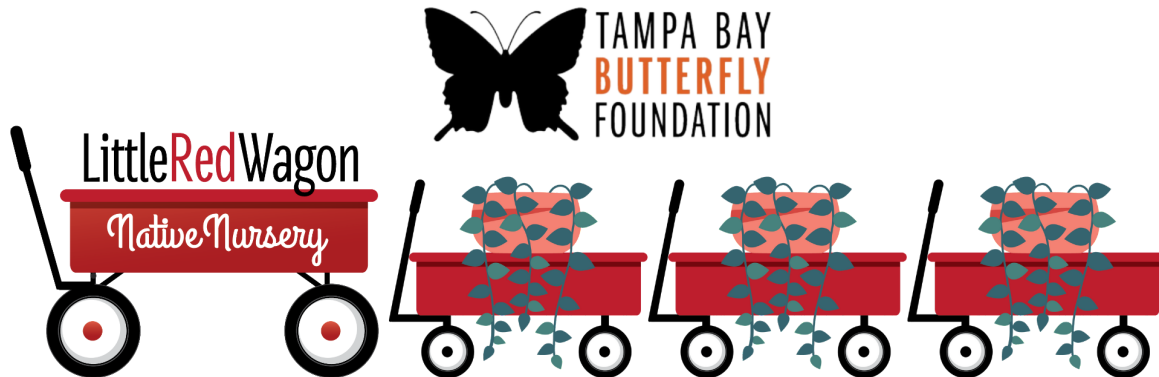


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LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



April 2023

'If every time one species disappears from an area, it's like pulling thread from (the tapestry of life) and as you pull more and more threads the tapestry gets weaker and you get ecosystem collapse.' ~Jane Goodall

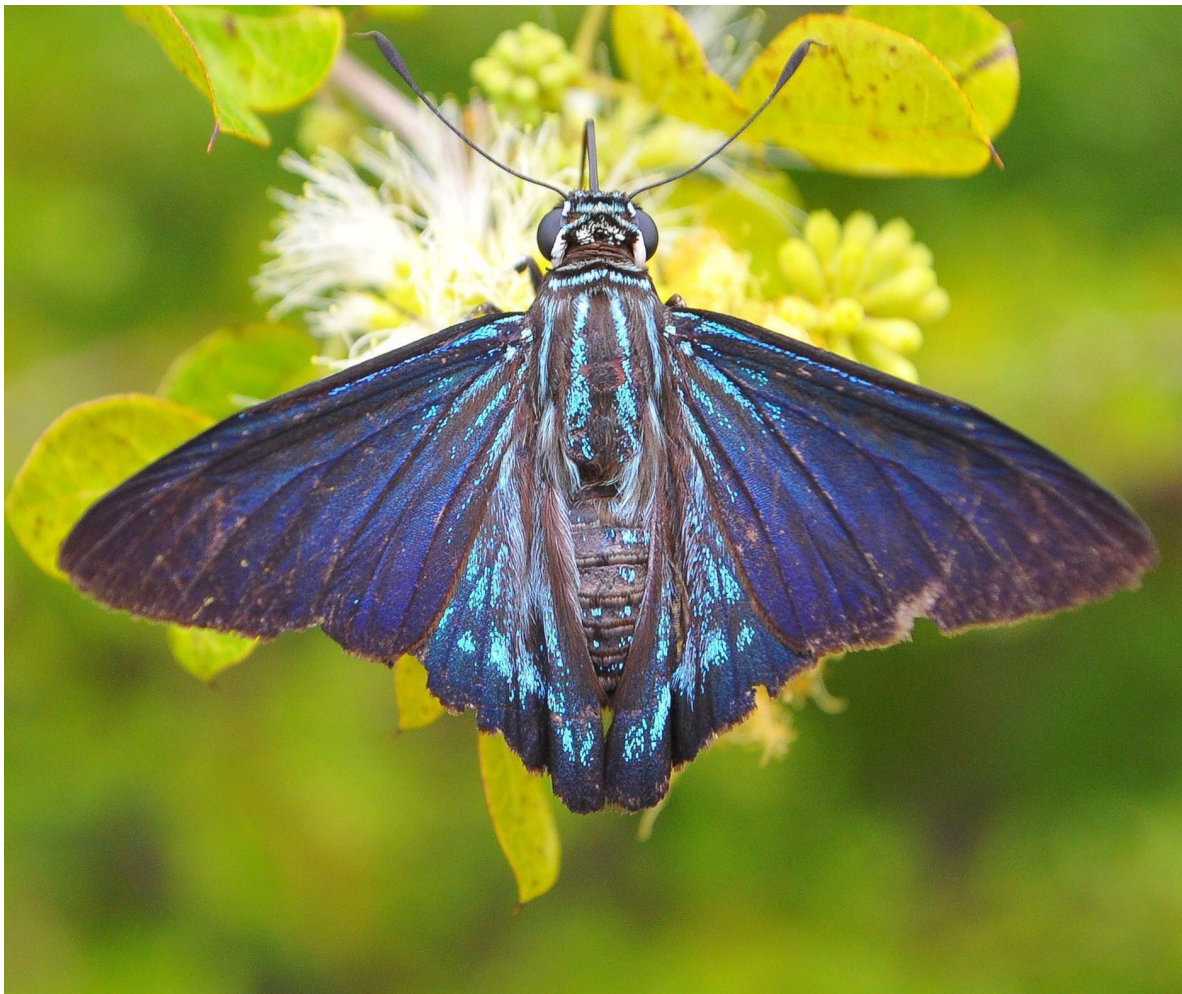
What a fun couple of days we had with the Jane Goodall Institute team, Roots and Shoots - The University of Tampa chapter, and Dr. Jane Goodall herself! We all sang and celebrated Dr. Jane Goodall's 89th birthday! Our Little Red Wagon Native Nursery team is very proud to have provided the native plants for the 2 evenings of events in Tampa last week. We celebrate working together for the common goal of environmental advocacy, youth empowerment, wildlife welfare, and community-led approaches. Our sights are set to move forward in these efforts with our new environmental impact partners, in the Tampa Bay area and beyond, to increase biodiversity.





