



# Wildflower Hotline

Every Weekend March through May

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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 17, 2013**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

The wildflower season is rapidly fading in the lower elevations, but travel above 3500 feet in our local mountains, and you will be delighted with the variety of species taking advantage of the cooler climate and residual moisture from snow melt.

A segment of the Pacific Crest Trail in the San Gabriel Mountains between Little Rock Creek Road and Pacifico Mountain is inviting enthusiastic botanists to explore the area. The diversity is great, the numbers of flowering plants is low, so take your time and search for the little beauties. The most colorful trail species include pink splendid gilia, (*Saltugilia splendens* ssp. *splendens*), interior goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), the Mojave ceanothus (*Ceanothus vestitus*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*), mountain currant (*Ribes nevadense*) and bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus* ssp. *austromontanus*). Scattered about, you may spot Burlew's wild onion (*Allium burlewii*), rock buckwheat (*Eriogonum saxatile*), Martin's paintbrush (*Castilleja applegatei* var. *martinii*) and silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*). A more intense search will reward you with canyon dudleya (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *pumila*) wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), scalebud (*Anisocoma aculis*) and rock cress (*Boechea californica*). This part of the trail is well maintained and rises from 5300 feet to 7100 feet in elevation.



*Dudleya cymosa* and *Saltugilia splendens* on the PCT. Photos by Michael Charters

The wildflower news is all good out of the Santa Ana Mountains, particularly on the trails along the Ortega Highway. The higher elevation chaparral on public trails is still beautiful and well worth the hike. There is a spectacular variety of wildflowers in the Blue Jay Camp ground, Chiquito Trail, the Los Pinos Peak Trail and the

Bear Ridge Loop. The Cleveland National Forest's very own monkeyflower (*Mimulus clevelandii*) stands out as a yellow beacon along the trails. There is still a ceanothus in bloom—the pretty blue wartleaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus papillosus*). Other iconic chaparral species that you will enjoy include chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema* sp.), sticky-leaf monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), woolly Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) and golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*). You should try to get out and hike this area this weekend.

In the San Jacinto Mountains between Idyllwild and Pine Cove, the well maintained forest service roads will accommodate wandering botanists very nicely. The walk will take you through several habitats including pine forest, chaparral and grassy meadows. This area has been greatly thinned as part of a fuel reduction project. Botanically speaking the big winners are scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and Chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) which are now thriving as a result of the open canopy. The heady fragrance of ceanothus wafts on the breeze. The showy pink bracted manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringlei* ssp. *drupacea*) which is in its prime right now and the few-leaved checkerbloom (*Sidalcea sparsiflora*) is frequently encountered in the open grassy spaces along with the less conspicuous Oak violet (*Viola purpurea* ssp. *quercetorum*). Quite amazing is the giant chain fern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*) with leaves up to 9 feet long. In much of Idyllwild one can see Indian milkweed (*Asclepias eriocarpa*), but at the lower elevations you may be lucky to spot its showier cousin the California milkweed (*Asclepias californica*). Other characteristic plants include bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) and canyon sweet pea (*Lathyrus vestitus* var. *vestitus*). It is easy to miss the cryptic long-flowered thread plant (*Nemacladus longiflorus* var. *longiflorus*) because it blends with the background landscape so well. But look at the flower of this plant with a hand lens to see its tiny orchid like flower. It is a small splendor. The baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii* var. *menziesii*) range in color from deep blue to white. The bright red snow plants (*Sarcodes sanguinea*) are still popping up everywhere in the pine needle litter.



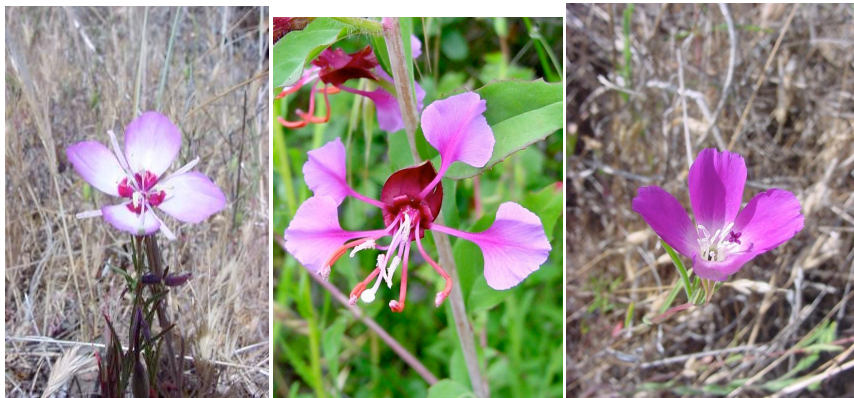
*Arctostaphylos pringlei* ssp. *drupacea* and *Asclepias californica*. Photos by Tom Chester

Dogwoods (*Cornus nuttallii*) are still all the rage in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and that it is worth a weekend trip to the parks to see them. The best place to see them is 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! If that were not spectacular enough, the 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 a great place to see the bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) with its stunning bright yellow blooms against its bluish green foliage. Elegant madia (*Madia elegans*), monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) and chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca* [*Yucca*] *whipplei*) are very showy along the highways as well. The California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is in peak bloom and very showy along Highway 198 through Three Rivers into the national parks.

Across the Valley at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden spring flowering plants were refreshed by the turn of cool weather. Be on the lookout for Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), and in the the pink fairy-duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), several species of penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.) and desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*). Together, these plants display a beautiful palette of color. The canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) is still in 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 sempervirens*).

A few seasonal wildflowers are lingering on Figueroa Mountain. You can spot dudleyas (*Dudleya* spp.), butter lupine (*Lupinus luteolus*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), and prickly lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*) 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. A variety of late season 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**

Along the main Canyon Trail at [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#), you can view our iconic chaparral species of flowering shrubs and wildflowers before they fade for the season. Along your hike you will see red-orange heart-leaved penstemon (*Penstemon cordifolius*) arching its branches over other shrubs to reach the light. Southern California locoweed (*Astragalus trichopodus*) is in full bloom now and

Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*), 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.

The natives at Descanso Gardens in La Cañada-Flintridge are still showy throughout the garden. 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 lewesii*). This plant has the most amazing fragrance. You will encounter the bright golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and the pretty-in-pink California wild rose (*Rosa californica*) here and there in the garden. Penstemons of all sorts (*Penstemon spectabilis*, *P. heterophyllum* and *P. centranthifolius*) and several sages (*Salvia* spp.) are happily blooming. The sages' cousin—woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) is busy attracting bees. Showy trees include the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*). Look for the colorful trio of monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) and pink fairy duster (*Calliandra californica*) as well.

Eaton Canyon is all about the sage! The heady 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 put on a stunning red and yellow show and include golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and 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.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 24** 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 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 [Huntington.org](http://Huntington.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**

Field Trip: Sunday, May 19. Upper Newport Bay Ecological Preserve. For more information, go to [occnps.org/explore/field-trips](http://occnps.org/explore/field-trips).