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 **March 20, 2015**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Enjoy the first weekend of spring. Participate in the Theodore Payne Foundation native plant garden tour, or get out into the many natural areas highlighted below to see nature’s ephemeral beauty in wildflowers.

![Desert globe mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) in Habitat Garden at the Elizabeth Learning Center. Photo by George Nanoski.](image)

Come by [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) this Sunday to marvel at the rich diversity of flora and fauna found in the school’s Habitat Gardens. It is Garden 47 on the Theodore Payne Foundation Native Plant Garden Tour! The gardens will be open from 10am to 5pm. Complimentary ice-cold lemonade and visitor’s guide brochures for all those curious enough to meander out their way! Here's what you'll see: The vernal pools continue their flower show surrounded by yellow-ray goldfields, owl’s clover, and miniature lupine, while in the basins, vernal pool endemics like Otay Mesa mint, woolly marbles, California Orcutt’s grass, Hoover's calico flower, San Diego button celery, thread-leaf brodiaea, dense-flowered spike primrose and Douglas’ meadowfoam vie for remaining moisture. Flowering outside the pools despite withering heat this month are arroyo lupine, fiddleneck, holly-leaf navarretia, California poppy, clustered Tarplant, Mojave tarplant, chia, deerweed, wart-stemmed ceanothus and cliff spurge. The Desert Habitat garden has with
beavertail cactus, catsclaw, brown-eyed primrose, thistle sage, Canterbury bells, desert blue bells, Mojave sun cups, lupines, California and pigmy poppy, apricot mallow, bladderpod, Spanish needle, desert pincushion, brittle bush, desert lavender, yellow flowering and red flowering chuparosa, sand verbena, desert penstemon, desert gold, lesser Mohavea, desert dandelion, goldfields, chia, desert candle, desert five spot, sand-blazing star, climbing milkweed, desert calico, desert marigold, fishhook cactus, sweetbush, and desert chicory. In the Chaparral Gardens, the palo verde has exploded with a fireworks-like display of yellow! The palo blanco (Baja) also has amazing clusters of round, white blooms. Other plants are also coming along. They are diverse and colorful.

Heading east along Highway 198 through Three Rivers into the lower elevations of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, you will see fiddlenecks, (Amsinckia menziesii), buckbrush (Ceanothus cuneatus), silver bush lupine (Lupinus albifrons), spider lupine (Lupinus benthamii) and Western redbud (Cercis occidentalis). Also, just starting to bloom and spotty still, are California poppy (Eschscholzia californica) and elegant madia (Madia elegans). Flowering is about one month ahead of season here because of warm, dry weather. But weather can change quickly in this area and you should be prepared for changeable temperatures and conditions.

From a friend and part time resident of Three Rivers, I received notice to get out to Dry Creek in the Three Rivers community to see the wildflowers. There is a splendid display, acre upon acre, of glorious golden poppies absolutely glowing in the afternoons bright sunlight. Check out these photos.
From US 101 about 20 miles north of Paso Robles, take the Jolon/Hunter Liggett turnoff and drive west towards Ft Hunter Liggett. The thin topsoil over chalk sandstone deposits are carrying dazzling displays of California poppies (Eschscholzia californica), fiddleneck (Amsinckia sp.), baby blue-eyes (Nemophila menziesii), goldfields (Lasthenia sp.), to name only a few. The surrounding hillsides are especially heavy with color and should last another few weeks. You can also access the area from King City. Gas up in Paso or King City, and bring a picnic lunch. Gas & snacks are available in Lockwood too. The area east of Santa Margarita (just north of San Luis Obispo) on Highway 58 is also very colorful. Again, no services, so gas up and take food for snacking. All private/gov’t land, no parks, but plenty of photo opportunities. Shell Creek Rd is a good spot to see wildflowers.

