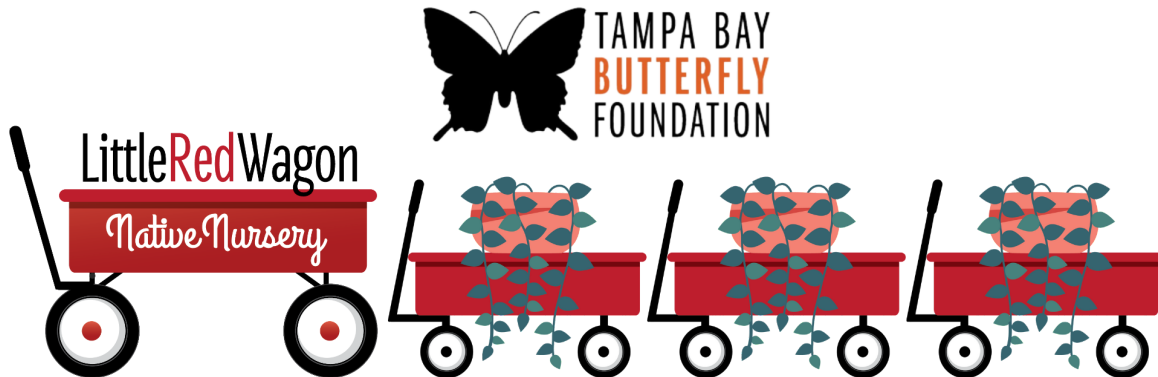


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*

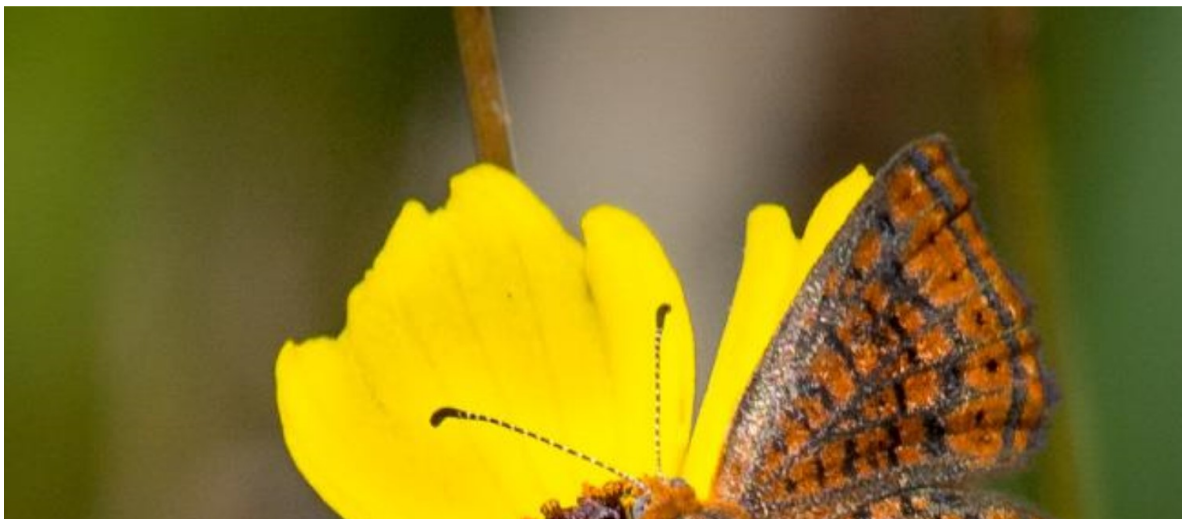


May 2023

“Taking a walk with Mother Nature makes my soul blossom.” ~ Anthony Douglas Williams

May is well underway and summer is around the corner! We are having lots of gardening fun, kids camps start soon, and we have other events this month. Check out our events section below in this newsletter or you can always check [ButterflyTampa.com](http://ButterflyTampa.com) and click on events for the latest happenings. There are so many things to celebrate; Gardening for Wildlife month, No Mow May month, Mother's day and school is ending! As we celebrate Mother's Day, why not give mom's the gift of butterflies in her garden or patio year-round? Our knowledgeable Nature Interpreter staff members are available to help you select the native plants that will thrive in mom's outdoor space, whether it's a landscape garden or container garden. Another great idea is our Mother's day event Saturday, May 13th Swallowtail Cocktail – see event information below to register. Your nature loving Mom's will also enjoy something from our gift shop or a gift card makes a great Mother's Day. Remember Teacher Appreciation gifts as the school year ends! There are lots of possibilities at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery.

