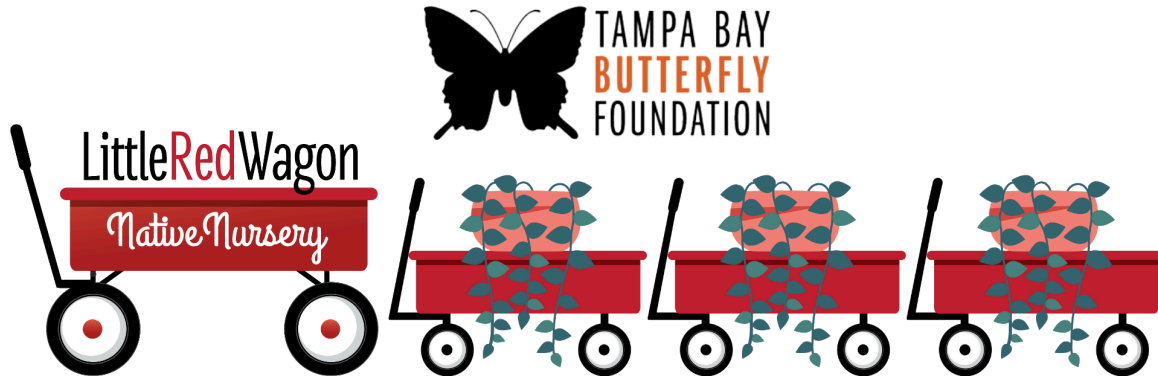


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



November 2024

“And still, after all this time,
The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe Me.”

Look what happens with
A love like that,
It lights the Whole Sky.”
~ Hafiz

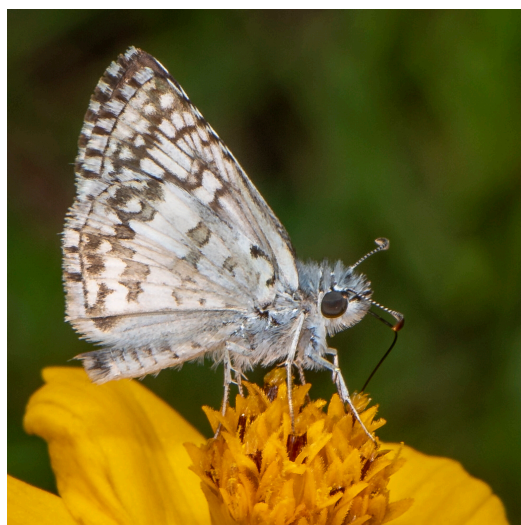
November marks the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and for us Floridians, the 30th will mark the end of hurricane season. We hope everyone is safe after the storms. This month, we can reflect on what we have and appreciate the good in our lives. Whether it's friends, family, or even just the small joys in daily life, there's always something to be thankful for. As we begin the holiday season, bring your friends and family to visit our Nature Center, Bug Zoo and Native Butterfly Botanical Garden. We will be closed for Thanksgiving but open Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, so come enjoy a peaceful oasis away from the hectic crowds!

Butterfly of the Month



Tropical Checkered-Skippers and White Checkered-Skipper

Tropical Checkered-Skippers and White Checkered-Skippers are small (wingspan of 1-to-1.5 inches) brown and white butterflies with checkered patterns. However, there are two key differences to help with identification: Tropical Checkered-Skippers have a strong white spot next to the rectangular spot on the dorsal forewing that White Checkered-Skippers lack. Additionally, Tropical Checkered-Skippers have a “smudged” pattern on their closed wings with a brown spot on the leading edge of the hindwing.



Females of both species lay pale green eggs on herbs in the Mallow family including Common Fanpetals (*Sida ulmifolia*). Caterpillars that emerge live in shelters they by tying host plant's leaves together with silk. Tropical Checkered-Skipper caterpillars tend to be a darker green than White Checkered-Skippers.

Both Checkered-Skippers are fairly common throughout Florida and are frequently found in open, sunny places with low vegetation. They nectar from small flowers and fly very quickly and low to the ground. Interestingly, areas to our north also have Common Checkered-Skippers; these cannot be distinguished from White Checkered-Skippers in the field. For more information about this, please see this [resource](#).