Wildflowers on Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest started early this year, including some of the late season flowers that we usually do not see until April. Crossing the first cattle guard, look for popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys sp), blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum), buttercups (Ranunculus californica), fiddlenecks (Amsinckia sp.), Johnny jump-up (Viola pedunculata), fiesta flowers (Pholistoma auritum), miner’s lettuce (Claytonia sp.), sky lupine (Lupinus nanus), hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea) and milk maids (californica). At the second bend, you will add to your previous sightings down the road, the vivid, red Indian paintbrush (Castilleja sp.) starting to bloom on the rock formations and a carpet of shooting stars (Dodecatheon sp.). Further up on the left are more lupine, buttercups, popcorn flowers, fiesta flowers, and blue dicks. Soon you encounter the road lined with lovely, white flowering ceanothus (Ceanothus sp.) along with prickly phlox (Linanthus californicus), wild onions (Allium sp.), orange wall flowers (Erysium capitatum), and coreopsis (Leptosyne sp.). The charming and beautiful chocolate lilies (Fritillaria biflora) are making their grand entrance at Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom). In the serpentine area
across the road, you'll see more California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), buttercups, blue dicks, shooting stars, wild onions and coreopsis. About a mile beyond the Figueroa Fire Station, the slopes on your left are rapidly beginning to fill with sky lupine and California poppies. Along this stretch, also look for bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), and the beginning of caterpillar phacelias, (*Phacelia cicutaria*). Beautiful displays of flowers continue past the Davy Brown Trailhead. As you continue for yet another quarter mile, there is a turnout on the left. Walk a few steps into that field to see gorgeous chocolate lilies, popcorn flower and shooting stars. From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, the Ceanothus continues to bloom, along with bush lupine, bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*), sticky leaf monkey flowers (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), Indian paintbrush, purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), and prickly phlox. These wildflower displays continue to amaze as you start your descent down Happy Canyon, through the old Cachuma Campground, to the end of your journey through Figueroa Mountain. This drive is well worth the trip. You are encouraged to use the turnout often and be safe on the road.

Spring at Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest.

Triunfo Canyon Park in the *Santa Monica Mountains* is having a quick turnover in flowering species, so if you are in the area, you should go visit soon. Lyon’s pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*) is a bright star along the trails in this area. Some folks haven't seen these in awhile because of the drought, but chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are abundant. There are colorful patches of color—yellow and
gold of common goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriscula*); and patches of purple with owl's clover (*Castilleja exerta*), and Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*). Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.) and violets (*Viola pedunculata*) stand out in the shaded and sheltered spots, and twining snapdragon (*Antirrhinum filipes*) rises above the fray by climbing on others to get the sunlight. Parry's phacelia (*Phacelia paryi*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), and larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.) dot the landscape with their blue blossoms. But make sure you also keep an eye out for the Mariposa and globe lilies (*Calochortus* spp.) poking up here and there.

Lyon’s pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*). Photos by Michael Charters

At **Descanso Gardens** in La Canada, you want to stroll the trails in the Native Garden and the Oak Woodland. There you will see in excellent blooms of tidy tips, (*Layia platyglossa*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), the cute little five spot (*Nemophila maculata*), and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Under the beautiful oaks look for bright spots of color with displayed by California sunflower (*Encelia californica*), monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthiflorus*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*). Of course there is much to see at Descanso, so plan on spending part of a day to enjoy the entire garden.

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) spring color is beginning to show off mostly between 2000 and 4000 ft.elevation. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), ceanothus, both blue and white-flowered (*Ceanothus* spp.) and some Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.) are flowering. Colorful lupines (*Lupinus* sp) are also showing off along the roadsides and slopes.

