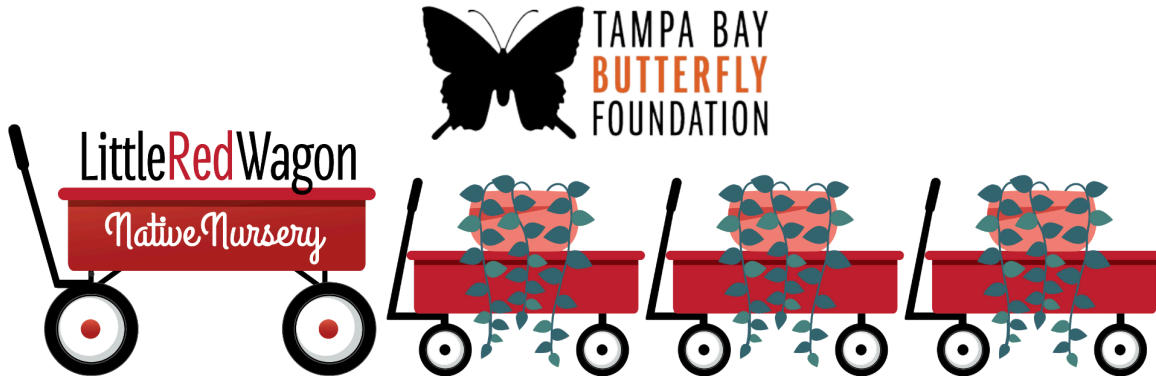


If you cannot see images, please [click here](#)

LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time



January 2025

“January is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s begin again.’”

– Unknown

January marks the beginning of a new year, often filled with a sense of renewal and fresh starts. Here in Tampa, January is a delightful escape from the harsh winter experienced in many other parts of the United States with mild daytime temperatures making it an ideal time for activities such as gardening or visiting Butterfly Tampa's nature center and botanical garden, without the intense summer heat. People often set resolutions and goals for the year ahead, inspired by the promise of new beginnings. January is also a time for reflection on the past year, celebrating achievements, and learning from experiences. The month is characterized by shorter days and longer nights, but the gradual increase in daylight after the winter solstice brings hope and anticipation for the coming spring which makes it a great time to start planning your native garden. Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and pick up some native strawberry plants or ask our knowledgeable staff for suggestions of native plants that will bring butterflies to your garden this spring.

Butterfly of the Month



Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charithonia*)

April 26th will mark the 29th anniversary of the Zebra Longwing as Florida's state butterfly. Zebra Longwing, or Zebra Heliconian (*Heliconius charithonia*), is named for its striped wing pattern. This coloration is a warning to predators that the butterfly is toxic. Their toxic nature comes from chemicals called cyanogenic glycosides that taste bitter, and if ingested, are bad for one's health. The nasty chemicals derived from the hostplant – the Passion Vine – protect caterpillars as well. The caterpillars are white with black spots and black spines and are conspicuous, because they too signal to predators, "Don't eat me!" Caterpillars pupate on or near hostplants and the chrysalis looks like a dry leaf and is hard to find.

Unlike most other butterflies, male Zebra Longwings mate with a female before the female has a chance to emerge from its chrysalis. So, even though the chrysalis is hard to find, male butterflies manage to do so. Once males find a chrysalis, they visit it repeatedly and perch on it. This begins way before mating happens. If a male senses chemicals that indicate a female pupa, the male continues to return more and more frequently. Intruding males are fended off by an opening of the wings. Mating happens for several hours, and the female this process to expand her wings. No other males attempt to mate with this female afterwards because during mating, the male repellent is transferred to her.

The zebra longwing butterfly (*Heliconius charithonia*) has a lifespan of up to six months, which is much longer than the typical lifespan of a few weeks for other butterflies. The zebra longwing's long lifespan is due to its diet of pollen, which is rich in protein and provides more nutrients than the nectar or fruit that most butterflies eat. The amino acids in pollen are used to produce eggs and sperm, and for body maintenance. Without pollen, zebra longwings typically live for about one month.

It is also easy to attract to your garden: simply plant some Passion Vines in a shady area of your garden with nectar plants nearby. These beautiful butterflies will visit your garden over and over. The Zebra Longwing has a wide range of habitats, including hardwood hammocks, thickets, and gardens. The Zebra Longwing is found throughout the state, although it is more common in south Florida, particularly in the Everglades National Park. In 1996, the state legislature designated the Zebra Longwing as the official state butterfly.

