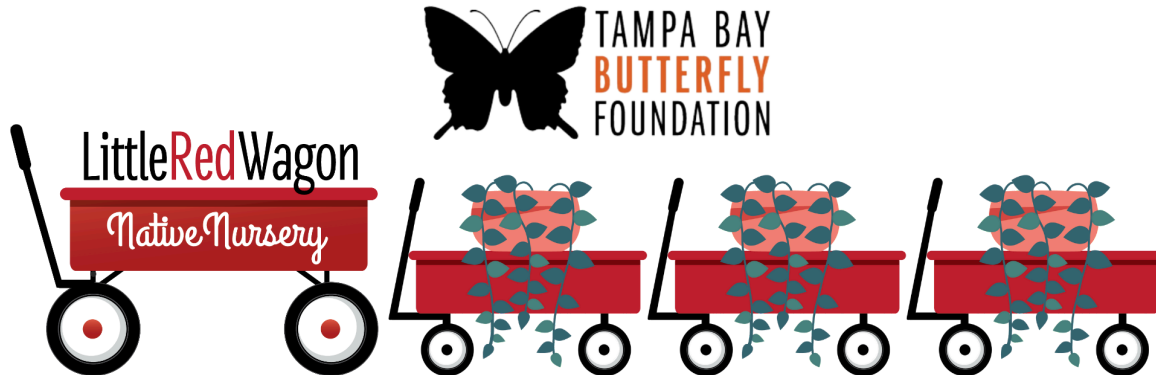


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# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*



**April 2026**

“Rain is not just water—it’s life returning to the land.” ~ Anita Camacho

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**A**pril is both National Native Plant Month and National Gardening Month, making it the perfect time to celebrate Florida’s incredible natural heritage. With warm temperatures and occasional spring showers, April offers ideal conditions for planting a thriving native garden that supports our state’s unique ecosystems. Native favorites like dune sunflower, coontie, and firebush are beautifully adapted to our climate, require minimal maintenance, and provide essential food and habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

In 2021, the U.S. Senate designated April as a month to honor the native flora that sustain biodiversity and shape our landscapes. Across the country, gardeners, conservation groups, and nature lovers mark the occasion by planting natives, restoring habitats, and sharing knowledge about the importance of these resilient species. When we choose native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses, we help rebuild wildlife corridors, reduce the spread of invasive plants, and create healthier, more sustainable outdoor spaces.

Roll on by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery, Tampa Bay’s only native plant nursery, and explore our wide selection of healthy, Florida-friendly plants. Whether you’re starting a new garden or enhancing an existing one, now is the perfect moment to plant with purpose and create a welcoming haven for local wildlife.

**Butterfly of the Month**



## Cloudless Sulphur

Cloudless Sulphurs are medium-sized butterflies with a soft pale yellow to off-white coloration and a wingspan of about 2¼ to 3 inches. While some individuals appear unmarked, others are more distinctive, with pink-edged markings on the underside of their wings. These often include two large, rounded spots on the forewings and smaller silvery spots on the hindwings. Females (see Photo 2) can be identified by a dark spot on the upper forewing whereas the male (see Photo 1). Males are typically a brighter yellow with a slight greenish hue, while females are a paler yellow.

Females lay single, slender yellow eggs on the fresh growth of plants in the pea family. In our area, this includes Privet Cassia (*Senna ligustrina*), Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), and Sensitive Pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*). Interestingly, some observations suggest they prefer to lay eggs on plants that are actively flowering.

Once they hatch, caterpillars vary in color depending on their diet. Those feeding primarily on leaves are typically green with a yellow stripe, blue patches, and small dark spines, while caterpillars feeding on flowers may appear yellow with black bands. Cloudless Sulphurs produce three or more generations each year, making them a frequent and welcome sight in Florida landscapes.

They are often confused with other sulphur butterflies, including the Orange-barred Sulphur and the Large Orange Sulphur. However, the Orange-barred Sulphur can be distinguished by its fast, high flight pattern and the presence of orange bands, which Cloudless Sulphurs lack.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this species is its migration. In late summer, millions of Cloudless Sulphurs travel to Florida, sometimes covering up to 12 miles per day. These butterflies may journey from as far north as Canada to overwinter here, with future generations heading north again in the spring.

Adult butterflies nectar on a variety of flowers, particularly those with long tubes. They are especially attracted to red blooms, such as Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinea*).

We have had recent sightings at the Butterfly Tampa butterfly garden as well as their caterpillars feeding on Privet Cassia and we regularly encounter Cloudless Sulphurs on our local butterfly walks.

