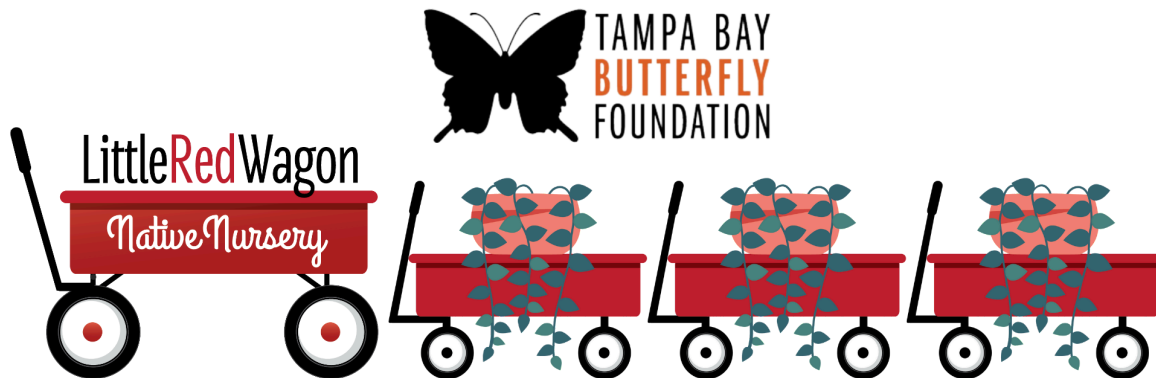


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LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time

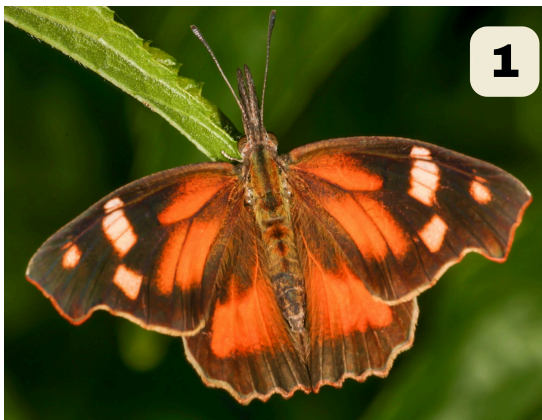


July 2024

"Just living isn't enough," said the butterfly,
"one must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower." ~Hans Christian Anderson

July is the heart of summer, a month filled with warm days and often clear, starlit nights. It's a period of vacations and adventures, where the sun stands high and the days stretch long into the evening. This month hosts Independence Day, a time of patriotic celebration and reflection on the nation's history. Gardening in July can be quite rewarding, but it's important to be mindful of the heat and the specific needs of your plants during this time. Pick up some mulch from Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to help retain moisture and reduce weeds. July is also National Blueberry month and we have a variety of native blueberry plants looking for a home garden! Whether it's enjoying the summer weather, participating in celebrations, or engaging with nature through gardening, July offers something for everyone.

Butterfly of the Month



The American Snout is perhaps our most peculiar-looking (and consequently our most easily recognized) resident butterfly. With very long, beak-like labial palps (mouthparts) that are almost as long as their antennae, it's very easy to see why these small butterflies (wingspan of 1 ¼- 2 inches) are called snouts! American Snouts have upper wings that are brown with orange patches and white spots (see Photo #1).

Their bottom wings are a mottled lavender gray (see Photo #2). Adults are friendly and will frequently stop, even if only momentarily, on an outreached finger. (See Photo #3.) Adults who perch on tree branches resemble dead leaves, which provides protection against predators.



Females lay tiny, pale yellow eggs on very young leaves of several species of hackberries (*Celtis spp.*) (In our area, the host plant is Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*). In the far northern counties of Florida, the host plant also includes Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*.) Once they emerge, the tiny caterpillars (which are green with narrow yellow lines and tiny yellow dots) eat the young leaves of its host plant.

American Snouts are native to upland forest edges, hammocks, and shrublands and are typically found in Florida north of I-4, although we've heard they are occasionally seen in Saddle Creek Park in Lakeland. Adults are generalists that nectar on goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*), Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), asters (*Symphotrichum spp.*) and more. Known for opportunistic mass movements that can stretch for miles in Texas and Mexico, American Snouts chase rainfall when hackberries retreat into dormancy during drought. (Read this [article](#) for a description of a 2018 event.)