According to iNaturalist, they were recently seen in our area at Sawgrass Lake Park and Fort De Soto Park. 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



Common Fanpetals (*Sida ulmifolia*)

Common Fanpetals (*Sida ulmifolia*) are a perennial herb or woody subshrub that occur throughout Peninsular Florida. Growing to heights of 3 feet or more if not maintained, Common Fanpetals have five-petaled butter-yellow or yellow-orange flowers that can bloom year-round. Most often found in dry uplands or disturbed sites, Common Fanpetals grow best in full sun and dry, well-drained soils. They are drought tolerant once fully established.

While many consider Common Fanpetals a weed, it's a native host plant for multiple species of butterflies including Mallow Scrub-hairstreaks, Gray Hairstreaks, and Tropical, Common, and White Checkered-Skippers. (For a very interesting article on this and other "weedy" native host plants for Florida butterflies, see this great [article](#) from the Florida Native Plant Society.)

Common Fanpetals are commonly seen throughout the Tampa area and are especially well suited for inclusion naturalistic landscapes. Why not try planting some to #NurtureNative?

Garden Swag

Get Your SwagON!



Giving a gift to your Thanksgiving host/hostess is a lovely gesture to show your gratitude. Here are some thoughtful and practical suggestions from our gift shop. When in doubt, Little Red Wagon Native Nursery gift cards are a great choice, always in stock and can be purchased and emailed online. Remember, it's the thought that counts—just something to say "Thank you for hosting and making this day special." And, if you're hosting Thanksgiving, roll on by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's Gift Shop to select from a wide variety of merchandise to treat yourself!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Blue Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)

Blue Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*) is a short-lived trailing perennial that makes a great groundcover or container plant. Growing to less than 1 foot tall and 3 to 4 feet wide, this evergreen produces flowers throughout the summer months. Although each charming blue or purple flower lasts a single day, Blue Porterweed is a magnet for butterflies, moths, bees, and hummingbirds. It is also the caterpillar host plant for Tropical Buckeyes.

Native to coastal strands and open areas in dry mesic hardwood forests in south Florida (USDA Zones 9b to 11), Blue Porterweed can tolerate occasional salt water inundation. It performs best in full sun and can tolerate dry periods once established. It does not tolerate freezing temperatures.

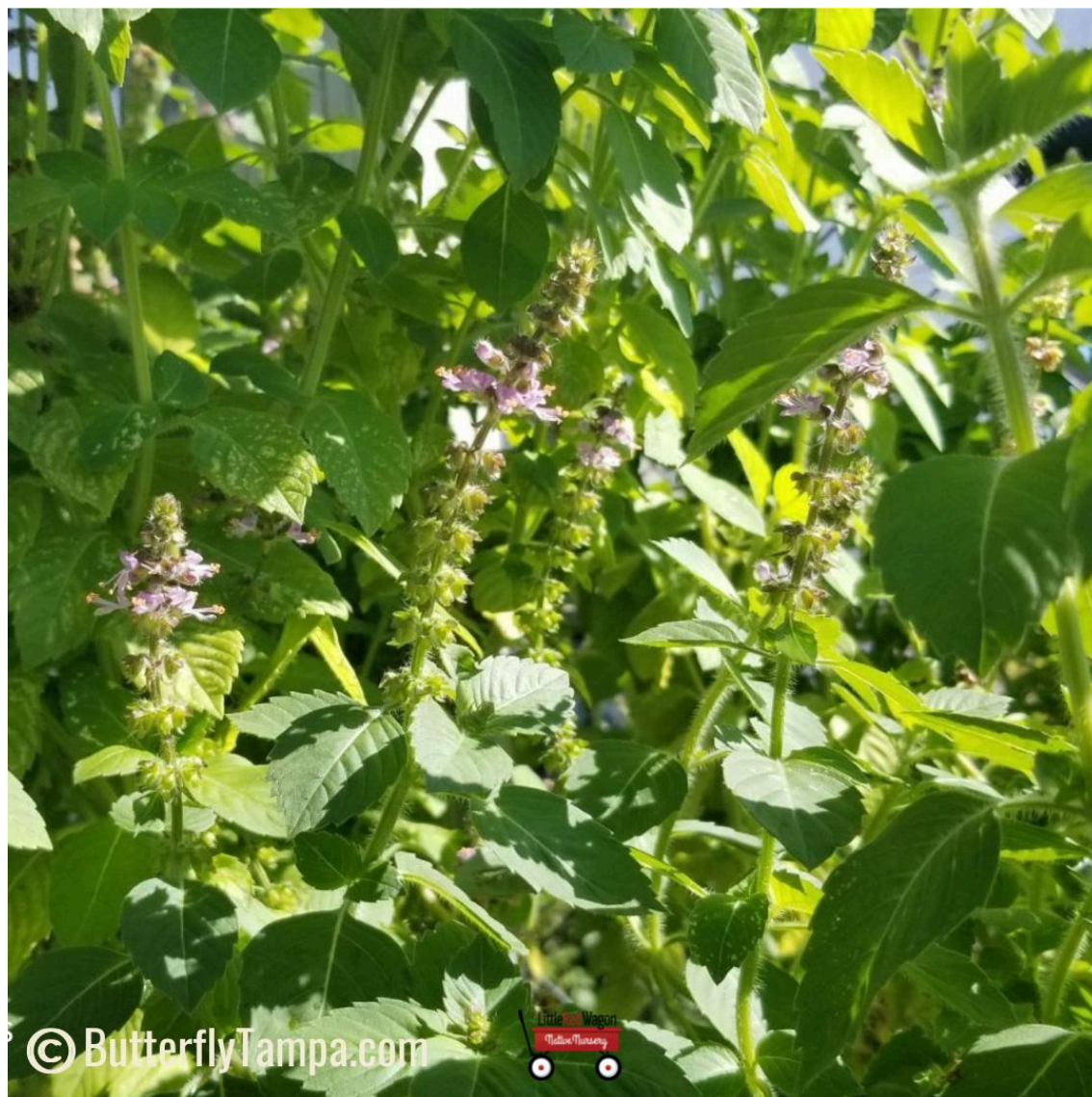
The Florida Wildflower Foundation [reports](#) that Blue Porterweed's flowers can be eaten raw and that flower spikes can be used to season soups or stews. The flowers have a mushroom-like flavor. Additionally, dried, steeped leaves form a foamy tea or brewed into beer, which "is likely the origin of the common name, porterweed, referring to the porter style of beer the tea resembles."

