



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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017**, and the last report of an extraordinary season!

The weather has been engaged in a “tug-of-war” between cool and hot, but “hot” is going to win this weather battle soon. The extended life of our favorite wildflower destinations will still be good to enjoy this holiday weekend. Get out to hike and enjoy the last of a spectacular wildflower season.

In the [Santa Monica Mountains NRA](#), the Backbone Trail section through upper Zuma Canyon is a walk through a garden in bloom right now, Visit as soon as possible. In addition to the "usual suspects," some of the less common plants to be seen include: checker bloom (*Sidalcea* sp.), sticky false gilia (*Allophyllum glutinosum*), some white-flowered (if you are bored with pink!) elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), large flowered phacelia (*Phacelia grandiflora*), needlemat galium (*Galium andrewsii*), mountain dandelion (*Agoserus* sp.) and the unfortunately named California mustard (*Caulanthus lasiophyllus*).



California mustard (*Caulanthus lasiophyllus*). Photo by Michael Charters.

The Nature Trail in Topanga Canyon State Park, especially the chaparral portion on the edge of the hillside, is still pretty wonderful. There are bush mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*) and lots of bush sunflowers (*Encelia californica*), chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), wild rose (*Rosa californica*), bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), narrow-leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), in great quantities. Distracting from the flora are sightings of alligator lizards and California whip snakes (probably chasing the lizards for a meal!). The only downside is that there is a lot of yellow star thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*) growing in and near the trail. The prickles easily penetrate most trouser fabric, and I pity anyone wearing shorts. Ouch!

At [Descanso Gardens](#) in La Cañada Flintridge stands of Matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*)—what kids like to call “the fried-egg plant”—is in full bloom in the Native Garden. In the shadier Oak Woodland, the monkey flowers (*Diplacus [Mimulus] longiflorus*) and (*D. puniceus*) are sharing the spotlight with California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) and appropriately named farewell-to-spring, (*Clarkia amoena*). The sun-loving plants in full flower and inviting pollinators include the sages (*Salvia mellifera* & *S. apiana*), deerweed (*Acmispon glabra*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) and Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*).

If you are heading out to [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#) for a holiday outing, be sure to hike the Manzanita Mountain Trail. Spring annuals are still showy and include common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), cliff aster (*Malacothrix saxitilis*), popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha* sp.), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), and California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*). California elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), and California buckwheat are showy with cloud-like clusters of creamy-white flowers. Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), monkeyflower (*Diplacus [Mimulus] longiflorus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), heart-leaved penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*) and chaparral bush mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*) round out a fantastic and classic chaparral display.

While many of the flowers at [Hungry Valley SVRA](#) have faded, the mild, warm weather and recent rain has encouraged the California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) to continue flowering. Their orange blossoms are easy to spot as the annual grasses dry and turn brown. There are several nice displays of poppies along the north entrance road and in the grasslands. The prickly poppies (*Argemone munita*) can also be seen around the park with their large showy white flowers on tall prickly stalks that announces “look but don’t touch” to all visitors. The larkspurs (*Delphinium* sp.) rise above the fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.) along Powerline Road near Badger, and the chaparral nightshade (*Solanum xanti*) was spotted in the grasslands as well. The golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) is adding a splash of yellow to many areas of the park. The pale purple flowers of Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) continues to be attractive along several of the roads and trails. The bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) flowers are fading, but the large inflated green seed pods now reflect their name “bladderpod.” The yuccas (*Yucca schdigeri* & *Hesperoyucca whipplei*) are in full bloom in the south end of the park. Two types of the Mariposa lily are blooming along the north entrance road and the S curve near Smith Forks. The desert Mariposa (*Calochortus kennedyi*) lily is a deep orange, while the butterfly Mariposa lily (*Calochortus venustus*) comes in several shades, with burgundy being seen on the hill above the kiosk. Remember that the warm

weather that brings out the flowers also brings out the snakes, so watch where you walk and where you put your hands. Rattlesnakes will defend themselves if they feel threatened, so please keep your distance.

