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 May 8, 2015. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

It’s Mother’s Day weekend, so take mom out to look at wild flowers and have a picnic too. The first three gardens below are the best of the bunch of possible outings.

Take Mom out for a walk in this Garden over the weekend. What a treat it will be for her! The Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach still has cheerful California poppies (Eschscholzia californica), and seaside daisy (Erigeron glaucus). Other flowers that will make Mom smile include the showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis), foothill penstemon (Penstemon heterophyllus), woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum) and the sages—white sage (Salvia apiana), Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii), purple sage (Salvia leucophylla) and Munz’s sage (Salvia munzii). California buckeye (Aesculus californica) is now fruiting. The fruits are almost as spectacular as the flowers! Red monkeyflower (Mimulus aurantiacus), various buckwheat’s (Eriogonum spp.) and desert mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) add color throughout the garden. Add common yarrow (Achillea millefolium), fairyduster (Calliandra eriophylla) and red sorrel (Oxalis oregana) to the color palette for a wonderful scene. Chaparral yucca (Hesperoyucca whipplei) flower stalks are shooting up into the air to show off their clusters of large creamy white flowers.

If you haven’t been to Descanso Gardens in La Canada yet, you should visit. The Native Desert Garden, and wildflower fields are looking very nice, but with recent heat and wind, their show maybe coming to an end soon. California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), lace-leaved and common phacelias (Phacelia tanacetifolia and Phacelia distans), bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor), elegant clarkia (Clarkia unguiculata) and tidy tips (Layia platyglossa) are annuals that are still showing color throughout the Native Gardens area. The perennials that add rich color include woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum), monkey flower (Mimulus aurantiacus), scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthiflorus), and deerweed (Acmispon glabra) and blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum). If it’s fragrance you want, the mock orange (Philadelphus lewesi) and California buckeye (Aesculus californica) are in bloom.

At Placerita Canyon Nature Center the Canyon Trail meanders along Placerita Creek through the Oak Woodland and up to Walker Ranch. This week some lovely blooms were found along this trail. Showy white Mariposa lilies (Calochortus venustus) and the pink splendid Mariposa lilies (Calochortus splendens) can be found in patches here and there. Farewell-to-spring with its lilac-rose petals (Clarkia bottae) says it all as summer comes our way. Perhaps the most dramatic of the current blooms are the Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla). The two-tone purple flowers are arranged in whorls stacked around the stem. There are still many other wildflowers around the park. You are invited to our Open House this Saturday, May 9th from 10:00-3:00.
If you don’t mind meandering around in your car and stopping frequently, visit the area south of Pearblossom Highway where Longview Road takes you to Fort Tejon Road. Turn left and check out Valyermo Road, Bob’s Gap Road and Big Rock Creek Road. Check out washes in this area as they still have lots of belly flowers like desert calico (*Loeseliastrum matthewsii*) and Wallace’s woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*). Also very abundant (relatively speaking, you still have to look for them!) with many buds still left to open is the queen of desert wildflowers...Kennedy’s Mariposa lily (*Calochortus kennedyi*). Prince’s plume (*Stanleya pinnata*) was also very showy along the roadside in several locations as was mojave thistle (*Cirsium mohavense*) and thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*). Another fairly abundant perennial blooming in this area is paperbag bush (*Scutellaria mexicana*). Last, but not least is a strange annual that this wildflower reporter had never seen before, the roundleaf puncturebract or "saucer" plant (*Oxytheca perfoliata*)...simply weird, amazing and beautifully red!

Mariposa lily (*Calochortus venustus*). Photo by RuthAnne Murthy

Kennedy’s Mariposa lily (*Calochortus kennedyi*) & Prince’s plume (*Stanleya pinnata*). Photos by George Nanoski
Warm weather has driven the bloom around the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, to higher elevations within the parks. Folks going to Giant Forest or Grant Grove this time of year will enjoy the annual flowering of the Western dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*). The bright white flowers of the dogwood light up the dark shaded forest. Along highway 198 through Three Rivers and around the Keweah Reservoir, look for elegant madia (*Madia elegans*), Sierra monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra ssp. cearela*) and California flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*). Look for flannel bush near Potwisha and Buckeye campgrounds.

The cooling temperatures of this week’s low pressure systems have given many of the annuals at Elizabeth Learning Center a temporary reprieve from their destiny of desiccated oblivion. There continues to be a nice array of flowers to experience such as california sage (*Salvia californica*), violet twining snapdragon (*Maurandella antirrhiniflora*), calico monkeyflower (*Mimulus pictus*), Indian pink (*Silene laciniata*), Santa Barbara island live forever (*Dudleya traskiae*), Verity’s liveforever (*Dudleya verity*) and numinous Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) in the chaparral garden!!! The desert garden still has California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), 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*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) Spanish needle (*Palafuxia arida*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), 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*) and five needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*). Also in the desert garden, the intoxicating smell of southwestern mock vervain (*Verbena gooddingii*). Matilija poppy (*Romneya
Romneya coulteri) is wowing passersby with its gigantic flower-heads! Stop by for a wildflower fix!...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.

Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa) & Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri) at ELC. Photos by George Nanoski

If you are entering Joshua Tree National Park at the North Entrance Station with a destination to White Tank campground, look for the orange-coral colored flowers of the desert globe mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), yellow flowers of creosote (Larrea
tridentata), and neon pink flowers of the beavertail cactus \( (Optuntia basilaris) \) all dotting the landscape. The hedgehog cactus \( (Echinocereus engelmannii) \) and woolly daisy \( (Eriophyllum pringlei) \) are also in this area, but you have to get out and walk around to find them. Throughout the north end of the park are patches of desert dandelions \( (Malacothrix glabrata) \) as well. Queen Valley is currently one of the best places for cacti their relatives but you have to get out and hike the trails. Look for barrel cactus \( (Ferocactus cylindraceus) \), silver cholla \( (Cylindropuntia echinocarpa) \), Parry’s nolina \( (Nolina parryii) \) and hedgehog cactus \( (Echinocereus engelmannii) \). And in rocky crevices search out the fishhook cactus \( (Mammillaria tetrancistra) \) on the Pine City trail. In between all these cacti you will still find the pretty notch-leaf phacelia \( (Phacelia crenulata) \). Other wild flowers include Fremont pincushion \( (Chaenactis fremontii) \) on the Bighorn Pass road along with desert trumpet \( (Eriogonum inflatum) \) and chia \( (Salvia columbariae) \). Near the south entrance at Cottonwood, catch the last remaining blooms of sacred datura \( (Datura wightii) \). You might run into a few sporadic sand blazing star \( (Mentzelia involucrata) \) and chicory \( (Rafinesquia neomexicana) \) as well. There are still some hardy perennials flowering including creosote bush, indigo bush \( (Psorothamnus arborescens) \), prince’s plume \( (Stanleya pinnata) \), palo verde \( (Parkinsonia florida) \) and paper bag bush \( (Scutellaria mexicana) \). At the west entrance look for desert senna \( (Senna armata) \), and if you are hiking around the Keys View area, keep an eye out for Wallace’s woolly daisy \( (Eriophyllum wallacei) \) and on the Cap Rock trail, still a few fading lupine \( (Lupinus arizonicus) \) and chia \( (Salvia columbariae) \).

The desert regions just north of Hwy 15 between Baker and the California-Nevada border still have some colorful perennials to enjoy. Travel the powerline roads south of the Kingston Range Wilderness, (access through Halloran Springs area or Excelsior Mine Rd.) or south of the Clark Mountains, (access from Excelsior Mine Rd.). Both showed continuous flowers along the way including desert aster \( (Xylorhiza tortifolia) \), Palmer’s penstemon \( (Penstemon palmeri) \) the desert poppy, \( (Eschscholzia glyptosperma) \), desert larkspur \( (Delphinium parishii) \), Mariposa Lily \( (Calochortus sp.) \), desert senna \( (Senna armata) \), blackbrush \( (Coleogyne ramosissima) \), desert mallow \( (Sphaeralcea ambigua) \), paintbrush \( (Castilleja sp.) \), and more in bloom at Indian Cove.

The Palms to Pines Highway in the San Jacinto Mountains Along the Pacific Crest Trail north of the pines to palms highway (SR74), at the east end of Garner Valley, you’ll see a few little flowers. Unfortunately, not any fabulous displays, but makes you appreciate more what is found. The shrubs however were all looking green and happy; mostly chamise and red shanks. The texture that these two shrubs provide the landscape is amazingly beautiful. Showy and colorful flowers include the \( (Opuntia polyacantha var. erinacea) \), in full bloom, with big flowers coming from its little cactus pads. Parish’s woollen curls \( (Trichostema parishii) \) was also in full bloom. In the sandy swales, California evening primrose \( (Oenothera californica) \) is in full bloom, but you have to be there at the right time of day because it is only open in the late afternoon until mid-morning. A few other notable species in bloom include forget me nots \( (Cryptantha spp.) \), grape soda lupine \( (Lupinus excubitus) \) and some golden yarrow \( (Eriophyllum confertiflorum) \).
On the part of state highway 74 (Ortega Hwy) that winds through the Santa Ana Mountains from Lake Elsinore to San Juan Capistrano, are a couple of nice hiking areas. One is Bear Ridge Loop in Bear Canyon. Along this trail search out Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) in shady patches. Other charming blossoms include Nuttall’s snapdragon (*Antirrhinum nuttallianum*), splendid Mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*), slender leaved sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Indian pink (*Silene lacinata*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), fairy lanterns (*Calochortus alba*), monkeyflower (*Minulus aurantiacus*), and lots of little white forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.). Further west on the Ortega Hwy is Casper’s Wilderness Park. Hike the Bell East Ridge trail with your camera in hand. Stunningly beautiful native bulbs are now in flower-splendid Mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*), golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*), Weed’s mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii var. intermedius*). Other nice blooms include clustered tarplant (*Dienandra fasciculata*), Parry’s larkspur (*Delphinium parryi ssp. parryi*), live-forever (*Dudleya pulveralenta*), and monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*).

![Mariposa lilies](image)

Mariposa lilies (*Calochortus splendens* and *C. weedii var. intermedius*)

Photos by Laura Camp

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 15** 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**

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center**

The monthly Blooms of the Season hike is this Saturday, April 25th at 9:30. We meet in front of the Nature Center, and we will hike the 1.5 mile loop on the Ecology Trail.

Annual Open House. Saturday, May 9

**Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve**
Wildflower Walks; All Saturdays; 11:30am
Come explore the visitors center, the reserve, and see wildflowers that are found only in the Big Bear Valley! Join a volunteer naturalist for a guided wildflower walk. Saturdays until further notice; don't miss this tour! No registration required.