Pair Blue Porterweed with Beach Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*) or Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) for a casual look that pollinators will love.

Please Note: The University of Florida [notes](#) that the non-native, Nettleleaf Vervain (*Stachytarpheta cayennensis* (syn. *S. urticifolia*)), a Category II invasive plant, is often sold as the native Blue Porterweed. Given this, please always procure your Blue Porterweed from a reputable native nursery like Little Red Wagon Native Nursery.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design with Vines/Edimentals



Wild Sweet Basil (*Ocimum campechianum*)

Wild Sweet Basil (*Ocimum campechianum*) is an herbaceous annual that grows to about 18 inches tall and 2-to-3 feet wide. With whorls of charming bell-shaped pink flowers that top the square stem, this highly aromatic plant is a great nectar source and a favorite of small, native bees.

Wild Sweet Basil is native to the lowlands of extreme South Florida (Collier, Dade and Monroe counties), Central and South America, and the West Indies. It grows best in full sun and tolerates moist to dry soil conditions. The plant does not tolerate frost but does grow well in containers. (I have it paired with Scarlet Sage (*Salvia coccinea*) in a container by my front door where the combination of red and deep pink flowers brightens my day when I walk past it!)

People of Latin America have traditionally used the plant medicinally as well as to repel mosquito and horsefly bites. For those of you able to read Spanish, here's a great [report](#) to digest about its use in Mexico.

Please note: Wild Sweet Basil is listed as endangered on Florida's Regulated Plant Index. Please be sure to only purchase this plant from reputable nurseries like Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and do not forage for it. (Please see this [source](#) for a list of information about the endangered, threatened and commercially exploited plant species in Florida.)

SHOP NOW

KIDS' CORNER



FALL NATURE CAMP FUN!

During October, while schools were waiting to resume, we added impromptu camps which were completely sold out! Kindergarten to Grade 5 children can continue to enjoy awesome activities while discovering nature in November. Our fall camps will have a different theme and participants will have the opportunity to release a butterfly by the end of each camp. Click below to obtain more details about each camp and to register.



REGISTER: NOV. 11

REGISTER: NOV. 25-27

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.



NATURE WONDERLAND CAMP

Take advantage of the early bird special: Register by December 1 and save \$25 off the camp registration fee!

