Theodore Payne Foundation, a non-profit plant nursery, seed source, book store, and education center dedicated to the preservation of wild flowers and California native plants. This a report for **April 17, 2015**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

It’s challenging now to find wild flower sightings below 2500’ except in cultivated gardens like the Environmental Nature Center, Descanso Gardens, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and others. But these are still wonderful places to see our native beauties. Check out Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden this weekend for their Annual Wildflower Show. See details in events section below.

Heading east along Highway198 through Three Rivers into the lower elevations of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra monkeyflower (**Mimulus aurantiacus**) and blue elderberry (**Sambucus nigra** ssp. **cearulea**) are especially nice around the Kaweah Reservoir. Above 1000 ft. elevation, look for spider lupine (**Lupinus benthamii**) in various locations, especially near southern entrance station. Also pretty in blue is the foothill beard tongue (**Penstemon heterophyllus**). Elegant madia (**Madia elegans**) and California flannel bush (**Fremontodendron californicum**) are flowering around the 2,000 ft. elevation. Look for flannel bush near Potwisha and Buckeye campgrounds. Pacific mountain dogwood (**Cornus nutallii**) will be starting to bloom in the next few weeks. Look for it around the Giant Forest. Always be prepared for changeable weather this time of year and be prepared.

Along the Angeles Crest and Angeles Forest Highways and Big and Little Tujunga Canyon Roads in the Angeles National Forest, (including the recently declared San Gabriel Mountains National Monument) roadside color is real nice between 2000 and 4000 ft. elevation. Black sage (**Salvia mellifera**), bush poppy (**Dendromecon rigida**), the blue-flowering ceanothus (**Ceanothus spp.**) and some California buckwheat (**Eriogonum fasciculatum**) are flowering. Elderberry (**Sambucus nigra** ssp. **cearulea**) and yerba santa (**Eriodictyon sp.**) can be seen blooming along the road as well. You’ll have to get out of the car (park safely first!) to see the cute little dudleyas (**Dudleya spp.**) tucked in among the rocks and boulders, along with some wild onion (**Allium sp.**) and blue dicks (**Dichelostemma capitatum**).

Walk the Native Garden, New Oak Woodland and Native Desert Garden sections at **Descanso Gardens** in La Canada to find lovely specimens of native wild flowers. You will find the cute little chia (**Salvia columbariae**), tidy tips (**Layia platyglossa**), Chinese houses (**Collinsia heterophylla**), lace-leaved phacelia (**Phacelia tanacetifolia**), elegant clarkia (**Clarkia unguiculata**), and bird’s eye gilia (**Gilia tricolor**). The perennials that add color include monkey flower (**Mimulus aurantiacus**), scarlet bugler (**Penstemon centranthiflorus**), and deerweed (**Acmispon glabra**). The Natives Desert Garden has Apache plume (**Fallugia paradoxa**), fairy dusters—the Baja (**Calliandra californica** and the pink (**Calliandra eriophylla**), chuparosa (**Justicia californica**), and apricot mallow (**Sphaeralcea ambigua**). As flowers dry up elsewhere in the natural areas, Descanso Gardens is an oasis. Check it out.
If you are looking for color and fragrance, walk the Ecology trail at the Placerita Canyon Nature Center and you won’t be disappointed; and a few new species are coming into bloom as others fade. Woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum) are spectacular, and fill the air with their pungent minty fragrance. The sticky monkey flower (Mimulus aurantiacus) is at peak bloom and showy orange-yellow in color. The bright red scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthifolius) is scattered along the trail among all the monkey flowers making a grand show of hot hues. Add to the variety, foothill penstemon (Penstemon heterophyllus), chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum), California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum), white snapdragons (Antirrhinum coulterianum), cliff asters (Malacothrix saxatilis), and black sage (Salvia mellifera), and you have a pretty nice backdrop for a great hike.

Sticky monkeyflower (Mimulus aurantiacus) Photo by RuthAnne Murthy

The Puma Reserve southeast of Pinyon Hills, north of Wrightwood, (the transition zone between the San Gabriel Mountains and the Mojave Desert) is in full bloom. There is a 2 mile loop trail on the Puma Reserve. The star of the show is desert sage (Salvia dorrii), which colors whole hillsides with blue-purple. Other showy species include Mojave linanthus (Leptosiphon breviculus) with its showy white flowers (for a linanthus!), fields of two different gilia species (Gilia spp.), tons of pincushion (Chaenactis stevioides), white tidy tips (Layia glandulosa), carpets of woolly daisy (Eriophyllum wallacei), sun cups (Camissonia campestris), and desert cryptantha (Cryptantha similis). There are a number of plants of cotton thorn (Tetradyymia axillaris var. longispina), goldenbush (Ericameria linearifolia), common phacelia (Phacelia distans), Fremont’s phacelia (Phacelia fremontii), a few larkspur (Delphinium parishii) and a few plants of beavertail cactus (Opuntia basilaris var. brachyclada) in bloom.
Mojave liananthus (*Leptosiphon brevicaulis*) above and desert sage (*Salvia dorrii*) at Puma Reserve below. Photos by Tom Chester

