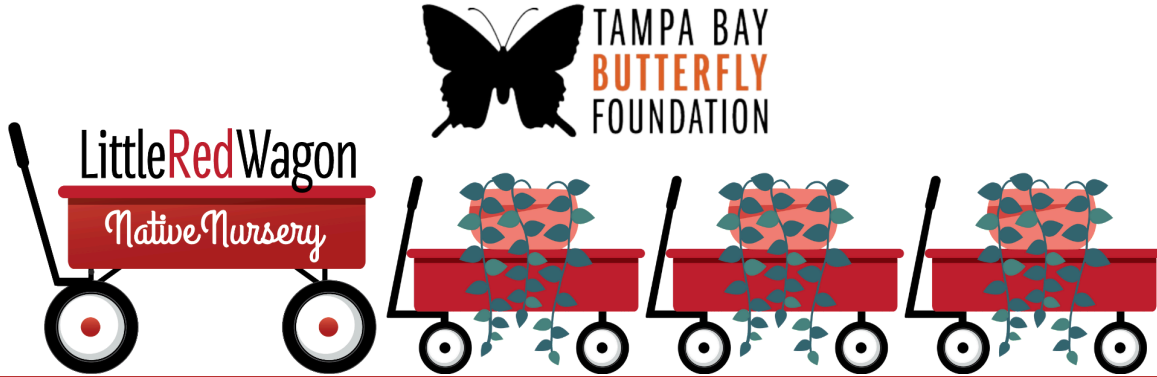


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



December 2024

"Life is a garden, and every choice we make is a seed;
what we harvest tomorrow is shaped by what we plant today." ~ Unknown

December is here and with it comes a mix of emotions and opportunities. You may be getting ready to dive into holiday festivities, or perhaps you're taking a quiet moment to reflect on the year behind you. While many parts of the country are blanketed in snow, December in Tampa is a delightful blend of mild weather and festive cheer. We can enjoy comfortable temperatures which make it an ideal time for outdoor activities. We can enjoy the fresh air while preparing our gardens for the coming spring. Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery to select native plants for your butterfly garden so they can get established now and provide support for wildlife in the spring. Looking for something fun to entertain your family this season? Bring the entire family to visit Butterfly Tampa's new Bug Zoo, Living Exhibits and Native Butterfly Botanical Garden during the holidays. Consider purchasing or gifting an annual membership! Annual Memberships fees are currently 20% off the regular price until December 31, 2024.

Holiday Hours



LittleRedWagon
NativeNursery

MONDAY - SATURDAY:
PLANT AND GIFT SHOP OPEN 9:00AM – 5:00PM

SUNDAY:
PLANT AND GIFT SHOP OPEN 11:00AM – 5:00PM

CLOSED: CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S



Butterfly
TAMPA

LIVING EXHIBITS AND BUTTERFLY GARDEN OPEN

MONDAY - SATURDAY:
9:30am – 5:00pm
(LAST ADMISSION AT 4:00PM)

SUNDAY:
11:30am – 5:00pm
(LAST ADMISSION AT 4:00PM)

CLOSED: CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S

Butterfly of the Month



Variegated Fritillary

Variegated Fritillaries are medium-sized (wingspan 1 3/4 - 3 1/8 inches) with a beautiful pattern of various shades of toffee on its upper wings. The underside of its wings is more muted in color and resembles a dry leaf. This helps camouflage the butterfly when it's sitting with closed wings. (See Photos #1 and #2.)

Females lay pale green or creamy white eggs on new growth of its host plants. In our area, host plants include Passionflowers (*Passiflora spp.*), Violets (*Viola spp.*), and Florida Yellow Flax (*Linum floridanum*). There are typically three generations each year.

