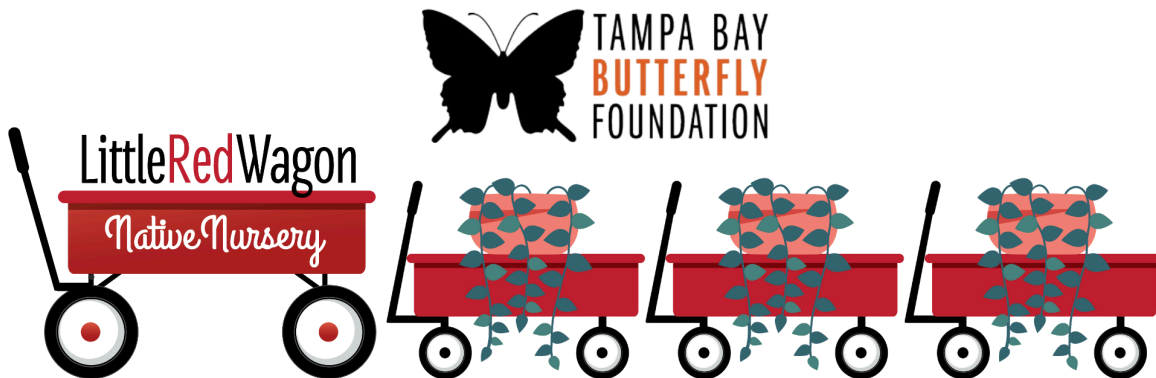


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



June 2024

“Nature's message was always there and for us to see. It was written on the wings of butterflies.” - Kjell B. Sandved

June is a month that heralds the beginning of hurricane season for Floridians and the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere with the summer solstice on the 21st. It is a time of vibrant transformation, where the Sunshine State welcomes the full embrace of summer. The days stretch longer, offering up to nine hours of sunlight, and temperatures soar. This month marks the beginning of the rainy season, with frequent showers that can bring relief from the heat; both the warmth of the sun and the sudden, cooling rainstorms contribute to native plants thriving in our Tampa environment with rainy season peaking July through September. We are hoping for some nice rain showers after so long with no rain and the heat really kicking up!

Butterfly of the Month



©John Lampkin

White M Hairstreak

Hairstreaks are some of the most fun butterflies to watch. They're tiny (typically 3/4"-1.5") and somewhat delicate looking with very thin tails that extend from their hindwings. (Interestingly, hairstreaks are known for moving their hindwings up and down when perched. With tails that can be mistaken for antennae on the hindwing, the motion directs predators' attention away from the butterfly's real head and towards the butterfly's outer wing, giving the butterfly a higher probability of surviving an attack.)

White M Hairstreaks are no exception. These small butterflies (wingspan 1 1/4 - 1 5/8 inches) have short, white-tipped, antennae-like tails on their hindwings. Distinguishable from other hairstreaks by beautiful, iridescent blue upper wings and a distinctive white M on bottom wings, the White M Hairstreak has a red spot that juts forward near the second peak of the "M" and a small white dash about midway down the bottom hindwing (see Photo #1). As added protection against predators like birds and jumping spiders, a White M Hairstreak will turn around multiple times when it lands to make it harder for predators to find its head.

Females lay flat whitish eggs on the leaves and twigs of oaks. Once they emerge, the green or red sluglike caterpillars eat young leaves of its host plant. In Florida, these include Southern Live Oak (*Quercus*

virginiana), Sand Live Oak (*Quercus geminata*), Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia*), Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*) and Post Oak (*Quercus stellata*).

Adults are generalists that will nectar on a range of plants including Viburnums (*Viburnum spp.*), Milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*), Coastal Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and other plants with small flowers.

White M Hairstreaks are fairly common throughout most of Florida with at least three generations per year. Historically, these beauties were found in and around scrub oak forests, their edges, and in hammocks as far north as Connecticut and west to Iowa, Missouri, and Texas. The butterfly is a rare stray to Michigan and Wisconsin.

We saw White M Hairstreaks during our April butterfly count in Annutteliga Hammock in Hernando County. Let us know if you see any closer--- please take a photo and email it to info@ButterflyTampa.com.

Host Plant Of The Month



Southern Live Oak - (*Quercus virginiana*)

Southern Live Oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) are long-lived, massive, and picturesque evergreen trees. With horizontal branches spreading as much as 100 feet wide, elbowed limbs that can touch the ground, and a height of 40-60 feet, Southern Live Oaks are the type of tree children love to climb and some adults love to hug. They are incredibly majestic specimen trees and make wonderful shade trees. Southern Live Oaks are also host to a range of epiphytes including orchids, ferns, and Spanish Moss, making them an interesting addition to the landscape both at a distance and up close.