Why not join us for our next butterfly walk and see them for yourself?

## Host Plant Of The Month



### **Water Dropwort** (*Tiedemannia filiformis*)

For our water-themed edition, we're highlighting a lesser-known but incredibly valuable native plant: Water Dropwort (*Tiedemannia filiformis*). This elegant perennial is an aquatic member of the carrot family and a wonderful addition to any moist or wet landscape.

Water Dropwort typically grows 2–3 feet tall and produces delicate clusters of white flowers in late summer through early fall. It thrives in consistently moist to very wet conditions, making it ideal for rain gardens, pond edges, and even container plantings where water can be maintained.

Beyond its beauty, Water Dropwort plays an important ecological role—it serves as a host plant for the Black Swallowtail butterfly. Interestingly, these butterflies are selective and will typically only lay eggs on the plant when it is in bloom, making those late-season flowers even more important. When conditions are right, you may spot caterpillars developing right on the plant—an exciting moment for any butterfly enthusiast!

We've recently incorporated Water Dropwort into our newly planted Koi pond at the nursery, where it joins a collection of Florida native aquatic plants supporting pollinators and wildlife. When in bloom, it becomes not just a striking visual feature, but a living habitat—another way we can support the lifecycle of the beautiful Black Swallowtail.

If you're looking to enhance your landscape while supporting native species, Water Dropwort is a fantastic choice—especially for those wetter areas where many other plants struggle.

Consider adding it to your own water garden and watch the magic unfold!

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Garden Swag

### GET YOUR SWAGON!

Welcome the joy of Easter and the fresh energy of spring with a few delightful seasonal items from our Gift Shop. The Blossombs Egg Carton "Hello Spring," is a charming gift-ready set featuring six vibrant eco-friendly seed bombs made from natural ingredients and filled with ten wildflower varieties loved by bees and butterflies. Simply toss, water, and enjoy colorful blooms from spring through fall.

The Beaumont SuperMoss Decorative Baskets, with wicker handles, are a sweet and stylish way to showcase Easter centerpieces or spring floral arrangements indoors or out—especially when filled with bright, blooming plants. Create a unique, living Easter Basket!

And since April is both National Native Plant Month and National Gardening Month, it's the perfect time to gear up with an adjustable gardening tool belt. Designed with organizer pockets and utility connectors, and available in a variety of colors and patterns, it keeps your essentials close at hand as you plant, tend, and celebrate the beauty of native gardening this season.



[SHOP NOW](#)



[SHOP NOW](#)



[SHOP NOW](#)



### RAINBOW SUN CATCHER

Designed to be applied to an indoor window so when the sun shines through it, it fills your home with rainbows! Not suitable for outside or car windows. This Sun Catcher Sticker is 3.9" x 5.7

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Nectar Plant of the Month



© Anita Camacho

### Rain Lily (*Zephyranthes atamasco*)

Delicate in appearance but unforgettable in bloom, Rain Lily (*Zephyranthes atamasco*) is one of those magical plants that seems to appear overnight after a good rain. True to its name, this charming native perennial surprises gardeners with sudden bursts of bright white to pinkish, showy flowers, often emerging just when you least expect them.

Growing in graceful clumps and reaching about 2–3 feet tall, Rain Lily brings a soft elegance to the landscape. Its blooms typically appear from late winter through spring, with additional flowering triggered by rainfall—making it a perfect fit for a water-themed garden or seasonal spotlight.

Rain Lily is wonderfully versatile and easy to grow. It thrives in full sun to part shade and adapts well to dry to moist conditions, preferring loamy or sandy soils with a range from acidic to slightly alkaline pH. Whether planted in mixed flower beds, along borders, or as a naturalized edging, it adds a refined yet natural look to any space.

Beyond its beauty, Rain Lily also plays a valuable role in the ecosystem. Its blooms provide nectar for pollinators, supporting bees and other beneficial insects during its flowering periods.

With its low-maintenance nature, long lifespan, and delightful habit of blooming after rain, Rain Lily is a must-have for gardeners looking to combine beauty, resilience, and ecological value.

Add it to your garden—and enjoy the surprise every time the rain rolls in. We are all hoping for more rain!

[SHOP NOW](#)

**Design with Vines/Edimentals**



### **Water Hyssop** (*Bacopa monnieri*)

A Wetland Wonder You Can Grow *and* Use

Did you know Water Hyssop (*Bacopa monnieri*) is edible? This fascinating native plant has a long history of traditional use, and its leaves are sometimes enjoyed in small amounts. With that said, it's best appreciated as both a functional edible and an ecological powerhouse in the landscape.

