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 6, 2016**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Mother Nature gives us the best Mother’s Day gift ever—a spectacular bounty of wildflowers! Take mom out for the day to enjoy this gift with you! The focus of reports this week is on our local treasures—easy outings for a Mother’s Day outing.

Happy Mother’s Day! Desert Dandelions. Photo by Gregory Frank
The Southern Sierra Foothill Woodland continues to explode with a great wildflower display. Especially showy this year are the geophytes: Triteleia, Brodiaea, and Dichelostemma. The Salt Creek/Case Mountain area east of Visalia and in Kings Canyon/Sequoia’s Cedar Grove the scenery is amazing with wildflowers.
The trails at Stough Canyon Nature Center in the Verdugo Mtns. are great for hiking and botanizing especially along Stough and Wildwood Canyons. Black sage (Salvia mellifera) is particularly beautiful and fragrant right now and look for the cheery bush sunflower (Encelia californica) too. Elderberry (Sambucus nigra ssp. caerulea) sticky-leaf monkeyflower (Mimulus aurantiacus), elegant clarkia (Clarkia unguiculata) caterpillar phacelia (Phacelia...
cicutaria), deerweed (Acmispon glaber) and prickly phlox (Linanthus californicus) add subtle
colors of blue, pink, yellow, and creamy white to the landscape. There are only a couple of
areas in Wildwood Canyon with Matilija poppies (Romneya coulteri), but they are bright white
beacons urging you to take a look.

Zuma Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains is definitely the best for wildflower displays
seen locally this year. The showy plants on the Backbone Trail include canyon sunflower
(Venegasia carpesioides), large-flowered phacelia (Phacelia sp.), Parry's phacelia (Phacelia
parryi), speckled clarkia (Clarkia cylindrica), elegant clarkia (Clarkia unquiculata), bush
monkeyflower (Mimulus aurantiacus), and California wild rose (Rosa californica).

Take mom out to Descanso Gardens in La Canada/Flintridge for a lovely stroll and enjoy the
colorful landscape. The many cultivated selections of monkeyflower (Mimulus varieties) show
yellow, orange, gold, pink, and red confetti of color throughout the garden. The stunning
Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri) will greet you to the Native Garden with their large white
and cheery flowers. Three desert shrubs, Baja fairy duster (Calliandra californica), pink fairy
duster (Calliandra eriophylla) and Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa) have frilly blossoms in
varying shades of pink. California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) are lining the Oak
Woodland trails. Pretty annuals in the Native Plant Garden, Chinese houses (Collinsia
heterophylla) and tidy tips (Layia platyglossa) are providing lots of color along with wine cup
clarkia (Clarkia purpurea), elegant clarkia (Clarkia unquiculata), blue flax (Linum lewesii), and
chia (Salvia columbariae). California encelia (Encelia californica), desert marigold (Baileya
multiradiata), apricot mallow, (Abutilon palmeri), and the yellow form of chuparosa (Justicia
californica) are displaying varying shades of sun color. Mom would love a visit to Descanso
this weekend.

Placerita Canyon Nature Center has a colorful palette of wildflowers in bloom on the Canyon
Trail to the Waterfall Trail (approximately 6 miles roundtrip). The lovely white butterfly
Mariposa lilies (Calochortus venustus) are showing off along with the greenish-white sticky
cinquefoil (Drymocallis glandulosa). The flamboyant Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla)
and delicate elegant clarkias (Clarkia unquiculata) bring a pink-purple glow along the trail.
Other shades of purple include Parry's phacelia (*Phacelia parryi*), valley phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*), and woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*). Current red blossoms include Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), heart-leaf penstemen (*Keckiella cordifolia*) and the rock-growing canyon liveforever (*Dudleya cymosa*). Two other dudleya species found along the trail are the lanceleaf liveforever (*Dudleya lanceolata*) and the chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*). The blues include the spreading larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.) and chia (*Salvia columbariae*). Sunny yellows include bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), American licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*), and seep monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*). Farewell-well-to-spring (*Clarkia* sp.) are pastel pink with the little magenta speckles decorating the petals. Soon the magnificent Humbolt lilies (*Lilium humboldtii*) will delight hikers. You are invited to experience these lovely blooms of spring before the summer heat comes to the canyon.

![Elegant Clarkia at Placerita Canyon. Photo by RuthAnne Murthy](image)

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) is dressed in spring’s finest colors. The California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) in the Oak Woodland region of the garden can be found by following the scent of grape soda and looking for long flower spikes on the tips of branches. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), the Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), and Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) fill spaces with their cheery presence. Showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*), woolly bluecurls (*Trichostema lanatum*) and seaside daisy (*Eriogonum glaucus*) present a palette of blues and purples. And speaking of blues, check out the little blue butterflies visiting all the flowering buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) making a blue cloud around the plant.
In Joshua Tree National Park on the California Hiking and Riding Trail, out of the Juniper Flats backcountry board (Keys View Road/parking area). Take the trail to Juniper Flats. The first mile is amazing and full of flowers. At about 1.5 miles, turn onto the Stubbe Springs Loop and then to the dirt road for more displays. Large patches of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), white pincushion (*Chaenactis* sp.)

