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 May 10, 2013. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

I've been told that it is prime flowering time for the dogwoods (Cornus nuttallii) in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks and that it is worth a weekend trip to the parks to see them. Check out the blooming dogwoods especially in Giant Forest and Grant Grove. It would be hard to find anything so magnificent together than dogwoods and sequoias; and you can see it here! Another great showy plant—flannel bush (Fremontodendron californicum) with its large yellow gold flowers—is in full bloom near Potwisha. The Lookout Point near the Mineral King entrance is popping with beauties too. The bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida) is stunning with bright yellow blooms against its bluish green foliage. Elegant madia (Madia elegans), monkey flower (Mimulus aurantiacus) with chaparral yucca (Hesperouucca [Yucca] whipplei) are very showy along the highways as well. Blue spider lupine (Lupinus benthamii) is fading but spots of blue do still dot the landscape here and there. The California buckeye (Aesculus californica) is in peak bloom and very showy along Highway 198 through Three Rivers into the national parks. If visiting the area, be reminded that a spring snowmelt is swelling the rivers, so be cautious in these areas.

Across the Valley at the coastal Santa Barbara Botanic Garden well tended spring flowering plants continue to delight visitors. The Meadow Section trail offers colorful California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), Point Reyes meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii var. sulfurea), Island bush poppy (Dendromecon harfordii), and purple sage (Salvia leucophylla). The Desert Section has a nice show of pink fairy-duster (Calliandra eriophylla), desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata), desert lavender (Hyiptis emoryi), several species of penstemon (Penstemon spp.), desert mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), and prickly pears (Opuntia spp.). The stream orchid (Epipactis gigantea) can be found in the Orchid display, and there, look for the hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea) as well. The canyon sunflower (Venegasia carpesioides) is in full bloom throughout the canyon below the picturesque and historic Mission Dam, where wild ginger (Asarum caudatum) and redwood sorrel (Oxalis oregana) are flowering beneath the redwoods (Sequoia sepmpervirens). Enjoy your visit here!

Seasonal wildflowers are just about gone on Figueroa Mountain. The warm, unseasonal temperatures, strong winds and lack of rain has shortened the bloom period for many annual species. Having said that, there are still nice things to seek out and well worth the search challenge. Throughout Figueroa Mountain, dudleyas (Dudleya spp.), butter lupine (Lupinus luteolus), blue elderberry (Sambucus nigra), bush lupine (Lupinus sp.), and prickly lupine (Lupinus hirsutissimus) can be spotted here and there—the dudleyas hugging rocks and boulders. The showiest plants—bush poppies (Dendromecon rigida), sticky leaf monkey flowers (Mimulus
aurantiacus), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.)—are somewhat easier to spot in the distance. Nuttall’s-larkspur (*Delphinium nuttallianum*), the remaining mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* spp.), and a variety of clarkia, including wine cups (*Clarkia purpurea*), farewell to spring (*Clarkia amoena*), speckled (*Clarkia cylindrica*) and elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unquiculata*) can be found hiding among grasses and shrubs. These are best seen in Sunset Valley and Happy Canyon.

Clarkia species. Photos by Michael Charters

At [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#), there is a nice variety of flowering chaparral shrubs, annuals and perennials along the main Canyon Trail. Visit, hike and enjoy this public natural treasure which has recently been refurnished by LA County crews. Along your hike you will see Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon trichocalyx*), holly-leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), sticky-leaf monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unquiculata*), farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia amoena*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and common phacelia.

Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon trichocalyx*) at Placerita Canyon. Photo by Ron Kraus
At Hungry Valley SRVA near Gorman, California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are still blooming and a little freshened after the recent rain. Driving south from the North Entrance kiosk along Wheatfield/Powerline/Saltlick trails loop, the poppies greet and wave at you along the roadsides. Powerline Road is especially nice with poppies, lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) and the balsam root sunflower (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*). Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) is stunning with its tall spikes of large creamy white flowers now in bloom all over the park. Look out too, (well you really can’t miss them!) for the bright red scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*).

Another botanic garden that has beautiful natives is Descanso Gardens in La Cañada-Flintridge. Right now the Matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*) are waving their large white flowers high in the air, signaling you to come visit. Another great plant is the mock orange (*Philadelphus lewesi*). This plant has the most amazing fragrance. You must go and enjoy it. Throughout the garden you will see abundant California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), penstemons (*Penstemon spectabilis, P. heterophyllus* and *P. centranthifolius*) and sages (*Salvia* spp.). Showy trees include the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*). The Native Garden Wildflower Patch is displaying tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), five spot (*Nemophila maculata*) chia (*Salvia columbariae*) and clarkias (*Clarkia* spp.). All this color benefits from the incredible backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Zoo Drive at the easternmost end of the Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park, has a colorful show of bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and Matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*). Look up at the chaparral covered slopes of Griffith Park for bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.). This colorful scene of native flowers nicely frames the Zoo’s wild critters.

It’s the bright pink prickly phlox (*Linanthus [Leptodactylon] californicus*) popping all over Stough Canyon Nature Center in the Verdugo Mountains and competing for your attention with the showy orange and yellow monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*). The elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) can’t be missed with its showy red-pink flowers. Caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*) is crawling all over the hillsides in Stough Canyon while bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and California wild rose (*Rosa californica*) are decorating the Nature Center garden.