Water Hyssop is a versatile, long-lived perennial herb that thrives in very moist to wet environments, making it an excellent choice for water gardens, pond edges, ditches, marshes, and streamside plantings. Its low-growing, spreading habit creates a lush green carpet, making it ideal as a groundcover in wet soils. I love using this one as a spiller plant in my wetland container gardens.

Its delicate white-to-soft pink-to-lavender flowers add understated beauty while supporting pollinators. The plant grows well in full sun to partial shade and is remarkably low-maintenance once established. Though it

becomes semi-dormant in winter in central Florida, it reliably returns each growing season.

Ecologically, Water Hyssop plays an important role. It is the larval host plant for the White Peacock butterfly, meaning it supports caterpillars as they grow and develop. It also provides nectar for pollinators, helping sustain a diverse and healthy ecosystem.

In the wild, Water Hyssop is commonly found along lake edges, marshes, swamps, and floodplains, making it perfectly suited for Florida's wetter landscapes.

Whether you're creating a wildlife habitat, stabilizing a wet area, or adding an edible native to your garden, Water Hyssop is a truly multi-purpose plant.

[SHOP NOW](#)

## KIDS' CORNER

### SUMMER CAMPS ARE FILLING UP QUICKLY!

Running May through August, each of our Summer Nature camps will have its own exciting weekly theme. Register early and let your child's summer be filled with wonder, learning, and a little wild joy.



05/26 - 29



06/01 - 5



06/08 - 12



06/22 - 26

06/29 - 07/03

07/06 - 10



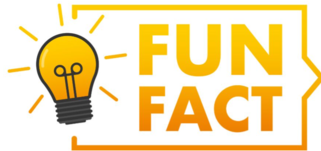
07/13 - 17



07/27 - 31



08/03 - 7



Did you know that when it rains, the water doesn't just disappear? Rain that falls on streets, sidewalks, and schoolyards flows into storm drains and eventually makes its way to our local watershed. The watershed is the land area that drains into rivers, lakes, and Tampa Bay!



That means everything on the ground—like litter, oil, or even fertilizer—can get carried by rainwater into the places where fish, birds, and other wildlife live.

April showers don't just grow flowers... they help move water (and sometimes pollution!) through the entire ecosystem.

# BUILD YOUR OWN WATERSHED



## What You'll Need:

- Aluminum foil or a plastic container
- Spray bottle or cup of water
- Small items (dirt, leaves, tiny pieces of paper or pepper)

## Steps:

1. Crumple and shape the foil into hills and valleys (this is your "land").
2. Sprinkle dirt, leaves, or "pollution" (paper/pepper) around your land.
3. Lightly spray or pour water over the top—like rain!
4. Watch how the water flows downhill and carries materials with it.

## Think About It:

- Where did the water collect?
- What happened to the "pollution"?
- How is this like what happens in our local watershed after a rainstorm?



**TAMPA BAY  
BUTTERFLY  
FOUNDATION**

**TAKE THE CLEAN YARD,  
CLEAN WATER PLEDGE**





[CLICK TO TAKE THE PLEDGE](#)



**RAIN STICK**

A rainstick from Indonesia is a long, hollow tube traditionally made from bamboo or cactus, filled with pebbles or seeds, and decorated with intricate designs, creating a soothing rain-like sound when tilted.

[SHOP NOW](#)

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

Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation regularly has a number of ongoing monthly volunteering opportunities.



**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: APRIL 28](#)



## Nature Camp Volunteers

Mentor Kindergarten to Grade 5 children during our Summer Nature Camps—fun, hands-on programs that inspire young minds through outdoor exploration. Ideal for environmental science college students and high schoolers earning Florida Bright Futures hours, volunteers must be available 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM for the full camp session. Year-round opportunities are available during school breaks; volunteer for our upcoming camps.

**VOLUNTEER: CAMPS**

We're gearing up for a busy and exciting spring season, and we'd love your help.



Your time makes a real difference and helps create meaningful experiences for our visitors.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 10-11: Birding & Nature Festival  
April 18: Monarch Festival in Dade City

Our upcoming events need enthusiastic volunteers to support everything from community outreach to education and native plant sales.

