



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 is a report for **May 12th, 2017**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

This weekend we celebrate Mother's Day and what greater gift but to take mom out to spend a day with our planet's own Mother Nature! This report will direct you to some of the easiest and loveliest nearby walks to commune with nature.

Rocky Oaks in the [Santa Monica Mountains NRA](#) is one of the gentler hikes in the park system, and all trails lead to a splendid seasonal pond. Along the trails, many flowering species can be seen not far from the parking lot. On the Pond Trail, are patches of golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), with all the chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) around them in full bloom. Too, there are still enough colorful annuals and perennials lingering to engage in a game of "plant jeopardy" with your hiking partner(s). The pond is full with water. After many dry years, it is well worth the trip. Birders should bring binoculars. The avian activity near the pond is in high gear now. Easy access to Rocky Oaks off of either Kanan or Mulholland in Malibu.



The pond at Rocky Oaks. Photo by Anthony Bevilacqua

The [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#) has lovely trails winding through glorious oaks and native chaparral. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), and Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) form the subtle-hued shrubby backdrop, while colorful bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), monkeyflower (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] *longifolius*) and, new to this flowering group, the slender sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*). Still flowering for a while longer, you really shouldn't miss seeing the Southern honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata*), purple nightshade (*Solanum xanti*), and common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*). Lastly, there are small annuals, yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), common muilla (*Muilla maritima*), golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*), and sun cups (*Camissonia campestris*). Look, too, for the elegant chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) with their tall stalks of creamy white blossoms sticking above the chaparral landscape. This is a really pleasant outing.



Common muilla (*Muilla maritima*). Photo by Michael Charters

[Descanso Gardens](#) in La Cañada Flintridge has some very showy beauties as you stroll through the sunny Native Garden and the shadier Oak Woodland. In the Native Garden, one cannot help but be distracted by the stands of Matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*)—what kids like to call “the fried-egg plant.” Verbena (*Verbena lilacina*) is another dominant in these sunny spots along with monkeyflowers (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] *aurantiacus*) and (*D. puniceus*). Walk through the Oak Woodland and enjoy the displays of wine cup clarkias (*Clarkia purpurea*) popping up everywhere. California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*) and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*) join the clarkias for a colorful display under the oaks. Coming back out into the sun, the warm air is heavy with the scent of Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*). Finally, over in the desert garden, one finds the sunny yellow of desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*) and California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*).

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach is the perfect destination for a stroll with Mom this weekend. The pathways that guide you through the different plant habitats are quite lovely with flowering trees. Just coming into bloom is the desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*, and the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is still impressing us with its spikes of pinkish flowers. The color pink also paints the landscape with the elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), California buckwheat (*Erigeron fasciculatum*) pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), Baja desert rose (*Rosa minutiflora*) and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*). Adding purples and blues to the bouquet of color are showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), foothill penstemon (*Penstemon heterophyllus*) and woolly blue-curls (*Trichostema lanatum*). Reds and yellows are represented by desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), monkeyflowers (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] *longifolius*) and *D. puniceus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*). While the eyes are enjoying the color palette, the nose is equally busy taking in the sweet scents of mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) and the shrubby sages—white, black and Cleveland sage (*Salvia apiana* and *S. mellifera*, *S. clevelandii*). Don't forget to show Mom the Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*).



Desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis* ssp. *arcuata*). Photo by Michael Charters

Stay in the urban area, but visit California's special desert, chaparral and vernal pool habitats! How is that, you ask? Well visit Cudahy's Elizabeth Learning Center school Habitat Gardens. Late spring rain keeps the wildflowers popping! Look for vernal pool

beauties like toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), San Diego button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum parishii*), spreading navarratia (*Navarretia fossalis*), hairy waterclover (*Marsilea vestita*), 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*). Blooming around the dry pools, Orcutt's birdbeak (*Dicranostegia orcuttiana*) is developing nicely, as are Lindley's blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), chaparral prickly-pear (*Opuntia oricola*), Mojave tarplant (*Deinandra mohavensis*), bluehead gilia (*Gilia capitata*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), clustered tarweed (*Deinandra fasciculata*), saw-toothed goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*). In the Desert Garden, catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*) continues its spectacular display of fuzzy, bee-laden blossoms! So many pollinators on this one!

Other blooms at ELC include Baja vizcaino (*Viscainoa geniculata*), prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis villosa*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), birds-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), Mojave suncups (*Camissonia campestris*), skeleton or rush milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), and both red- and yellow-flowering chuparosa (*Justicia californica*). Their Chaparral Garden adds Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), San Diego thornleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*) woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), sacred thorn apple (*Datura wrightii*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), blue palo verde (*Cercidium floridum*), chaparral honeysuckle (*Lonicera interrupta*), Santa Cruz island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), Santa Barbara Island live-forever (*Dudleya traskiae*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), palo blanco (Baja) (*Lysiloma candidum*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), wine cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*) and pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*)! Visit Elizabeth Learning Center during school hours by checking in at the Main Office. The school is located on Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Clustered tarplant (*Deinandra fasciculata*), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*).
Photos by George Nanoski.

