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LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



April 2024

“We have allowed alien plants to replace natives all over the country. Our native animals and plants cannot adapt to this gross and completely unnatural manipulation of their environment in time to negate the consequences. Their only hope for a sustainable future is for us to intervene to right the wrongs that we have perpetrated.” ~ Douglas Tallamy

April, with its lengthening days and blooming landscapes, becomes a canvas for us to demonstrate our commitment to native plants. In 2021, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution declaring April as a celebration of native flora. Their vision was to honor the plants that have evolved alongside us, sustaining ecosystems and providing habitat for countless creatures. Across the country, people and organizations celebrate Native Plant Month by planting, educating, and restoring. Native plants are the backbone of biodiversity. These resilient species have adapted to local conditions over millennia, harmonizing with their surroundings. When we plant native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses, we invite birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife to thrive. We restore habitats, combat invasive species, and create resilient landscapes. Stop by Little Red Wagon, Tampa Bay’s only Native Nursery, to select healthy native plants for your outdoor space.

Butterfly of the Month



Palamedes Swallowtail

Palamedes Swallowtails are lovely to behold with rich, blue-black or brown wings that are 4 1/2 to 5 1/8" across. The butterfly's upper surface has a broad yellow band and a row of yellow spots near the outer edges of its wings and its tails are filled with yellow. (See Photo 1.) These markings help distinguish this butterfly from other dark-colored swallowtails (like the Pipevine Swallowtail (see photo #2) and the Spicebush Swallowtail (see photo #3)) that fly in our area.





Females lay pale yellow-green eggs singly on plants in the Laurel family (see Photo 4). These plants include Redbay (*Persea borbonia*), Silk Bay (*Persea borbonia* var. *humilis*), and Swamp Bay (*Persea palustris*). The caterpillar is yellowish-green with a thin, yellow line on the sides, a pair of large eyespots behind the head, and a pinkish underside. Early instars are said to resemble bird droppings.

Adult Eastern Black Swallowtails like to nectar on thistles (*Cirsium horridulum*), milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), Joe Pye Weeds (*Eutrochium fistulosum*), Purple Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), and blazing stars (*Liatriis* spp.). With multiple broods throughout the year, why not include some host and nectar plants in your landscape for these beauties?

Host Plant Of The Month

Redbay - (*Persea borbonia*)



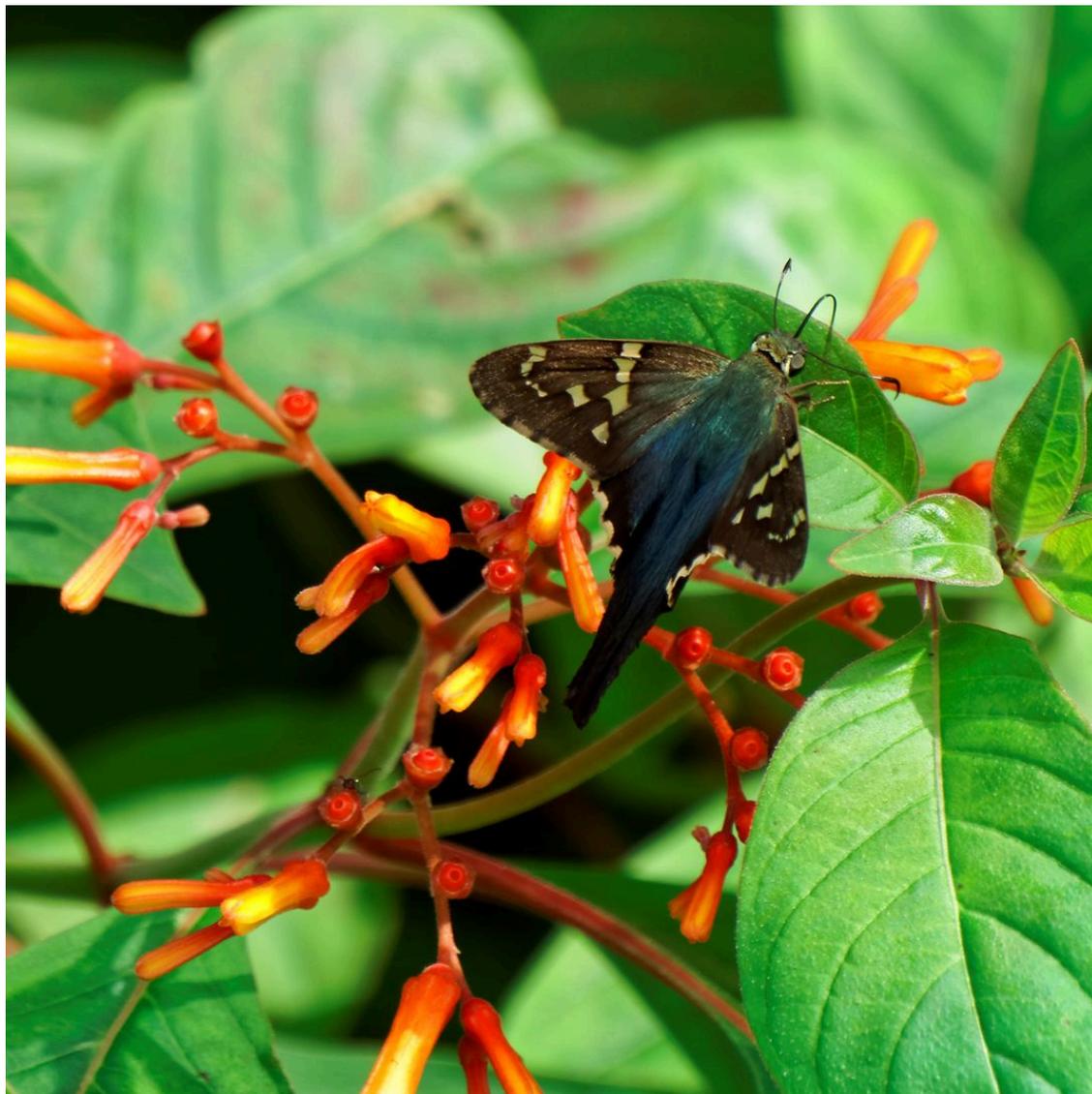
Redbay (*Persea borbonia*) is an evergreen tree that typically grows 30 to 70 feet tall and 10 to 20 feet wide. With inconspicuous white spring flowers that become blue or purple berries in the fall, furrowed reddish-brown bark, and leaves that produce a spicy “bay” odor when crushed, this plant is the host plant for Palamedes Swallowtails and Spicebush Swallowtails, a nectar source for a number of native bees, and a fruit source for birds.