Photo of Joshua Tree NP, Juniper Flats Trail. Photo by Robert Camp

Smoke Tree Wash in Joshua Tree National Park is also a nice hiking spot for folks visiting the area. The photos below will entice you to explore this wonderful site.
The hills are turning brown and many of the annuals have faded at Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area. Still, there is a nice display of California primrose (*Oenothera*...
californica) at the Quail Canyon Track parking area and along the sides of the road coming in to the park from the south entrance. As you head into the park, look for the bright pink beavertail cactus flowers (*Opuntia basilaris*) on the hillsides. The Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) is starting to bloom. Look for the pale purple flowers on the large grey-leaved shrubs lining the road on the way toward Lane Ranch campground. The tall yucca stalks (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) are in gorgeous flower at the yucca flats area near Aliklik campground. If you take a stroll, there is still a nice variety of wildflowers scattered among the yucca. Drive up Powerline Road toward Badger to see a large patch of blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) near the road and several patches of poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) on the hillsides. Watch closely on Badger Trail to see the road-cut where the chia (*Salvia columbariae*) are blooming on the sharp curve. There is a pullout on the apex of the curve if you want to park and take pictures. As you are driving through the grasslands looking at flowers, look up, too. Two California condors have been seen soaring over the grasslands! The goldenbush (*Ericameria* sp.) are showing off their color in the park and the lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) are still blooming along Spaghetti Pass near the north entrance station. Lots of colorful flowers AND condors too! Come out and enjoy the scenery. What a great way to spend Mother’s Day! Plan your visit now!

The drive along SR76 from i-15 to Lake Henshaw had a sea of chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) in full bloom, looking quite beautiful. Seems early for full flower chamise, but it is looking splendid. Along the way there is one hillside of grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) in full bloom with a few scattered wild pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*). Paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*) is still in bloom, That was about it for widespread blooming plants, but still pretty colorful. Lake Henshaw basin looked very dry, but still seen are plants of Parry’s larkspur (*Delphinium parryi*), some lingering baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), checkerbloom (*Sidalcea* sp.), and a number of forget me nots (*Cryptantha intermedia*). The drive out along SR79 to Temecula is mostly dry with the one
exception of heavily flowering elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) lining the highway.

In the **San Jacinto Mountains**, the Cedar Springs trail above Garner Valley, and the PCT south to Pyramid Peak along the Desert Divide has a nice diversity of flowering plants right now. The drive along Morris Ranch Road to the Cedar Springs trailhead has several good patches of grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) in full bloom, and one dense stand of the showy form of elegant lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*) easily appreciated from the car at 40 mph. The lower part of the Cedar Springs trail has a large number of Davidson’s phacelia (*Phacelia davidsonii*), mountain dandelion (*Agoseris heterophylla*), and Southern mountain phlox (*Phlox austromontana*) in full bloom, with a number of goosefoot violet (*Viola purpurea*) and paintbrush (*Castilleja applegatei* ssp. *martini*) as well. The meadow area at mile 1.0 had a good stand of lovely blue flax (*Linum lewisii*). On the PCT, alpine gold (*Hulsea vestita* ssp. *callicarpha*) and Johnston’s rockcress (*Boechera johnstonii*) were in full bloom.

![Katydid on plant in native habitat garden at Elizabeth Learning Center. Photo by George Nanoski](image)

I’d like to remind everyone that this school’s habitat gardens are refuge for some of Southern California’s most threatened species. You really need to get over and visit this garden! Vernal-Poolooza continues at the **Elizabeth Learning Center** this week. Center with dry vernal basins filled with Hoover’s calicoflower (*Downingia bella*), toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), bracted popcornflower (*Plagiobothrys bracteatus*), Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), San Diego button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum parishii*), spreading navarratia (*Navarretia fossalis*), hairy waterclover (*Marsilea vestita*), owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*), thread-leaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), dense-flowered spike primrose (*Epilobium densiflorum*) and Sanford’s arrowhead (*Sagittaria*).
sanfordii). Putting on a show around the pools are California sage (Salvia californica), chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum) and clustered tarweed (Deinandra fasciculate). Newcomers to the bloom party here are Orcutt’s birdbeak (Dicranostegia orcuttiana), glandular clarkia (Clarkia arcuata) and saw-toothed goldenbush (Hazardia squarrosa).

Catsclaw (Senegalia greggii) continues to produce an explosion of flowers in the Desert Garden! Over fifteen different native pollinators buzz and flitter around this one plant! Other species still flowering here are desert bluebells (Phacelia campanularia), Mojave sun cups (Camissonia campestris), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), creosote bush (Larrea tridentata), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), Spanish needle (Palafoxia arida), pebble pincushion (Chaenactis carphoclinia), brittlebush (Encelia farinosa), desert lavender (Hyptis emoryi), desert holly (Atriplex hymenelytra), owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), chia (Salvia columbariae), fish hook cactus (Mammillaria dioica), skeleton milkweed (Asclepias subulata), desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata), sweetbush (Bebbia juncea), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentachaeta), red and yellow flowering chuparosa (Justicia californica) and climbing milkweed (Funastrum cynanchoides).

The Chaparral Gardens continue to “POP!” with Coulter’s Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri), woolly Indian paintbrush (Castilleja folirolosa), white sage (Salvia apiana), chaparral honeysuckle (Lonicera interrupta), Santa Cruz island buckwheat (Eriogonum arborescens), Santa Barbara island live-forever (Dudleya traskiae), desert willow (Chilopsis linearis), Baja snapdragon (Galvezia juncea), California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum), palo blanco (Baja) (Lysiloma candidum), Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), wine cup clarkia (Clarkia purpurea) and prickly poppy (Argemone munita)! Desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata) IS ESPECIALLY MAGNIFICANT as a blanket of yellow in front of the school community clinic. Visit Elizabeth Learning Center during school hours by checking in at the Main Office as a visitor. The school is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.
That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 13th 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:**

**Stough Canyon Nature Center:** Docents conduct various free hikes for different abilities and interests. For a fee the Nature Center staff will lead activities for school groups, scouts and birthday parties. They also run their own Nature Camp held various weeks for ages 3 to 10 years old. Call (818) 238-5440 for more information.