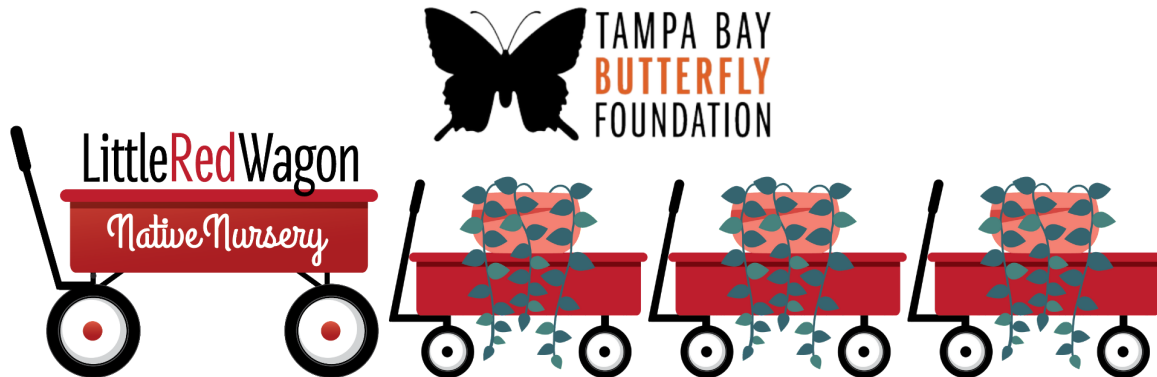


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# LITTLE RED WAGONFUL

*Nurturing Nature One Wagon at a Time*

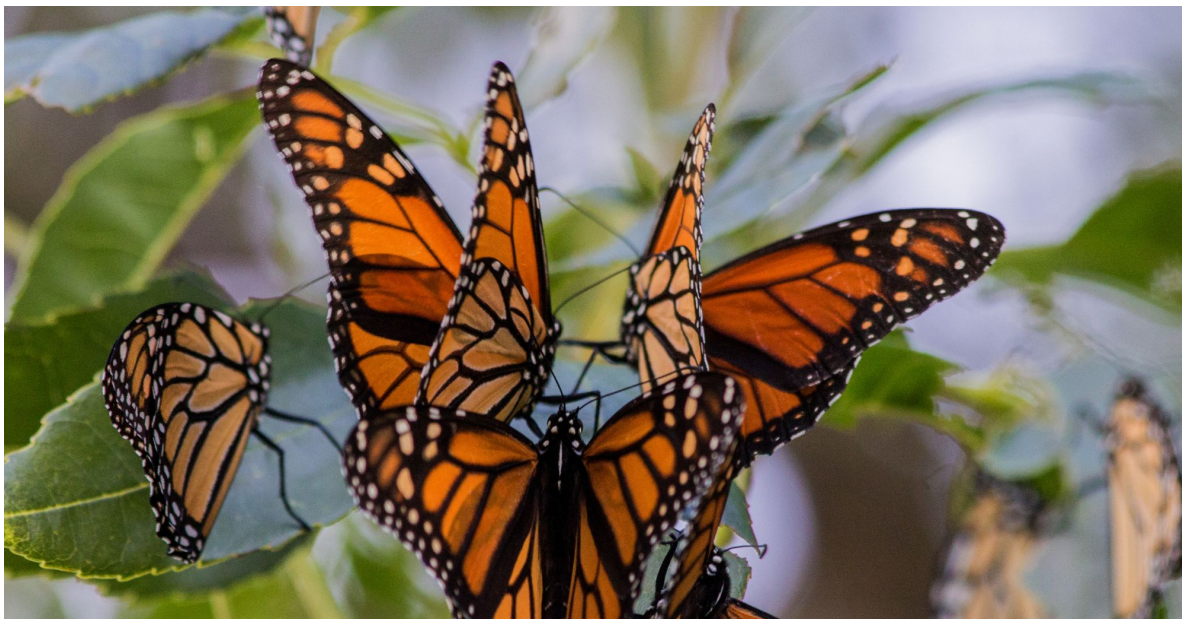


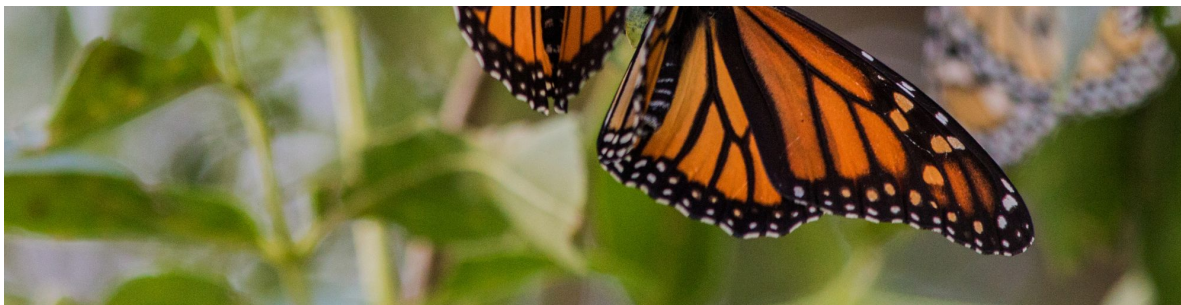
March 2023

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle...a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."  
~Barbara Winkler

**S**pring officially arrives on the 20th this month! Did you know March 14 is Learn About Butterflies Day? Stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery and pick up some native plants to help bring butterflies to your container garden or backyard. If you're interested in attracting specific butterflies, snap a photo of the area with your phone and show our knowledgeable staff who can advise you on the native plants to purchase to attract these pollinators.

## Butterfly of the Month





## Monarch

Monarchs are perhaps the most iconic butterfly in North America. Famous for their long migrations, these orange and black beauties have a wingspan that ranges from 3 3/8 to 4 7/8 inches. A double row of white spots in a black border on the hindwing (see Photo 1) helps distinguish this butterfly from the smaller Viceroy and the darker, root beer-colored Queen. (See Photos 2 and 3.)



Females lay eggs singly on milkweed leaves. The yellow, black and white striped caterpillars that emerge are voracious and can easily devour several large milkweed leaves each day as late instar caterpillars. This appetite highlights just how important it is to have numerous milkweed plants in your garden.

Adult Monarchs nectar on milkweed as well as [goldenrods](#), [blazing stars](#), [ironweed](#) and other nectar-rich plants. Unfortunately, on December 15, 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [announced](#) that listing the Monarch as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act was warranted but precluded due to higher priorities. Unlike other parts of the country, our area has a year-round Monarch population, so please take steps to conserve this butterfly by planting native species to support this beauty. Please also avoid planting non-native tropical milkweed. [Research](#) shows that Monarchs breeding on tropical milkweed have higher levels of *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* ("OE"), a debilitating protozoan parasite. You can learn more about this problem [here](#).