We saw American Snout butterflies during our April butterfly count in Annutteliga Hammock in Hernando County and hope to see them when we count butterflies at Goethe State Forest later this summer. Let us know if you see any closer--- please take a photo and email it to info@ButterflyTampa.com.

Host Plant Of The Month



Sugarberry/Hackberry - (*Celtis laevigata*)

Sugarberry or Southern Hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*) is a deciduous tree with a round crown. The tree easily grows to 50-70 feet tall with a canopy as broad as the tree's height and a trunk diameter of 3 feet. Its branching structure and bark have been described as remarkably similar to that of the American Beech. Sugarberry is commonly found along streams, woodlands, and low-lying bottomlands across its native habitat which includes much of the southern United States: it ranges from Virginia to Florida, westward through Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The tree tolerates clay soils and thrives in fertile, sandy loam soils.

The tree's common name describes the tree's very sweet, very juicy berries which are a favorite of at least ten species of birds including robins, mockingbirds, and cedar waxwings. Some small mammals also enjoy the tasty fruit. Birds frequently nest in the tree and its leaves are food for the caterpillars of the Hackberry Emperors, Tawny Emperors, American Snout and Question Mark butterflies.

A number of Native American tribes used Sugarberry: the Houma made a concentrate from the tree's bark to treat sore throats. The Comanche mixed pulp from the berry with animal fat for food while the Acoma, Navajo and Tewa ate its berries. The Navajo made dye from Sugarberry's leaves and branches.

Sugarberry is drought resistant and resistant to most debilitating pests. (It is, however, parasitized by mistletoe.) The University of Florida recommends that homeowners have an arborist prune this tree several times during its first 15 years to prevent the development of multiple trunks or weak branch crotches. If you have ever been lucky enough to visit Savannah, GA, you may well have seen it; Savannah plants it widely as a street tree.

Have you seen them here in Tampa Bay? If so, why not post a photo with its location to our Facebook page? We'd love to see more of them in our area. If we know where the trees are, we'll know where to look for butterflies that rely on them.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag

Get Your SwagON!

Plastic Free July is a global movement that encourages individuals and communities to reduce their plastic waste. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the environmental impact of single-use plastics and promotes actions to reduce reliance on them. You can help contribute to a cleaner world by picking up some of these great alternatives to single-use plastics. Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's Gift Shop and be part of the solution!



Sips Glass Water Bottles

These reusable glass tumblers and water bottles feature bamboo lids and BPA-free straws! Protective silicone sleeve provides a no-slip grip!

[SHOP NOW](#)



Eco Watering Spout

Transform your empty plastic bottles into watering cans with this twist on bottle adaptor. It's a great way to recycle and reuse plastic soda or water bottles.

[SHOP NOW](#)



Insulated Bottle

This double-walled stainless steel water bottle with a coordinating bamboo top lid keeps beverages cold for 24 hours and hot for 12 hours.

[SHOP NOW](#)

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VOTE NOW AT GUIDETOFLORIDA.COM

VOTE FOR US DAILY!

Do you love your experience when you shop at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery?

Thank you to those of you who voted us Best Home & Garden Shop in 2023. Please vote for us again this year! Voting ends July 31.

VOTE DAILY

Nectar Plant of the Month



Solidago spp.

When I think of summer, I think of long, lazy, hazy days. And, when I think of plants that give a similar vibe, I immediately think of our native Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*). With showy, plume-like spikes of tiny yellow flowers, there's something about Goldenrods that simply shouts "Summer."

There are over 20 Goldenrods native to Florida and here, at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery, we try to keep at least ½ of them in stock. This means whether you live in coastal area, prairie, forest edge or scrub area, have soil that's sand or clay, chances are one of our native Goldenrods will be perfect for you and your garden.

Goldenrods flower from summer through fall and are an important nectar source for a variety of our native pollinators and migrating Monarchs. You may even find the goldenrod soldier beetle and many species of wild bees when these plants are in bloom. Goldenrods typically pair really well with our native Sages (*Salvia spp.*), Ironweeds (*Vernonia spp.*) and Blazing Stars (*Liatris spp.*), but it all comes down to pairing the right plants based on your site's specific conditions. Why not stop by and let us help you select the perfect combination? Bring some photos and information about your soil --- we'd love to help.