Host Plant Of The Month



Corkystem Passionvine (*Passiflora suberosa*)

This perennial vine is a host plant for the long wing butterflies - Gulf fritillary, Zebra longwing and Julia. This is especially a favorite for the Zebra longwing as it will grow in shadier conditions and the Zebra heliconia likes it a bit cooler (don't blame them). Bloom color is green and the flowers are a little larger than a dime in size. The plant likes shadier conditions to sun and grows in moist to dry soils. The berries can contain small amounts of cyanide when green and when they turn dark purple they are ripe for the birds to eat.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Garden Swag

COME GET YOUR SWAG-ON!

Pot Sox are made from strong but lightweight fabric with reinforced side walls. The breathable fabric facilitates superior aeration, allowing roots to thrive and flourish. The mesh base of the Pot Sox allows for improved drainage preventing waterlogging and promoting healthier root systems.

They are great for covering pots or for gift giving throughout the year and are washable and reusable! Available in 6-inch and 10-inch sizes to fit different pot capacities.



6-inch: SHOP NOW



10-inch: SHOP NOW

Nectar Plant of the Month



Climbing Aster (*Symphotrichum carolinianum*)

Climbing Aster (*Ampelaster carolinianus*) is long-lived sprawling vine about ten feet long that can easily be trained to crawl over fences, arbors, and pergolas. Its delicate, daisy-like flowers are lovely shades of pink, purple and lavender clustered at the ends of the vine's branches. Climbing Aster blooms from late summer through the fall (and into the winter when the weather is mild.) It's a great nectar source for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators and its seeds are a winter fuel source for songbirds. It is also the host plant for Pearl Crescent caterpillars.

Climbing Aster's native habitat includes the coastal plains and Piedmont from the Carolinas south to Georgia and Florida. It naturally grows along stream banks, moist thickets, wet woodlands, and marshy shores. It performs best in full sun and wet to dry sands with good drainage. It is an excellent candidate for the edges of retention basins and streambank stabilization projects. It pairs well with Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and Swamp Lily (*Crinum americanum*).

Deadhead this plant when flowers are spent, but reserve heavy trimming for the spring to encourage new growth and a profusion of flowers.

Climbing Aster has been recently spotted in Lettuce Lake Park. Let us know if you see any while you're out and about. Email your photos to info@ButterflyTampa.com. We'd love to know what you find!

[SHOP NOW](#)

Design with Vines/Edimentals



Sugar Apple (*Passiflora incarnata*)

Sugar Apple (*Annona squamosa*) is a small, semi-deciduous or evergreen tree that typically grows to 20 feet. With unique fruit whose surface resembles that of an artichoke, this highly aromatic plant attracts bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds with flowers that bloom first as female before changing to male. With an ability to self-pollinate, each plant can effectively ensure its own reproduction. However, by planting more than one Sugar Apple, you can ensure cross-pollination, which will boost fruit production.

Sugar Apple is native to the West Indies and tropical America. It is now widely planted and naturalized in Florida along the lower southeast and southwest coasts. It grows best in full sun and sets fruit when temperatures range from 73 to 94° F with a relative humidity of at least 70%.

Sugar Apples are typically eaten raw and people regularly comment they have a tasty, creamy texture that resembles a custard. It can be used in ice cream, smoothies, or even baked in pies.

The fruit has historically been used to treat diabetes, hypertension, respiratory infections, and gastrointestinal disorders. As reported [here](#), modern research has found the plant has numerous pharmacological properties with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anticancer insecticidal, and antimicrobial effects.

(For a month-to-month calendar of care for Sugar Apple trees planted in the home landscape, please see this University of Florida [resource](#).)

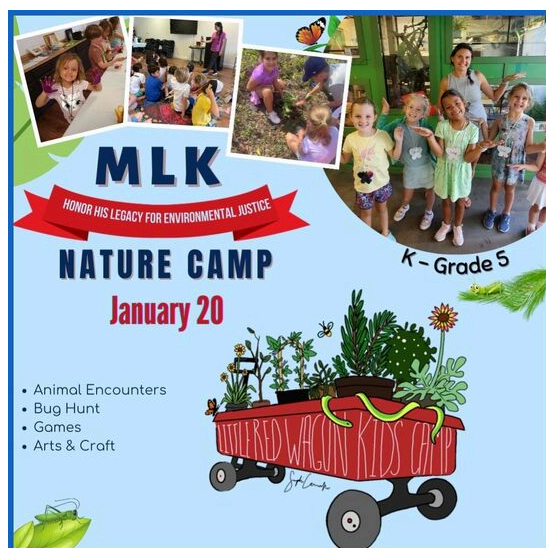
[SHOP NOW](#)

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 breaks with our nature camps.

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.



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: 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!



REGISTER FEB. 14



SAVE BIG WITH OUR EARLY BIRD SPECIAL FOR SPRING BREAK CAMP!

