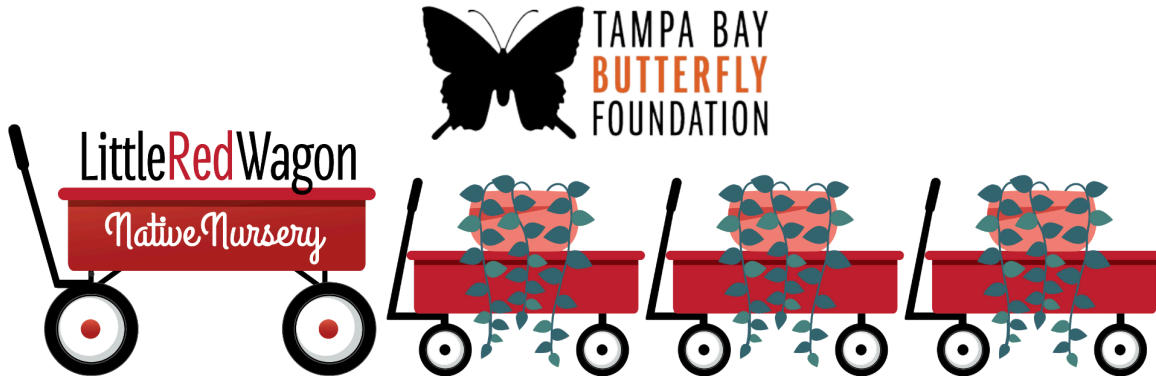


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



September 2024

"Happily we bask in this warm September sun, which illuminates all creatures."

~Henry David Thoreau

September is a month of transition, marking the end of summer and the beginning of autumn in our

Northern Hemisphere. It's a time for harvest festivals, back-to-school excitement, football, and the anticipation of upcoming holidays. Autumn, or fall, begins on the autumnal equinox, when the hours of daylight are equal to the hours of darkness. This year, the fall equinox will occur on September 22. In many cultures, September is also a month of reflection and new beginnings, as people set goals and make plans for the final quarter of the year. As we begin to welcome fall and start to have less daylight, September offers a unique blend of endings and fresh starts in our gardens. Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery for gardening tips to help prepare for the upcoming change in seasons.

Hope in Action



SEPTEMBER 14 & 15, 2024
Tropicana Field, 1 Tropicana Dr, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Join Dr. Jane Goodall and the Roots & Shoots Alliance of Tampa Bay for Hope in Action, a weekend for people of all ages to join forces for Tampa Bay's environment.



SATURDAY, SEP. 14 | 7:00 PM

An Evening with Dr. Jane Goodall

As part of her 90th birthday tour, Dr. Goodall will share her message of hope live, in a unique talk tailored for the Youth Environment Summit.

Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation are proud members of Dr. Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots Tampa Bay Alliance group. See the link below for more information about the Youth Environment Summit and a special Evening with Dr. Jane Goodall on September 14th. Tickets on sale now! We will also be participating in a Day of Action with maintenance of our Butterfly Garden and Butterfly Alley. **Sign up to volunteer!** All of the information can be found in this link as well as the link to purchase tickets: **Tampa Bay Hope in Action - Roots & Shoots**

Butterfly of the Month



©Ron Smith

Silver Spotted Skipper

Silver-spotted Skippers are one of the easiest skippers to identify in our area: its closed brown wings have broad, painterly-liked splashes of golden-orange and silvery-white with a frosty lavender color along the outside edges of its wings. (See Photo #1.) And, with a wingspan $1 \frac{3}{4}$ to $2 \frac{5}{8}$ inches, this is also among the largest skippers in our area, which makes it extra easy to spot and identify.

Silver-spotted Skippers favor open, sunny habitats with access to abundant nectar sources and caterpillar host plants; in our area caterpillar host plants include False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) and American Wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*). Females lay single, green eggs on or near the host plant. Very young caterpillars cut and fold leaves of the host plant to form a protective hiding spot. Older caterpillars weave several leaves together for shelter. They also develop large orange eyespots as a further defensive mechanism and spit a bitter-tasting greenish fluid if provoked.

Adults typically nectar on Blazing Stars (*Liatris spp.*), Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), and Thistles (*Cirsium horridulum*). We're at the southern edge of the normal range for Silver-spotted Skippers. According to iNaturalist, they were most recently seen in our area at Sawgrass Lake Park in July and Alafia State Park in June. Let us know if you happen upon any nearby--- please take a photo and email it to info@ButterflyTampa.com.

