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# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



May 2024

"May, the month of sunshine, blooming flowers, and endless possibilities." - Unknown

**M**ay is a month rich with history, celebrations, and interesting facts. April showers bring May flowers, as saying goes. In Florida we rarely see April showers, but we do have May flowers nonetheless! What else is the month of May known for? Truly, there are so many special days to celebrate every single day in May, including weekly and monthlong observances too. For instance, did you know May is National Strawberry Month? You could stop by Little Red Wagon and pick up a Florida Native Strawberry plant to celebrate National Strawberry month. May Day, celebrated on May 1st throughout the years and decades, there have been different meanings, festivities, and representations of May Day. The meaning of seasonal change has been the most significant one amongst different countries. Star Wars Day: May the 4th be with you. Cinco de Mayo on May 5<sup>th</sup> is the yearly celebration of Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. VE Day (Victory in Europe) celebrated on May 8<sup>th</sup> celebrations erupted around the world to mark the end of World War II in Europe. Mother's Day celebrated this year on May 12<sup>th</sup> celebrating all of our wonderful Mom's. May's full moon is called the Flower Moon, symbolizing the blooming of flowers; this year it will appear on May 23. Memorial Day honors those who lost their lives while defending our country but also marks the beginning of school summer break. Have you made plans for your Kindergarten to Grade 5 nature-loving kids? Our Summer Camp programs are filling up quickly, with two weeks already sold out. Register soon so you don't miss out!

**Butterfly of the Month**



### Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

Eastern Tiger Swallowtails are graceful beauties that seem to float magically in the air. With a wingspan that ranges from 2 ½ to 4 ½ inches, these butterflies are often seen in suburban gardens near deciduous woods and wetlands. Males are typically smaller than females. They are bright yellow with four parallel black tiger stripes at the top of each wing and a thick black band along the outer edge. Females have two forms: a yellow form that's similar to the male and a black form that has shadows of the tiger stripes. Both of the female forms have blue chevrons along the lower edge of the upperside of its hindwings.

Females lay dark green eggs singly on mature leaves of host plants that include Sweetbay (*Magnolia virginiana*), ashes (*Fraxinus spp.*), and Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*). Caterpillars eat the leaves and rest on silken mats in curled leaves. The caterpillar is green with large yellow and black decoy eyes and black stripes.

Adult Eastern Tiger Swallowtails readily nectar on Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and Milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*). According to iNaturalist, Eastern Tiger Swallowtails were seen only a couple of days ago at Lettuce Lake Park and also at Little Manatee River State Park. 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](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com) and we'll let you know when we have our next one.

## Host Plant Of The Month



### **Black Cherry - (*Prunus serotina*)**

Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) is a deciduous tree that typically grows 60 to 90 feet tall and 35 to 50 feet wide here in Florida. With long, dangling clusters of delicate, white fragrant spring blossoms that become dark purple berries in the fall, this plant is the caterpillar host plant for the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and Red-Spotted Purple. Its blossoms provide abundant nectar to our native pollinators and its berries are a wonderful source of late fall and winter food for birds and small mammals.

Black cherry grows from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (Canada) south to central Florida and west to Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and eastern Texas. As you might guess from its vast range, Black Cherry grows under a wide range of conditions. Here in Florida, it is native to upland forests, secondary woods, old fields, and sandhills. It does best in consistently moist (but not wet) strongly acidic soils and full sun.

Black Cherry is the largest of our native cherry trees and has traditionally been used to make fine furniture and is commercially valued to make products like musical instruments, tool handles, and gun stocks. Members of the Cherokee and Iroquois Nations traditionally used its bark to make cough medicines and to treat fevers. Fruit harvested before wildlife eats it can be used to make jelly and wine.

According to [University of Florida](#), Black Cherry trees should be planted away from concrete since its fruit stains pavements. Additionally, the tree's shallow root system is highly susceptible to damage so don't stack, store, or park anything within its dripline.

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## Garden Swag



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### Get Your SwagON!

Summer is almost here and the end of May marks the transition into the early days of summer when the kids begin summer school break and we get ready for various celebrations and traditions. Memorial Day is a perfect time for entertaining guests outdoors with a colorful garden flag welcoming friends and family to celebrate a patriotic holiday and the beginning of school summer break!