Variegated Fritillaries tend to be found in open, sunny areas flying low to the ground or nectaring on Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*), Bidens (*Bidens spp.*) or other low-growing flowers. More shy and less abundant than its cousin, the Gulf Fritillary, the closest place we reliably see this beauty is Brooker Creek Preserve. 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 Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*)

Found throughout much of Florida, Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*) is our state's most common violet. Tiny (about 6- to 10-inches tall and wide), but mighty, this long-lived perennial is an important part of our natural food chain: a number of fritillary butterflies use it as a host plant for their caterpillars. Its leaves are eaten by rabbits and deer, and small mammals and birds eat its seeds. In moderation, humans can also eat violet leaves and flowers --- here's [recipe](#) for a violet glaze and here's a [recipe](#) for a blackberry and violet scone.

Common Blue Violet occurs naturally in semi-shady woodlands and hammocks. It prefers dappled sun or shade although it can adapt to sunnier (but not full sun in our area) locations if kept moist. The plant is one that is dormant in winter ---- its emergence from the ground is a true indication that spring has arrived.

Violets self-seed readily and will spread. Consider planting it as an understory plant in your wildflower garden and let us know how it goes. Email your photos to info@ButterflyTampa.com. We'd love to hear from you!

(Fun fact: Violets are one of the two flowers traditionally included in a bouquet for a 50th wedding anniversary because they symbolize affection and loyalty. The other flower is a yellow rose, which symbolizes friendship and joy.)

Garden Swag

Get Your SwagON!



This eco-friendly watering spout makes a fantastic stocking stuffer for any gardener or nature lover. It's practical, sustainable, and shows that you care about the environment. Plus, it's a thoughtful gift that helps reduce water waste while keeping plants hydrated. Perfect for those who cherish their green spaces and want to contribute to a healthier planet!

[SHOP NOW](#)



A gift card is a perfect choice for anyone who loves gardening and appreciates the beauty of native plants. It gives the recipient the freedom to choose the plants or supplies they need to enhance their garden, supports our small business, and promotes the cultivation of plants that are well-suited to our local environment.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Nectar Plant of the Month



Christmasberry (*Lycium carolinianum*)

Christmasberry is a woody, evergreen shrub that natively occurs along Florida's coastal counties from Bay and Duval Counties south to the Keys. Highly salt tolerant and resistant to hurricane winds, this plant typically grows 6- to 8-feet tall and 3- to 5-feet wide. Most often found at the edge of salt marshes and mangroves, on sandy shell mounds, or dunes, Christmasberry produces delicate flowers that vary in color from bluish-white to deep lavender. These flowers typically appear in the fall and winter, although in the Tampa Bay area the plant does flower intermittently throughout the year.

The plant does best in full sun and sandy soils with high pH. Christmasberry exhibits signs of stress when it faces drought conditions.

Christmasberry gets its common name from the large, brilliant red, egg-shaped berries it produces in abundance in December. A favorite food source for many birds, this plant is an especially important source of nourishment for our overwintering bird populations when little else is available. It is also a great nectar source for hummingbirds, Great Southern Whites, Gulf Fritillaries, and sphinx moths.

Christmasberry makes a great addition to gardens where it can be used as a specimen plant or grouped to form a hedge. Please note, however, that the plant is somewhat thorny and unripe fruits are poisonous to human and ripe and unripe fruits are poisonous to some animals. Plant in areas your pets and children can't reach to minimize poison risks.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design with Vines/Edimentals



Maypop Passionvine (*Passiflora incarnata*)

Maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*) is a rapidly growing, short-lived woody vine that can grow up to 25' long and about 5' wide. Equally happy in a pot or planted in the ground, this vine will climb anything it can grasp, from trellis to tomato cage to other plants. The showy purple flower gives way to a fruit that matures to a yellowish color. If you can grab some of the fruit before the birds do, you can make some wonderful jellies and drinks. The leaves can be used for teas. Indigenous peoples poultice Maypop roots to treat inflammation and cuts.

Maypop does well in full sun and can tolerate partial shade. It's a host plant for Gulf Fritillary, Julia Heliconian, Zebra Heliconian, and Variegated Fritillary caterpillars. It's a nectar source for pollinators and birds and small mammals appreciate its fruit. Why not #NurtureNative and include it in your garden? Be careful, though. The plant has an extreme flammability rating so don't plant it within the defensible space of your home.