## Host Plants Of The Month



### Milkweeds of Florida

Most people know that milkweed is the only plant that Monarch caterpillars will eat. Fewer know that various species of milkweed also act as a host plant for Queen and Soldier caterpillars. With 21 species of milkweed native to our state, why not include some in your garden?

Here are just two of our favorites:

#### **Pink Swamp Milkweed - *Asclepias incarnata***





Pink Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) is our best-selling milkweed, so we're listing it first!

Pink Swamp Milkweed is an erect, short-lived clumping perennial that will typically grow to about 4' tall and 1.5' wide. Its large, showy pink blossoms comprise many small, rose-pink flowers that emit a beautiful fragrance similar to the scent of vanilla. The flowers are magnets for hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. The plant is also the larval host plant for Monarchs, Queens, and Soldiers.

This short-lived perennial does well in partial shade to full sun locations both in a pot or in the ground. It goes dormant around November. When the stems turn brown, the plant is not dead! Please do not disturb the roots or remove the plant. Simply cut the stems back to about 6 inches and leave it where it is planted and continue regular watering. These brown stems are attached to the roots and in the spring, the plant pushes up from the roots.

Pink Swamp Milkweed is found as far north as Quebec, Canada and as far west as Manitoba in Canada and New Mexico in the US. In its native environments, the plant is most often found in floodplain swamps, hydric hammocks, wet meadows and marshes. Despite its name, Pink Swamp Milkweed can tolerate moderately dry soil conditions and is one of the few milkweeds I've successfully grown in planters.