Spring is here and April is Native Plant Month! Last year, Native Plant Month was introduced by Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) and Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI); it was passed again by the senate this year. In it's second year, more than 150 groups in 49 states are supporting this resolution which recognizes that native plants help birds, pollinators and other wildlife to thrive. April is also Kids' Gardening Month; pick up some kid-size gardening accessories from our Gift Shop so they may get involved with learning about native plants and pollinators.

Butterfly of the Month



Mangrove Skipper

At first glance, Mangrove Skippers appear to be somewhat non-descript, brownish-black skippers. Catch them in the correct light, however, and these large, fast-flying skippers (wing spans are $1 \frac{7}{8}$ to $2 \frac{3}{4}$ inches) are incredibly handsome: their hindwings have striking, iridescent blue streaks on both the top and bottom.

Female Mangrove Skippers lay single green eggs on the leaves of Red Mangroves; these plants are the requisite food source for her caterpillars. Caterpillars cut these leaves and silk them together to make a place to hide from predators.

Mangrove Skippers produce at least three generations per year and can be found near Mangrove forests along both coasts of peninsular Florida. According to iNaturalist, people spotted them in November at Gandy Beach, also in early and mid-March at Fort De Soto and in February on Anna Maria Island. Let us know if you see any while you're out and about. Email your photos to info@ButterflyTampa.com. We'd love to know what you find!

Host Plants Of The Month



Mangroves

Mangroves are pretty incredible. They thrive in salt water, are part of nature's storm defense system, act as an underwater nursery for fish, and provide important nesting spots for birds. Florida has three native mangroves: Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), Black Mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), and the White Mangrove (*Laguncularia racemose*.) Here we'll discuss two: the Red Mangrove and the Black Mangrove.



Red Mangrove - *Rhizophora mangle*

Red Mangroves are broad-leaved, evergreen, spidery-looking trees that grow to heights of 20 to 50 feet and widths of 15 to 40 feet. Typically growing in salt water or mudflats in saline conditions, Red Mangroves have aerial “stilt roots” which descend from the tree’s trunks and branches and gradually help trap sediment around the plants. These stilt roots also contain special membranes to filter salt from the seawater and allow transport of oxygen to the underground roots living in anaerobic soils.

