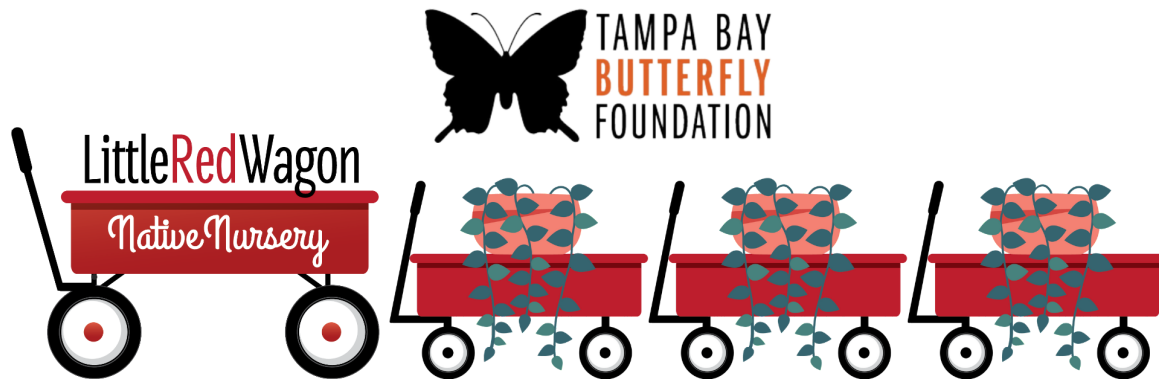


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



October 2023

"Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all other seasons." ~Jim Bishop

Oh my gourdness, fall is already here! October is Florida Native Plant Month when the beauty and bounty of nature are indisputable. Roll on by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to pick up some colorful fall-blooming plants to brighten your garden or outdoor space. We can enjoy pumpkin spice everything, hayrides, corn mazes, and Fall Festivals. Before you know it will be Halloween and Thanksgiving will be around the corner. Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's Gift Shop has nature-themed merchandise to help you decorate for the holidays and Fall Nature Camps so kids can have fun learning about nature while on school breaks.

Butterfly of the Month





Tropical Buckeye

Tropical Buckeyes are medium-sized beauties (wingspan typically 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches) that are easily recognized as a Buckeye: their tan to brown wings have conspicuous eyespots (two on the forewing and two on the hindwing) which are thought to help protect the butterfly from predators (See Photo #1.) In Florida, there are two other Buckeye species. One is the Common Buckeye and the other is the Mangrove Buckeye. Eyespots on the hindwing and the band that surrounds the large eyespot on the upper forewing help butterflyers identify which butterfly they're seeing: Common Buckeyes have a "sunset" eye on the hindwing while Tropical and Mangrove Buckeyes have less colorful eyespots. Tropical Buckeyes have a creamy pink band that surrounds the large eyespot on the upper forewing while Common Buckeyes (See Photo 2) have a cream or white band and Mangrove Buckeyes (See Photo 3) have an orange band.



Males perch on flat-topped vegetation or the ground to watch for females. Female Tropical Buckeyes lay green eggs singly on porterweeds. Caterpillars are black with numerous blue-black spines. Here in Florida, there are at least three generations each year.

Tropical Buckeyes are rare in Florida and are usually found here in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. (They can also be found in southern New Mexico, parts of Arizona and Texas and south through the West Indies to Argentina.) Adults are generalists that can be found along roadsides, open tropical lowlands and sandy islands.

We've recently seen these winged beauties in Homestead on my way to visit the Everglades. How about you? Email your photos to info@ButterflyTampa.com and let us know where you're seeing them.



October is Native Plant Month! For the past two years, the Florida Native Plant Society has worked with Florida leaders to proclaim October as Native Plant Month. Their goal is to encourage Floridians to learn about native plants which will thrive in our environment. Little Red Wagon Native Nursery is Tampa's ONLY native nursery, proudly providing you with healthy native plants for the past three years.

Little Red Wagon Native Nursery

Host Plant Of The Month



Blue porterweed - (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)

Blue Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*) is a short-lived trailing perennial that makes a great groundcover or container plant. Growing to less than 1 foot tall and 3 to 4 feet wide, this evergreen produces flowers throughout the summer months. Although each charming blue or purple flower lasts a single day, Blue Porterweed is a magnet for butterflies, moths, bees, and hummingbirds. It is also the caterpillar host plant for Tropical Buckeyes.