The genus *Asclepias* is named for Asklepios, the Greek god of healing, because some *Asclepias* species have medicinal properties. Indeed, Iroquois used a decoction of Pink Swamp Milkweed as a diuretic and



kidney aid while the Meskwaki used an infusion of the plant's roots to destroy tapeworms. Specific epithet means flesh-colored.

Fun fact: During World War II, the milkweed seed floss was collected and used to fill life jackets. The floss is still used today as a hypo-allergenic filling in pillows and comforters.

Caution: Please wear gloves when handling all milkweeds. Their white milky toxic sap can irritate skin and cause chemical burns to the eyes. (Note: if you get it in your eyes, please see an ophthalmologist right away.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

### Aquatic Milkweed - *Asclepias perennis*



© Anita Camacho

Aquatic milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*) is another great Florida native milkweed, but quite different from Pink Swamp Milkweed. It will typically grow to a height of only 2 feet and 1 foot wide. Its bright white clusters of up to 25 flowers top individual stems and are an important nectar source for our native bees, wasps, and butterflies.

As its common name implies, Aquatic Milkweed occurs in a variety of wetland habitats, including floodplain swamps, marshes, and semi-shaded forests that experience dry and rainy seasons. As a result, Aquatic Milkweed can tolerate 2-3 months of drought in our Florida sandy soils and also does very well in extremely wet and nearly underwater conditions during the Florida rainy season.

Aquatic Milkweed can survive lower amounts of direct sunlight than our other native species and will maintain its leaves throughout the year. Although it can become somewhat lanky, it is still a terrific plant to include in your butterfly garden as it's an important winter food source for Monarch, Queen, and Soldier caterpillars.

Aquatic Milkweed can tolerate shade although it will bloom better in full sun. This wildflower is commonly propagated for home gardeners and is quite hardy. I plant it in areas around my yard that get a mix of sun and shade as well as some areas that are full sun - the plants do well in pretty much any condition Florida seems to throw at it, so why not try some in your butterfly garden?

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Garden Swag



### Get your SwagON!

March 19 is National Backyard Day and with the arrival of spring, why not add some 3-dimensional butterfly stakes to your garden and watch them take flight in the wind. These beautifully detailed garden stakes available in Malachite, Pipeline and Monarch, have a realistic metal body and are balanced to rock in a gentle breeze. Painted in matte colors, they are weather and fade resistant. Stop by our Gift Shop soon before they all take flight!



[SHOP NOW](#)

## Nectar Plant of the Month



### Starry Rosinweed - *Silphium asteriscus*

Starry Rosinweed (*Silphium asteriscus*) is a wonderful, bring a smile to your face type of plant. Its bright, lemon-yellow 2- to 2.5- inch yellow flowers are on branched stems that can easily grow to 5 feet tall. In Florida, this plant typically blooms from March through late fall. A favorite of the Monarchs since it has such a nice landing pad for them to get to the nectar easily.

Starry Rosinweed is native to dry upland forests, flatwoods, sandhills, and glades. It is found from Virginia west to Missouri and Oklahoma and south to Florida and Texas. In Florida, Starry Rosinweed has been vouchered in 23 counties, mostly along the Gulf Coast south to Lee County.

Starry Rosinweed performs best in full sun and can tolerate moderately dry or moist soils that are well drained. It's great at the back of a wildflower garden and pairs nicely with any of our fall-blooming Asters and Ironweeds. It does self-seed, so it's best planted in an area that's less manicured.

According to NC State Extension, "the name rosinweed comes from the [plant's] resinous sap which, when dried, was used by Native Americans as a breath-freshening chewing gum."

(Fun fact from the Missouri Department of Conservation: "Rosinweeds (genus *Silphium*) generally resemble sunflowers (genus *Helianthus*). But here's a big difference: The disk (center) florets in rosinweeds are essentially staminate (male) and therefore don't create seeds, just pollen; but the disk florets in sunflowers, as most of us know, create seeds. In rosinweeds, it's the petal-like ray florets that are pistillate (female) and turn into seeds, while those in sunflowers produce only pollen.)

