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Little Red Wagonful

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



February 2022

"The February sunshine steeps your boughs and tints the buds and swells the leaves within."
~ William C. Bryant

Fluttering butterflies is often a description associated with being in love. As we celebrate Valentine's Day this month, pick up a LRW gift card or a native plant to show your favorite Valentine they can have butterflies fluttering throughout the year by planting a native pollinator garden!



Butterfly of the Month



Red Admiral

In recognition of Valentine's Day, it's fitting that our Butterfly of the Month is the Red Admiral. This striking butterfly has upper wings that are a deep chocolate brown (almost black). Thought to have obtained their common name for their resemblance to the uniforms worn by the British navy in the 18th century, these butterflies have an upper front wing with an orange stripe that runs diagonally across the middle with white dots towards the outer edge and back wings with an orange band that runs along the back edge. (See Photo #1.) The underside wings have a dark brown pattern that is marked by a red stripe, a small blue ellipse, and white spots. (See Photo #2.) When the butterfly perches with its wings shut tightly, the red and white markings are hidden; the remaining mottled brown pattern protects the butterfly from predators through camouflage. (See Photo #3.)

This medium-sized butterfly flies year-round in Florida, favoring moist woodlands, uplands, open weedy areas, and gardens. Adults feed on tree sap, fermenting fruit, bird droppings, and mud puddles. They will nectar at common milkweed and asters when other sources of nutrients aren't available. During the late afternoon, males perch on ridgetops or high shrubs and trees, watching for females and chasing other butterflies who enter the territory.

Females lay pale green eggs singly on the top of its host plants' leaves. In our area, host plants include False-nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*) and Florida pellitory (*Parietaria floridana*).

Caterpillars are variable in color with colors ranging from yellow to black, with black bodies speckled with white especially common. Caterpillars has six groups of branched spines on each segment of their body. Caterpillars

shelter in a folded leaf nest comprising host plant leaves tied with silk. Several young caterpillars may live together but older caterpillars are solitary and form their own shelter.

Red Admirals are migratory butterflies and we tend to see them more frequently in our area in the fall through early spring than in the summer. Scientists in Europe and the United States are working with citizen scientists to better understand the migration patterns. Why not help? Contribute your sightings to help deepen our knowledge about this stunning and interesting insect.

Host Plant Of The Month



False-nettle - *Boehmeria cylindrica*

False-nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*) is a short-lived, 1-3' perennial herb in the Urticaceaea (nettle) family whose native habitat includes cypress swamps, floodplain forests, wet thickets, stream banks, marshes, wet prairies and margins of ponds. It is also characteristically found in ditches and disturbed places. With insignificant, tiny whitish-green flowers that appear on spikes in the summer and late fall, this plant's interesting foliage makes it a

great companion for some of our native sunflowers like *Helianthus angustifolius*. It is also an important host plant to Red Admiral, Question Mark and Eastern Comma caterpillars as well as several species of moths. Notably, this plant lacks the stinging hairs that many of its cousins in the nettle family have.

Internet resources note that this plant may have value as a leafy green vegetable and at least one article reports that the plant contains antimicrobial chemicals. Additionally, historical records indicate that Indigenous peoples used the plant to make fibrous materials, including string for wampum (the Delaware), bowstring (the Ojibwa), and for fish spears (the Micmac).

This plant prefers light shade and moist soil. If you have the right conditions, why not plant some as part of a wonderful butterfly garden?

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag



Get Your SwagOn!

On sale at \$14 OFF until Feb. 14, gift your loved one a Butterfly Garden-in-a-Pot to celebrate Valentine's Day. They will enjoy its beauty longer than cut flowers and you'll literally be giving them butterflies all year long!

[SHOP NOW](#)



Gift Cards Available

Stop by our Gift Shop for a LRW gift card, which are always in stock. If you're not sure what to purchase for your loved one this Valentine's Day, a gift card is always a great option!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design with Vines





© Anita Camacho

Maypop - *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.

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Nectar Plant of the Month



Firebush - *Hamelia patens*

Firebush (*Hamelia patens*) is a large, perennial shrub that can grow to 15' tall and 8' wide. Distinguished from its Caribbean and Central American cousins that have yellow or orange flowers, our native firebush has red, tubular flowers that attract bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. Its fruit attracts a number of songbirds including wood thrush and mockingbirds.

The plant prefers full sun and well-drained, but somewhat moist soil. It makes a great accent and can also be used in a mass planting at the back of a planting bed or as a screen to provide privacy. Pair Firebush with tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*) or great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) for a vibrant, exuberant feel to your garden, or make it a standout focal point by juxtaposing the white whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*) or salt and pepper (*Melanthera nivea*) with it.

[SHOP NOW](#)