[SHOP NOW](#)

KIDS' CORNER

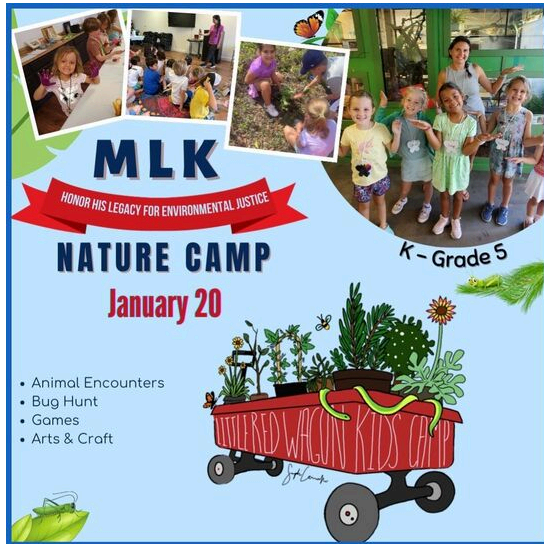


WINTER NATURE CAMP FUN!

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 with our 4-day camp: December 30-31 and January 2-3. Sign up by midnight December 3 and save \$25 off the registration fee!

Camp 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 NOW](#)



REGISTER: JAN. 20

Love Bugs this Valentine's Day!

What better way to show your love for the tiny creatures that make the world go round than by celebrating them on Valentine's Day?! This special day off from school is designed for children to learn about, appreciate, and even embrace insects. Through hands-on exploration and interactive activities, your child will discover how insects impact our world in ways we simply can't live without.

Your child will LOVE this unforgettable day filled with bug-themed fun, friends, and tons of learning. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot today!

MLK Nature Camp

Inspired by Dr. King's messages of unity, justice, and community, campers will spend the day learning and observing native wildlife, reading nature poems promoting harmony, and planting seeds while reflecting on their responsibility to care for the earth and one another. Dr. King emphasized harmony, unity, and equality--principles that will help kids to envision and plan a sustainable and healthy future for our environment. By the end of the day, campers will showcase their creative works celebrating both the wonder of nature and Dr. King's vision for people from diverse backgrounds uniting to make a better future.



REGISTER FEB. 14



Spring break is a great time to learn about Beach bugs! Where the sands are hot, harsh, and constantly on the move. Yet here, where the shifting sands meet the gulf or ocean coasts of Florida, there's an abundance of insects that make their homes there. These bugs have evolved to succeed in the sand. But survival in this merciless landscape is hard won! We will learn about bug adaptations to coastal sand environments, roles they play in these sandy environments, what they eat and so much more about their microworld! There will be theme related arts and crafts, guest appearances from our bug and animal ambassadors and each child will have the opportunity to release a butterfly into our garden. We will also visit our very own Bug bungalow, Nature Center and Butterfly garden where we have our very own sand dune to explore!

[REGISTER SPRING BREAK CAMP](#)

Wally Jolly MIX UP

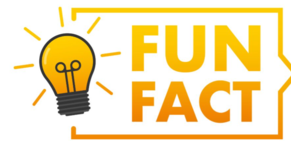
1. DETNAV	
2. TDOROCANSE	
3. CBERDEME	
4. BEANGRRIRDE	
5. EDRENERI	
6. VLEES	
7. MSTNAOENR	
8. EIMOELTST	
9. EPRTSNSE	
10. NPEATIHOTS	
11. RCMISSAHT VEE	
12. HDLUORP	
13. ASINT NIAHSLOC	
14. UHNAAHKK	
15. MLIAPY TIECLOENRABS	
16. TUAYNGH RO NIEC	
17. ANDCY CASNE	
18. EIGLIN BSELL	
19. HPIYPA YIDUHOAS	
20. RHAMTCSSI ERET	
21. ARCTURKEN	
22. CIEFERPA MCHENY	
23. HONRT LOEP	
24. CONKSGTIS	
25. CNHIGR	

WORD SCRAMBLE ACTIVITY

Have fun during the holidays with friends and family. Unscramble the holiday words...the one with the most right answers wins!

