Fransera (*Frasera parryi*) above and convergent lady beetles (*Hippodamia convergens*) below. Photos by Michele Rivers.

The highlight of the week in the [San Jacinto Mtns.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Jacinto_Mountains) along the north side of Morris
Creek in Garner Valley (Hwy 74) is the rare (*Penstemon californicus*) in full bloom. The penstemon is sharing the hillsides with Palmer’s Mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri* var. *munzii*) and hundreds of goldenstars (*Bloomeria crocea*). In addition there are numerous Engelmann’s hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), blue flax (*Linum lewisii*) and checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*). The Mountain Center (junction of Hwy 74 and Hwy 243) burn area was awash in white with huge patches of forget-me-not (*Cryptantha intermedia*) covering the ground along with large patches of Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) and hundreds of coasta gilia (*Gilia diegensis*). McCall Park in Mountain Center had a very nice bloom of tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*) along with goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*) and coffee berry (*Frangula californica*). The bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), is in full bloom along the roadsides and very showy between Mountain Center and Idyllwild. If you continue on 74 going to Hemet and don’t turn on to 432 to go to Idyllwild, then look for the first Plummer’s Mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*) in bloom on the lower slopes on the Hemet side of Highway 74. Along Hwy 243 at Poppet Flats, the area is in full bloom after recent rains and the rare fire follower red rayed hulsea (*Hulsea heterochroma*), was very showy along with several other plants in bloom. Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) is in full bloom all over the mountain and even down in the foothills.

Plummer’s Mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*). Photo by Bruce Watts

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach still has cheerful California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) and various buckwheat’s (*Eriogonum* spp.). For fragrance, go for the white sage (*Salvia apiana*), Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*), purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) and Munz’s sage (*Salvia munzii*). But the outstanding member of the fragrance team is mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*). Look for the bright red and yellow columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) probably with a few hungry hummingbirds mobbing it. Common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is pretty in white and anything but common. Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) flower stalks are shooting up into the air to show off their clusters of large creamy white flowers. The live forever’s (*Dudleya* sp.) and prickly pear cactus are opening up their yellow, coral and pink blossoms. The beautiful
Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and stunning Matillija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) are just coming into flower, while the woolly blue curls just keeps on producing its purple, fuzzy flowers and pungent aroma.

Even though spring has come to an end, that doesn’t mean the blooms have come to an end at Elizabeth Learning Center. There is still a wide variety of annuals and perennials putting on a good show at this unique K-12 LAUSD campus. Look for California sage (*Salvia californica*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*) violet twining snapdragon (*Maurandella antirrhiniflora*), Indian pink (*Silene laciniata*), Santa Barbara island liveforever (*Dudleya traskiae*), Verity’s liveforever (*Dudleya verityi*) and apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) in the chaparral garden! The desert garden continues to impress with yellow-flowering chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), Mojave sun cups (*Camissonia campestris*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), desert holly (*Atriplex hymenelytra*), owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*), Emory’s rock daisy (*Perityle emoryi*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*) and the sweet smell of southwestern mock vervain (*Verbena gooddingii*). Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) is in full flower riot! Also continuing their flowery parades of color are Farnsworth jewelflower (*Streptanthus farnsworthianus*) and palo blanco (*Lysiloma candida*). AND….soft-leaved Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja mollis*) is still blooming in their nursery! Stop by for one more late spring wildflower moment! Elizabeth Learning Center is 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.
Showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) at ELC. Photo by George Nanoski

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