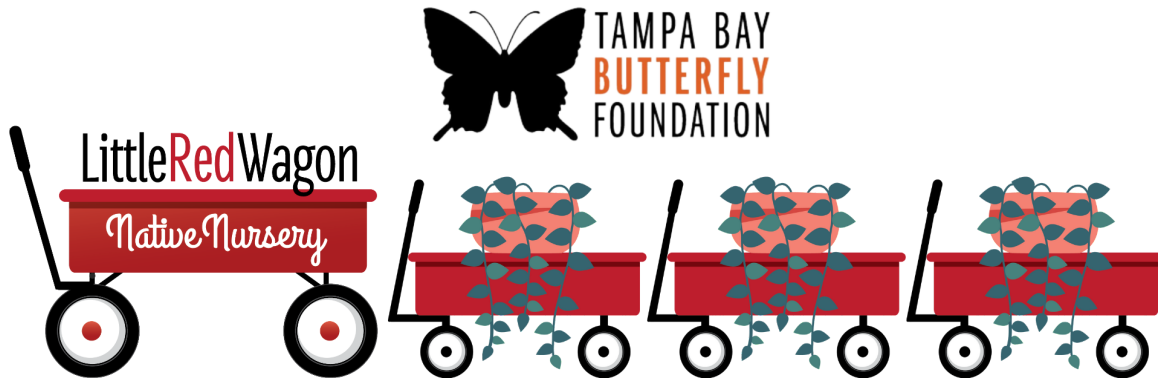


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# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



January 2023

"The gardening season officially begins January 1 and ends on December 31." ~Marie Huston

**H**ave a happy New Year! We look forward to helping you plan and prepare your garden as spring will be here before you know it. Whether its container gardening or a backyard, our knowledgeable staff can help you select plants to bring butterflies and other pollinators to your garden. Be patient with any plants that may have a bit of die back from the freeze and don't cut back too soon. Try to give them time to come out of the winter season and see what they do on their own.

## Butterfly of the Month



Viceroy

Viceroy's are orange and black butterflies that are Müllerian mimics of the iconic Monarch. According to [New Jersey Audubon](#), "Müllerian mimicry is when two or more species evolve similar appearances when both [exhibit] toxicity and/or foul taste, so that a lesser toll is taken on each species by predators who are still learning to avoid that appearance." Indeed, the Viceroy and Monarch so closely resemble each other that many people mistakenly identify Viceroy's as the better-known Monarch.

Fortunately, it's relatively easy to distinguish between the two:

1. Viceroy's have a thick black line across each hindwing. (See Photo #1.) This line is missing on Monarchs. (See Photo #2.) In the field we call this thick black line across the Viceroy's wings the "smile line."
2. Viceroy's tend to be smaller with a wingspan of 2 ½ to 3 3/8 inches; Monarchs typically have a wingspan of 3 3/8 to 4 7/8 inches.
3. Viceroy's tend to have a much faster flight, while Monarchs have a characteristic "flap, flap, glide" flight pattern.

Female Viceroy's lay single pale green eggs on the tips of plants in the Willow family; these plants are the requisite food for her caterpillars, which have been [described](#) as resembling "bird droppings in all stages." This resemblance probably helps protect the caterpillars from predators as they rest on exposed leaf midribs while eating. In less temperate areas, caterpillars will overwinter in a shelter attached to the plant's stem that is made from folded willow leaves and silk.

Viceroy's can be found in wet meadows, marshes and swamps across most of the continental United States, southern Canada, and northern Mexico. Adults are generalists that favor composites such as Asters (*Symphyotrichum spp.*), Goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*), and Shepherd's needle (*Biden alba*). When flowers are unavailable, Viceroy's will feed on aphid honeydew, carrion, dung, and decaying fungi.

In the last month, we have seen Viceroy's at Gadsden Park in South Tampa. We also have Viceroy's at the Duette Wilderness Preserve in Duette and at Celery Fields, Sarasota. Have you seen any around the Bay area? Please let us know. Post a photo with its location to our [Facebook](#) page. We'd love to see more of them in our area.