Nature doesn't take a break and neither do we! Kindergarten - Grade 5 kids can explore and discover nature during school break over the holidays. This 4-day camp will be held December 30-31 and January 2-3.

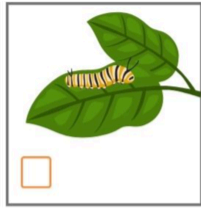
REGISTER: Winter Camp



SCAVENGER HUNT



Red Wagon



Caterpillar



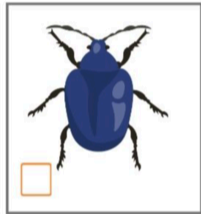
A Yellow Flower



A Butterfly



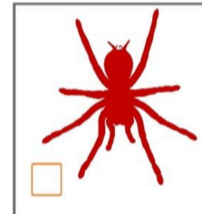
Red-eyed Tree Frog



Blue Beetle



Oreo



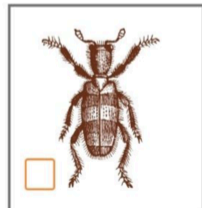
Red-legged Tarantula



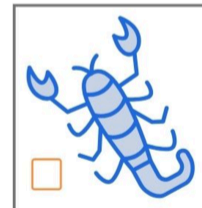
Roly Poly



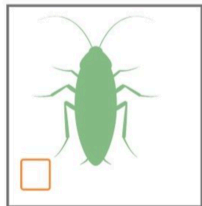
Curly-tailed Lizard



A Hairy Robot



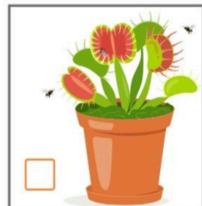
A Blue Scorpion



Green Cockroach



Tree



Venus Fly Trap

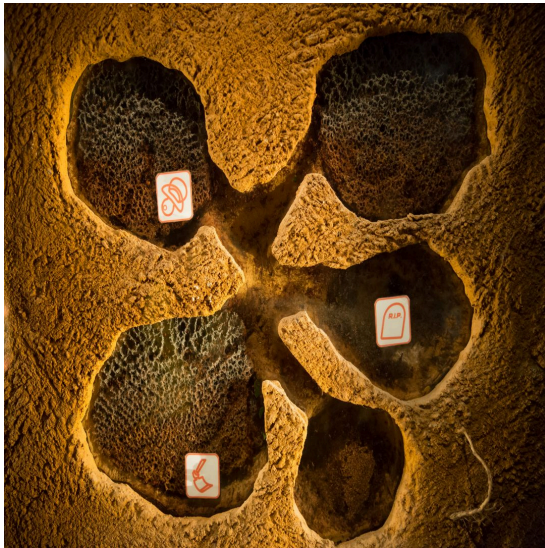
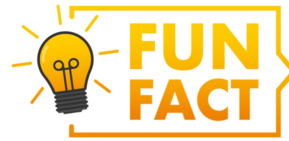


Honey

SCAVENGER HUNT

This month's activity is a scavenger hunt kids can perform at Butterfly Tampa's new Bug Zoo, Nature Center and Native Butterfly Botanical Garden. Some items may even be found in Little Red Wagon's Native Nursery and Gift Shop. Bring some friends and see how many interesting wildlife and other items you can find and learn about!

[DOWNLOAD Scavenger Hunt](#)



Some ant colonies are so huge they're like cities reaching as far as 25 feet underground complete with tunnels, nurseries, and even dumps for trash.

Come visit Butterfly Tampa's new Nature Center, Native Butterfly Botanical Garden and Bug Zoo to see a variety of insects and to learn more interesting facts!

FELT INSECT ORNAMENTS

Select from an assortment of cute felt insect ornaments: butterflies, dragonflies, and beetles available in our Gift Shop.

Makes a great memento to remember the awesome time you had visiting Butterfly Tampa's Bug Zoo, Nature Center and Native Butterfly Botanical Garden.

[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).

VOLUNTEER: NOVEMBER 23



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: NOVEMBER 21



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.).

VOLUNTEER: NOVEMBER 16



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring K to Grade 5 children during our Fall Nature Camps: Veterans Day Nature Camp: November 11 and Thankful for Nature Camp: November 25-27. These are great opportunities for college environmental science students or High School students to earn hours for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program. Assistants must be available 7:45 am - 3:30 pm. for entire camp session. Click date(s) below to volunteer!