(Fun fact: Although people frequently blame goldenrods for causing hay fever, the real culprits are ragweeds (*Ambrosia spp.*): the plants flower around the same time each year but it's ragweeds' wind-borne pollen that triggers allergic reactions in many people.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design With Edimentals



Prickly Pear Cactus - (*Opuntia austrina*)

Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia austrina*) is an evergreen perennial in the cactus family that is endemic to Florida and grows 1-2 feet tall and up to 3 feet wide. Its flat, paddle-like segmented stems act as leaves with golden-yellow flowers emerging at the tip of the paddles in spring. The fleshy fruit that follows turns to a brilliant red and is an important food source for birds, wild deer, tortoises, and other wildlife. Its flowers are an important nectar source for the Dotted Skipper and a number of native bees. Both paddles and fruit can be eaten after the plant's bristly barbs are removed. We're happy to share one of our favorite recipes below.

Prickly Pear Cactus does best in full sun and well-draining, dry, sandy soil. It is suitable to grow in USDA Zones 9A to 11. The plant is extremely drought tolerant and overwatering or poor draining soil can cause the plant to rot.

Prickly Pear Cactus is a showy plant that can bring a rocky slope to life. Be careful where you plant it though --- its spine will cause serious pain!

According to iNaturalist, Prickly Pear Cactus can be found at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. We've also seen it at Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area in Hernando County. 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

Did you know you can turn prickly pear fruit into a margarita?

Prickly Pear Margarita



2 ounces tequila
2 ounces sweet and sour mix
1 ounce triple sec
1 ounce lime juice
1 ounce prickly pear syrup
(Prepared ahead of time)
Coarse salt as needed

Prickly Pear Syrup



Ingredients:
1 ½ cups prickly pear
3 cups water
½ cup sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Directions:

1. De-thorn prickly pears and cut them in half.
2. Scoop out the middle fruit into a pot with the water, sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce to a simmer, stirring occasionally.
3. After approximately 30 minutes, the mixture will thicken. Remove from the heat. Allow to cool.
4. Ladle, one scoop at a time, into a strainer over a bowl/container. Use the back of a spoon to press and extract more liquid into your container.
5. Empty the strainer of the pulp and seeds then repeat with the remainder of the prickly pear mixture.

KIDS' CORNER



SUMMER NATURE CAMP FUN!

Bug hunts, animal encounters and butterfly releases...oh my! Children entering Kindergarten - Grade 5 are having fun discovering nature during our Summer Nature Camps that parents voted Best Summer Camps for the past two years! Some of our camps are sold out but we still have a few openings left in some camps so register soon! Day Passes will be available for purchase on the Friday prior to the camp start date, providing the camp is not full/sold out. Click the button below for information about upcoming camps.

[REGISTER: SUMMER CAMPS](#)