Native to coastal strands and open areas in dry mesic hardwood forests in south Florida (USDA Zones 9b to 11), Blue Porterweed can tolerate occasional salt water inundation. It performs best in full sun and can tolerate dry periods once established. It does not tolerate freezing temperatures.

The Florida Wildflower Foundation [reports](#) that Blue Porterweed's flowers can be eaten raw and that flower spikes can be used to season soups or stews. Additionally, dried, steeped leaves form a foamy tea or brewed into beer, which "is likely the origin of the common name, porterweed, referring to the porter style of beer the tea resembles."

Pair Blue Porterweed with Beach Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*) or Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) for a casual look that pollinators will love.

Please Note: The University of Florida [notes](#) that the non-native, Nettleleaf Vervain (*Stachytarpheta cayennensis* (syn. *S. urticifolia*)), a Category II invasive plant, is often sold as the native Blue Porterweed. Given this, please always procure your Blue Porterweed from a reputable native nursery like Little Red Wagon Native Nursery.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag



Get Your SwagON!

Ready to decorate for Halloween, Day of the Dead, or to welcome the arrival of fall? Whether you've already decorated your home for the season or are still looking for fresh inspiration and ideas, Little Red Wagon's Gift Shop has great options for your indoor and outdoor spaces. Come check out our wide variety of fall garden flags, ghoulish decor, and pick up versatile soil scoops to help carve your pumpkin masterpiece! Roll on by our Gift Shop to get some inspiration and give your home a seasonal touch with our nature-themed merchandise.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Rouge - (*Rivina humilis*)

Rouge Plant (*Rivina humilis*) is a small, perennial shrub that typically grows 3 to 5 feet tall and 1 to 3 feet wide. With clusters of 25 or more delicate, ¼ inch white to pink flowers along the last 2-3 inches of the plant's stems, this plant is a real show stopper in the woodland or shade garden. Evergreen in zones 9 to 11, Rouge Plant usually flowers year-round, providing a great nectar source for our native pollinators, including our state butterfly, the Zebra Heliconian. Flowers give way to deep red berries that songbirds relish.

This plant is native to hammocks, woodlands, and shady disturbed areas throughout much of peninsular Florida south of Levy, Alachua, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. Rouge Plant is also native to parts of the south-central United States from Louisiana west to Arizona, where it can be found in ravines and canyons at elevations up to 4,500 feet. In our area, the plant does best when planted in loamy or sandy soil at the edge of a shady area where it receives a few hours of dappled (not direct) sun every day. The plant prefers moist, but well-drained soil until it is firmly established; then it can tolerate occasional drought

but will become dormant until the drought is over. If your Rouge Plant becomes leggy or wind damaged, simply prune it back in late winter for a fuller plant by late spring.

This plant makes a great accent. You can also pair it with any of our native wild coffees (*Psychotria spp.*) or spiderworts (*Tradescantia spp.*) for an added punch of color in shady areas.

Please note: the fruit and leaves of Rouge Plant are toxic if ingested. Consequently, it is best to plant it where children and pets won't be tempted to eat it.

(Fun fact: Rouge Plant gets its common name from the red dye produced by its berries. This has been used for cosmetics and to dye materials. For a great read on this and other native plants that have been used to produce dyes, please see this [article](#) from the Florida Native Plant Society.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design With Edimentals



Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)

American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) is a woody, deciduous, long-lived perennial shrub that adds a burst of vibrant color to the fall garden. Typically growing 4 to 8 feet tall and wide, this plant has showy

white or pink flowers that are a great nectar source for bees. In fall, as the common name implies, these flowers give way to beautiful clusters of deep purple fruit at leaf axils along the plant's branches. These showy purple drupes are a good fall food source for many birds, particularly the northern bobwhite, orioles, wood warblers, and waxwings. Further to our north, this plant is also a food source for Spring Azure and Snowberry Clearwing caterpillars.

This shrub is native to open meadows, dry mesic hardwoods, xeric hammock, scrubby flatwoods, flatwoods, disturbed dry-moist woods, and margins of ponds and streams from Virginia south to Florida and west to Texas. It prefers full sun to part sun; it cannot tolerate deep shade. Old canes should be removed to rejuvenate the plant because flowers and fruit appear on new growth.