VOLUNTEER: NOV. 11

VOLUNTEER: NOV. 25-27

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.

As the days are shorter, so are the hours the butterflies are flying. Below are the new business hours that will be **effective November 3**:

NEW BUSINESS HOURS:

Monday through Saturday Plant and Gift shop open 9am – 5:00pm

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

Sunday Plant and Gift shop open 11:00am – 5:00pm

(Living exhibits and butterfly garden open 11:00am – 4:30pm 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: Yellow Rat Snake



Meet Banana, our Yellow Rat Snake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*)! She is this month's featured reptile at the Butterfly Tampa! Native to Florida, these fascinating snakes are found throughout the peninsula and east of the Apalachicola River in the Panhandle.

These remarkable reptiles are both terrestrial and excellent climbers, equally at home on the ground or in trees. In the wild, they can be found in a variety of habitats including pinelands, hardwood hammocks, cypress strands, and even suburban areas. They're primarily nocturnal, spending their days resting in safe spots like tree hollows, under bark, or within palm fronds.

Banana serves as an ambassador for her species, helping us educate the public about these beneficial predators. Eastern Rat Snakes are natural pest control experts, feeding primarily on mice and rats, as well as lizards, frogs, and birds and their eggs. Conservation of Yellow Rat Snakes and their habitats is crucial as they play a vital role in controlling pest populations. They use constriction to subdue larger prey, though smaller prey may be swallowed alive. While they may bite if threatened, these non-venomous snakes are not aggressive and prefer to avoid confrontation with humans.

Visit us at Butterfly Tampa to meet Banana and learn about our other reptilian residents!

Invertebrate of the Month: Orchard Orbweaver



Come visit Melon, she is the new spider in our Bug Zoo family.

Orchard orbweavers, *Leucauge argyrobapta*, are attractive small spiders and are some of the most common spiders. Females are usually larger than males. They are commonly found in Florida citrus groves, shrubby meadows, woodland edges, wooded suburban areas, and between hedges and houses. They prefer shaded areas within a few feet of the ground, and often in seasonally wet areas. They build horizontal webs with numerous sticky spirals surrounding an open central area. They often attach their webs together when prey is plentiful. They eat mosquitos, small flies, and other insect pests.

Did you know???... Orchard orbweavers rarely bite, and their venom is comparable to that of a bee sting. The bite is not usually harmful to humans, unless the victim is hyper-allergic to the venom.

Monthly Calendar of Events

- NOVEMBER 1-2** Day of the Dead
- NOVEMBER 3** Daylight Savings Ends, NEW BUSINESS HOURS begin
- NOVEMBER 6** National Stress Awareness Day
- NOVEMBER 8** STEM/STEAM Day
- NOVEMBER 9** Wonders of Wildlife Festival - Little Red Wagon will be a vendor near the entrance



The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay's 6th annual Wonders of Wildlife
NOVEMBER 9, 2024
10:30 AM to 4:30 PM
 Turkey Creek Stables
 5534 Turkey Creek Rd,
 Plant City, FL 33567



**VISIT OUR
 Native Plant table**

The Wonders of Wildlife Festival will provide guests with the unique opportunity to see some of Florida's native species up close: birds of prey, skunks, snakes, tortoises and more. This year's festival's theme is "I Can Save the Planet" and will unite over 65 organizations from the arts, nature, science, and community sectors across the Tampa Bay area, creating a truly unique experience. Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be selling native plants to support wildlife.

Visitors of all ages are invited to enjoy a day filled with wildlife encounters, artistic expression, and interactive activities focused on conservation. Guests can also explore the Magical Bird Bus, other attractions include face painting, live mermaids, selfie stations, and more. Throughout the day, attendees can enjoy presentations, shop for arts and crafts, native plants, and savor food from three trucks offering diverse culinary delights.

For more information on this event and to purchase tickets, click [HERE](#).

- NOVEMBER 10** World Science Day for Peace and Development
- NOVEMBER 11** Honoring our Veterans
- NOVEMBER 15** National Recycling Day
- NOVEMBER 19** National Camp Day
- NOVEMBER 20** Universal Children's Day
- NOVEMBER 28** Happy Thanksgiving - LRW will be closed



NOVEMBER 29 Butterfly Tampa & LRW will be open "Green Friday"

NOVEMBER 30 Small Business Saturday

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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