

Welcome to the **31st Annual Wildflower Hotline**, brought to you by the Theodore Payne Foundation, a non-profit plant nursery, seed source, book store, and education center dedicated to the preservation of wildflowers and California native plants. This a report for **March 15, 2013**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

The alternating warm weather and rain events have encouraged more blooms to come out in some of our favorite places. There were nice reports this week from the mountains and inland valleys of Orange and Riverside counties.

Wildflowers are in bloom at Harford Springs Preserve in Western Riverside County mostly in the southern part of the park. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are blooming in large patches on several hillsides with California bells (*Phacelia minor*) and California figwort (*Scrophularia californica*) spotting the landscape among the rocks and boulders. Forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.) and California sun cup (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*) are plentiful beside the trails. Chia (*Salvia columbariae*) is abundant but shorter in stature this year. Chocolate lillies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are starting to bloom next to junipers along the grassy slopes near Ida Leona Road. Cream cups (*Platystemmon californicus*) are small this year, but patchy in the landscape in little swales. Oak gooseberry (*Ribes quercetorum*), hoary-leaved (*Ceanothus crassifolius*), and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) are the major perennials in bloom. There are a few small patches of baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) in the shade of the magnificent junipers this park is famous for.

Baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). Photo by Michael Charters

Traveling west across the valley to the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, the Clinton Keith Road that brings you to the Plateau is stunning with hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) in peak bloom. On the Reserve's trails, the shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*) are particularly showy growing among ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). In the grassy meadows and slopes, blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) and checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*) are in bloom. Look in shaded areas along the trails for milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), Western buttercups (*Ranunculus occidentalis*), violets (*Viola douglasii*) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata* ssp. *mexicana*). The Santa Ana Mountains have a number of exciting trails and the flowers are popping now. Along the Ortega Highway (Hwy 74) stop at the Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park and enjoy an easy walk along one of the well maintained trails. On the Quail Run Trail, there are still good displays of shooting stars, (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*). Look for two meadows on the north side of the trail; the upper one has many more flowers. Also on the trail are lots of wild hyacinth, (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), a few scattered wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), and the bright red-orange paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.). Going north on East Ridge trail, the chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), are starting their annual showy display. Many plants are already in full bloom and some great specimens are close to the trail. If you go south on the East Ridge Trail there is a lone surprise clematis (*Clematis* sp.) in full bloom on the south side of the trail. Quail Run can be a little strenuous, but it is close to the Bell Canyon trailhead parking, and if you take your time it should be a nice hike with excellent flowers. Cougar Pass has a fantastic display of shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*), the best in the park. West Ridge and East Ridge Trails have good wildflowers, including lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), San Diego jewel-flower (*Caulanthus heterophyllus*), suncups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*), phacelia (*Phacelia* spp), ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*) and more. At the top of Sun Rise Trail, make sure to take in the stunning view of the landscape. Finally the Dick Loskorn Trail has a big patch of miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.) in full bloom.

In the Cleveland National Forest wildflowers are painting a palette of bright colors along the Santiago Truck Trail, near Modjeska Canyon. Hiking in the area you will come across nice displays of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), four lupine species (*Lupinus bicolor*, *L. hirsutissimus*, *L. succulentus* and *L. truncatus*), four or five phacelia species (*Phacelia* spp.), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), native lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*), red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*) and owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*). Wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitata*) is poking up among the grasses and annuals. Of course, there are many interesting native perennials and shrubs like ceanothus as well. Nearby is also a small grove of rare manzanita relatives, mission manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*) and summer holly (*Comarostaphylis diversifolia*). Santiago Truck Trail is popular with mountain bikers, so watch out for the two wheelers speeding by!

The school gardens at the Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy are looking spectacular and visitors are welcome to visit and enjoy. The bloom in the new Mojave/Sonoran Desert Habitat Garden is almost at peak now. The following are exploding in a riot of desert beauty: goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), owls clover (*Castilleja* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), brown-eyed primrose (*Chylisma claviformis*), Thistle Sage (*Salvia carduacea*), Canterbury bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Mojave sun cup (*Camissonia campestris*), Mojave lupine (*Lupinus ordoratus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), desert gold poppy (*Encelia parishi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), desert chicory (*Rafinesquia neomexicana*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), desert pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*) and yellow flowering chuparosa (*Justicia californica*). Visitors are welcome to visit the campus and enjoy the flowers from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. They need a visitor pass from the Main Office. We are located in Cudahy on Elizabeth Street between Atlantic Blvd and Wilcox Ave.

Butterfly on apricot mallow. Photo by George Nanoski

Continue a little south of Cudahy to Long Beach to enjoy walking in the Jack Dunster Marine Biological Preserve which is a secluded gem of Coastal Sage Scrub habitat. Chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Island snapdragon (*Galvesia speciosa*), several sage species (*Salvia* spp.), giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne gigantea*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) provide a heady mix of floral and ocean breeze scents. Go to see the blossoms and the views of the marina, but keep an eye out for possible sea lion sighting!