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

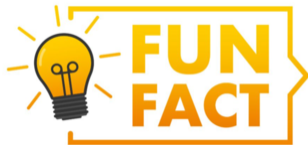


APRIL SHOWERS: APRIL 18

Celebrate the magic of spring with our one-day April Showers nature camp! Campers will explore how rain nurtures life—not just for plants and animals, but for us too. Through exciting activities of crafting rain catchers, exploring the water cycle, and planting native wildflowers, they'll discover the essential role water plays in our daily lives and ecosystems. The day also includes bug hunts, hands-on experiments, and creative art projects that highlight how we can conserve and protect this precious resource.

REGISTER: APRIL 18

Discover Fossils and Florida's Prehistoric Past



Did you know that dinosaurs likely didn't live in Florida? That's because much of the state was underwater during the Cenozoic Era, around 23–30 million years ago. But Florida was home to fascinating prehistoric mammals, like the Imperial Mammoth and the Saber-toothed Cat, which roamed the area before going extinct about 10,000 years ago!

Here's a fascinating look at body fossils from a saber-toothed cat and an artist's interpretation of what this incredible creature may have looked like:



Fun Mold Fossil-Making Activity



Now that we've learned a bit about Florida's prehistoric creatures, let's dive into making your very own mold fossil—just like scientists do when studying ancient remains!

What You'll Need:

- Air-dry modeling clay
- A small animal toy, shell, or leaf
- A rolling pin or your hands to flatten the clay



Steps:

1. Choose your object: Pick a small toy, shell, or leaf to represent your "fossil."
2. Prepare the clay: Roll the clay flat (about ½ inch thick).
3. Make the impression: Press your object into the clay firmly, then carefully remove it.
4. Let it dry: Leave your mold fossil out to air dry.
5. Optional: Paint your fossil once it's dry to make it extra special!



By combining creativity and science, this activity helps bring Florida's unique prehistoric history to life while learning about the fascinating world of fossils!

We would love for you to share your project with us. Please email to carissa@butterflytampa.com.

The greenzaurus:

Dawn of the Green Age



The new Green Zaurus are a wonderful mash-up of the Jurassic era and our self-watering Peropons. These colorful and cute dino characters have tongues that lap up water and feeds the precious plant on their back. Made of glazed ceramic, Green Zaurus come in three styles and colors with a popular plant (Sweet Basil, Lucky Clover or Wild Strawberry) peat puck, seeds, tray and instructions. Step aside dusty, old dinos, it's the age of Green Zaurus!

Materials: Ceramic animal, felt tongue, plastic pot, coco fiber wafer, seed pack, instructions.

Approximate Dimensions: 4.75"W x 2.75"D x 2.75"H

Origin: Japan

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: JANUARY 14



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: JANUARY 16 & 23



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: JANUARY 21



Nature Camp Volunteers

Sign up for a rewarding experience mentoring K to Grade 5 children during our MLK camp January 20, February 14 Love Bugs camp and Spring Break 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.

VOLUNTEER: CAMP ASSISTANT

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



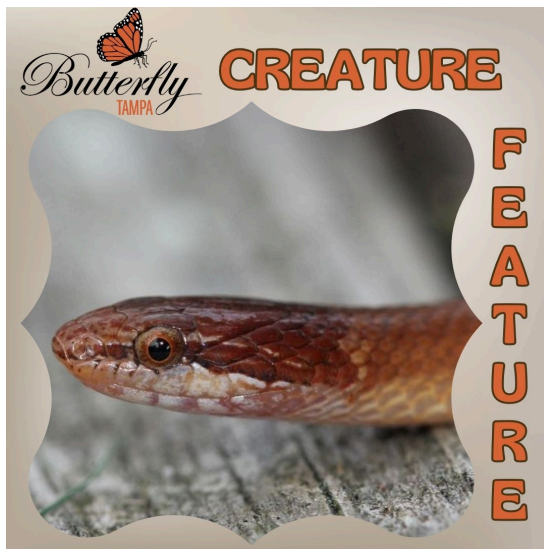
Butterfly
TAMPA

BUG ZOO
NATURE CENTER
NATIVE BUTTERFLY BOTANICAL GARDEN
4113 Henderson Blvd., South Tampa
(located inside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery)

Content required by Anita or Carissa



Reptile of the Month: "Wood Snake"



As the Chinese New Year approaches, we honor the Year of the Wood Snake. While the term "wood" in the Chinese zodiac represents the element associated with growth and stability, and not a specific snake species, there also happens to be a handful of snakes that are commonly known as "wood snakes!" These include species within the genus *Xylophis*, found in Asia, and the Pine Woods Snake, which is found right here in Florida!