Native to dunes, hammocks, and maritime forests along the coastal areas of North Carolina south to Florida and west to Alabama and parts of Louisiana and Texas, the plant tolerates full sun or partial shade and a range of soils including well-drained sandy soil, moist loams, and mucky clays. The plant is highly salt tolerant.

Traditionally used to make fine furniture and boats, Redbay’s leaves can also be used to flavor soups and meats. Unfortunately, Redbay is highly susceptible to laurel wilt, a nonnative pest-disease complex caused by the pathogen *Raffaelea lauricola* and the primary vector, the redbay ambrosia beetle. Since 2002, laurel wilt has killed hundreds of millions of trees in the Laurel family. (For more background, please see this [USDA resource](#).) As a result, the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) now recommends against planting Redbay (or indeed any bay) to slow the spread of this fatal disease. FNPS also recommends allowing stumps to sprout in order to provide food for Palamedes and Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillars.

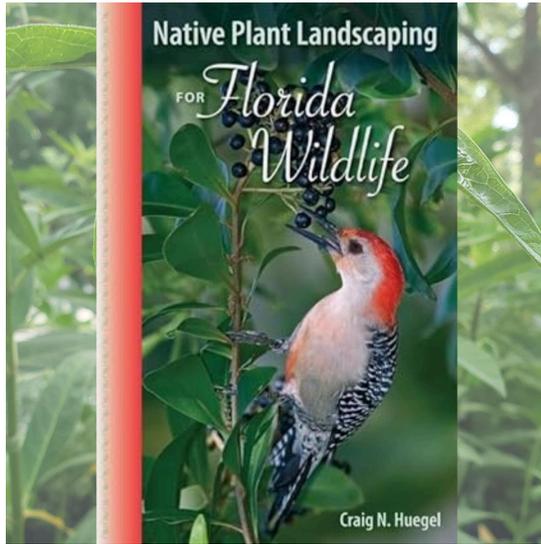
Concerned about the future fate of Palamedes Swallowtails? So are we. Follow [#ButterflyEffectTampa](#) for up-to-date tips and learning events focused on saving our native butterflies.

Garden Swag

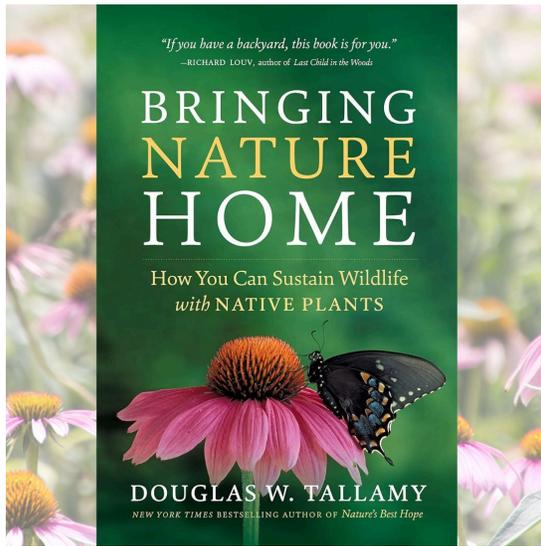


Get Your SwagON!