Host Plant Of The Month



False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*)

False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) is a thicket-forming, woody, long-lived sparsely branched deciduous shrub that can easily grow to 12 feet tall and 10 feet wide. With showy, purple spikes that bloom in late spring and early summer, this plant's native habitat includes moist hammocks and wetlands, floodplains, along streams, and at the edges of marshes. The plant is native to all of Florida except Monroe County. False Indigo is the host plant for Silver-spotted Skipper, Southern Dogface, and Gray Hairstreak caterpillars. It is also a wonderful nectar source for many of our native bees and other pollinators.

False Indigo prefers full sun or light shade and usually moist soils. Although it is not drought tolerant, [Grant Thompson](#) from the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State calls this a “tough plant for tough conditions.” It can be effectively used in rain gardens, bioswales, and to help stabilize stream banks. Plant it en masse as a privacy screen or along with Buttonbush and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) as part of a wonderful native butterfly garden.

According to the [Native American Ethnobotany Database](#), Kiowa used False Indigo as a foundation for bedding material and Lakota made arrows from the shrub's stems. Today, some [basket weavers](#) use strips of False Indigo as materials for their craft.

Note: False Indigo can become a bit leggy if left to its own devices. Pruning in winter will help maintain the plant's shape and improve flowering.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag



Get Your SwagON!

Decorating your home for fall can be a delightful way to embrace the season's cozy and vibrant atmosphere. Inside, consider adding warm-toned decor in shades of orange, red, and brown to your living spaces like this inset box sign featuring a "Home Sweet Home" sentiment with a black background, natural wood exterior, and colorful dimensional paper flower accents to create interest. It's easy to hang or can stand alone. Outside, add a welcoming touch to your front porch or garden by choosing from a variety of our beautiful fall garden signs (sign holder sold separately).

Visit our Gift Shop to select from our fall seasonal merchandise to adorn your home inside and out!

[SHOP FALL COLLECTION](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Teabush (*Melochia tomentosa*)

Teabush (*Melochia tomentosa*) is a small woody, evergreen shrub that typically grows to three feet tall and wide, but will sometimes grow to the size of a small tree. Native to the pine rocklands of Miami Dade County (as well as Hidalgo County, Texas and much of the Caribbean, the Lucayan Archipelago, and Central and South America), this plant is a pollinator's delight: bees, small butterflies and other beneficial insects swarm Teabush's delicate, tiny pink flowers. The plant is also frequented by hummingbirds.

Teabush performs best in full sun and, once established, is drought tolerant. A beautiful cultivated specimen is thriving in the native gardens behind Little Red Wagon Native Nursery in our Butterfly Alley. There are also some that can be seen at Technology Park in the Encore community in downtown Tampa. Over the past couple of years at the nursery we have seen an uptick in the plant's use in general landscaping because of its hardiness, beauty and functionality as a pollinator magnet! There is also one we have had growing in a whisky barrel container in front of the restaurant Whiskey Cake at International Plaza and it is doing quite well there. As always, please share your own experiences with us – email the information to us at info@ButterflyTampa.com along with a photo or two. Or, even better, stop by the nursery and show us your photos in person!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Vine of the Month



Spurred Butterfly Pea - (*Centrosema virginianum*)

Spurred Butterfly Pea (*Centrosema virginianum*) is a trailing and twining perennial vine with showy, purple flowers and nitrogen-fixing roots. Easily growing to six feet or more, this plant is an effective ground cover when not trained to grow upright. Notably, its extensive root system means this plant is especially useful in erosion control and soil stabilization projects.

Native to pine flatwoods, sandhills, interdunal swales and coastal strands, Spurred Butterfly Pea prefers full sun and well-drained dry or moist soil. Like so many of our native plants, it will grow in nutritionally poor and sandy soils without any fertilization.

Interestingly, the flowers of Spurred Butterfly Pea are shaped like butterflies (“papilionaceous”) and as such, are especially well-suited to bee pollination. The plant is also the caterpillar host for the Long-tailed Skipper and Northern Cloudywing.

The plant typically blooms from summer to fall in northern Florida and year-round in southern Florida, although its individual flowers will bloom for less than a day. You might be lucky enough to catch it in bloom at Lettuce Lake Conservation Park in Tampa or Fort De Soto Park in Tierra Verde. Interestingly, [University of North Florida](https://www.universityofnorthflorida.edu/extension/extension-publications/centrosema-virginianum/) notes that this attractive plant is rare in the nursery trade, but we happen to have some in stock. Why not stop by and take one home?

SHOP NOW

KIDS' CORNER



FALL NATURE CAMP FUN!