If Mom likes to see lovely landscape and/or have fun on OHVs occasionally, [Hungry Valley SVRA](#) is the place to visit. Many of the annual wildflowers have faded, but there is still plenty of lingering color throughout the park. Lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) and balsam root (*Balsamorhiza* sp.) are still blooming along Spaghetti Pass and the California primrose (*Oenothera californica*) can be seen along the roadside near the pavilion with its big white blossoms (Best in early morning and early evening). There are still small patches of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) around the park, but another stunning poppy has made an appearance— the prickly poppy (*Argemone corymbosa*) on their tall stalks with flowers that look fried eggs. Another new flower on the scene is the desert Mariposa lily (*Calochortus kennedyi*); look for the delicate, dark orange flower on the S curve near Smith Forks. This is *not* a “drive by” flower. Stop and look! The south end of the park has a lot of Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) blooming; the large plants are covered with pale purple flowers. Check out the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) vines in that area too. Though the blooms are long gone, the prickly fruit is quite interesting. Some of the elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) are almost completely white with flowers. The yuccas (*Yucca schidigera* and *Hesperoyucca whipplei*) are still sending up new stalks, so the flowers should be showy for the next few weeks; the trails through the yucca forest are spectacular right now. Come out and ride!

If you were too overwhelmed with the superbloom this spring and missed out completely on our lowlands manzanita and ceanothus bloom, don't fret. The Idyllwild area in the [San Jacinto Mountains](#) is spectacular with Pringle's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringeli*) and some lingering whitethorn ceanothus (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) in bloom now. Just about any road or trail is decorated with these beauties. You are advised not to wait long to see this extraordinary bloom of pink and blue. May be gone in another week.



Pringle's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringeli*). Photo by Nancy Accola.

Pringle's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringeli*) flowers. Photo by Tom Chester.

Heading up into the Sierra foothills along highway 198 east of Visalia on the approach to Sequoia National Park, speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica* ssp. *clavicaarpa*) are coming into season with their omen of “farewell-to-spring.” They are putting on a fine show along Kaweah River drive to the community of Three Rivers. The foothill woodland perennials are looking good as well. A woodland walk is along the Salt Creek/Case Mountain road off Skyline Drive in Three Rivers has pink fairy lanterns (*Calochortus amoenus*). It seems though, that they are finishing a pretty massive bloom.

However, other geophytes are coming into their prime in a very big way. A really nice side trail is what mountain bikers have named “Old No. 1,” which cuts off the dirt road just past the second stock gate. The narrow, lesser-used trail traverses the hills above the main road, undulating through open grasslands and under stunning blue oaks and crossing shady seasonal creeks. This trail with fine views of Ash Mountain and Shepard’s Peak, is also the best place to see the floral stars of this region: pretty face (*Triteleia ixioides*) and its cousin, (*Triteleia laxa*). Annuals along this trail include mustang clover (*Leptosiphon montanus*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermanii*), and the locally rare Bolander’s monkey flower (*Diplacus bolanderi*) and Congdon’s monkeyflower (*Diplacus congdonii*). Also rare along this path is a perennial, heart-leaf milkweed (*Asclepias cordifolia*). One annual having a typical good bloom year is common madia (*Madia elegans*). In May and early June, look for Leichtlin’s mariposa lily (*Calochortus leichtlinii*) and butterfly mariposa lily (*Calochortus venustus*) in the Sierra foothills and into summer at higher elevations.

Visit the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#) in Sun Valley for more spring beauties, including a hillside filled with flowering Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*); blooming sages (many species and cultivars), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), various buckwheats (*Eriogonum* spp.), bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*); common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), red and pink fairy duster (*Calliandra californica* and *C. eriophylla*); and more in and around the headquarters, classroom and sales yard. And don’t miss the white-flowered, very fragrant western mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) in the Sales Yard!

Lastly, on your way or when leaving Theodore Payne, cruise curvy [La Tuna Canyon](#) in the Verdugo Mountains between the Foundation and the I-210 for gorgeous displays of apricot-yellow sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] *longifolia*).

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 19th**, 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 Tuesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

Mr. Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens (Elizabeth Learning Center, Cudahy) coordinator, is available for a more “hands-on” botanical visit during his conference period in the mornings from 7:30am to 9:00am. Send him an email (on website) a day or two before your visit.

California Native Plant Society Events

San Gabriel Mountains Chapter

Saturday, May 13 (second Saturday), Nature Walk, 9:00 am – noon

Eaton Canyon Natural Area, Pasadena.
More information, visit: ecnca.org

Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter

Saturday, May 13, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Field Trip.

Bautista Canyon (western Riverside County). Meet at Valle Vista Library at 25757 Fairview Avenue (and Florida Ave). for carpooling. Please **RSVP** to Kate kakramer1@icloud.com or (951) 970-8890.

Orange County Chapter CNPS

May 14, 9:00 – 1:00; Ramona Grasslands, San Diego Co.

May 21, 9:00 – 1:00; Oceanside Barrel Cactus Hunt and other specialties.

More information, visit occnps.or