Red Mangroves have dark green, smooth-edged leathery leaves and small yellow flowers throughout the year. Flowers can be pollinated by bees or wind and produce seeds that sprout roots while still on the tree. Once these long, green pointed seedlings fall off the tree, they will float in the water until they reach mudflats where they can root. Red Mangroves are the sole host plant for Mangrove Skipper caterpillars.

(Fun fact: Red Mangroves get their common name from the bright red wood that is found underneath the tree’s bark.)

SHOP NOW



Black Mangrove - *Avicennia germinans*

Black Mangroves are also evergreen but are slightly smaller (15 to 40 feet tall by 10 to 30 feet wide) and look more like a traditional tree than Red Mangroves. They also grow upland of Red Mangroves and lack aerial roots. Instead, Black Mangroves rely on pneumatophores (dark, finger-like projections sticking out of the ground) to facilitate aeration for root respiration. (This resource likens the pneumatophores to a snorkel that takes in oxygen from the air to help get air to the roots in water-logged anaerobic soil.)

The leaves of Black Mangroves are also dark green but the bottoms are covered in dense hairs and the bottom of the leaf appears almost silvery green. Additionally, the leaves of Black Mangroves may have salt crystals: the plant excretes the salt in the salt water it absorbs through special glands in its leaves.

Black Mangroves are the caterpillar food source for the Mangrove Buckeye. They also are a fantastic nectar source for Great Southern Whites and numerous bees.

Here's a great [resource](#) to help children understand the importance of Mangrove Ecosystems. And here's an interesting [resource](#) from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that discusses changes in the distribution of mangrove forests around the state.

Garden Swag



Get your SwagON!

April 14 is National Gardening Day but why wait to get your SwagOn! Stop by our Gift Shop and select from a wide array of gardening tools to help make installing native plants easy peasy. After planting, adorn your garden with these beautiful accessories that signify spring is here!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Blue Mistflower - *Conoclinium coelestinum*

Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) is a short-lived herbaceous perennial that adds a delightful pop of purple color to your spring garden. Typically growing 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. (In our area, we're frequently lucky enough to get a bloom in early spring with a repeat in the fall. Colder areas typically see a late summer to fall flowering season.)

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 (*Symphoricarpos 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.

(Fun Fact: Blue Mistflower's botanical name (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) comes from the Latin *caelistis* (*coelestis*) for "cone-bed" and *coelestinum* for "celestial" or "heavenly," which refers to the flowers' sky-blue color.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design With Vines



Railroad Vines

Railroad Vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*) is a fast-growing (up to 1' per day!), salt tolerant, evergreen creeping perennial vine that can easily extend to 100 feet. With lovely trumpet-shaped lavender flowers juxtaposed against dark green leaves, Railroad Vine is commonly found in coastal habitats (especially dunes and beaches) on both coasts in Florida. Like many members of the genus *Ipomoea*, each flower blooms for only one day. Don't worry, though! In our area, the plant produces flowers throughout the year with peak flowering season occurring from spring to fall. Bees are attracted to the plant and when visiting, will disappear into the deep flower to gather pollen and nectar. The plant also attracts numerous butterflies and other pollinators.

Its deep tap roots and salt tolerance make Railroad Vine incredibly well suited to dune restoration efforts or beachfront properties. Railroad Vine requires full sun and well-drained soil. It rarely does well in small or contained landscapes given its growth pattern, which tends to be long running tracks (hence its common name).

Please note: All parts of railroad vine are toxic if eaten. As a result, it's a good idea to keep children and pets away from them. It's also best to remove spent flowers before they drop seeds; this will promote robust blooming and minimize the risk of accidental seed ingestion.

(Fun fact: *pes-caprae* is Latin for 'goat's foot.' This refers to the plant's notched leaf apex, which resembles a goat's cloven hoof.)

SHOP NOW

KIDS' CORNER



If you're looking for something fun for your kids to do during their day off, April 7th, send them to bug camp! Kids will learn all kind of wacky and zany things about our local insects. Turn your kid into a bug lover this non-student day.