Xylophis is a genus of small, elusive snakes native to the hill forests of the Western Ghats in India. This genus includes the Captain's wood snake and Deepak's wood snake. They are known for their smooth, glossy scales and small eyes, and are usually found burrowed under the ground.

Meanwhile, the Pine Woods Litternake (*Rhadinaea flavilata*), which has a reddish-brown coloration and distinctive dark eye stripe, is native to Florida! It typically inhabits pine flatwoods and oak forests, blending perfectly into its environment. Often found underneath pots in a garden, they are harmless, non-venomous snakes that eat primarily invertebrates and small reptiles. Visit us at the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and Butterfly Tampa to learn more about snakes and the cultural richness they bring to the celebration of the Chinese New Year!

Invertebrate of the Month: Discoid Cockroach



Meet our Bug of the Month Mo, our discolored cockroach, and some of his younger friends!

Discolored cockroaches (*Blaberus discoidalis*), or other known as “False death’s head cockroaches” are native to Central America but are found commonly in Florida and northern parts of South America. They reside in rotting wood or under tree bark during the daytime and come out to forage for food at night. They prefer to live in warm, humid habitats.

This species of cockroach gets its name from its close resemblance to the Death’s head cockroach, which has a similar pattern on its pronotum. This marking looks quite like a skull, which can be seen in the picture.

During the night, once these cockroaches emerge from their dwellings, they will feed on ripened fruit and plant matter. Roaches are essential to the decomposition process, helping to recycle nutrients, form healthy soil, and balance the ecosystem.

Cockroaches play an essential role in recycling nitrogen. Plants rely on roaches to release nitrogen-rich poop, among many other nutrients recycled by them. The plants then use these nutrients as a natural fertilizer, to help them grow and flourish.

Come by the Little Red Wagon Bug Zoo to meet Mo and his friends!

Monthly Calendar of Events

JANUARY 5 National Bird Day

JANUARY 6 Apple Tree Day

JANUARY 8 Earth’s Rotation Day

JANUARY 10 National Houseplant Appreciation Day

January 11, 2025 Plantapalooza III at Sunken Gardens

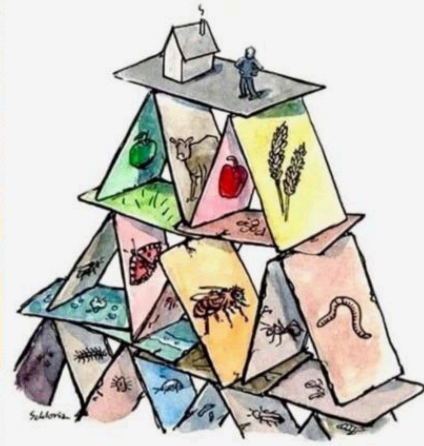


Pollinator Pyramid Impact Presentation and Project:

Grades K-4 (11am)

Grades 5th – 8th (12pm)

Grades 9th – 12th (1pm)



Sponsored by:



1825 4th St N, Saint Petersburg, FL 33704

Join us at the Sunken Gardens in St. Pete for the third annual Plantapalooza. 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 Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation will be offering Pollinator Power: Interactive, Fun Learning STEM activity for K-12 Students for \$5.00. This event is perfect for curious minds who love nature and want to make a difference! Through science, creativity, and hands-on activities, students will learn how pollinators impact the world—and how they can help protect them. Spaces are limited, so reserve your spot today!

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

PURCHASE TICKETS: POLLINATOR PROJECT

JANUARY 17 Florida Arbor Day
 JANUARY 20 MLK Day
 JANUARY 25 National Florida Day
 JANUARY 27 National Seed Swap Day

Helping 
 Hands
HAPPY HOUR

Thursday, February 13
 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Price: \$20 Donation

Benefiting:

Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation



SAVE THE DATE!

An Evening of Fun, Food, and Conservation at the Centre Club!

Mark your calendar to join us for two hours of great food, fun, and connection at our happy hour event! For just \$20, you'll enjoy *unlimited appetizers* in the elegant atmosphere of the Centre Club—an unbeatable deal. Best of all, every dollar goes directly to support local conservation efforts through the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation.

Here's what's in store:

- Savor delicious bites while you mingle.
- Try your luck with exciting raffles.
- Explore unique treasures at our silent auction.
- Meet our team and connect with others who share your passion for nature.

It's the perfect way to relax after a long day, enjoy fantastic food, and support a great cause. So grab your friends and join us for an unforgettable two-hour event! We can't wait to see you there! Let's raise a glass to fun and conservation.

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](#)

This email was sent to [[contact.email]] because you've subscribed on our site or made a purchase.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Edit preferences](#)