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BEST SUMMER CAMPS

**VOTE
TODAY**



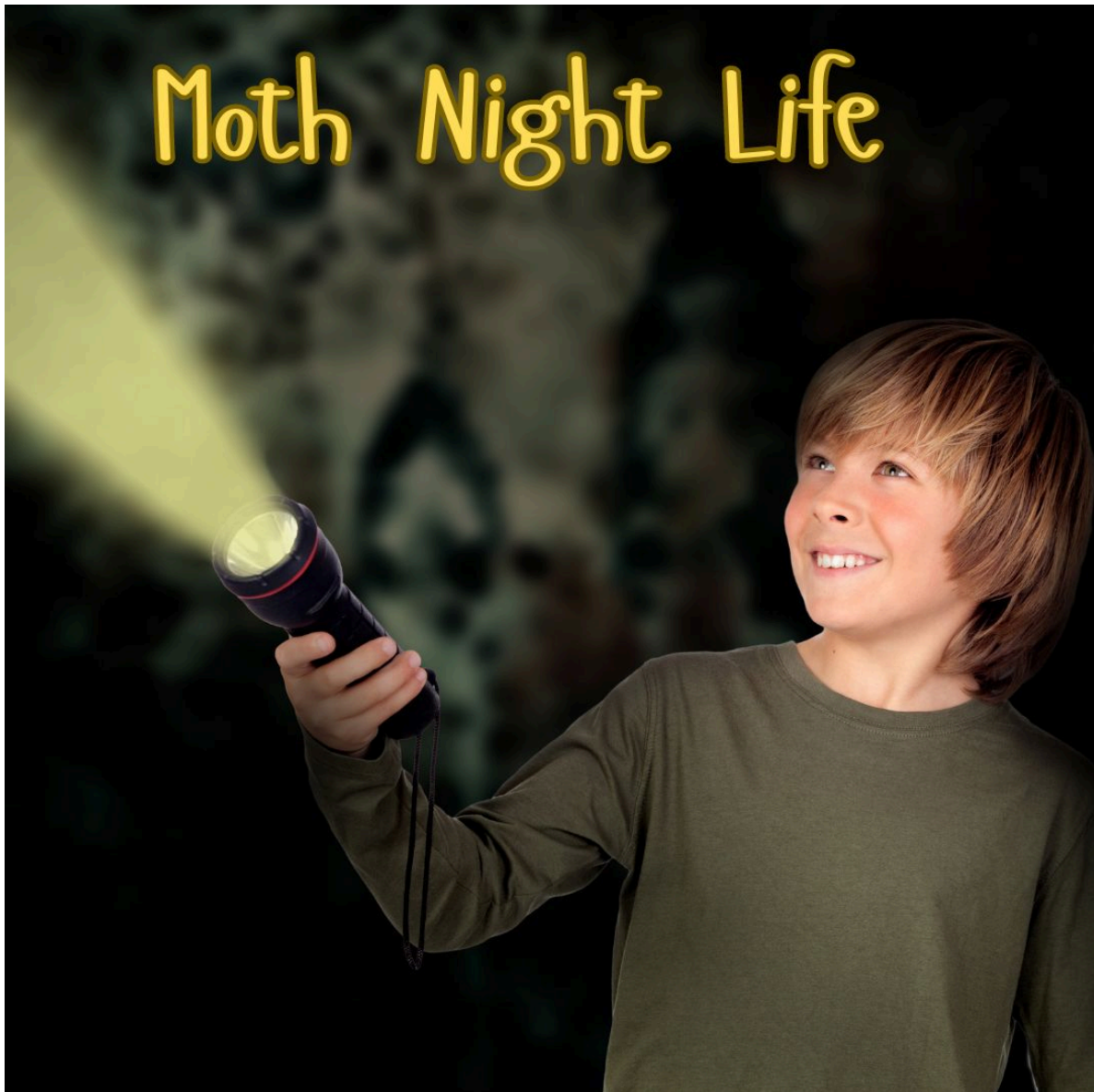
VOTE NOW AT [GUIDETOFLORIDA.COM](https://www.guidetoflorida.com)

VOTE FOR US DAILY!

Are your kids enjoying our Summer Nature Camps? For the past two years, we have been voted Best Summer Camps, by the Guide to Florida.

Please help make this a three-peat by voting daily! Voting ends July 31 so please vote, vote, vote!

VOTE DAILY



With the help of an adult, grab a blanket and your flashlight to head outdoors. You want to find a place that is away from house lights. Resist the urge to turn on your flashlight right away. When it gets dark enough to

see the stars, turn on your flashlight and aim it at a tree trunk or wall. Be patient. But eventually moths will flock to the light and you will be able to see some of Florida's amazing moths!



Did you know...Moth week is the last week of July! Florida is home to about 237 different types of moths.

KIDS' GARDEN GLOVES



Beetle and Bee Kids Gloves

[Shop now](#)



Kidsworld Garden Gloves

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Kids Nitrile Gloves

[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 perform cleanup and maintenance of Butterfly Alley habitat (4110 W. Estrella St., behind Little Red Wagon Native Nursery). We will not be performing maintenance during the summer months, but please join us when we resume in the fall.

VOLUNTEER: September 28



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: July 25



Encore Park! Maintenance

Volunteers help 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.). We will not be performing maintenance during the summer months, but please join us when we resume in the fall.