KIDS' CORNER

K - Grade 3
8:30 am - 12:30 pm
\$50

Presidents Day Nature Camp
February 21, 2022

ButterflyTampa.com

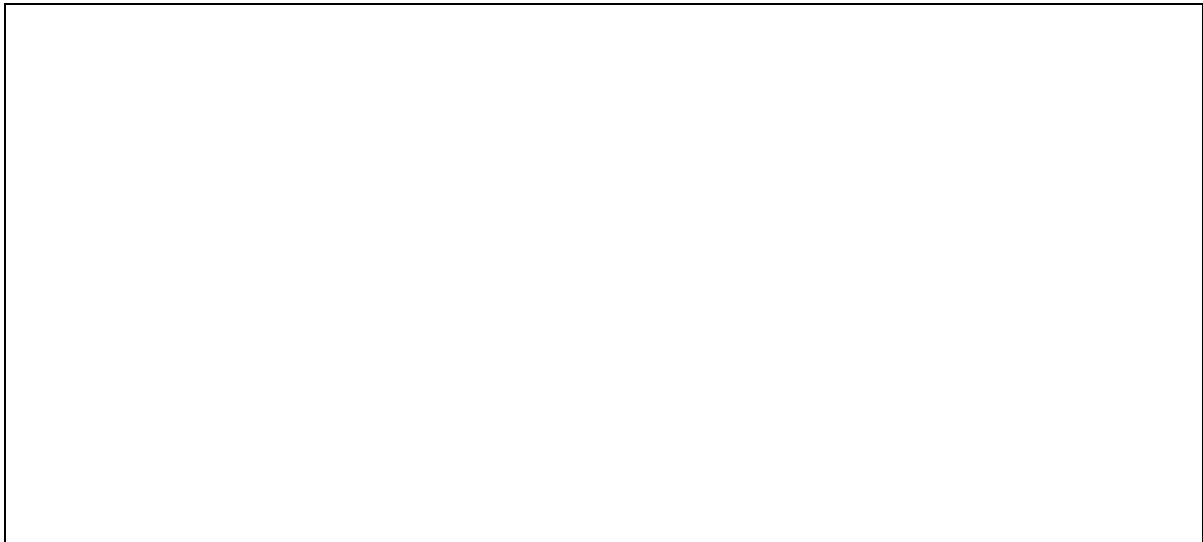
4111-A HENDERSON BLVD., SOUTH TAMPA

Register your child for a one-day Nature Camp. Only \$50!

Campers will discover nature and wildlife while learning to care for our environment. Every child will get an opportunity to release a butterfly by the end of the camp (weather permitting).

Click to download a brochure with more details and to register.

REGISTER NOW





- Animal Encounters
- Bug Hunts
- Games
- Arts & Crafts
- Butterfly Release (weather permitting)

SPRING BREAK NATURE CAMP
 Kindergarten - Grade 3
ButterflyTampa.com
 4111-A HENDERSON BLVD., SOUTH TAMPA

March 14-18
 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
 \$250

[REGISTER NOW](#)

“Diggin’ in to Restore Butterfly Habitat in Tampa Bay”

Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation regularly has a number of single-day and ongoing volunteering opportunities.



UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

CFC Butterfly Garden Maintenance: February 17 @ 9:30 am - 11:30 am

The Florida Aquarium, Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and FWC's Suncoast Youth Conservation Center are looking for 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.

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/WTCLY>

Nature Kids' Camp Assistants: February 21 @ 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Adult or High School volunteers are needed to assist with our nature camp for children in Kindergarten to Grade 3. We will have a planning meeting one week in advance of the camp (date and time TBD).

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/RT3CJ>

Encore! Technology Park: February 24 @ 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Volunteers are needed to help maintain the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at

Encore Park! located at 1210 E. Harrison St. (Corner of Harrison Street and Hank Ballard St.)

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/9MJHD>

TBBF Hell Strip Habitat Maintenance: February 26 @ 10 am - 12:00 pm

Volunteers are needed to perform Hell Strip Habitat maintenance (4110 W. Estrella St.).

To volunteer, click or copy and paste into a browser: <https://volunteersignup.org/JQCCE>



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. To join our awesome volunteer

team, click or copy and paste into a browser:

<https://volunteersignup.org/9BQTJ>

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.

TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION
North American Butterfly Association
NABA

BUTTERFLY WALK
SATURDAY, FEB. 19
11 AM - 1:30 PM

BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM
Free!
Register To Join Us!

7404 Picnic Island Blvd, Tampa

John Lampkin

Butterfly Walk at Picnic Island: February 19

Join Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and NABA Tampa Bay on a butterfly walk to continue our monthly monitoring of butterfly species at Picnic Island in South Tampa on Saturday, February 19. We will start out at around the southern-most part of the park at 11 a.m. and work our way to the entrance by 1:30 p.m.

Join us for Free!

Free!

REGISTER

Pardon Our Metamorphosis



Visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit during Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's normal business hours while the Butterfly Conservatory is being constructed. Enjoy live butterflies, their caterpillars and chrysalis as well as a few native reptiles Tuesdays through Sundays. While the education exhibit is currently free, we do accept donations for Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation for education, research, habitat restoration and conservation for butterflies and native plants in our area. Please keep visiting

[Butterfly Conservatory of Tampa Bay](http://www.ButterflyTampa.com) website for updates regarding our Grand Opening. For updates, visit:

www.ButterflyTampa.com

Monthly Calendar of Events

February 1: *National Serpent Day*

February 2: Groundhog Day

Just like Phil up in Punxsutawney, will Bucky the Buckeye, our local weather prognosticator, see his shadow confirming it's six more weeks of winter for us in Tampa Bay? Looking forward to finding out whether we need to wear socks with flip flops a few more days!

February 3: *Feed the Birds Day*



- February 4: *National Hemp Day*
- February 7: *National Send a Card to a Friend Day--Visit our Gift Shop for nature-themed cards.*
- February 8: *National Boy Scout Day*
- February 13: *Super Bowl Sunday*
- February 14: *Valentine's Day--Gift cards are always in stock!*
- February 21: *Presidents Day*
- February 28: *National Floral Design Day*
- February 28: *Invasive Species Awareness Week begins.*

Visit Little Red Wagon Native Nursery

Little Red Wagon Native Nursery is Hillsborough County'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: Tuesdays - Fridays 11-5:30, Saturdays 10-5:30 and Sundays 12-4. Closed Mondays.

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Little Red Wagon Native Nursery



@nurturenative

