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LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



March 2024

"Blossom by blossom the spring begins."~Algernon Charles Swinburne

Spring, with its gentle warmth and blossoming beauty, beckons gardeners to till the soil, sow seeds, and nurture life. Nothing compares to the energy of spring, both in nature and within ourselves. It revitalizes us, inspires us and gives us a new perspective. As the days lengthen and the earth awakens, we prepare our gardens for a season of growth and abundance. Why not start a new hobby by planting a butterfly garden or rev up your existing gardening hobby? Now's a good time to get native plants in the ground to help them establish before the intense summer heat. Don't waste even one day of the light and beauty this spring...stop by Little Red Wagon and let us help you select native plants that will bring butterflies and other pollinators to your outdoor space.

Butterfly of the Month



Cloudless Sulphur

Cloudless Sulphurs are medium-sized pale yellow or off-white butterflies with a wingspan that ranges from 2 ¼ to 3 inches. Butterflies are variable: they may be unmarked (see Photo #1) or well-marked. Well-marked individuals tend to have pink-edges on the underside of their wings. Additionally, they usually have two large, rounded, pink-edged spots on the lower surface of the forewing and two smaller pink-edged silvery spots on the hindwing. (See Photo #2.) Females have a dark spot on its upper forewings. (See Photo #2.)

Females lay single slender yellow eggs on the new growth of plants in the Pea family, which, in our area, includes Privet Cassia (*Senna ligustrina*), Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), and Sensitive Pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*). Notably, some reports indicate that Cloudless Sulphurs will only lay eggs on plants with flowers. Caterpillars that emerge are usually green with a yellow stripe, blue patches, and dark spines but they may also be yellow with black bands. (Caterpillars that mostly eat the plant's leaves are green; caterpillars that mostly eat the plant's flowers are yellow.) There are typically three or more generations per year.

Cloudless Sulphurs are similar to two other butterflies in our area: the Orange-barred Sulphur and the Large Orange Sulphur. Orange-barred Sulphurs have a strong, high, and rapid flight pattern and typically fly higher than other giant-sulphurs. Additionally, Cloudless Sulphurs and Large Orange Sulphurs lack the orange bands and patches that Orange-barred Sulphurs have.

In late summer, millions of Cloudless Sulphurs migrate to Florida at a pace of 12 miles a day. Coming from as far away as Canada, these butterflies overwinter in our area, with some of their young heading north in late spring. Adults typically nectar from flowers with long tubes with some sources suggesting they prefer plants with red flowers like Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinea*). According to iNaturalist, Cloudless Sulphurs were seen only a couple of days ago at Clam Bayou Nature Preserve in St. Petersburg. We regularly see them on almost all of our local butterfly walks. Why not join us for one? Send your details to info@ButterflyTampa.com and we'll let you know when we have our next one.

Host Plant Of The Month



Privet Cassia - (*Senna ligustrina*)

Privet Cassia (*Senna ligustrina*) is a fast-growing, evergreen shrub that typically grows to 4-to 8- feet tall and 3- to 6- feet wide. Its bursts of buttercup-yellow, 5-petaled flowers that bloom from early autumn through late fall are a great nectar source for butterflies and many of our native solitary bees. It is also the caterpillar host plant for Cloudless Sulphurs, Sleepy Oranges, and Orange-barred Sulphurs. (Interesting fact: there's a gland at the base of this plant's leaves that attracts ants which kill the caterpillars.)

Privet Cassia is native to hammocks and disturbed areas along both of Florida's coasts from Levy County (on the west coast) and Brevard County (on the east coast) south to the Keys. The plant does best in full sun and dry to slightly moist well-drained soils.

Privet Cassia is in the bean family and characteristically produces long thin pods that turn brown when ripe. Be sure to harvest them to avoid an overabundance of tiny seedlings that may overtake your garden.

Privet Cassia is a great addition to any garden. Plant several en masse to form a privacy buffer, use a single shrub as an accent, or use one as a backdrop to some of our native wildflowers. This plant pairs well with other legumes, including Partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), Sensitive pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*) and Sunshine mimosa (*Mimosa strigillosa*). Any way you plant it, you're helping to #NurtureNative.