[SHOP NOW](#)

## Design With Vines

### Milkvines of Florida



### Anglepod Milkvine (*Gonolobus suberosus*)

Anglepod Milkvine (*Gonolobus suberosus*) is a long-lived, high-climbing vine about ten feet long with big cordate leaves and distinctive, yellow-green star-shaped flowers with a maroon center. Anglepod Milkvine can bloom as early as April and as late as October, however its peak flowering time is typically in our summer months. About a month after flowering, the plant's very angular seedpods (which generated the plant's common name) emerge. Anglepod Milkvine is pollinated by flies and it's the host plant for Monarch and Queen caterpillars.

Anglepod Milkvine's native habitat includes mesic forests, lake margins, and streambanks from states along the Gulf Coast north to Virginia and as far west as Kansas. It performs best in somewhat moist, sandy soils, full sun, and when provided a tree or vertical structure to climb.

Caution: When cut, Anglepod Milkvine produces a milky sap that can irritate skin and eyes.

Anglepod Milkvine was spotted last spring at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg and last summer in San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park. Let us know if you see any while you're out and about. Email your photos to [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com). We'd love to know what you find!



### White Twinevine (*Funastrum clausum*)

White Twinevine (*Funastrum clausum*) is a long-lived evergreen vine that grows to 20-30 feet with fragrant, showy white flowers that typically bloom in summer and fall. While in its native habitat this plant can easily cover shrubs and small trees, with a little care, this plant can be trained to cover fences, topiary forms (check out ours by the front door of the shop when you visit!), and pergolas. It is a caterpillar food plant for Monarchs, Queens, and Soldiers. Here at the shop, we tend to move our third instar caterpillars from our other Milkweeds to this plant since it's such a fast grower.

White Twinevine's native habitat includes swamps, moist hammocks, coastal strands and wetland edges in South Florida and parts of Texas. It performs best in slightly acidic, moist soils and full sun.

According to iNaturalist, White Twinevine was spotted at Uceta Yard last October. Let us know if you've seen it anywhere else in our area. Email your photos to [info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:info@ButterflyTampa.com).

**SHOP NOW**

**KIDS' CORNER**





### ACTIVITIES

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

Join us for a fun-filled week during Spring Break, March 13-17, as we explore and learn about nature. Kindergarten to Grade 5 kids will go on bug hunts, play games, participate in arts and crafts and so much more! Every camper will get to release a butterfly (weather permitting) and meet our animal ambassadors.

**REGISTER NOW**

**TAMPA BAY BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION**

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

**Little Red Wagon Native Nursery**

**GUIDE TO FLORIDA BEST OF FLORIDA 2022 WINNER SUMMER CAMPS**

**CAMPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**  
8:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

**KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 5**

**EVERY CAMPER WILL RELEASE A BUTTERFLY** (weather permitting)

411-A Henderson Blvd.  
Tampa, FL 33629

For details and to register, visit:  
**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**

Discovering Nature Through Fun & Creative Activities

Come find out why parents voted us the Best of Summer Camps in 2022 by the Guide to Florida! Registration is open for our Summer Nature camps for children entering Kindergarten to Grade 5. Each week will be a different theme to keep campers engaged! If you register for a camp session, one month in advance of the start date, you will receive \$25 off the regular registration fee for the full camp session. Day Passes also available (but not applicable for the Early Bird discount.)

**REGISTER NOW**





### Nature Paintbrush Activity:

1. Find a few sturdy twigs for your brush handle. Pick out some evergreen pine needles, or flowers for your paint bristles.



2. Arrange the bristles around one end of your twig. While holding the bristles in place, wrap the string around them at the base of the brush. Wrap the string around several times and pull it tight so the bristles stay on the handle.
3. Knot your string and trim off the long ends.
4. Enjoy your new paint brush!

## Outdoor Bingo



Outdoor bingo is a great way to get your kids outside. It's the perfect match-up of a scavenger hunt and bingo. Take a walk around your neighborhood or hike through the woods all while playing a game great for all ages.

[SHOP NOW](#)



### WACKY FACT!

Animals and plants grow faster in the spring, and so do you! Scientists have shown kids grow faster in the spring and summer because of the amount of sunlight they are exposed to and an increased variety of fresh and nutritious food. Get ready to grow!