## Host Plant Of The Month





### Coastal Plain Willow - *Salix caroliniana*

Coastal Plain Willow (*Salix caroliniana*) is a small (15 to 30 feet), understory tree that typically grows in wet thickets, swamps, riverbanks, floodplains, sandbars, and interdune ponds throughout the Southeastern United States. With a spreading, irregular crown and narrow, lanceolate leaves, Coastal Plain Willow is similar in shape and form to Black Willow (*Salix nigra*), which is also found in the northern part of our state. The two can be differentiated by looking at the plants' leaves: Coastal Plain Willow leaves are slightly wider and lighter (almost a silvery white) on the underside.

Coastal Plain Willow produces showy yellowish-green catkins in the early spring that provide bountiful nectar for pollinators. These yield fruits in late spring that birds devour. The plant also provides cover for songbirds and is a caterpillar food source for Viceroy, Red-spotted Admirals, Mourning Cloaks, and the IO moth.

A number of Native American tribes used Coastal Plain Willow: Houma used a decoction of roots and bark to treat fevers; Seminole used an infusion of bark to treat fevers and body aches. (For a fascinating [read](#), see "The aspirin story – from willow to wonder drug.") Additionally, many cultures used various willow species for basketry and to build fences and furniture.

In our area, Coastal Plain Willow thrives in part shade and acidic, moist, nutrient-poor soil. Plant it with Swamp Dogwood (*Cornus foemina*), Swamp Bay (*Persea palustris*), Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), and Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) and #NurtureNative.



[SHOP NOW](#)

## Garden Swag



**Get your SwagON!**

Did you know scientists have discovered that by doing puzzles, people can stimulate their brain and improve a number of skills? When we work on a jigsaw puzzle, we use both sides of the brain which improves memory, cognitive function and problem solving skills in the process. January 29 is National Puzzle Day. Stop by our gift shop to select from these vintage nature-themed puzzles.

[SHOP NOW](#)



Nectar Plant of the Month





Gulf fritillaries on Salt bush © Anita Camacho

### Saltbush Plants of Florida

Saltbush (*Baccharis halimifolia*) is a long-lived 10- to 15-foot multi-stemmed shrub native to salt marshes, irregularly flooded fresh and brackish marshes, coastal upland fringes, and the back dunes of the Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains from Massachusetts south to Florida and west to Arkansas and Texas. It can also be found inland in open woods, vacant fields, disturbed areas, ditches, and desert habitats. Saltbush is deciduous in northern Florida but evergreen in the Tampa Bay area and further south.

Saltbush is dioecious with both male and female plants producing fall flowers that attract pollinators including Monarchs and numerous bees such as *Colletes mandibularis*, *C. simulans*, *C. thysanellae*, *Agapostemon splendens*, *Augochlorella aurata*, *Augochloropsis metallica*, *Dialictus miniatulus*, *D. nymphaelis*, *Halictus ligatus*, *Sphecodes heraclei*, and *Apis mellifera*. Female plants have large, panicle-like inflorescences that bear dense clusters of tiny white tubular flowers while flowers on males tend to be more yellow than white. Female flowers yield hundreds, if not thousands, of silvery white achenes that resemble cottony tufts or the bristles of a paintbrush. You'll need both male and female plants to enjoy this showy fall display. Interestingly, in other areas of the country, Saltbush is known as Groundsel; this name references another plant (Common Groundsel, or *Senecio vulgaris*), which has similar looking tufts on its mature seedheads.

Saltbush has an irregular, shrubby habit that makes great cover for birds and other wildlife. In low-maintenance gardens this shrub is typically planted en masse or with companion plants such as American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), Button Bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), or Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*). Saltbush can be pruned if you prefer to use it as a specimen plant or as a hedge.