## Butterfly of the Month





© John Lampkin

### Little Metal Mark

The Little Metalmark is as stunning as a brand new shiny copper penny! This small (wingspan  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1"), rust-colored butterfly is unmistakable: with its delicate fringed wings and blue metallic pattern on both its wings and body, this little beauty reminds me of a woven medieval tapestry. (See above photo.) Native to the southeast Atlantic coastal plain, this is Florida's only metalmark.

Females lay single, reddish-brown eggs (described as having a "pitted, turban shape") on the underside on host plants, which include Thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*) and Vanilla-plant (*Carphephorus odoratissimus*). Caterpillars are hairy and sluglike, preferring to rest underneath leaves when it's sunny and feeding at night and on cloudy days.

Little Metalmarks produce at least three generations per year and can be found in prairies, open pine woods, and marshes. Adults nectar on relatively short flowers such as Bidens (*Bidens alba*), Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) and Sneezeweeds (*Helenium spp.*)

In our area, these butterflies are commonly found at Fort De Soto. A little further afield, Little Metalmarks are also regularly seen at Duette Wilderness Preserve in Manatee County. Please let us know if you see any here in Pinellas County or anywhere in the Tampa Bay area. Email your photos to [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com). We'd love to see what you find!

## Host Plants Of The Month



## Thistles of Florida

Florida has seven native thistles: Tall Thistle (*Cirsium altissimum*), native to Jackson County; Purple Thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*), native to most counties south of Dixie, Alachua, and Putnam counties; Horrid thistle (*Cirsium horridulum* var. *horridulum*), native to every county in Florida; Leconte's Thistle (*Cirsium lecontei*), native to most of the counties bordering Alabama; Swamp Thistle (*Cirsium muticum*), native to Jackson, Liberty, and Wakulla counties; Nuttall's Thistle (*Cirsium nuttallii*), native to most of the counties south of Levy County and north of Collier and Broward counties; Virginia Thistle (*Cirsium virginianum*), native only to Duval county. All are biennial (they develop a basal rosette and taproot in the first year and then flower and seed in the second). The plant's shape the color of its flowers are the ways you can distinguish them.

While the thorny nature of the plants can make them a tricky to handle, they are wonderful nectar source for pollinators and are among the first plants to bloom in spring. Indeed, when I'm out butterflying at this time of year and throughout the summer, I will pause when I see thistle in bloom; I know that unless the area has been treated with chemicals, I will only have to wait a few minutes before the pollinators appear. Since each bloom can produce as many as 4,000 seeds, this plant can be hard to control and may not be appropriate in all landscapes. If, however, you have space and don't mind a bit of wild in your garden, plant some of our native thistle and you'll be rewarded with pollinators from early spring through mid-summer and with small birds (especially finch) visiting the plant to gather seed tufts for nests and seeds for food. (If you're interested, Xerces Society has published a fantastic guide that stresses the importance of native thistles for our native wildlife. You can read it [here](#).)

In addition to the Little metalmark butterfly discussed above, the Painted lady butterfly also uses Thistles as a host plant option for its caterpillars.

(Fun fact: Cherokees are known to have used leaves from *Cirsium altissimum* as an analgesic and Houmas used *Cirsium horridulum* as a dermatological aid and expectorant. (You can find more information [here](#).)