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

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







### 2023 Nature Camp Assistants

We need adults and/or high school students to help with Kids' Nature Camps from 7:45 am to 3:15 pm during Spring Break & Summer . A commitment for the full camp session is preferred. All Nature Camps will be held at 4111-A Henderson Blvd. in South Tampa.

**VOLUNTEER - Spring Break Camp**

**VOLUNTEER - Summer Camps**



### Butterfly Alley Maintenance

Volunteers are needed to perform cleanup and maintenance of Butterfly Alley habitat (4110 W. Estrella St., behind Little Red Wagon Native Nursery) this month.

**VOLUNTEER - March 29**



Center for Conservation Maintenance

### 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 - March 30**



### ENCORE! Park

Volunteers are needed to help maintain the Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at Encore! Technology Park located at 1210 E. Harrison St. (Corner of Harrison Street and Hank Ballard St.)

**VOLUNTEER - March 27**



### Fred Ball Park

Volunteers are needed to help maintain the Rose Circle Garden Circle and Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation-sponsored butterfly garden at 2851 Rubideaux St., Tampa, FL 33629 (next to Tampa Garden Club).

**VOLUNTEER - March 19**



### GreenFest

Volunteers are needed to help with the set up on Friday afternoon and during GreenFest hours on Saturday and Sunday. This event will be held at 2629 Bayshore Blvd. rain or shine.

**VOLUNTEER - March 24, 25 or 26**



### 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.

**Pardon Our Metamorphosis**







Visit our temporary butterfly education exhibit inside Little Red Wagon Native Nursery during our normal business hours while the Butterfly Conservatory is in permitting to be built. 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 our website for updates regarding our Grand Opening.

[BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM](http://BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM)

## Monthly Calendar of Events

- MARCH 3 *World Wildlife Day*
- MARCH 8 *International Women's Day*
- MARCH 12 *Butterfly Walk at Picnic Island*






### BUTTERFLY WALK

Picnic Island

**MARCH 12**  
**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**



**Non-NABA Members Fee: \$5**

Register at:  
**BUTTERFLYTAMPA.COM**

7404 Picnic Island Blvd, South Tampa

Join Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and NABA Tampa Bay on a butterfly walk at Picnic Island this weekend. This will be free for NABA members. Non-NABA members fee: \$5. Please bring payment morning of event. Address is 7404 Picnic Island Boulevard in South Tampa. Registration is required.

**REGISTER**

- 
- MARCH 12 *Daylight Savings Time begins*
  - MARCH 14 *National Learn About Butterflies Day, World Spider Day*
  - MARCH 17 *St. Patrick's Day*
  - MARCH 18 *Global Recycling Day*

MARCH 19 *National Backyard Day*  
 MARCH 20 *Equinox Earth Day, First day of spring*  
 MARCH 20 *World Sparrow Day, World Frog Day*  
 MARCH 21 *World Planting Day, National Flower Day*  
 MARCH 22 *World Water Day*  
 MARCH 25-26 *GreenFest*



**TAMPA  
GreenFest**

**March 25 & 26  
9 am - 4 pm**

**FREE**

**Tampa Garden Club  
2629 Bayshore Blvd.  
South Tampa**

- Free Kids' Activities
- Local Florida Growers
- Free Floral Show
- Food/Refreshments

**AND MORE!**




**TAMPA BAY  
BUTTERFLY  
FOUNDATION**

**LittleRedWagon  
NativeNursery**

Join us at Tampa Bay's premier gardening festival: GreenFest - March 25 & 26. This family event is free and open to the public from 9 am - 4 pm at 2629 Bayshore Blvd. Featuring local Florida growers with Florida-friendly plants, stop by Little Red Wagon Native Nursery's tent. Bring the entire family!

- A children's tent with FREE kids' activities (sponsored by the Davis Islands Garden Club)
- NGC Standard Flower Show FREE in conservatory
- Food and Refreshments
- Rain or shine!

MARCH 28 *Day of Insects, Weed Appreciation Day*  
 MARCH 29 *Little Red Wagon Day, National Mom & Pop Business Owner Day*  
 MARCH 30 *National Take a Walk in the Park Day*



**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](http://LittleRedWagonNativeNursery.com)

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

Hours: Tuesdays - Fridays 11-5:30, Saturdays 10-5:30 and Sundays 12-4. Closed Mondays.

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