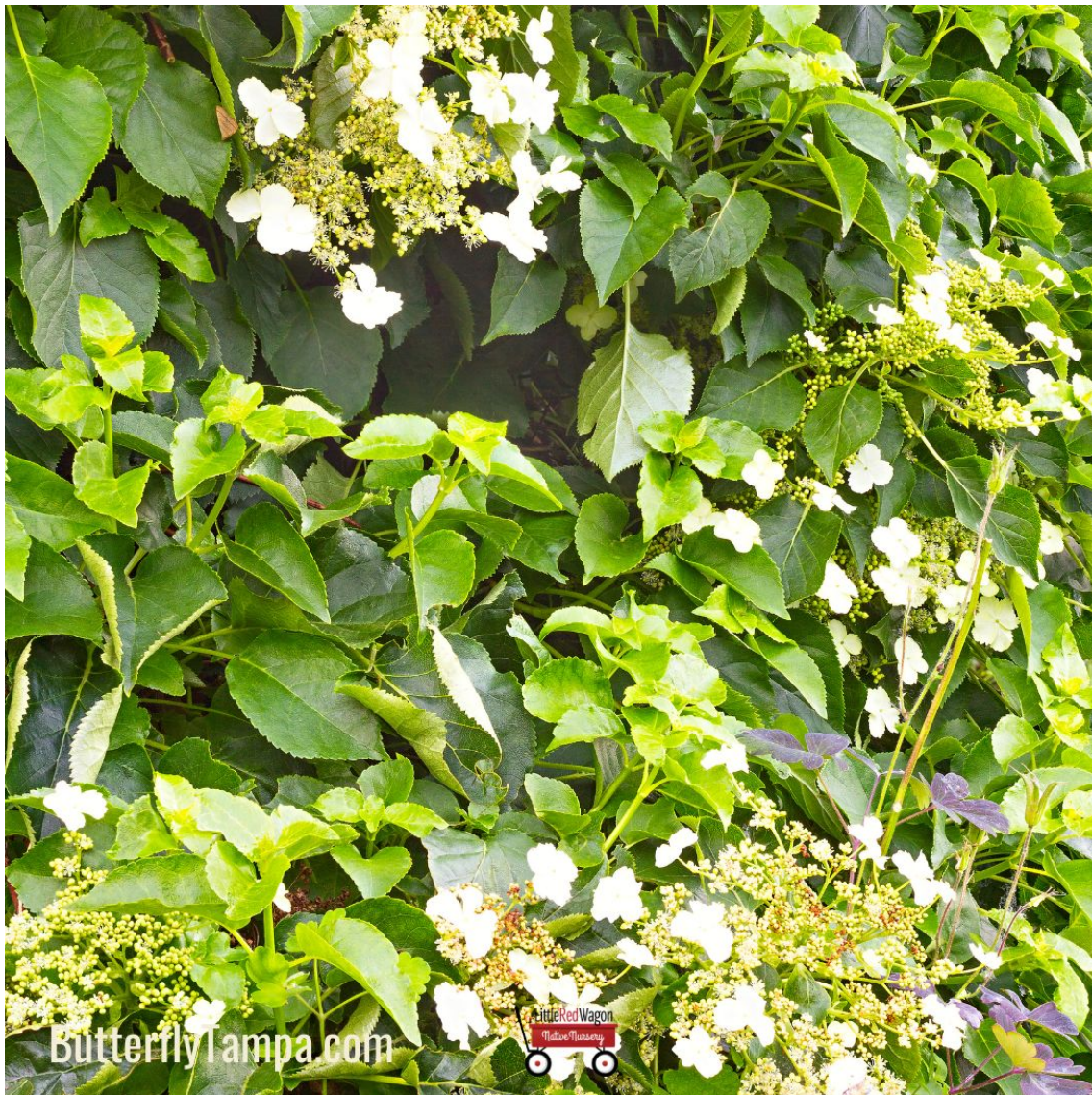
Saltbush needs full sun and does best in moist sandy or loamy soil. It tolerates drought once established, salt water/brackish water intrusion, and some salty wind, which makes this plant ideal for our customers living close to coastal waters.