In *Joshua Tree National Park*, along Park Blvd. from the west entrance to the north entrance, desert bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*), and chia (*Salvia columbariae*) can be seen along the roadside. Parry’s nolina (*Nolina parryi*), Mojave yucca (*Yucca schidigera*) and Mojave mound cactus (*Echinocereus mojavensis*) are among the species blooming in spectacular fashion in the Barker Dam and Hidden Valley areas. Near the West Entrance beardtale cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), desert fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata var. tessellata*), paper bag bush (*Scutellaria mexicana*), and desert globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigu*ua) have all been spotted recently. At Jumbo Rocks, search the little sandy and gravelly areas
for chia (*Salvia columbariae*), lupine (*Lupinus sp.*), and woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*). The interesting and odd looking desert trumpet (*Eriogonum inflatum*) is also around in this area. At Wilson Canyon, the desert senna (*Senna armata*), indigo bush (*Psorothamnus arborescens var. simplicifolius*), desert chicory (*Rafinesquia sp.*), brittlebush (*Encelia sp.*), and desert rock pea (*Acmispon rigidus*) add colorful highlights to an otherwise sparse landscape. At Wilson Canyon, the desert senna (*Senna armata*), indigo bush (*Psorothamnus arborescens var. simplicifolius*), desert chicory (*Rafinesquia sp.*), brittlebush (*Encelia sp.*), and desert rock pea (*Acmispon rigidus*) add colorful highlights to an otherwise sparse landscape. At Indian Cove there is quite a variety of interesting blooms including ground cherry (*Physalis sp.*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), desert tobacco (*Nicotiana obtusifolia*), desert bells (*Phacelia sp.*), silver cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*), hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), and California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*).

At **La Alba Trails**, the new Riverside County Habitat Conservation Area I’ve included in the last weeks, doesn’t have the showy carpets of bloom any longer, but new good stuff is coming out to be enjoyed. Perennials include slender-leaved sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*), black and white sage (*Salvia mellifera* and *Salvia apiana*) and yellow bush penstemon (*Keckiela antirrhinoides*). Look for fire red paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis* ssp. *affinis*) and blue larkspur (*Delphinium sp.*). Very colorful! Look for patches phacelia species, (*Phacelia distans* and *Phacelia cicutaria* var. *hispida*). Splendid Mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*) stick up from the ground to form delicate pink spots in the landscape. Make sure to seek out the slender tarplant (*Deinandra fasciculata*). Since this is a new area, here are the directions once again this week. From I-15 (Murrieta/Temecula area) take the Winchester Rd/N Hwy79 exit. Go north on Winchester Rd. approximately 4 miles to La Alba Dr. Turn left on La Alba, and drive to end of street and park. The trailhead is directly ahead and to the left of the trailhead sign. For the best blooms, take the small trail just beyond the main trail on the right.

Slender-leaved sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*). Photo by Michael Charters
At the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach, the blooms just keep on coming! Showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) are spectacular along with desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*). The California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is still in bloom and Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and Island mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*) provide wonderful color. The California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) pop with orange in contrast to the more subtle pastel colors of bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) and fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*).

The wildflowers keep coming at Elizabeth Learning Center! Our deepest vernal pools continue to retain enough soil moisture to have effervescent Hoover’s calicoflower (*Downingia bella*) and toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*) clustering in the basins. Also blooming are flowering quillwort (*Triglochin scilloides*), prostrate navarratia (*Navarretia prostrata*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), California orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), San Diego button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum var. parishii*), Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), thread-leaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), dense-flowered spike primrose (*Epilobium densiflorum*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), Bolander’s water-starwort (*Callitriche heterophylla var. bolanderi*) and gorgeous Sanford’s arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*). Most of our toadlets have found refuge from the sun in vernal cracks or beneath rocks! Other plants putting on a good show here are calico monkeyflower (*Mimulus pictus*), Indian pink (*Silene laciniata*), and Verity’s liveforever (*Dudleya verityi*) in the chaparral garden! The desert garden has California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Mojave sun cups (*Camissonia campestris*), Mojave lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), pebble pincushion (*Chaenactis carphoclinia*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert lavender (*Hypsit emoryi*), desert holly (*Atriplex hymenelytra*), desert gold (*Geraea canescens*), owls clover (*Castilleja exserta*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), Panamint cryptantha (*Cryptantha inaequata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*), emory’s rock daisy (*Perityle emoryi*), five-needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*) and southwestern mock vervain (*Verbena gooddingii*). Also really stunning are the large planters we have here filled with California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Come for a visit...we are in Cudahy between Atlantic and Wilcox. Check in as a guest at the Main Office during school hours. You may visit the Desert and Vernal Pool gardens anytime as they are in front of the school.
That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 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 flowerhotline@theodorepayne.org by Wednesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

**Wild Flower Events**

- **Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.** Wildflower Festival & Show Saturday & Sunday, April 18 & 19; 10 am – 4 pm. Free for garden members. Entrance fee for non members.

- **Placerita Canyon Nature Center**
  Annual Open House. Saturday, May 9