Take a side trip off the 210 Fwy to visit Eaton Canyon Nature Center. The recent rain has freshened up the landscape and the fragrance of abundant sage species fills the air. The white sage (*Salvia apiana*) along the trails, black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) in the demonstration garden are in bloom. Other natives seen here include golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and for the first time blooming this year the Western columbine (*Aquilega formosa*). This plant attracts a lot of hummingbirds, so enjoy that show as well. The blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) is also beginning to display its sprays of creamy yellow flowers.
Down the coast to Orange County, at the [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach, the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is showing off its large flower spikes and enticing you with the fragrance of grape soda. Representing mallows from the desert to the sea, Indian mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*) and San Clemente Island mallow (*Malacothamnus clementinus*) are blooming with golden and lavender flowers. The bright red of scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) contrasts nicely with yellow Hooker’s evening primrose (*Oenothera hookeri*). Some prickly characters—wild rose (*Rosa californica*) and prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*) have beautiful blossoms among their spiny branches. The white sage (*Salvia apiana*) is waving its tall flowering branches well beyond its foliage giving you a little tickle as you walk by.

[Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy is still the wildflower oasis in the asphalt jungle. The flowering is winding down like the school year, but there are still some stars to carry us through graduation. The Matillija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*) are still going strong, and the San Clemente Island brodiaea (*Brodiaea kinkiensis*), the Santa Rosa Island white felted paintbrush (*Castilleja lanata* ssp. *hololeuca*), and San Diego sunflower (*Hulsea californica*) form the backbone of the garden. The Desert Garden still has, thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), Canterbury bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*). Come see this garden before the school year ends. Visitors are welcome to visit the campus and enjoy the flowers from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. Visitor passes from the Main Office. The school is located in Cudahy on Elizabeth Street between Atlantic Blvd and Wilcox Ave.

![Photos of ELC Habitat Garden. Photos by George Nanoski](#)
Places along the Pacific Crest Trail in Southern California still hold a promise of wildflowers, but you probably need to go soon. In the San Gabriel Mountains, the PCT from Mill Creek Summit trailhead to Pacifico Mountain offers some delightful views of the Mojave desert. Some of the desert’s flower species mix it up with the mountain species here. The area is also recovering from the 2009 Station Fire. Look for the yellow Mojave goosefoot violet (*Viola purpurea ssp. mojavensis*), white forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), pink Modoc gilia (*Gilia modocensis*) and violet-blue Davidson’s phacelia (*Phacelia davidsonii*). If that is not enough color for you, the bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) and Johnston’s bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus var. johnstonii*) add to the amazing color palette along the trail. Some interesting and lovely members of the sunflower family—scale bud (*Anisocoma acaulis*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), San Gabriel Mountain hulsea (*Hulsea vestita ssp. gabrielensis*) and silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*)—will be showing off for a short time.

![Mojave goosefoot violet, Modoc gilia, San Gabriel Mountain hulsea on PCT.](image)

With a bit of hunting, wildflowers can still be found at various locations in the Cleveland National Forest. Take the always-beautiful drive on Hwy 74 (Ortega Hwy) and stop at the large meadow at the intersection with Long Canyon Road. This is about 23 miles east of San Juan Capistrano. Walk the meadow and you will find an excellent colony of golden-yellow (*Linanthus aureus*) in peak bloom, as well as (*Viola pedunculata*). You'll also find lots of (*Gilia angelensis*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), checker bloom (*Sidalcea malvaflora*) and a few others in the meadow. Although not wildflowers, you may also want to notice a couple of interesting monocots (rush) that grow here: Basket rush (*Juncus textilis*) is somewhat uncommon overall, but obvious here. Wire rush (*Juncus balticus*) is smaller and less conspicuous, but is blooming right at the entrance gate.

Lastly, our first report from local mountain resorts. Spring wildflowers have just arrived in the higher elevations like Idyllwild in the San Jacinto Mountains. Along the forest service roads and trails from Idyllwild to Pine Cove, a hiker will find a variety of habitats and a great diversity of flowers. If you missed the manzanita flowering in the low elevations earlier this spring, come to the mountains to see three species of this beautiful California icon now flowering. There is the Mexican Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pungens*), with its polished bronze bark, bright green leaves and pure white flowers. Edgewood’s Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*
glandulosa) has just a blush of pink in its flowers; and the pink-bracted manzanita (Arctostaphylos pringlei) has the showiest deep pink flowers of any manzanita. Add to that the pink flowered mountain currant (Ribes nevadense), with a few species of blue lupines (Lupinus bicolor and L. concinnus) and bright yellow and orange bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida) and monkeyflower (Mimulus aurantiacus); and you have a feast of color for the eyes. Some small beauties are also peeking out from rocks, shrubs and oak duff. These include baby-blue-eyes (Nemophila menziesii), Miner’s lettuce (Claytonia spp.), forget-me-nots (Cryptantha spp.), wild strawberry (Fragaria sp.), suncups (Camissionopsis spp.) gilias (Gilia spp.), woodland star (Lithophragma sp.) and wallflower (Erysimum capitatum). If you’ve never seen the snow plant (Sarcodes sanguinea), better get up there before it’s gone! Idyllwild is having several nice festivals this month, so you should get up there and check it out.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 17** 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 blooms of note occur.

**NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:**

**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](http://www.theohuntington.org)
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

**Garden Tours**
Weekends, March 23 through June 9, 1 p.m.
Guided walking tours with Garden nature interpreters featuring beautiful California wildflowers and seasonal highlights. Free with standard Garden admission.

**California Native Plant Society Chapters**

**CNPS-San Diego Chapter**

Field Trip/Hike: **Saturday, May 11, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.** Batiquitos Lagoon. [More information](#) about meeting place and hike conditions.

Field Trip for Advanced Plant Lovers: Sunday, May 12, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Upper Cottonwood Creek Flora. [More information](#) about meeting place and conditions.

**CNPS – Orange County Chapter**

Field Trip: Sunday, May 19. Upper Newport Bay Ecological Preserve. For more information, go to [OC/CNPS](#).