[DOWNLOAD Word Scramble](#)

[Download Answer Key](#)



Did you know that some reindeer really do have red noses, much like the fictional character, Rudolph? Their noses have a red hue because they are packed with tiny blood vessels. These blood vessels help reindeer regulate their body temperature in extreme weather conditions.

OUTDOOR BINGO

This Outdoor Bingo game for kids is a fun and engaging activity that combines the excitement of a traditional bingo game with the adventure of exploring nature. Instead of numbers, the bingo cards are filled with pictures or words representing various outdoor items and activities.

[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: DECEMBER 21

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: DECEMBER 11

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: DECEMBER 17



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring K to Grade 5 children during our 4-day Winter Nature Camp: December 30-31 & Jan. 2-3, MLK camp January 20 and February 14 Love Bugs camp. 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: WINTER BREAK

VOLUNTEER: JAN. or FEB.

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

VOLUNTEER 2025

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



Butterfly Tampa Memberships are 20% off through December 31, 2024!

Give the Gift of Membership at Butterfly Tampa this holiday season. Butterfly Tampa is conveniently located just 10 minutes from Tampa International Airport and less than 15 minutes from downtown Tampa. A great lunch time break from the daily grind to reconnect with nature. There is so much to discover and experience in our Bug Zoo, Nature Center and Native Botanical Butterfly Garden. Nature's Tiny Giants open the door to science learning, invertebrate exploration, and year-round fun to engage and inspire the whole family while supporting the conservation of these little unsung heroes. This is the perfect gift for those who want to protect our pollinators and support the mission of Butterfly Tampa and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation's pollinator conservation efforts. Annual Memberships are now 20% off through December 31st. Enter: **BugsZoo24** at checkout.

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.

[CLICK TO PURCHASE A MEMBERSHIP](#)

[CLICK BELOW TO GIFT A 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: Tbd



Meet the Southern Black Racer (*Coluber constrictor*), one of Florida's most commonly encountered snake species! These non-venomous snakes are frequent visitors to residential areas and play a crucial role in our local ecosystem.

Adult black racers are easily recognized by their sleek, black or bluish-black bodies and white chin. However, juvenile racers look dramatically different - they're gray with distinctive reddish-brown blotches, which unfortunately leads many people to mistakenly identify them as venomous species. These fast, agile snakes are diurnal predators that help control populations of frogs, lizards, small mammals, and insects. While they don't constrict their prey like some snake species, they use speed and quick jaw movements to catch and consume their food.

Although we don't have black racers in our living exhibit, keep an eye on our back garden - we've spotted a few local residents slithering through the native plants! These snakes are known for their distinctive behavior of moving with their head and neck raised above the ground, scanning their environment.

Black racers are found throughout Florida in diverse habitats from pine flatwoods to suburban neighborhoods. If cornered, they may strike defensively, but they're not aggressive and typically prefer to flee when approached.

Visit Butterfly Tampa and keep a lookout in our garden for a chance to spot these fascinating snakes!

Invertebrate of the Month: Regal Jumping Spider



Meet Celeste, our female regal jumping spider!

Regal jumping spiders (*Phidippus regius*) are known for their charismatic personalities, bright colors, and hunting capabilities. Regal jumping spiders are commonly found in the Southeastern portion of the United States and parts of the Caribbean.

Regal jumping spiders are sexually dimorphic, showing two distinct colors attributed to sex.