Southern Live Oaks are native to the lower Coastal Plain of the Southeastern United States from southeastern Virginia south to Georgia and Florida west to southern and central Texas and the mountains of northeastern Mexico. They are quite adaptable to a range of soil conditions and can be found growing in the sandy soils of low coastal areas, dry sandy woods, rockland hammocks, moist rich woods, and the edges of floodplains. Their resistance to salt spray and high levels of soil salinity means Southern Live Oaks are great trees to plant near the coast.

While the tree is long-lived and can reach ages of 300 years or more, the University of Florida notes how important it is to take care “to develop a strong branch structure early in the life of the tree. Be sure to eliminate multiple trunks and branches which form a narrow angle with the trunk as these are likely to split from the tree as it grows older.”

Taking care of your oaks will reward you handsomely. Doug Tallamy, one of my favorite authors and scientists, notes that oaks are “the most productive plant in the country. Over 900 species of Lepidoptera—and most of them are moths—use oaks and there’s no other genus that comes close to that.” Indeed, in our area, Southern Live Oaks are the caterpillar host for Horace’s Duskywings, Red-Banded Hairstreaks, and White-M Hairstreaks. Hummingbirds eat the tree’s pollen. Squirrels, mice, turkeys and a range of other small mammals and birds eat its acorns.

If you’re a tree-hugging sort of person, you’ll find this link, which lists several of the world’s largest oaks, absolutely fascinating. And, if you happen to visit any of them, please take a photo and email it to info@ButterflyTampa.com. We’d love to share your joy!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag



Get Your SwagON!

June is Pollinator Month so let's celebrate pollinators. Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's Gift Shop and select from handmade pollinator bar soaps, plant picks, window ornaments, butterfly gala suckers, suncatchers and more!

[SHOP NOW](#)



Father's Day is an opportunity to honor fathers and father figures for their contribution to their children's lives. A Little Red Wagon Native Nursery gift card, accompanied by a heartfelt note, can convey your gratitude and offers the freedom for dad to select exactly what he wants from our nursery or gift shop.

Our gift cards never expire so Dad can shop at his convenience!

[SHOP Gift Cards](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Rattlesnakemaster - (*Eryngium aquaticum*)

Rattlesnakemaster (*Eryngium aquaticum*) is an architectural and somewhat prickly-looking biennial forb that typically grows to 3-to 5-feet tall and about 1 foot wide. With clusters of very tiny, 5-parted florets that burst into a bluish-purple globular flower head at the tip of very erect, rigid stems during the summer, Rattlesnakemaster is an especially important source of nectar for our native bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Rattlesnakemaster is native to wet prairies, bogs, fresh to brackish marshes, ditches, and swamps from New Jersey south to Florida and west to Mississippi. The plant requires full sun and does best in moist soils. (Indeed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [classifies](#) Rattlesnakemaster as an Obligate wetland plant, which means that the plant “almost always occur in wetlands.”)

According to the [Native American Ethnobotany Database](#), Rattlesnakemaster was traditionally used to treat various ailments and some sources state that its common name was derived because the plant’s root was used to treat snake bites. [Recent research](#) has focused on ways *Eryngium* spp. can be used to treat metabolic syndrome and diabetes. We regularly see Rattlesnakemaster along roadside ditches in Goethe State Forest during July. 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](#)

Design With Edimentals



'Red Tip' Cocoplum - (*Chrysobalanus icaco* 'Red Tip')

'Red Tip' Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco* 'Red Tip') is a fast-growing, evergreen perennial cultivar of the inland ecotype of Cocoplum that will easily grow to heights of 20 feet and 10-20 feet wide if not pruned. (For more information on the two ecotypes of Cocoplum, please see this University of Florida [resource](#).) New leaves on the plant are red (hence the plant's name!) before they mature and turn green. The plant has tiny white flowers that attract a range of bees and other pollinators. The purple fruit that follows is devoured by birds and mammals alike and can be used to make jams and jellies.

'Red Tip' Cocoplum does best in full sun or moderate to light shade. It tolerates a range of soil conditions and once established, will tolerate salty wind and occasional brackish water inundation. It makes a great hedge and privacy screen – simply plant multiple Red Tip Cocoplums 36 to 50 inches apart on center and allow them a year or so to fill in. You'll be surprised at how quickly they grow!

Please note: Cocoplums will not survive hard freezes and are susceptible to damage from cold temperatures. If you live areas north of Zone 10A, this may not be the best plant for you. But, if you're in 10A or south, why not take advantage of this gorgeous beauty?

[SHOP NOW](#)

KIDS' CORNER



SCHOOL'S OUT!! SUMMER NATURE FUN IS HERE!