Please note: while birds and other wildlife rely on its seeds as a source of food during winter, Saltbush seeds are poisonous to humans and its leaves are poisonous to sheep. Please plant accordingly.

(Fun fact: According to the [Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center](#), "Baccharis is the ancient Greek name (derived from the god Bacchus) of a plant with fragrant roots. The Latin species name means 'with the leaves of Halimus,' an old name for Saltbush, an unrelated shrub.")

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Design With Vines



### Climbing Hydrangea (*Decumaria barbara*)

Climbing Hydrangea (*Decumaria barbara*) is a deciduous, semi-evergreen woody vine that can grow to 30 feet. Although it can be used as a groundcover, the plant will only bloom if it climbs. And climb it will! Its aerial roots will attach to trees, walls, trellis, fences, and arbors. With fragrant showy 2" to 4" flat-topped clusters of tiny white flowers that pop out about a foot away from the climbing surface, this vine is sure to



delight humans as well as the many bees, butterflies, and other pollinators who visit the flowers for nectar. Songbirds will visit for its seeds.

Climbing Hydrangea's natural habitat includes swamps, bottomlands, moist forests, and river banks from New York south to central Florida and west to Louisiana and Arkansas. It does best in partial sun to partial (dappled) shade with protection from afternoon sun and moist, acidic soil.

Please note: this plant has an extreme flammability rating so don't plant it within the defensible space of your home.

Historically, this plant was recorded along the Hillsborough River, but a quick search on iNaturalist reveals not one posting.

Why not get out with your camera and see if you can help us locate any plants in our area? Email your photos to [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com). We'd love to know what you find!

**SHOP NOW**

## KIDS' CORNER



Calling all nature-loving Kindergarten to Grade 5 kids. Come join us during school winter break where you may learn and explore during our Nature Wonderland camp. Every camper will get the opportunity to



release a butterfly (weather permitting).

**REGISTER NOW**



**K-Grade 5**

**MLK**

**HONOR HIS LEGACY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**NATURE CAMP** \$75

**JANUARY 16**

Did you know Martin Luther King Jr. supported the environmental justice movement and sought to ensure the right to a clean and healthy environment? From 8 am to 3 pm, while on school break, Kindergarten to Grade 5 campers will learn about Martin Luther King Jr.'s love and support of nature, meet live critters and release butterflies (weather permitting).