Florida's native plants offer a wealth of benefits, for both the environment as well as gardeners. Playing a crucial role in supporting our local ecosystem, native plants conserve water and provide habitat for wildlife. Below are some benefits of adding native plants to your landscape and some recommended books that delve into their beauty, ecology, and importance:



SHOP NOW



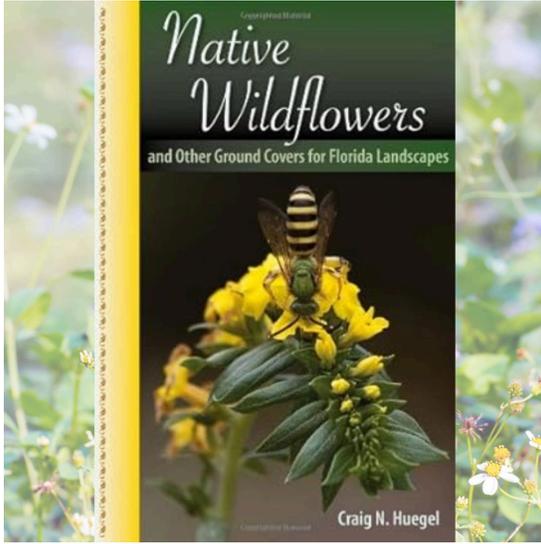
SHOP NOW

Adaptation to Local Climate: Native plants are well-suited to Florida’s unique conditions. Once established, they require minimal maintenance and are drought-tolerant. Their ability to thrive in the local climate makes them an excellent choice for landscaping.

Reduced Water Usage: Native plants have evolved alongside Florida’s weather patterns, which means they need less water compared to non-native species. By incorporating them into your garden, you contribute to water conservation efforts.

Wildlife Habitat: These plants provide essential food and shelter for Florida’s wildlife. From pollinators like butterflies to birds and other critters, native plants play a crucial role in supporting local ecosystems.

Lower Fertilizer and Pesticide Needs: Because they are adapted to the region, native plants typically require fewer fertilizers. Eliminating pesticides reduces the overall environmental impact of gardening and promotes a healthier ecosystem.



Biodiversity Enhancement: By growing native species, you contribute to the biodiversity of Florida. Native plants attract a variety of insects, birds, and other animals, creating a balanced and vibrant ecosystem.

Florida native plant species not only add beauty to our surroundings but also contribute to the health of our environment and support wildlife!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Cardinal flower - (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Cardinal Flower is an herbaceous, clump-forming perennial that grows 2 to 4 feet tall and 1 to 2 feet wide. Native to moist areas along streams and swamps and also found in moist, low wooded areas, Cardinal Flower has showstopping erect, terminal spikes of large, cardinal red flowers that are easily recognizable at a distance. The beauty attracts butterflies (especially swallowtails) and hummingbirds. When planted en masse, the summer display is absolutely stunning.

Cardinal Flower is suited to gardens in USDA Zones 3-9B. Since South Tampa and much of Pinellas County is Zone 10A, we recommend planting Cardinal Flower in areas with filtered sun and afternoon shade to shelter it from our intense summer heat. Deadheading will encourage the plant to rebloom and will also encourage a fuller and more compact plant form.

This plant pairs well with Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*), many of our native Milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*), Bee Balms (*Monarda spp.*) and Canadian Toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*).

Please note: Cardinal Flower contains several alkaloid compounds that are toxic to humans, cats, dogs, and horses. Plant in areas your pets and children can't reach to minimize poison risks.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design With Edimentals



Pigeon plum - (*Coccoloba diversifolia*)

Pigeon Plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*) is a tardily deciduous, multi-stemmed tree that can easily reach heights of 15 to 25 feet and 20 to 35 feet wide. With shiny leathery oval leaves that emerge as bright red new growth in the spring, whitish-green colored flowers that grow as 6" racemes and attract a range of butterflies and bees, this plant is truly noted (and named!) for its clusters of 1/3-inch plum-like fruit (female trees only) that ripen to a deep purple by late summer. These can be used to make jellies, preserves, wines, and pies if birds and small mammals don't devour them first.

Note that Pigeon Plum is dioecious: to obtain fruit set, the female requires that a male be planted nearby for proper pollination.