(Please note: Privet Cassia is sometime confused with Christmas Cassia (*Senna pendula* var. *glabrata*), which is sold at various big-box stores as a plant appropriate for butterfly gardens. Christmas Cassia has been identified by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council as a Category I invasive species that is altering our native plant communities. Please #NurtureNative and only plant the original!)

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag



Get Your SwagON!

Get the kids excited to help in the garden with their very own gloves, shovels, trowels and buckets. Just the right size for smaller hands, and colors to make everyone happy. Available in pink, blue, orange, and green. Makes great Easter gifts!



Shop now



Shop now



Shop now

Nectar Plant of the Month



Seaside Ageratum - (*Ageratum maritimum*)

Seaside Ageratum (*Ageratum maritimum*) is a short-lived, semi-succulent herbaceous perennial in USDA Zones 10A to 11 and should be treated as an annual elsewhere. It typically grows to about 1 foot tall and 3 feet wide and has clusters of tiny, tassel-like showy lavender flowers that attract butterflies and bees. Although the plant resembles the more common Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), the two can be easily distinguished by their leaves: Seaside Ageratum has glossy, succulent leaves.

As its name implies, Seaside Ageratum is native to coastal areas and was historically found in both dunes and coastal hammocks in the Florida Keys. It requires full sun and tolerates salty wind and occasional salt water intrusion. It is drought resistant once established.

Unfortunately, the plant is at risk of extinction due to habitat loss caused by both land development and rising seas. According to the [University of Florida](#), Seaside Ageratum “has long been known as *Ageratum littorale*, and it is on the Florida Endangered Plant List under that name. Some botanists regard *Ageratum littorale* and *Ageratum maritimum* to be distinct species, but the Atlas of Florida Plants and the Flora of North America treat them as synonymous, with the name *A. maritimum* having taxonomic priority.”

Given its status as an endangered plant, please ensure you acquire this plant from reputable nurseries like Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to ensure it hasn't been poached from any of our state's remaining wild populations. It is a beautiful addition to any wildflower garden.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design With Edimentals



Flatwoods Plum - (*Lepidium virginicum*)

Flatwoods Plum (*Prunus umbellata*) is a deciduous tree in the rose family that typically grows to a height of 15-20 feet and 15 feet wide. With an explosion of delicate, umbrella-shaped, 5-petaled white or cream flowers in March, the tree is a great nectar source for early spring butterflies and a source of aesthetic delight for people. The 1-inch purple fruit that follows in early summer is devoured by birds and mammals alike and can be used to make great jams, jellies, and tart pies. The fruit is high in beta carotene and potassium, contains vitamin C and B-complex and phosphorous, calcium, iron, and magnesium. However, it's best to avoid eating the pits: they contain a form of cyanide that is toxic when ingested in large quantities.

Native to hammocks and woodlands from Virginia south Central Florida and west to Texas, Flatwoods Plums grow best in moist soils with afternoon shade but does exhibit some degree of drought tolerance once established. The tree can be a bit scraggly if not pruned, but when it is, it makes a great accent tree that can live for 40 years or more.

Flatwoods Plum is blooming right now and people are reporting sightings on iNaturalist from Manatee County north to Tallahassee. Let us know if you see any in our area by sending a note to us at info@ButterflyTampa.com. We'd love to hear from you.

SHOP NOW

3-Ingredient **Wild Plum Jam** (No pectin recipe)



1 lb foraged ripe plums (pitted)

1 tablespoon lemon juice



DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash plums and remove pits.
Place in a heavy bottomed pot.
2. Add lemon juice and cook for a few minutes. The plums will begin to release their juices.
3. Stir in sugar and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring often.
4. Once the jam thickens, it can be poured into prepared canning jars then stored in the refrigerator. Use within a few weeks.