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center** invites you to come and visit. The brand new Interpretive Center is now open and will designed to inform visitors about the three ecosystems within our park: oak woodland, riparian, and chaparral. The Ecology Trail hosts all three of these ecosystems within a 1 1/2 mile loop. At this time there are at least 20 plants that are budding, blooming, or producing fruit. The California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is in full bloom and will soon begin to fade. The Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*) covers a large slope at the top of the trail. The spectacular purple blooms are a sight to see. Also of note are the fiddle neck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) with their bright yellow blooms and the unique form.
Mother nature dropped a heat bomb last week on the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve SNP which took out the stunning landscape of poppies just beginning a spectacular display on the south slopes. However, all is not lost! The north slopes of the reserve are angled away from the sun and still have lovely mosaics of color with goldfields (Lasthenia sp.), forget-me-nots (Cryptantha sp.), gold cups, cream cups (Platystemon californicus), owl's clover (Castilleja sp.), and lupine (Lupinus sp.) among scattered poppies. The best patches of wildflowers can be found on the north sides of Kitanemuk Vista Point, Valley Vista Point at the far east end of the park (just before Antelope Butte Vista Point), and the Vista Point just up from the east end of the paved parking lot.
In **Joshua Tree National Park**, the area around Black Rock Campground are starting to have showy patches of color. Joshua Trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) are ready to burst into bloom. Joshua Tree National Park’s own poppy (*Eschscholiza androuxi*) is brilliant now and contrasts nicely with the baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and tidy-tips (*Layia glandulosa*). Woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*) is dotting the washes with chia (*Salvia columbariae*). The wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*) is creeping up into the shrubs and along rock edges. At Jumbo Rocks, the shrub with the pretty pink blossoms—desert almond (*Prunus fasciculata*)—is blooming widely in the area. Wilson Canyon to Pinto Basin and in Porcupine Wash, the perennial shrubs are looking good and attracting pollinators. Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), thick-leaved ground-cherry (*Physalis crassifolia*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), and globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) are a few that are splendid now, especially if the starvine (*Brandegea bigelovii*), is decorating their branches. At the southern end of the park along Cottonwood canyon Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) are in bloom at milepost 33. Be careful of dive-bombing hummingbirds! Walk a bit in the area and you may come across the gorgeous blue Canterbury bells (*Phacelia campanularia*) and much more of what we mentioned above.

If you are driving w-a-a-a-y out in the eastern Mojave along Cadiz Road north of Hwy. 62, you will be in for a treat with splendid wildflower displays not far off the road. Keep in mind that you are in a somewhat remote desert area and be prepared for a sunny and windy desert environment, and far away from gas stations and markets. Most showy are the large swaths of desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), laxflower (*Baileya pauciradiata*), and tiny desert star (*Monoptilon belliioides*) scattered between the bright green foliage and yellow flowers of creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*). Near the roads are phacelias (*Phacelia spp.*), lupines (*Lupinus spp.*), and desert needles (*Palafoxia arida*). Along Hwy 62 between Hwy 177 and Vidal Junction, there are lots of pinchushion
(Chaenactis spp.), little white flowers of forget-me-nots (Cryptantha sp.), and popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys spp.). On the sandy hillocks, you will find one of my desert favorites, spectacle pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes). Other beauties that like this sandy habitat are sand verbena (Abronia villosa), desert dandelion, (Malacothrix glabrata), and birdcage evening primrose (Oenothera deltoides).

Sand verbena (Abronia villosa) and desert sunflower (Gereae canescens) off Hwy 62 south of Danby Lake. Photos by Daniel Torres

In the Inland Empire out at the MWD Diamond Valley Lake, the flowers along the North Hills Wildflower Trail and the Lakeview Trail are quite lovely, and much better than past years. Recent heat wave makes your trip here to see the peak bloom ever more urgent. This must be a good year for forget-me-nots (Cryptantha spp.) and popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys spp.) They are covering the hillsides with their tiny white flowers. Sprinkle some blue into the white landscape with arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), fern-leaf phacelia (Phacelia distans), wild Canterbury bells (Phacelia minor) and wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum) along with some orange and yellow California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), California goldfields (Lasthenia californica), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), and California sun cups (Camissoniopsis bistorta) and you get a lot of photo-worthy color.

The Wildflower Trail at Diamond Valley Lake. Photo by Bill Wagner
This week we get introduced to a new wildflower area. **La Alba is a Riverside County Habitat Conservation Area**; some of the land is semi-privately held. An urban park located next to housing tracts, it maintains pristine coastal sage scrub and riparian oak woodland habitats. Visitors who want to check it out are asked to please stay on trails and do not collect anything. The trailhead is located at the end of La Alba drive in Murrieta. 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. Trails are not marked. For the best blooms, go past the first main trail/road you come to on the right, and take the next small trail on the right, which is just a few feet further on. The trail travels downhill and will take you back to the main trail, go left to return to your car. The most common recognizable wildflowers include blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), owl’s cover (*Castilleja* sp.) and popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.).

Nearby is the **Santa Rosa Plateau Reserve** with its vernal pool habitat. The report I got is from a “drive by”, not a hiker in the park. But the word is that goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) and checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*) are there plenty.