**SHOP NOW**



A flyer for a "Swallowtail Cocktail" event. The background is a lush green field with a yellow and black swallowtail butterfly perched on a pink thistle flower. To the left, a tall flute glass filled with orange juice is garnished with a slice of orange. Text at the top reads "Saturday, May 13, 2023 ~ 4:00 PM" in purple and "Swallowtail Cocktail" in a large, black, cursive font. Text on the glass says "ADULTS 21 AND OLDER INCLUDES SNACKS AND MIMOSAS \$15". At the bottom, logos for the "TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION" and "LittleRedWagon Native Nursery" are shown, along with the website "BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM" in large red letters.

**Saturday, May 13, 2023 ~ 4:00 PM**

# Swallowtail Cocktail

ADULTS 21 AND OLDER  
INCLUDES  
SNACKS AND MIMOSAS  
**\$15**

TAMPA BAY  
BUTTERFLY  
FOUNDATION

LittleRedWagon  
Native Nursery

## BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

Treat Mom all weekend long! For only \$15 per person, Mom and guests can enjoy mimosas and light refreshments while Anita Camacho shares her knowledge about Swallowtail butterflies in Central Florida and an update on Monarchs. Attendees may enter a raffle for a chance to win a butterfly mixed pot to invite butterflies to mom's garden. Raffle tickets will be \$2 each or 3 tickets for \$5.00. Please click below to register for the adult-only Swallowtail Cocktail event. Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be open after the event for extended hours for attendees and or exotic reptile area, not yet open to the public will also be open after the event.

**REGISTER NOW**

**Garden Swag**





**Get Your SwagON!**



**Mother's Day: May 14**



Our Gift Shop is brimming with beautiful options for nature-loving moms! From windchimes to floral sachets to garden accessories, stop by and select something unique from our carefully curated merchandise. Or, pick up a gift card so mom can shop at her convenience. Gift card denominations begin at \$10, can be purchased online and never expire! A Little Red Wagon Native Nursery gift card is also a great way to show appreciation to favorite teachers on National Teachers' Day: May 2, or at the end of the school year.

**SHOP NOW**

[REGISTER NOW](#)[REGISTER NOW](#)

Bring the entire family on mother's day weekend for a butterfly release Saturday and Sunday at noon (weather permitting). Register to reserve your spot as space is limited to 20 people per release and registration is required for ages 3 and up. The releases are \$5 and can be paid at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery before the release. You may also visit our living butterfly and wildlife education exhibit. While the education exhibit and butterfly living exhibits are currently free, we do accept donations to Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation to further our mission to continue our education, research, habitat restoration and conservation for butterflies and native plants throughout Florida and beyond.

## Nectar Plant of the Month





### Purple Thistle

Purple Thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*) is an herbaceous biennial in the daisy family that adds a pop of pinkish purple (or occasionally yellow and rarely white) to the spring landscape. Typically growing to 4' tall and about 2 feet wide with stiff branching stalks, Purple Thistle's unopened buds resemble small artichokes. The plant's ping-pong ball-sized, domed, bristly flowers are nectar-rich magnets for Swallowtails, Delaware Skippers, Three-spotted Skippers, Twin-spot Skippers, bees, wasps, beetles and hummingbirds. The plant's leaves and flowerheads are a caterpillar food source for a range of butterflies and moths, including two found in our area, the Painted Lady and Little Metalmark. Purple Thistle also provides highly nutritious seeds for small songbirds during the breeding season. Additionally, several species of birds use its down to line their nests.

Indigenous to moist, open woods, the edges of salt marshes, disturbed areas, and the coastal plain, Purple Thistle grows in moist to dry well-drained, sandy, limestone, or silty soils. It prefers full sun but can tolerate some shade.

Please note: The plant has sharply toothed leaves that are covered with sharp spines, so don't plant it near areas where children play.

[SHOP NOW](#)



## Design With Vines



### Wild Allamanda

Wild Allamanda (*Pentalinon luteum*) is a long-lived, scrambling evergreen woody vine that can easily grow to 10 feet. With showy, trumpet-shaped bright sunny yellow flowers that are two inches in diameter and dark green, shiny leaves, the beautiful Wild Allamanda usually produces flowers from spring through the fall with peak flowering in spring and summer.