Fall is almost here and the first non-student day for Hillsborough County Public Schools is right around the corner, too! Our Fall Nature Camps are a great way for Kindergarten to Grade 5 students to explore and discover nature in a fun, safe environment on non-student days this season. Each camp will have a different theme and participants will have the opportunity to release a butterfly by the end of each camp. Click below for more details about each camp and to register.



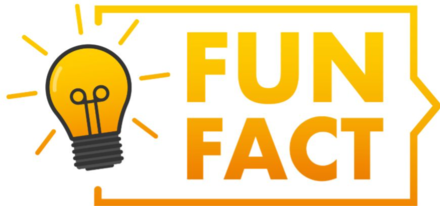
Camps will be held from 8:00 am to 3:00 p.m. at the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation Gallery located at 4111-A Henderson Blvd. (beside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery). Camp drop off will be between 8:00-8:30 am and pickup between 2:30-3:00 pm.

REGISTER FOR FALL NATURE CAMPS

BUILD AN ISPOD

Use left over pieces of plastic, cardboard, paper and anything else you can find to create an isopod! With the help of an adult, use the internet to look up pictures. Try to make your isopod as close to the real thing as possible.

After you have made your isopod, we would love a picture! You can have an adult email us at info@butterflytampa.com or you can tag us in your picture on Facebook.



Did you know isopods are not insects?
They are land crustaceans!



MINI ROLY POLY 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.

[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: Sept. 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: September 19

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: TBD



"A Day of Action"

We're proud to partner with @rootsandshoots and the Tampa Bay Roots & Shoots Alliance. Please join us September 15 for butterfly garden maintenance at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery - Native Butterfly Botanical Garden and Butterfly Alley located at 4113 Henderson Blvd. Tampa, FL 33629. Come help improve the natural environment.

VOLUNTEER: Sept. 15



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring Kindergarten to Grade 5 children during our Nature Camps this fall. 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: Nature 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



The metamorphosis of Butterfly Tampa is complete! The grand opening of our new Botanical Native Butterfly Gardens and living exhibits was held on August 2. Butterfly Tampa emerged as a unique, memorable, and educational attraction for all ages attached to the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery. Attendees can view our living exhibits that include many native and some exotic reptiles, amphibians, and arachnids. We also unveiled our new “bug bungalow” featuring many of our vital native insects. You can view caterpillars eating their host plants and look at our fantastic butterfly collection in the educational facility. On your way to our demonstration botanical garden, showcasing our native Florida flora, you will see our new butterfly emergence lab and may have the chance to see a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis or a moth emerge from its cocoon. As you stroll through a tranquil oasis tucked behind our South Tampa native nursery, you can enjoy our new native butterfly botanical garden with butterflies in their native habitat free flying around you. We have had over 30 different species of butterflies regularly visiting our gardens and you never know which will visit on any given day.

Get inspired and join us on the quest to re-wild Tampa Bay and beyond! Learn how to do your part to support the conservation of wild butterfly populations and their natural habitats together through chemical-free native plant landscaping. Our new attraction will give you the chance to explore our exhibits, read the educational signage, learn from our knowledgeable nature interpreters, and connect with other amazing folks just like yourself.

NEW HOURS:

Monday through Saturday Plant and Gift shop open 9am – 5:30pm

(Living exhibits and butterfly garden open 9:30am – 5:00pm and last admission at 4:30pm)

Sunday Plant and Gift shop open 10:00am - 5:30pm

(Living exhibits and butterfly garden open 10:30am – 5:00pm and last admission at 4:00pm)

Annual memberships are now available for purchase. Membership opens the door to numerous perks, including discounts to the gift shop and plant shop, exclusive early access to sign up for presentations, events, camps, and more. By subscribing now, you'll stay informed and be ready to explore all the exclusive content and features we have in store for you.

PURCHASE MEMBERSHIP



BUTTERFLY RELEASES

Butterfly releases will be held Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm (weather permitting) included in paid single day ticket purchases and memberships.

Skilled nature interpreters and horticulture specialists will be available to answer questions and provide visitors with a personal and highly engaging experience.



Reptile of the Month: Corn Snake



Meet Eddie, our charismatic corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*)! Also known as a red rat snake, Eddie is native to Florida and the southeastern United States. Corn snakes are known for their stunning coloration and docile temperament. Adult corn snakes typically measure between 3 to 5 feet in length, and Eddie is about 2-3 feet. Corn snakes are non-venomous constrictors, using their strength to subdue prey rather than venom.

As a species native to Florida, corn snakes like Eddie play a crucial role in our local ecosystem. They thrive in a variety of habitats, including pine flatwoods, hardwood hammocks, and agricultural areas.