KIDS' CORNER



Join us for adventures this month on non-student days and Spring Break. Participate in bug hunts, butterfly releases, animal encounters, and more!. All Nature Camps are held at the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation Gallery located at 4111-A Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa, right beside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery.

NATURE CAMP TIMES:

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Drop off: 8:00 – 8:30 AM

Pick up: 2:30 – 3:00 PM

Location: 4111-A Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa

Every child will have the opportunity to release a butterfly by the end of camp.



SPRING BREAK: MARCH 11-15

REGISTER MY CAMPER



BUG POKEMON: MARCH 29

REGISTER MY CAMPER



Registration is open for our Nature Summer Camps. Our first week is sold out but we are offering Kaleidoscope of Butterflies again in June! Register by the end of this month to save \$25 on the registration fee!

REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMPS



During your next nature walk, be sure to collect all the beautiful wildflowers you see! With an adult, see if you can identify what type of flowers you picked. By the end of your walk you will have a vase full of beautiful Florida native flowers!



FUN FACT!

Did you know the official start of Spring is on the Spring equinox. After the Spring equinox, the days get longer and the nights get shorter!



POLLINATOR PROTECTOR

Become a Pollinator Protector by utilizing the Wildflower seed pop to start your own wildflower garden. Using the Activity Mat you can track what flowers you see in your wildflower garden! Make sure the get your Pollinator Protector Merit Badge with this activity today!

[SHOP NOW](#)

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

Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation regularly has a number of ongoing monthly 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: March 23



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: March 21



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: April 13



Nature Camp Volunteers

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

VOLUNTEER

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



Did you know the Little Red Wagon is more than a native plant nursery? We have lots to see in our living education exhibits. Enjoy seeing live butterflies, their caterpillars munching on their host plants, and possibly witness a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis! While our main focus is butterflies and the native plants they rely on, there are many other creatures that rely on native plants and benefit our ecosystem. Visit our **new** native bug exhibit in our Bug Bungalow next time you visit! We also have several native and exotic reptiles, amphibians and turtle residents of Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation's living exhibit!

While the living education exhibits are currently free, donations are suggested to help us continue the mission of Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation to provide education, foster and engage in research, support the exhibit animals, and to restore habitats and conservation space for butterflies and native plants throughout the Tampa Bay area.

Visit [BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM](https://www.butterflytampa.com)

Monthly Calendar of Events

- MARCH 3** World Wildlife Day
MARCH 8 International Women's Day
MARCH 9-10 Tampa GreenFest--visit the LRW tent at the Tampa Garden Club: 2629 Bayshore Blvd.



MARCH 9 & 10 2024
9:00 AM-4:00 PM

TAMPA GreenFest
 Tampa Garden Club

TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION

LittleRedWagon NativeNursery

2629 Bayshore Blvd., South Tampa

- MARCH 10** Daylight Savings begins
MARCH 12 National Plant a Flower Day -- come see what's blooming at LRW
MARCH 14 National Learn About Butterflies Day, World Spider Day--come see our live exhibit
MARCH 17 St. Patrick's Day
MARCH 18 Global Recycling Day
MARCH 19 National Backyard Day
MARCH 20 Spring Equinox, World Sparrow Day, World Frog Day
MARCH 21 World Planting Day, International Day of Forests
MARCH 22 World Water Day
MARCH 23 World Meteorological Day
MARCH 27 Little Red Wagon Day -- come fill your wagon!
MARCH 28 Weed Appreciation Day
MARCH 29 National Mom & Pop Business Owner Day
MARCH 30 National Take a Walk in the Park Day, Earth Hour
MARCH 31 Have a Happy Easter!

COMING IN APRIL...

EARTH DAY EVERY DAY

Native Butterfly Garden Tour

April 21

LittleRedWagon NativeNursery 12-5 pm

\$20

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

Purchase tickets for our Native Butterfly Garden Tour of South Tampa gardens on April 21 from 12 noon to 5 pm. Join us for refreshments after the garden tour with a "Nectar" party at the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation Gallery located at 4111-A Henderson Blvd., South Tampa.

PURCHASE TICKETS

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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