**April 10-11**

**April 18**

## 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)

**Bug Zoo, Nature Center & Butterfly Garden Hours**  
 Mon. - Sat.: 9:30am – 5:00pm (last admission: 4:00 pm)  
 Sunday: 11:30am – 5:00pm (last admission: 4:00 pm)

**SAME DAY TICKET SALES**

	Adult (18+): <b>\$9.95</b>
	Child (3-17): <b>\$7.95</b>
	Seniors & Active Military: <b>\$8.95</b>

	Adult (18+) <b>\$48.95</b>
	Child (3-17) <b>\$38.95</b>
	Family (4+) <b>\$122.95</b>
	Seniors & Active Military <b>\$44.95</b>



**Butterfly Releases**

**WEEKDAYS AT 12:30PM**  
**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 2PM**

(weather permitting) included in paid single day ticket purchases and memberships.

		
Adult (18+) <b>\$9.95</b>	Child (3-17) <b>\$7.95</b>	Seniors & Active Military Duty <b>\$8.95</b>

			
Adult (18+) <b>\$48.95</b>	Child (3-17) <b>\$38.95</b>	Family (4+) <b>\$122.95</b>	Seniors & Active Military Duty <b>\$44.95</b>

Take a break with nature! Join us for a **daily butterfly release Monday through Friday at 12:30 PM, Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 PM** (weather permitting). Included with paid admission to Butterfly Tampa.

Step away from your busy day and enjoy a peaceful moment with the butterflies—perfect for a relaxing lunch break or leisurely weekend at **Butterfly Tampa**.



### PLAN A FIELD TRIP TO BUTTERFLY TAMPA

With the school year in full swing, it's never too early to start planning your field trip to Butterfly Tampa—a one-of-a-kind educational experience right in the heart of Tampa Bay. At Butterfly Tampa's Bug Zoo and Native Butterfly Botanical Garden, students can explore the wonders of nature that complements classroom science and environmental studies. From the captivating transformation of butterflies and other fascinating invertebrates to the intriguing world of reptiles, each exhibit invites curiosity and offers rich opportunities for discovery and learning.

Whether you're teaching pollination, ecosystems, or biodiversity, Butterfly Tampa brings your lesson plans to life in the most vibrant way. Let your students discover, engage, and be inspired by the natural world right here at our Nature Center located in South Tampa.

And, we're not just for kids! Butterfly Tampa also welcomes adult groups, including corporate teams, community organizations, and clubs, for immersive educational outings and unique team-building experiences.

**Reserve at least two weeks in advance:** email [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:Info@ButterflyTampa.com) to schedule a field trip!



### Reptile of the Month: Rainbow Snake



Our Reptile of the Month for April is the rainbow snake (*Farancia erytrogramma*), one of Florida's most famous yet rarely seen native species! At first glance, it appears dark or nearly even black, but in the right light its scales reflect a subtle rainbow iridescence. Its underside is equally distinctive, with bold red stripes running along the belly.

Rainbow snakes are found in aquatic habitats such as swamps, marshes, and slow-moving waterways. They are excellent swimmers and spend much of their time hidden beneath vegetation or submerged, which contributes to how rarely they are encountered in the wild.

This species has a highly specialized diet and feeds almost exclusively on freshwater eels. Because of this, rainbow snakes are directly impacted by changes in eel populations. Factors such as dams, which disrupt eel migration, as well as disease and declining water quality, can reduce eel abundance and in turn affect rainbow snake survival.

In addition to these challenges, habitat loss across wetland ecosystems has further contributed to their rarity. While they are non-venomous and pose no threat to people, sightings are uncommon, and they are considered a species of conservation concern in parts of their range.

Although we do not have a rainbow snake on exhibit at Butterfly Tampa, we have plenty of other cool reptiles (of all colors in the rainbow) for you to meet!

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### Invertebrate of the Month: Rainbow Scarab Beetle

 *Butterfly*  
TAMPA **CREATURE  
FEATURE**



As the weather warms up and spring begins to show its colors, these precious little gems of the soil are becoming more active and noticeable throughout the state. Rainbow scarabs get their name from their multicolored, iridescent exoskeletons, often having shades of deep blue and green. As with all beetles, their front pair of wings are modified into hard, armored plates called elytra. Although these hardened forewings reduce beetles' aerial maneuverability, they more than make up for it in the protection from predators and the elements. In fact, it is thought that the development of elytra was one of the major factors in generating the large amount of beetle diversity seen today. There are more known species of beetles than plants!