Summer Break is here! Have you made plans for your K-Grade 5 children for exciting summer activities? Check out our popular Summer Nature Camps that parents voted Best Summer Camps for the past two years! Come discover nature this summer. 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/sold out.



DAY PASS AVAILABLE



JUNE 10 - 14



JUNE 17 - 21

REGISTER

REGISTER

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

JOIN WAITLIST



MOSQUITO LIFE CYCLE

With the help of an adult, look up and draw the mosquito life cycle. Try to make your pictures as close to the real stages as possible! Notice where they live at different stages of their life.

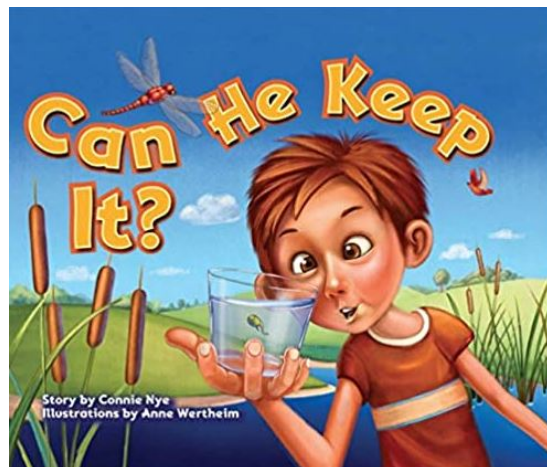


FUN FACT!

Only female mosquitos bite. Male mosquitos only feed on plant juice (nectar) but females need extra protein to lay eggs which leads them to bite.

Can He Keep it?

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 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



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: June 27



ENCORE PARK

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 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 for a couple more weeks, 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. Stay tuned as we will be adding to our living exhibits and opening our new Botanical Native Butterfly Gardens soon.

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



Reptile of the Month: T-Rex!

Meet T-Rex, our juvenile Florida king snake (*Lampropeltis floridana*) and this month's featured reptile at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation! Native to peninsular Florida, Florida king snakes are known for their striking patterns and docile nature, making T-Rex a favorite in our educational reptile collection.

T-Rex, like most Florida king snakes, showcases a series of bold, dark bands across a lighter background that ranges from gray to golden-brown.

T-Rex, like most Florida king snakes, showcases a series of bold, dark bands across a lighter background that ranges from gray to golden-brown. Despite being young, T-Rex displays the characteristic smooth scales and rounded head of his species. Juvenile king snakes like T-Rex typically measure between 8 to 16 inches in length but can grow upwards of 50 inches.

Florida king snakes are versatile in their habitats but prefer forested areas with abundant cover and nearby water sources. They are non-venomous constrictors, primarily preying on other snakes (including venomous ones), small rodents, birds, and eggs. Florida king snakes have resistance and immunity to the venom of native pit vipers, including rattlesnakes and cottonmouths. This adaptation allows them to prey on these snakes and control their populations.

While not currently listed as an imperiled species, Florida king snakes face challenges from habitat loss, road mortality, and introduced diseases. Programs like ours aim to educate the public on the importance of preserving natural habitats and the roles these incredible reptiles play in the ecosystem.

Visit us at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to meet T-Rex and learn about our other reptilian residents!

Monthly Calendar of Events

- JUNE 1** World Reef Day, National Trails Day
- JUNE 2** Garden Week (2-8), Animal Rights Day
- JUNE 3** The Very Hungry Caterpillar's birthday
- JUNE 5** World Environment Day
- JUNE 6** Gardening Exercise Day
- JUNE 8** Butterfly Education and Awareness Day, World Oceans Day
- JUNE 9** World Swallowtail Day
- JUNE 10** National Herbs and Spices Day
- JUNE 13** Weed Your Garden Day
- JUNE 16** Father's Day, World Sea Turtle Day
- JUNE 17** Pollinator Week (17-23), World Day to combat desertification and drought
- JUNE 19** Juneteenth
- JUNE 20** National Eagle Day
- JUNE 21** International Day of Yoga, Summer Solstice



Pollinator WEEK

June 17-23, 2024



pollinator.org



Come get your tools sharpened on Saturday, June 22 from 9am – 4pm. You may drop off your tools in the bucket at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery in advance of Saturday. Please place a label with your name and phone number on your tools for easy retrieval when you return on Saturday.

Tampa Bees will be doing honey tastings and we will have a mini bee hive that allows our guests to see the bees up close. Tampa Bees is a women owned local beekeeper and provides the honey we sell in our gift shop. Come meet Stephanie and meet the bees Saturday, June 22 10am – 4pm!

- JUNE 22** World Rainforest Day
- JUNE 23** National Hydration Day
- JUNE 27** National Orange Blossom 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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