VOLUNTEER: September 14



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



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 the only native plant nursery in Tampa? We are finishing out renovations on the Butterfly Tampa living educational exhibits that include butterflies in their various stages of metamorphosis as well as other insects, arachnids, amphibians, and reptiles! Our new Native Butterfly Botanical Garden will open later this month also.

We are excited about the exhibit's grand re-opening at the end of July! Stay tuned and sign up for our newsletters and announcements at [ButterflyTampa.com](https://butterflytampa.com) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram for up to date information.

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



Reptiles of the Month: Ivy and Hulk

This month at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation, we're delighted to feature two of our most graceful residents and the cutest couple, Ivy and Hulk, our Rough Green Snakes (*Opheodrys aestivus*). These slender and elegant reptiles are not only a treat to watch but also play a vital role in the balance of our local ecosystems as Florida natives.

Rough Green Snakes are known for their striking, bright green coloration, which provides perfect camouflage among the leaves and branches of their habitat.



Ivy and Hulk both exhibit this vibrant green hue, with slight variations in tone that help them blend seamlessly into the foliage. They are long and slender, typically measuring between 22 to 32 inches as adults. Their undersides are a creamy yellow or white, and their scales have a slightly keeled texture, giving them a "rough" appearance.

Native to the southeastern United States, Rough Green Snakes thrive in a variety of arboreal habitats.

They prefer environments with dense foliage such as bushes, vines, and trees where they can hunt and hide. Rough Green Snakes can often be seen swaying in the breeze like a branch, an effective natural camouflage that confuses both predators and prey. These snakes are insectivorous, primarily feeding on insects and spiders. Their diet helps control the population of pests, which is beneficial for both humans and the ecosystem. Rough Green Snakes like Ivy and Hulk are docile and non-venomous, making them harmless to humans.

While not currently listed as an imperiled species, Rough Green Snakes are affected by habitat destruction, pollution, and disease. Conservation efforts are important to maintain their natural environments and ensure that these beautiful snakes continue to thrive in the wild.

Visit us at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to meet Ivy and Hulk and learn about our other animal ambassadors!

Bug of the Month: Milkweed Insect!

Meet the Large Milkweed Bug (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*) as this month's featured insect at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation! Native to Florida and distributed throughout North and Central America, these critters are known for their bright orange coloration and love for milkweed.

Due to the wide distribution of this species, the Large Milkweed Bug's morphology can vary in wing size and coloration based on geographic region.



However, all have a distinctly bright orange color with a black 'X' shaped pattern on their wings. Although easily seen, these bright colors can act as a warning signal to their predators not to eat them!

The large milkweed bug is a part of the group considered a 'true insect' (*Heteroptera*). Containing over 40,000 species, this group of true insects is characterized by the presence of needle-like mouthparts that extract fluids from their food. For the Large Milkweed insect, this is often nectar and other fluid from milkweed plants.

These bright orange critters favor tropical environments but migrate based on the flowering patterns of milkweed plants. Milkweed insects are vital to their ecosystems, helping to maintain milkweed and aphid populations, and are a common model organism in research.

Females of the Large Milkweed Bug can lay anywhere between 30-50 eggs at a time, depending on their geographic range. Florida's population is one of the state populations that have the largest average clutch size. This could be due to their preference for tropical climates and their need for high temperatures and humidity for reproduction. In temperate climates, reproduction halts during the cold months but will resume once temperatures warm and humidity rises.

The Large Milkweed Insect is of least concern due to their wide distribution. If you see them in your garden, make sure to keep them around as they are helping maintain harmful insect populations and maintaining milkweed populations for you and the butterflies to enjoy!

Monthly Calendar of Events

JULY 1 National Blueberry month, National Wildlife month, National Parks & Rec month

JULY 3 International Plastic Bag-free day

JULY 4 Happy Independence Day--Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be open 11am - 5:30pm

JULY 6 World Fire Fly Day

- JULY 7** National Koi Fish Day
- JULY 8** National Blueberry Day
- JULY 10** Pick Blueberries Day
- JULY 14** Be Nice to Bugs Day
- JULY 15** World Youth Skills Day
- JULY 16** World Snake Day
- JULY 21** Moth Week (21-28)
- JULY 28** World Nature Conservation Day
- JULY 29** Rain Day

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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