I've been waiting all spring for someone to finally visit and submit a report from my favorite site—the [Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area](#) on the eastern side of the San Gabriel Mountains. It is a wonderful place to go on a late spring wildflower scavenger hunt! On the way there, along Mt. Emma Road and Fort Tejon Road, look for prolific stands of prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*)! Once at the Nature Center parking lot, take a meandering hike down into the San Andreas "punchbowl" or a more challenging hike to the Devil's Chair overlook! There are no fields of flowers, but there is amazing variety among the boulder-strewn scenery. One of the stars here is flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*). Enjoy looking in the mountain scree for summer lupine (*Lupinus formosus*), sticky cinquefoil (*Drymocallis glandulosa reflexa*), Parish's larkspur (*Delphinium parishii*), brewer's monardella (*Brewer's monardella*), clustered broomrape (*Orobanche fasciculata*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), short-joint beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris brachyclada*), sharp-nut cryptantha (*Cryptantha oxygona*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Fremont's monkeyflower (*Diplacus [Mimulus] fremontii*), desert mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), hollyleaf gilia (*Gilia latiflora davyi*), evening primrose (*Oenothera californica*), Xantus' clarkia (*Clarkia xantiana*), giant blazing star (*Mentzelia laevicaulis*), Veatch's blazing star (*Mentzelia veatchiana*), Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*), chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), paperbag bush (*Scutellaria mexicana*), California milkweed (*Asclepias californica*) and rock phacelia (*Phacelia egeana*). The beautiful seed-heads of mountain dandelion (*Agoseris retrorsa*) are a delight to behold as you breathe deeply from the mountain air and listen to the babbling meltwater from our astounding winter snows. You may also hear the hypnotic droning of cicadas in the ancient stands of big-berry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*). Definitely worth a visit!



Prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*). Photo by George Nanoski.



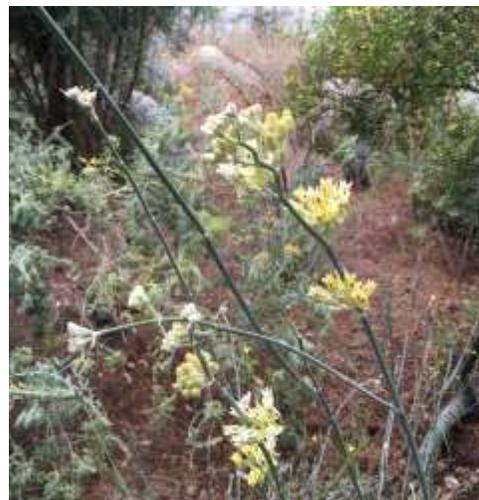
**Hooray for pollinators and other neat insect friends!  
Photos from Devil's Punchbowl by George Nanoski.**

In the [San Jacinto Mountains](#), the Forbes Trail, on the north side of Garner Valley, is an area recovering from a mountain fire. Most of the shrubs are too small to bloom, but are re-sprouting from charred stumps. The best display was from the showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), which is indeed spectacular. Its electric blue flowers are everywhere in full glory. Everything else paled by comparison. There is abundant cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*) with its bright white flowers, some wide throated yellow monkeyflower (*Diplacus [Mimulus] brevipes*) scattered about and, in one area, Parish's bluecurls (*Trichostemma parishii*). Occasionally one will see the cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale* var. *californicum*) pop up in the landscape. Look for the patch of monkeyflower (*Diplacus [Mimulus] longiflorus* var. *pubescens*)—an interesting variant; and too, one area of bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) in beautiful bloom. There is one desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) looking nice and some holly-leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *ilicifolia*) just beginning to show flowers.

Take in all of southern California's rich habitats in one place, the [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach. Native to the Channel Islands, enjoy the Island snapdragon (*Galvisia speciosa*), San Clemente Island mallow (*Malacothamnus clementinus*), mock orange (*Philadelphus lewesii*), and Island mallow (*Lavatura assurgentiflora*). From the coastal scrub and chaparral, flowering seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia amoena*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum californicum*), woolly blue-

curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), and sages—white, black and Cleveland sage (*Salvia apiana*, *S. mellifera*, *S. clevelandii*). From our deserts, are desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), Indian mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*) and desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*). Crossing over all three habitats is the amazing bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*). Last chance before heat sets in permanently to see blooms from all across our great state.

**Elizabeth Learning Center** winds down the end of spring with many species still blooming strong. Delicate beauties like Orcutt's birdbeak (*Dicranostegia orcuttiana*) are beautiful right now, as are 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*). Dry vernal basins still have, San Diego button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum parishii*), hairy waterclover (*Marsilea vestita*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*), dense-flowered spike primrose (*Epilobium densiflorum*) and Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*). In the Desert Garden, catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*) continues to wow! Other species here 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 milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*). The Chaparral Garden adds Coulter's Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), San Diego tornleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*) woolly 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*)!



**Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*).**  
Photos by George Nanoski.

The high country (elevations above 5000 ft.) of Death Valley National Park is full of color with stunning blooms spotted near Wildrose Campground. The view from the road may be striking, but do stop to look around. More flowers appear once you slow down and take time to notice! Where have you seen flowers blooming?

**That's it for 2017. Look for our popular reports again next spring, beginning the first Friday in March and running through May. Until then, keep fingers crossed for a wet, mild winter yielding another good bloom. Thanks to all the wonderful contributors of sightings and lovely photos. See you next year.**