Jack Dunst Preserve. Photo by George Nanoski

Going to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to see wildflowers is only for the die-hard botanists this year. The blossoms are sparse and short of stature—belly flower short! Entering the park down the Montezuma grade (S22) will offer up sightings of desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) with a few ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) rising above them. A few of the die-hard botanists I mentioned above visited Yaqui Pass this week and reported finding good blooms of almost entirely small plants along their hike to about 1300 feet in the canyons and washes of the area. Forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), small flowered poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*) common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), purple mat (*Nama demissum*), Bigelow's monkey flower (*Mimulus bigelovii*) were all guilty of blooming small.

In Joshua Tree National Park, the wildflower bloom is developing nicely in Cottonwood Canyon and on the Bajada Trail with more than 30 species reported, although just a few of each. You will need to get out of the car and hike around to appreciate the diversity of flowering plants. Brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) are the showy shrubs that can be seen along the road. Annuals that you will encounter hiking in Cottonwood wash include whitestem blazing star (*Mentzelia albicaulis*), brown-eyed primrose, (*Chylisma claviformis*), for-get-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.) and my personal favorite, desert star (*Monoptilon bellioides*).

Traveling south of JTNP through Box Springs Canyon, pull off the road and explore the washes and canyons. Tucked around crevices and rocky canyon walls are a few hardy annuals like little golden poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), notch-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), white fiesta flower, (*Pholistoma membranaceum*) and desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). Perennials include chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis* sp.), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*).

We have our first report from Death Valley National Park this week. Not much is happening yet, but the area between Jubilee Pass and Salsberry pass in the southeast side of the park is looking to be a treat in a few weeks. Already there are signs of life with Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), small flowered poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), Panamint forget-me-not (*Cryptantha angustifolia*), evening primroses (*Chylisma claviformis* and *Chylisma brevipes*) in bloom, along with perennials such as bur sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) and creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*). Park off the pavement and take a hike to enjoy all the little beauties.

Over at the Placerita Canyon Natural Area, spring has definitely arrived along the Canyon Trail. Look for the hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) at its peak bloom along with the "ribes trifecta" fuchsia-flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) and the golden currant (*Ribes aureum*). Tucked under these shrubs is the California peony (*Paeonia californica*) and scrambling over the shrubs is the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*).

Springtime on the Canyon Trail at Placerita Canyon. Photo by Ron Kraus.

Lastly, our first report from folks up north at Pinnacles National Monument. On the Balconies Ridge trail, Condor Gulch trail and along Hwy 146 E. enjoy the gold and red colors of goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), and Indian Warrior (*Pedicularis densiflora*). Chia (*Salvia columbariae*), tufted poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitata*) paint a beautiful palette of yellow, gold and blue in the landscape. Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), two shooting star species (*Dodecatheon clevelandii* ssp. *patulum* and *Dodecatheon herndersonii*) are outstanding specialties that you must see here!

For those of you wondering about Carrizo Plain, the report is that due to low rainfall, very little is flowering there now. Keep fingers crossed for the next few weeks.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 22** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

If you would like to be a wildflower reporter send your information about wildflower blooms and their location to flowerhotline@theodorepayne.org by Wednesday of each week when notes occur.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:
Theodore Payne Foundation

Annual Poppy Day on Saturday, March 23, Plant Sale and Festival.

10th Annual Native Plant Garden Tour, Saturday and Sunday, **April 6 & 7** from 10 am – 5 pm. For more information and tickets, visit our **webpage**.

Huntington Library

When They Were Wild: Recapturing California's Wildflower Heritage

March 9 – June 10, 2013

Mary Lou and George Boone Gallery

A collaborative project of The Huntington, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants. For more information, go to The Huntington

California Native Plant Society Chapters

CNPS-San Diego Chapter

March 16 - Spring Plant Sale – Saturday

Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano, 9:00am to 4:00pm

For more information see the chapter website CNPS-San Diego Chapter

March 30 - Public Plant Hike - Sunday

San Diego National Wildlife Refuge

More information

CNPS – Los Angeles-Santa Monica Mountains

Field Trip: **Sunday, March 17 - 9am**

Royce Canyon (Griffith Park)

Wildflower Hike 9:00 am -12:30 pm. For more information and program schedule, go to LA/SMM newsletter **The Toyon**

CNPS – Orange County Chapter

Field Trip: **March 31, Sunday. 8:00 am** Elsinore Peak Region, Santa Ana Mountains. Go to **OCCNPS Field Trips** for more information.

CNPS – Channel Islands Chapter

March 30, 9 am – 12:30 pm Nature hike on Sulphur Mt., Ventura County.

See calendar of activities for chapter for more information.

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park

March 17. Sunday Wildflower Hike

Harford Springs Preserve

March 16 and March 23. 9:00 am – 12:30 pm \$2/person

Wildflower walks are being offered through Hidden Valley Nature Center- Reservations required. **Call 951.785-7452**. Parking is at the entrance on Gavilan Road.