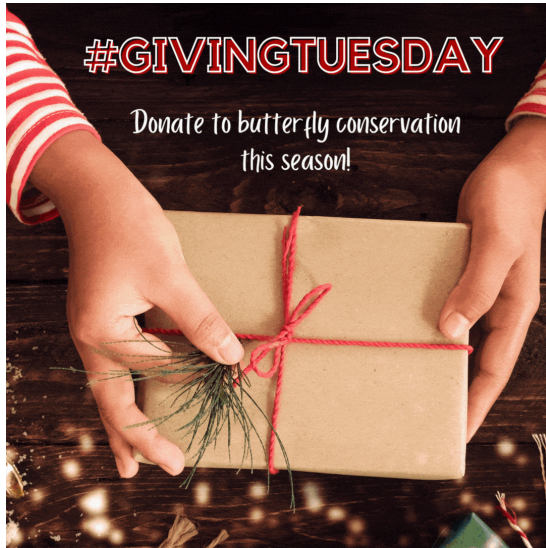
Females of this species have markings ranging in orange and white hues. Conversely, males are black and white, with a face-like marking on their abdomen. Both sexes of this species have iridescently colored fangs, which make them stand out from other species of spider.

Celeste is our December Bug of The Month as a representative of a Christmas tale about spiders called "The Christmas Spider". Though there are many variations of the story, one of them is as follows:

"A long time ago a mother was cleaning for Christmas. Spiders fled up to the attic to escape the broom. On quiet Christmas Eve, the spiders slowly came down for a peek. "Oh, what a beautiful tree!" In excitement, they scurried up and out along each branch. They were filled with happiness as they climbed amongst the glittering beauty. But alas! The tree was shrouded in their dusty, grey web by the time they were done. When Santa came with gifts for the children and saw the tree covered with spider webs, he smiled because he saw how happy the spiders were but knew how heartbroken the mother would be if she saw it covered in dusty webs. So, he turned the webs into strands of silver and the tree was even more beautiful than before. And so began why we put tinsel on our trees, and why you should add a Christmas spider to the branches of yours."

Monthly Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 3 Giving Tuesday -- Donate ANY time of the year!



Donating to the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation on GivingTuesday is a great way to support our conservation efforts. Your contribution will help protect butterflies, wildlife and restore their natural habitats in the Tampa Bay area. Supporting the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation doesn't have to wait for a special day. If you missed giving on Tuesday, there is still time to donate to our goal of raising \$2K. Your contribution will make a difference any time of the year. Early and ongoing donations help ensure we can maintain our conservation efforts, habitat restoration, and educational programs throughout Tampa Bay!

DONATE TO TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION

- DECEMBER 4** Wildlife Conservation Day
- DECEMBER 5** World Soil Day
- DECEMBER 10** International Animal Rights Day
- DECEMBER 12** National Poinsettia Day--pick up a native Poinsettia from LRW
- DECEMBER 14** Ozone Action Day
- DECEMBER 21** Winter Solstice
- DECEMBER 24** Christmas Eve - LRW will be open until 5:00 PM; gift cards may be purchased online
- DECEMBER 25** Merry Christmas! LRW & Butterfly Tampa will be closed



Season's Greetings!

As the festive season is upon us, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, our valued customer. Your trust and loyalty have been the cornerstone of our success, and we are incredibly grateful for your continued support. We wish you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season filled with laughter, love, and cherished moments.

May your New Year be bright and prosperous, bringing you closer to your goals and dreams. Thank you for being a part of our journey. We look forward to serving you in 2025 with the same dedication and excellence.

JANUARY 1 Happy New Year! LRW & Butterfly Tampa will be closed

JANUARY 11 - Join us at the Sunken Gardens in St. Pete for the third annual Plantapooza.

This year's theme is 'One Tiny Spark' which is building off of the energy from Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots and Great Explorations.



Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be selling native plants from 10 am to 2 pm to help support wildlife.

The Sunken Gardens are located at 1825 4th St N, Saint Petersburg, FL 33704. We hope to see you there!



We are thrilled to be selected to participate in the Centre Club's Helping Hands Happy Hour for 2025! This is an exciting opportunity for Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation to showcase our mission and connect with a wider audience who share our passion for butterfly conservation. Mark February 13 on your calendar and stay tuned for more details to sign up for this exciting event!

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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