturalist](#) reports some 50 observations in Florida over the last two years, but the nearest we've seen listed are in Bradenton and Dunnellon. Why not get out with your camera and see if you can help us locate additional plants a little closer? Email your photos to [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com). We'd love to know what you find!

## KIDS' CORNER





Keep kids entertained and learning about nature during school breaks this winter. Register for our upcoming Nature Camps January 2-6 and January 16. Campers will get the opportunity to meet our animal ambassadors and release butterflies (weather permitting).

**REGISTER NOW**





## COMING SOON... in January

Kids will want to join our new Bug Buddies Kids Club! It is an great opportunity to discover the amazing world of bugs. You would never guess what wonders are happening all around us every day because of our tiny insect friends. While our main focus is on bugs, we won't forget about plants that feed and shelter the bugs and all our wonderful animal friends who are much bigger in size! We can't wait to see you at our first meeting Saturday, January 14th!

**REGISTER NOW**

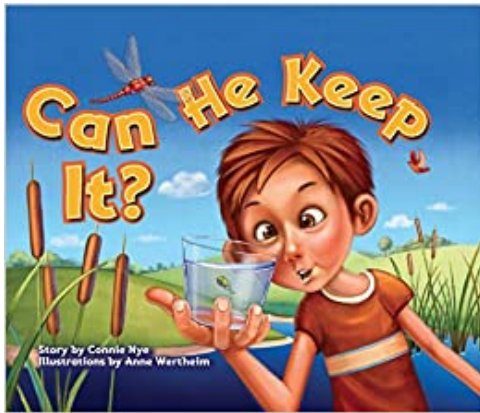




### Wacky but True!

It is common knowledge that it's nearly impossible for anything to survive in Antarctica. This is due to its inhospitable environment that includes freezing temperatures, strong winds, and no natural land bridge to connect it to other continents. Who would guess there would be insects on Antarctica too!

The Antarctic midge (*Begica antarctica*) is the continent's largest purely terrestrial land animal and the **ONLY** native insect. These insects are smaller than a pea but have adapted to Antarctica's insane conditions. Perhaps some larger mammals would learn a thing or two from this amazing insect!



There is nothing in the world like the excitement of a kid catching something live, be it a ladybug, a tadpole, or a fish. But inevitably the questions arises, "Can I keep it?" and the person in charge always has to be the bad guy with the response, "No!" This story helps kids to figure out this answer themselves.

[Shop now](#)

## "Diggin' in to Restore Butterfly Habitat in Tampa Bay"

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



### 2023 Nature Camp Assistants

We need adults and/or high school students to help with Kids' nature camps from 7:45 am to 3:15 pm during school winter breaks in January. Additional camp dates will be published for 2023. Nature camps will be held at 4111-A Henderson Blvd.

#### **JANUARY 2-6, JANUARY 16**

To volunteer click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/9FXAF>

### Butterfly Alley Maintenance



Volunteers are needed to perform cleanup and maintenance of Butterfly Alley habitat (4110 W. Estrella St.).

#### **DECEMBER 19 @ 3:00 - 5:00 PM**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/K3Q7X>

#### **JANUARY 3 @ 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

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

#### **JANUARY 16 @ 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

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

### CFC Habitat Maintenance

The Florida Aquarium, Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and FWC's Suncoast Youth Conservation Center need volunteers to assist with



Center for Conservation Maintenance



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.

**DECEMBER 15 @ 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/X4TEW>

**JANUARY 18 @ 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/EXB38>

## ENCORE! Park



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

**DECEMBER 16 @ 9:30 - 11:30 am**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/JEEK3>

**JANUARY 28 @ 11:00 am - 1:00 pm**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/E7JRM>

## Fred Ball Park



Volunteers are needed to help maintain the Rose Circle Garden Circle and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at 2851 Rubideaux St., Tampa, FL 33629 (next to Tampa Garden Club).

**DECEMBER 17 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/8PC3W>

**JANUARY 19 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser:  
<https://volunteersignup.org/4KLDC>



### 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.



A hand holds a red Amazon Smile loyalty card over a laptop keyboard. A green wreath with gold ornaments and a red bow is superimposed over the image. Inside the wreath, text reads: **SUPPORT #NURTURENATIVE** when you shop at Amazon. Amazon donates to your favorite charity with each purchase. Below this is the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation logo, which features a butterfly silhouette and the text 'TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION'. At the bottom, a black box contains three steps: 1. Go to smile.amazon.com, 2. Select **Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation**, 3. Shop and Amazon will donate a portion. To the right of this box is the 'amazon smile' logo with the tagline 'You shop. Amazon gives.'

**SUPPORT #NURTURENATIVE**  
when you shop at Amazon  
Amazon donates to your favorite charity with each purchase.

 TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION

1. Go to smile.amazon.com  
2. Select **Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation**  
3. Shop and Amazon will donate a portion.

**amazon smile**  
You shop. Amazon gives.

**Pardon Our Metamorphosis**





Visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit inside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery during our normal business hours while the Butterfly Conservatory is in permitting to be built. 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 our website for updates regarding our Grand Opening.

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

## Monthly Calendar of Events

- December 4: *Wildlife Conservation Day*
- December 5: *World Soil Day*
- December 9: *LRW Owner's Birthday--wish Anita Happy Birthday at checkout to save 20%*



December 12: *National Poinsettia Day*--pick up a native, wild poinsettia plant from our nursery.  
December 21: *Winter Solstice*  
December 25: *Christmas Day* - CLOSED  
January 1: *New Year's Day* - CLOSED



# Holiday Hours

Tuesdays - Fridays: 11:00 am - 5:30 pm

Saturdays: 10:00 am - 5:30 pm

Sundays: 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**CLOSED:** Mondays, Christmas & New Year's.

**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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