Pigeon Plum is native to coastal hammocks and coastal uplands. Historically, this plant was found along the Gulf Coast from Lee County south to the Keys and on the Atlantic Coast from Brevard County south. It requires full sun and sandy, well-drained soils.

Grow Pigeon Plum as an interesting specimen or prune a row of them to create a dense hedge and privacy fence. It also pairs well with our native wild coffees (*Psychotria spp.*) and Snowberry (*Chiococca alba*).

Please note: Pigeon Plum leaves are slow to decompose, so be sure to only plant in areas where this won't be an issue.

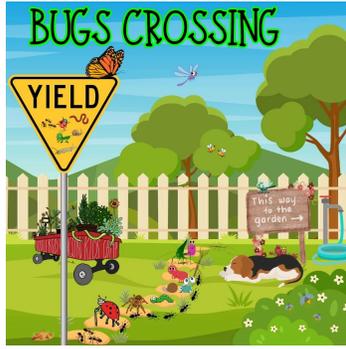
[SHOP NOW](#)

KIDS' CORNER



SUMMER IS AROUND THE CORNER!!

It's not too early to register for summer camps! Our first week of camp is already sold out. Each week of camp will have a different theme to keep kids learning about nature all summer long. Every child will have the opportunity to release a butterfly (weather permitting). Day Passes will be available for purchase on the Friday afternoon prior to the camp start date, providing the camp is not full.



JUNE 3 - 7

REGISTER



JUNE 10 - 14

REGISTER



JUNE 17 - 21

REGISTER



JUNE 24 - 28

REGISTER



JULY 1-3 & 5

REGISTER



JULY 8 - 12

REGISTER



JULY 15 - 19

REGISTER



JULY 29 - AUG. 2

REGISTER



AUGUST 5 - 9

REGISTER



BEE WALK

This month, go outside for a bee walk! Before taking a bee walk, create a small journal with several pages for you to record the bees you find. During your bee walk, try to record or color all the different types of bees you see. After your walk, you can try to identify the bees online with the help of an adult.

FUN FACT!

Florida is home to 63 different species of leafcutter bees! Leafcutting bees get their name because they will neatly cut small circular holes out of leaves. These circles are taken back to their nest and used to create a comfortable and soft home for their eggs.



MONARCH MINI FINGER PUPPER

You will love these mini monarch finger puppets! They are a great travel companion and can go with you wherever you go! They are perfect for a puppet play or just playing outside!

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

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: April 27



CENTER FOR CONSERVATION

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 25



ENCORE PARK

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 20



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring Kindergarten to Grade 5 children during our Nature Camps this summer. Click the button below to select the week(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: Summer Camps



Garden Tour Assistance

Garden Guides will welcome visitors, answer questions, and chat about native plants and the habitat gardens. Talking points, garden descriptions and other resources will be provided. You do not have to be an expert to volunteer, just someone who enjoys meeting fellow fans of birds, bees, and native flowers and helping them enjoy their visit. If this sounds like a good fit for you, click below to sign up.

VOLUNTEER: April 21



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

- APRIL 1** No April Fool's joke: Seniors (65+up) save 10% on first Monday of the month
- APRIL 2** National Dark Skies week: April 2-8
- APRIL 3** World Aquatic Animal Day
- APRIL 5** National Wildlife Week: April 5-9
- APRIL 7** World Health Day 2024: My health, my right, #NationalGirlMeTooDay
- APRIL 8** #NationalAllisOursDay
- APRIL 10** Gopher Tortoise Day
- APRIL 13** International Plant Appreciation Day
- APRIL 14** National Volunteer Week, National Gardening Day
- APRIL 17** Bat Appreciation Day
- APRIL 21** National Volunteer Week begins

Native Butterfly Garden Tour
April 21

EARTH DAY
 EVERY DAY

10 am - 4 pm

Little Red Wagon
 Native Nursery

\$15

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM

In celebration of Earth Day, purchase tickets and join us in celebrating Earth Day for our 1st Native Butterfly Garden Tour. This year featuring 4 South Tampa butterfly gardens from 10 am to 4 pm on Sunday, April 21. Enjoy visiting other gardens to get ideas on how to incorporate native plants into your home landscape. The garden tour will be followed by a "Nectar" party with refreshments at the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation Gallery: 4111-A Henderson Blvd., South Tampa next to Little Red Wagon Native Nursery.

If you'd like to volunteer to assist with the garden tour or "Nectar" party, please sign up via the link below.

PURCHASE TICKETS

VOLUNTEER

APRIL 22 Earth Day

APRIL 26 Zebra Longwing Day, National Audubon Day, National Arbor Day



Butterfly Walk April 28
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Non-NABA Members: \$5

North American Butterfly Association
NABA
Tampa Bay

TAMPA BAY
BUTTERFLY
FOUNDATION

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](#)

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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