Scarabs, or members of the beetle family Scarabaeidae, all share the same basic body plan. They can often be identified by their oval-shaped, stocky bodies, with the legs and head being modified for digging in the substrate. In many species, including the rainbow scarabs, males develop large horns on the head for competition over mating rights. Scarabs are also identified by their unique larval stage, called a grub. Grubs have a curled, C-shaped body with an orange to yellow head and soft, white body. All scarab grubs are completely fossorial, meaning they spend all of their time underground. Within the larger scarab family, rainbow scarabs belong to the true dung beetle subfamily (Scarabaeinae). Rainbow scarabs feed exclusively on the waste of larger animals. In particular, they seem to prefer dung from omnivorous or herbivorous mammals such as racoons, deer, and squirrels. While this may seem gross to some, their feeding habits serve to transport nutrients throughout and between habitats.

This time of year is the beginning of the rainbow scarab mating season. Interestingly, it can be argued that this species actually has three sexes instead of two. This is because they produce two very different types of males. So called major males are those with larger bodies and long horns, with which they will fight other males for access to a female. Same males, however, have much smaller bodies and horns, to the point of almost appearing female. Instead of fighting, these minor males will use their disguise to (hopefully) avoid competition with other males altogether.

Once a male and female have paired up for the season, they begin working together on the construction of their nest. First, they then dig a series of tunnels into and underneath a pile of dung which they had previously collected. Then, more dung is gathered from the surrounding area and rolled into "brood balls" which are placed at the bottom of the nest. The female will lay a single egg into the center of each brood ball. Once the larva hatch, they will feed on the brood ball from the inside out. Just before reaching the outer edge of the ball, they will enter their pupal stage and finally emerge as an adult beetle after several months of metamorphosis.

Rainbow scarabs and other dung beetles may seem unsanitary, but the role they play within our native ecosystem is highly important. By transporting and burying the feces of larger animals, they help to spread nutrients throughout the soil. Their method of digging also serves to loosen the soil, making it much easier for many plant roots to grow through. In a way, they help do the hard part of gardening for us! Rainbow scarabs encourage healthy, nutritious soil environments throughout our state and much of the country.

## Monthly Calendar of Events

**APRIL 3 JANE GOODALL DAY**



Today, we celebrate one of the most extraordinary voices for our planet and remembering the incredible moment when we had the chance to meet Dr. Jane Goodall just before her 90th birthday. We're reflecting on the extraordinary impact Dr. Jane Goodall has had on conservation, compassion, and our shared responsibility to protect the natural world. She is a living legend whose kindness and wisdom stay with you long after the moment ends. As we honor Dr. Goodall's legacy, we're reminded that hope, action, and small everyday choices truly can make a difference.

**APRIL 5** Happy Easter -- Little Red Wagon Native Nursery will be closing at 4 PM

**APRIL 10** Birding Festival (April 10-11)



## APRIL 10 - 11

Free of charge, the Birding Festival Expo will be full of nature organizations, original artwork, and more.

Stop by the Little Red Wagon table and come meet other groups working hard to protect the environment, and shop! Open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Friday & Saturday.

**APRIL 18** Monarch Butterfly Festival - Dade City



Join us at the Monarch Butterfly Festival on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at Touchton Park, with festivities flowing out into the gardens of the Dade City Garden Club! There will be a Kids' Zone, entertainment, educational exhibits and an eclectic market. Stop by our native plant sale to help feed the pollinators.

**APRIL 19** City of Tampa Earth Fair at Al Lopez Park

**APRIL 22** Earth Day



**APRIL 25** Little Red Wagon is turning 6! We're so grateful for this amazing community—can't wait to celebrate with you. Stay tuned!



## **BUTTERFLY WALK**

Gadsen Park

**APRIL 26**

**9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

**Butterfly Tampa & NABA Members: \$5**  
**Non-Members Fee: \$10**

Register at:

**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**

6901 S MacDill Ave in South Tampa

Join Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and NABA Tampa Bay on a butterfly walk as we continue our monitoring of butterfly species at Gadsen Park located at 6901 S. MacDill Ave in South Tampa.

We will meet under the trees North of the softball field at the back of the park. There is ample parking back there. [VIEW Gadsen Park map](#). Plan for the outdoors, heat, mosquitoes, no-see-ums, getting feet wet if you don't wear the right shoes to avoid it. Bring plenty of water to drink and a snack if you want.

**PURCHASE TICKETS**

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](http://LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com)

Email: [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:Info@ButterflyTampa.com)

Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm | Sunday: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

[Visit Little Red Wagon Native Nursery](#)

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