In the Pinyon Ridge area of **Anza Borrego Desert State Park**, near its west boundary with Ranchita in the Wilson Trail region you will encounter some nice species. Fremont’s pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*), and yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabridulcula* var. *glabruiscula*) make a cheery display. More yellow and gold is on display with whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), golden bush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), Wallace’s daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), coreopsis (*Leptosyne californica*) and goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*). Occasional pink and blue blooms of ground pink (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*) purple mat (*Nama demissum*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), bluebells (*Phacelia minor*), and chia (*Salvia columbariae*) dot the yellow landscape.
Traveling west from Ana Borrego and down along the San Diego coast, get to Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve for a great day outing. If you haven’t been to Torrey Pines lately, you will find that many of the trails are now refurbished and ADA compliant, and provide beautiful views of our Pacific coastline. This time of year look for native bulb species in bloom. Red-skin onion, (Allium haematochiton), blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), star-lily (Zigadenus fremontii), and wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum ssp. capitatum). San Diego sea dahlia (Coreopsis maritima), encelia (Encelia farinosa), and bush sunflower (Encelia californica) provide a lot of cheery yellow color along with Southern goldfields (Lasthenia coronaria), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa) and Western wallflower (Erysimum capitatum). The vine species like wild cucumber (Marah macrocarpus var. macrocarpus), San Diego sweet pea (Lathyrus vestitus var. alefeldii) twine up the branches of the shrubs so they can get a sunny spot and your attention. Classic chaparral beauties blooming now include Arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), fuchsia flowering gooseberry (Ribes speciosum), coastal sand verbena (Abronia maritima), California peony (Paeonia californica), climbing snapdragon (Antirrhinum kelloggii), Cleveland shooting star (Dodecatheon clevelandii ssp. clevelandii), and Ramona ceanothus (Ceanothus tomentosus).

Along the Southern California coast In Newport Beach, the Environmental Nature Center is an oasis of floral serenity in a bustling beach community. Go there to walk the trails among beautiful native plants now in full bloom. Always cheery in their California-buckening colors of gold and blue are California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and Arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus). Enjoy all the California wild lilac (Ceanothus spp.) in stunning bloom along with California encelia (Encelia californica) bladderpod (Peritoma arborea) and flannel bush (Fremontodendron californicum). In contrast to all that blue and gold are the pink Western redbud (Cercis occidentalis), fairyduster (Caliandra eriophylla) and hummingbird sage (Salvia spathaceae). Then there is the showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis) that can’t decide if it wants to be blue or pink, so it chooses to display both colors on its flowers. More subtle blossoms, showy in their own style, are the coral bells (Heuchera spp.) attracting hummingbirds to their sweet nectar.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 27th 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:

Theodore Payne Foundation

Poppy Days Plant Sale

*Friday & Saturday, March 27 and 28, 8:30am-4:30pm*

An annual celebration of our State flower and huge native plant sale, offering the region’s largest and most interesting selection of California native plants – with expert advice and discounts to all!

TPF members 15% off all day; non-members 10% off after 11:00 am; memberships available at the door.

**2015 Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour**

*Saturday & Sunday, March 21 & 22, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm*

Full details at NativePlantGardenTour.org
Tickets On Sale Now

Placerita Canyon Nature Center

We invite you to our Blooms of the Season Hike on the 4th Saturday of the month (March 28) at 9:30. There is always something new and fascinating to see.

Los Padres National Forest

Spring 2015 Figueroa Wildflower Tour. **Saturday, March 28.** Starts at 9:00 am. Duration of the tour is 3 to 4 hours. For more information, call Helen Tarbet (805) 925-9538 ext. 246 or email htarbet@fs.fed.us

California Native Plant Society

Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter, CNPS

March Field Trip!
Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve
Saturday, March 21, 10 am to 12 noon
Meet at Old Schoolhouse parking lot at 9:45 am for an introduction to the Reserve and then we will start our wildflower walk. Explore plants and animals of the sage scrub, chaparral, and riparian habitats of the Lake Skinner Reserve with Christine Moen and Kate Kramer.

• 2 mile walk/hike starts at 10 am
• Bring lunch/snacks, plenty of water, sun protection, and comfortable hiking shoes

For detailed directions and parking, see attached flyer.
Info: contact Kate Kramer (kakramer@me.com, 951-970-8890)