Wild Allamanda is native to Lee and St. Lucie counties south to the Florida Keys. Typically found in hammocks, coastal thickets, and pinelands, this vine can thrive in nutrient-poor soils, grows in full or partial sun, and is somewhat drought resistant once established.

This plant can be trained to grow on a trellis, pergola, or fence. Left alone, it will scramble across other plants in its path. It can also provide dramatic effect in small spaces when grown in a container.

Wild Allamanda is the caterpillar food source for the Polka Dot Wasp Moth. It also attracts hummingbirds and many native bees and butterflies who will almost disappear when nectaring at the flower.

While Wild Allamanda can provide a splash of sunny yellow in your garden, please be careful to plant it away from children and animals: it is toxic when ingested.

[SHOP NOW](#)

## KIDS' CORNER



We need a few more volunteers to assist with us for our Summer Nature Camp program. This is a great opportunity for High School students to earn hours for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program and college environmental science students. Be a mentor to Kindergarten to Grade 5 children while learning about nature...what a rewarding way to spend the summer! Not available this summer? We offer nature camps throughout the year. Please visit the [Volunteer Opportunities page](#) of our website, frequently, for new camp offerings. Click the button below to select the week(s) you are available to volunteer this summer.

**VOLUNTEER**





**KIDS SUMMER Nature Camps**

**MAY - AUG. 8 am - 3 pm**

**TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION**

**BEST OF FLORIDA 2022 WINNER SUMMER CAMPS**

**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**

**Kindergarten - Grade 5**

**Discover nature through fun and creative activities.**

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

The poster features a vibrant design with a sun wearing sunglasses, a monarch butterfly, and a green leaf with the camp dates. It includes several photographs: a smiling girl, two children in bee costumes, a group of children in a classroom, and a girl with large glasses. A red wagon filled with plants and a caterpillar are also depicted. A circular seal from the 'Best of Florida' contest is prominently displayed.

Can you believe summer break begins at the end of this month? Our first week of camp has only one spot left and the rest of our summer camps are filling up quickly! Don't miss out on our popular nature camps by taking advantage of the Early Bird special. Register one month in advance of a camp session to get \$25 off the registration fee. Each week of camp will be a different theme, with special wildlife ambassadors to keep campers discovering and learning about nature all summer long!

**REGISTER NOW**



# BECOME A SCIENTIST!

## Materials:



Clear, open-mouthed jar



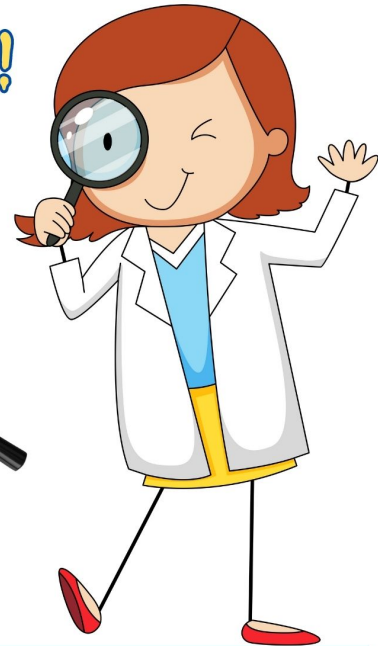
Water



A Leaf



Magnifying Glass



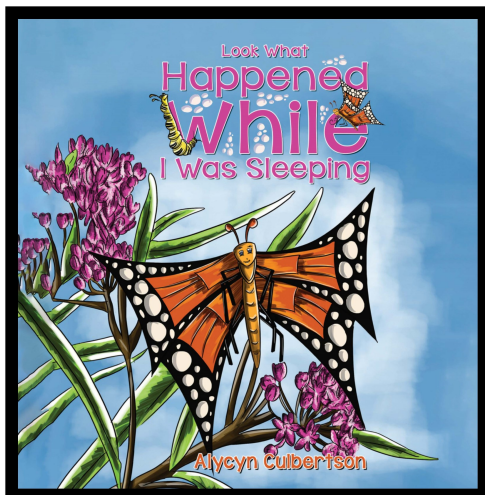
1. Fill the jar with water and drop the leaf into it.
2. Place the jar in a sunny location outdoors or in a windowsill.
3. Leave it there in the sun for at least one hour.
4. With a magnifying glass, look at what happens in the jar.