Corn snakes are excellent climbers and can often be found in trees or hiding under bark. Their diet primarily consists of small mammals, particularly rodents, making them nature's perfect pest control agents. By keeping rodent populations in check, Eddie and his wild counterparts help maintain the balance of our ecosystems and provide free, natural pest management. Despite their importance, corn snakes face challenges from habitat loss, road mortality, and misunderstanding from the public.

Conservation efforts, including education programs like ours, aim to highlight the importance of preserving natural habitats and fostering appreciation for these beautiful and beneficial reptiles. By learning about Eddie and his species, we can gain a better understanding of the vital role snakes play in Florida's diverse ecosystems.

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

Bug of the Month: Hentz Striped Scorpion



Meet our Hentz Striped Scorpion (*Centruroides hentzi*) Amber! Native to Florida and the southeastern United States, this scorpion species plays an intriguing role in our local ecosystems. As nocturnal predators, Hentz Striped Scorpions are most active after dark. During the day, they seek shelter in leaf litter, under logs, or in the bark of trees in wooded areas. Their diet consists primarily of small insects and spiders, making them beneficial in controlling pest populations. While they do possess venom in their stinger, it is relatively mild, comparable to a bee sting in terms of pain and toxicity and poses little threat to humans.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Hentz Striped Scorpion is its ability to fluoresce under ultraviolet (UV) light (see photo 1). Like many scorpion species, their exoskeletons contain a substance that glows a vibrant green when exposed to UV rays. Scientists believe this unique feature may help scorpions navigate at night, find mates, and potentially protect them from harmful UV radiation.

While not currently listed as an imperiled species, Hentz Striped Scorpions still face challenges from habitat loss and pesticide use. Conservation efforts focused on preserving natural habitats and promoting environmentally friendly pest control methods are crucial for ensuring the continued presence of these fascinating arachnids in our ecosystems.

Hentz Striped Scorpions exhibit remarkable parental care, which is unusual among arthropods. After a gestation period that can last from 1 to 18 months, depending on environmental conditions, females give birth to live young called scorplings. These babies cling to their mother's back for protection during the

early stages of their lives. At the Bug Zoo, Amber currently has multiple babies on her back, so stop by to visit Amber and our other arthropod ambassadors! (See photo 2.)

Monthly Calendar of Events

- SEPTEMBER 2** Happy Labor Day! LRWNN will be open!
- SEPTEMBER 4** National Wildlife Day--Visit our Bug Zoo & Living Exhibits
- SEPTEMBER 4** International Day of Charity, Amazon Rainforest Day
- SEPTEMBER 6** National Read a Book Day
- SEPTEMBER 7** International Day of Clean Air, National Hummingbird Day

Join us for a weekend of Hope in Action!



SEPTEMBER 14 & 15, 2024
Tropicana Field, 1 Tropicana Dr, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Join Dr. Jane Goodall and the Roots & Shoots Alliance of Tampa Bay for Hope in Action, a weekend for people of all ages to join forces for Tampa Bay's environment.

 SATURDAY 10 AM - 4:30 PM Youth Environment Summit	 SATURDAY 7:00 PM An Evening with Dr. Jane Goodall	 SUNDAY Schedule online A Day of Action
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Contact Roots & Shoots
For more information on student registration
rootsandshoots.org/TampaBayHopeinAction

REGISTER TODAY!



We're proud to partner with @rootsandshoots and the Tampa Bay Roots & Shoots Alliance for a series of events that is sure to energize and inspire you.

It starts with the Youth Environment Summit, September 14 at @Tropicana Field, followed by an evening with Jane Goodall, a true hero for the environment. Tickets on sale now!

Then, join us September 15 for butterfly garden maintenance at Little Red Wagon Native Nursery - Native Butterfly Botanical Garden and Butterfly Alley located at 4113 Henderson Blvd. Tampa, FL 33629. Come help improve the natural environment.

Learn more at rootsandshoots.org/TampaBayHopeinAction.

- SEPTEMBER 16** International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- SEPTEMBER 19** National Paw Paw Day--We sell native Paw Paw plants!
- SEPTEMBER 20** World Cleanup Day: Make Room For Life
- SEPTEMBER 21** International Day of Peace, Zero Emissions Day
- SEPTEMBER 22** Fall Equinox
- SEPTEMBER 26** World Environmental Health Day
- SEPTEMBER 29** National Coffee Day--Celebrate by picking up a native coffee plant at LRW!

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: Monday - Friday: 9:00 am - 5:30 pm | Sunday: 10:00 am - 5:30 pm

Visit Little Red Wagon Native Nursery

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