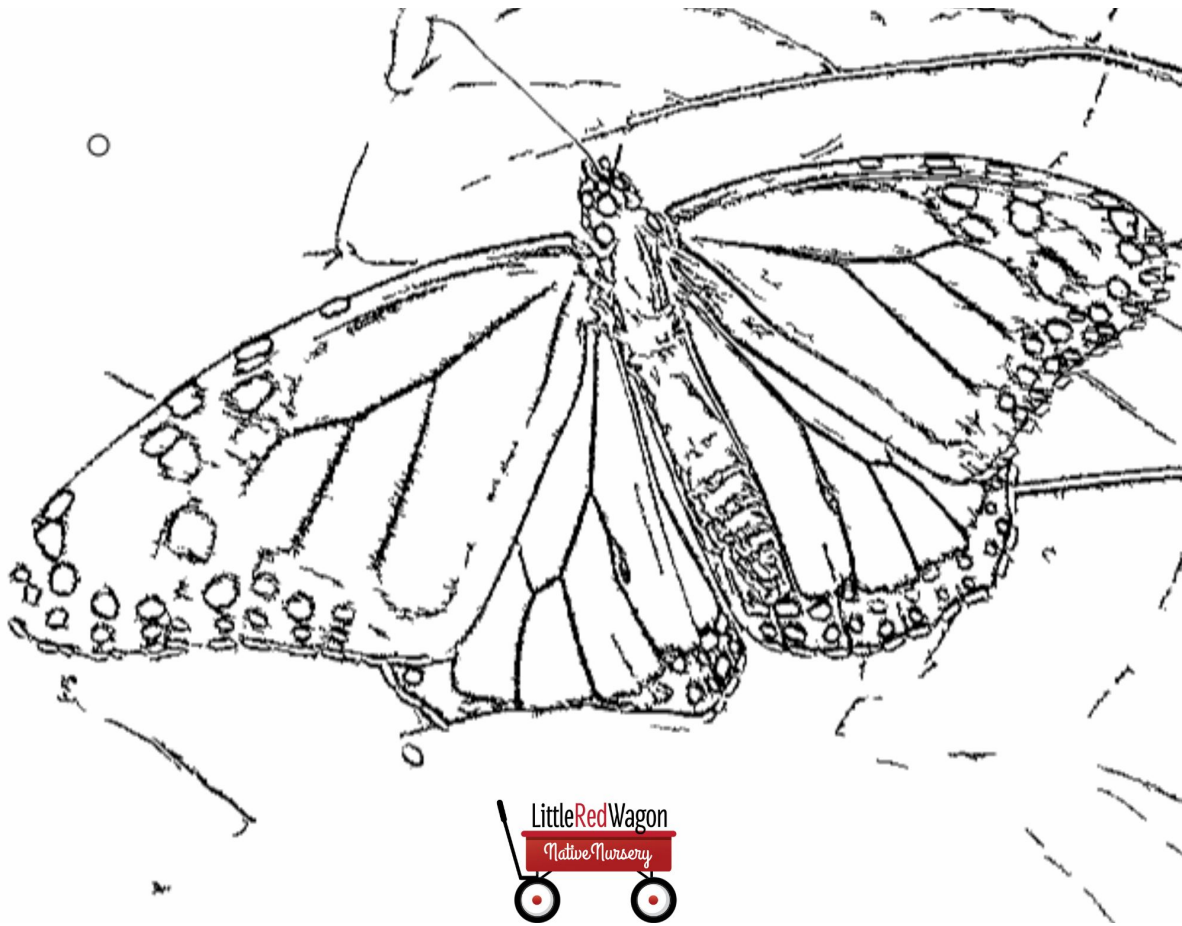
**REGISTER NOW**



Kindergarten to Grade 5 kids will want to join our new Bug Buddies Kids Club on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays during the school year! It is a 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 this month, Saturday, January 14th!

**REGISTER NOW**





## Monarch Butterfly Coloring Page

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### Wacky Fact:



Did you know? Caterpillars have 12 eyes!

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### Outdoor Bingo

Check out this fun, no mess activity that will keep the kids playing outside!

[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 2023. All Nature Camps will be held at 4111-A Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa.

**VOLUNTEER**



### Butterfly Alley Maintenance

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

**VOLUNTEER - January 3**



Center for Conservation Maintenance

### CFC Habitat Maintenance

The Florida Aquarium, Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and FWC's Suncoast Youth Conservation Center need 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.

**VOLUNTEER - January 19**





## 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).

**VOLUNTEER - January 14**



## 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.

**VOLUNTEER**

### 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 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.

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

## Monthly Calendar of Events



JANUARY 1 *New Year's Day--Little Red Wagon will be CLOSED*  
 JANUARY 2-6 *Nature Wonderland Kids' Camp*  
 JANUARY 5 *National Bird Day*  
 JANUARY 8 *Earth's Rotation Day*  
 JANUARY 10 *National Houseplant Appreciation Day*  
 JANUARY 14 *Bug Buddies Kids Club*  
 JANUARY 16 *MLK Day*  
 JANUARY 20 *Florida Arbor Day*  
 JANUARY 21 *Use your Gift Card Day, National Squirrel Day*  
 JANUARY 28 *Bug Buddies Kids Club*  
 JANUARY 29 *National Puzzle Day, National Seed Swap 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](https://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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