## Nectar Plant of the Month



**Black-Eyed Susan - (*Rudbeckia hirta*)**

Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is perhaps the most recognizable of our native plants. With 3-inch wide flowers that have golden-yellow petals and a dark chocolate brown center, this wonderful plant is a hallmark of prairies, wildflower meadows, and roadside plantings. A biennial that readily self-seeds, Black-Eyed Susans will easily grow to 3 feet tall and about 2 feet wide. In Florida, this plant typically blooms from spring through summer. It's a favorite nectar source for our native pollinators including bees, moths, and butterflies. It is the host plant for Silvery Checkerspot caterpillars; Silvery Checkerspots are found in the extreme northern parts of Florida.

Native to meadows and fields and woodland areas, Black-Eyed Susan is also commonly found in disturbed areas. It is a low-maintenance plant that can tolerate somewhat moist (not wet) to dry soil conditions and does best in full sun. Deadheading spent flower heads encourages repeat blooms.

Black-Eyed Susan petals can be used to make colorfast, natural yellow dye. It's a great plant for a cut flower or wildflower garden and can be used to help control erosion. It pairs well with Sunflowers (*Helianthus spp.*), Coreopsis (*Coreopsis spp.*), and Blanket Flowers (*Gallardia spp.*).

How are you using Black-Eyed Susan in your garden? We'd love to know--- email your photos to [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:Info@ButterflyTampa.com)

(Fun Fact: According to [NC State Extension](#), the plant's Latin "genus name honors Olof Rudbeck, a 17th-century Swedish botanist. The species epithet means "hairy" and refers to short bristles on the leaves and stems.")

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## Design With Edimentals



### Red Mulberry - (*Morus rubra*)

Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*) is a long-lived deciduous tree that can grow to 50 feet tall and 40 feet wide. It's native to woodlands, wood margins and bottomlands from Massachusetts and Southern Ontario south to Florida and west to Minnesota and Texas. The tree grows best in full sun and normally requires water twice a week. Like many fruit trees, experts recommend pruning to keep the tree healthy.

Red Mulberry is the host plant for Mourning Cloak caterpillars. Its greenish-white spring catkins attract pollinators and its juicy red berries attract wildlife as diverse as birds, small mammals, and the Eastern box turtle. This tree's berries are also a tasty treat for humans. Rich in antioxidants, vitamin C, potassium, iron,

and other nutrients, mulberries can be used to make jams, pies, sorbets and more. Indeed, here's a [website](#) with links to 20 recipes!

According to iNaturalist, Red Mulberry has been spotted in Hillsborough River State Park and Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. If you have space, why not plant this treat in your garden and share your recipe with us at [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com)? We'd love to hear how you use it.

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## KIDS' CORNER



### SCHOOL'S ALMOST OUT FOR SUMMER!!

Summer break begins at the end of this month. 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.



**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**

**JOIN WAITLIST**



**AUGUST 5 - 9**

**REGISTER**





**MATERIALS**

- TOILET PAPER TUBE
- CRAYONS OR COLORED PENCILS
- PLASTIC BEADS
- STRING
- STAPLER

**CIRCADA SHAKER**

**Instructions:**

- Decorate your paper towel tube as your favorite bug.
- Get 8-10 plastic beads and put them on a length of string.
- Tie the string so that it is tight on the tube with all beads on the outside.
- Staple ends so it is tight.
- Try out your Cicada Shaker




**FUN FACT!**

It will be cicadas season from late April to June and this year will be extra special!

Cicadas spend their time as nymphs under the ground. It takes them either 13 or 17 years to reach adulthood. Once they reach adulthood, they will emerge to the surface during the warm months. This year, both the 13 year and 17 year cicadas will emerge, leading to an epic summer full of cicadas! So keep your eyes peeled!

**Monarch Finger Puppet**

With a soft printed fabric design, the extraordinary and realistic detailing of the Folkmanis® finger puppets will surely pollinate the imagination and nurture sweet acts of conservation.

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# “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).

**VOLUNTEER: May 25**



**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: May 30**



**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: June 22**



### 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, 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**

- MAY 1** National Start Seeing Monarchs Day
- MAY 3** National Garden Meditation Day
- MAY 10** National Public Gardens Day
- MAY 11** World Migratory Bird Day
- MAY 17** Endangered Species Day
- MAY 20** World Bee Day
- MAY 22** International Day for Biological Diversity
- MAY 23** World Turtle Day
- MAY 27** Memorial Day--LRW will be open!
- MAY 29** Learn about composting Day

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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](http://LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com)

Email: [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto: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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