REGISTER NOW



TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION

- Animal Encounters
- Bug Hunts
- Games
- Arts & Crafts
- Butterfly Release (weather permitting)

Kids' SUMMER NATURE Camps

LittleRedWagon Native Nursery

GUIDE TO FLORIDA BEST OF FLORIDA 2022 WINNER SUMMER CAMPS

CAMPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
8:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 5

EVERY CAMPER WILL RELEASE A BUTTERFLY (weather permitting)

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

Discovering Nature Through Fun & Creative Activities

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

For details and to register, visit:

There are many reasons why parents voted us the Best of Summer Camps in 2022 by the Guide to Florida! Our first week's summer camp, Backyard Bugs, is almost sold out. Space is limited and our camps are filling up quickly as parents are taking advantage of the Early Bird Special: \$25 off the registration fee if you register for a camp session, one month in advance of the start date. If there are still spots available, we will allow Day Passes to be purchased starting the Friday prior to each week's camp.

REGISTER NOW



Smell It!

One of the best ways to experience nature is with your sense of smell. Use your nose to sniff out these items. Grab a notebook and record what you smell!

1. A flower
2. A patch of mud.
3. Green Grass
4. Wet leaves
5. Pine needles
6. Tree sap
7. Fungus or moss



Kids' Garden Month!

It's kids' gardening month! Get some shovels and rakes so your kids can join in the gardening fun! These shovels and rakes are the perfect size for little hands!

SHOP NOW

Wacky Fact!

Bugs have brains! Some people may think bugs have no brains because they're so small but they do. However, bug brains aren't as important as humans' brains. Bugs can live for a few days without their heads assuming they don't lose too much blood.



"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: April 30

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: April 27



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.)

VOLUNTEER: April 29

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: April 28



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

Monthly Calendar of Events

APRIL 1 *Let's celebrate Native Plant Month*
APRIL 3 *World Aquatic Animal Day*
APRIL 7 *World Health Day*
APRIL 13 *International Plant Appreciation Day*

Gardening with Native Plants

Learn about native plants for your landscape and their benefits to our ecosystem.



Hybrid Session: In-Person & Virtual

WHERE	WHEN	COST	REGISTER
UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough 5339 County Road 579 Seffner, FL 33584	April 13th, 2023 10 AM - 11:30 AM	\$5	



Guest Speaker:
Anita Camacho







**TAMPA BAY
BUTTERFLY
FOUNDATION**

Hillsborough County's Only Native Nursery




The University of Florida is an equal opportunity institution.

Learn how to garden with native plants and select plants that are native to our Florida environment. Find out why native plants are beneficial for a healthy garden and our ecosystem, including providing food to support pollinators and a habitat for wildlife. Anita Camacho will share her expertise of native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees suitable for planting in our Tampa Bay environment. This class will be co-taught by Tia Silvasy, Residential Horticulture Agent at UF/IFAS Extension. You may attend in person or via zoom. Cost: \$5.

REGISTER

APRIL 14 *National Gardening Day*
 APRIL 15-22 *International Dark Sky Week*
 APRIL 17 *Bat Appreciation Day, National Volunteer Week begins*
 APRIL 20 *Volunteer Recognition Day*
 APRIL 21 *World Fish Migration Day*
 APRIL 22 *Earth Day--Join us for a Butterfly Walk and our Earth Day Festival at LRW*


[REGISTER](#)

[FREE EVENT](#)

Every day is Earth Day but this year, please join us for an Earth Day Festival at LRW and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation. We will kick off the day with a Butterfly Walk at Gadsden Park (registration required and \$5 fee for non-NABA members). During our Earth Day Festival at the nursery, we will have a raffle for a butterfly garden in a pot, reptile encounters, spiders, and of course butterflies! There will be crafts for the kids too! Visit our free live exhibit room, where our staff will be available for Q&A; and, weather permitting, there will be a butterfly release at 1 and 3 pm. Bring the entire family out for a fun day celebrating and honoring our Earth.

APRIL 22 *Earth Day--Join us for a Butterfly Walk and come celebrate an Earth Day Festival at LRW*

APRIL 26 *Zebra Longwing Anniversary, National Audubon Day*

APRIL 29 *National Arbor 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

Email: Info@ButterflyTampa.com

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

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