## FIND OUT WHAT OXYGEN LEAVES!

You're probably thinking oxygen leaves? Leaves what? Try this experiment and you won't be confused! Also learn two very important words: stomata and photosynthesis!

What should you see? Why is it important?

You should see thousands of tiny bubbles appear on the surface of the leaf and inside the jar. This is the oxygen gas given off the leaf. Plants need sunlight to make their food. This process is called photosynthesis which means "light" and "putting together". When water, air, chlorophyll, and sunlight are put together in a certain way. Oxygen is given off as waste during this process and exists through tiny holes in leaves called stomata. That's why you see bubbles!



## Look What Happened While I Was Sleeping

Looking for some summer reading?

Check out this adorable book that highlights the butterflies transition from caterpillar to beautiful butterfly.

If you're shocked and stunned at the butterflies beauty as it emerges, you will be happy to know the butterfly in this book is as surprised as you!

[SHOP NOW](#)

### WACKY FACT!

- Titan beetles are the largest of its kind!
- They can grow up to 7 inches in length.
- They also have extremely strong jaws. They're so strong, they can snap a pencil in two!



## “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' Summer Nature Camps from 7:45 am to 3:15 pm. A commitment for the full camp session is preferred. All Nature Camps will be held at 4111-A Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa.

**VOLUNTEER: May - August**



### Butterfly Alley Maintenance

Volunteers are needed to perform cleanup and maintenance of Butterfly Alley habitat (4110 W. Estrella St., behind Little Red Wagon Native Nursery) this month.

**VOLUNTEER: May 21**

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: May 18**



### ENCORE! Park

This month, we will not be performing maintenance at 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.) Keep visiting our website for dates in the future.

**VOLUNTEER Date TBD**

Fred Ball Park Maintenance



### 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: May 24**



### 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**





**Butterfly Walk** MAY 28 9:00 - 11:00 AM  
Non-NABA Members: \$5

North American Butterfly Association  
**NABA**  
Tampa Bay

**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**  
Gadsen Park: 6901 S MacDill Ave, South Tampa

Join Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and NABA Tampa Bay on a butterfly walk to continue our monthly monitoring of butterfly species at Gadsen Park in South Tampa. Registration is required. Free for NABA members, \$5 for non-NABA members.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

#### **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.

## Education Exhibit



Visit our butterfly education exhibit inside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery during our normal business hours. Enjoy seeing 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.

[BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM](http://BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM)

## Monthly Calendar of Events

MAY: *Mental Awareness Month, Gardening for Wildlife Month, No Mow May*  
 MAY 1 *National Start Seeing Monarchs Day*  
 MAY 1-7 *National Wildflower Week*  
 MAY 2 *National Teacher Appreciation Day*  
 MAY 3 *National Garden Meditation Day*  
 MAY 5 *Cinco De Mayo*  
 MAY 6 *National Herb Day*  
 MAY 8 *World Migratory Bird Day*  
 MAY 10 *National Small Business Day*  
 MAY 12 *Public Gardens Day*  
 MAY 13 *Swallowtail Cocktail Event at Little Red Wagon at 4 PM, Butterfly Release at noon*  
 MAY 14 *Butterfly Release at noon at Little Red Wagon - Happy Mother's Day!*  
 MAY 15 *Bring Flowers to Someone Day*  
 MAY 16 *National Love a Tree Day*  
 MAY 19 *Plant Something Day, Endangered Species Day*  
 MAY 20 *World Bee Day*  
 MAY 21 *National Flower Day*  
 MAY 23 *World Turtle Day*  
 MAY 29 *Learn About Composting Day, Happy Memorial Day!*  
 MAY 30 *Water a Flower 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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