Beautyberry's fruit can be eaten in small quantities and made into jellies and wines. Additionally, [University of Florida](#) reports that the plant's leaves contain compounds that have antibacterial and pest-detering properties. (For related research, see this [article](#).) Members of the Alabama tribe used a decoction of Beautyberry's roots to treat fevers and rheumatism, Choctaw used a decoction of roots and berries for colic, and Seminole used the plant's bark to treat snake sickness.

This plant is a staff favorite that is especially well suited to mass plantings or as a specimen in a pollinator garden. Why not try planting it to #NurtureNative?

SHOP NOW

KIDS' CORNER

TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION
 Early Release Mondays
 1:30 - 3:00 pm
 September to May
 4111-A Henderson Blvd,
 in South Tampa

BUG CLUB

Kindergarten - Gr. 5

SCAN ME

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

Our monthly Bug Club will be held during the school year on Early Release Mondays for Hillsborough County Public Schools.

From 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., Kindergarten to Grade 5 children will participate in various activities exploring nature and will meet animal ambassadors too! There will be no club activities on non-student days.

Each month, we will have a different theme and focus for kids to continue learning and exploring.



OCTOBER BUG CLUB:

With Halloween around the corner, it is the perfect time to debunk some misconceptions about some of our spookiest Florida wildlife. Kids will learn about the butterflies of the night, moths, by exploring their camouflage tactics and creating their own moth species. We will discuss bats, spiders and the creepy crawly bugs that usually make peoples skin crawl! By the end of the month, kids will be fascinated with some of our creepiest wildlife.

REGISTER NOW

FALL NATURE CAMPS

REGISTRATION OPEN!






Our Fall Nature Camps are filling up quickly so register soon! From 8:30 am to 2:30 pm on school breaks, Kindergarten to Grade 5 children will enjoy bug hunts, crafts, butterfly releases (weather permitting), meet animal ambassadors and much more!

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM



October 16 is a non-student day for Hillsborough County Public Schools. Have you made plans for your kids? Sign up for this one-day camp where kids will participate in a bug hunt and learn about the ecosystem in their very own yard.

REGISTER: October 16



Kids will dive into the patriotic spirit by exploring and learning about bugs that are red, white and blue during this one-day camp.

REGISTER: NOVEMBER 10



Kids will learn to be thankful for all that nature provides. Limited enrollment so register soon for this popular camp.

REGISTER: NOVEMBER 20-22



MAKE YOUR OWN SPIDER WEB!

1. Take a walk outside and pick up your favorite sticks.
2. When you get back inside, ask an adult for some string.
3. Wrap your string around the sticks to make your own spider web!

Remember, spiders try to make their webs as symmetrical as possible!



MINI SPIDER FINGER PUPPET

Check out our mini spider finger puppet! This adorable spider is the perfect way to creep out others during the spooky season! Who knows? You may even be able to convince them spiders aren't so bad.

[SHOP NOW](#)

WACKY FACT!

Jumping spiders can jump more than 50x their body length. Imagine how far we could jump if we could do that!



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

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





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). We will not be performing maintenance this month but hope you will join us in the future.

VOLUNTEER: October 20



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: October 26



Encore Park! Maintenance

Volunteers will be helping to maintain a Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at Encore Park located at 1210 E. Harrison St. (Corner of Harrison St. and Hank Ballard St.).

VOLUNTEER: October 7

VOLUNTEER: October 28



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring Kindergarten to Grade 5 children during our Fall Nature Camp programs. Click the button below to select the date(s) you are available to volunteer. This is a great opportunity for High School students to earn hours for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program and college environmental science students.

VOLUNTEER: Fall Camps

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.

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 every day of the week!

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

Monthly Calendar of Events

OCTOBER is **Florida Native Plant Month**

OCTOBER 4 World Animal Day

OCTOBER 12 National Farmers' Day

OCTOBER 13 International Day for Disaster Reduction

OCTOBER 14 Chocolate Covered Insect Day

OCTOBER 16 World Food Day

OCTOBER 21 National Reptile Awareness Day

OCTOBER 23 National Mole Day

OCTOBER 24 International Day of Climate Action
OCTOBER 26 National Pumpkin Day
OCTOBER 31 Happy Halloween

Little Red Wagon Native Nursery is Tampa'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: Mondays: 11-3, Tuesdays - Fridays 11-5:30, Saturdays 10-5:30, Sundays 12-4

[Visit Little Red Wagon Native Nursery](#)

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