



If you are looking for an excuse to procrastinate from doing those taxes, there are plenty of reasons to get out and see flowers! Flowers only come once a year as well, they won't be around long, and it's much more fun!

First, near the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#), in the middle and upper La Tuna Canyon, the north sides of the hills sport patches of gorgeous, deep blue wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*). Careful drivers can spot the post-fire regeneration, though it's best to pull off the road to look.

We received our first report this season from [Figueroa Mountain in Los Padres National Forest](#). This is a very popular area for wildflower viewing without much hiking. There are frequent turn outs along the road. Please be sure to use them and for safety, do not just stop along the road. Figueroa Mt. had a very dry winter, but rain in March has generated April wildflowers. It's uncertain what the extent or duration of the wildflowers this late in the season, but let's enjoy them while they last. Starting at the first cattle guard and continuing to the tree canopy area, glistening yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), beautiful fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*), and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.) are in bloom. Right before the tree canopy area, look to your right and find a charming little field of shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) and popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* sp.).

As you continue to climb up the hill, the familiar golden-orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are beginning to bloom along the road and on the rocky hillsides. If you look to your left, notice that Grass Mountain is starting to get patches of poppies, giving the appearance of a patchwork quilt with the orange from the poppies, green from the grasses and browns/yellows from the bare soil. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look on the ground to the right and find adorable, tiny cream cups (*Platystemon californica*) blooming, along with some poppies. Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill drive include more buttercups, poppies, miner's lettuce, fiddleneck, wild hyacinth, and prickly phlox (*Linanthus californica*). California buckwheat (*Eriogonum* sp.), popcorn flowers, shooting stars, goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), fading ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.), and graceful mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* sp.) are popping up among the grassy slopes.

Stopping at the serpentine turnout provides a wonderful picture taking opportunity, as Grass Mountain is directly in front and poppies, goldfields, popcorn flowers and shooting stars are adjacent to the serpentine. At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), the wildflowers are very slow at starting to bloom this year, if they will at all. There are some shooting stars and one lonely blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), a few lomatium (*Lomatium* sp.) and the beginning of goldfields. Across the road from Vista Point and up to the station, the only flowers

currently blooming include poppies, lomatium, coreopsis and wild hyacinth. As you pass the ranger station, fields of shooting stars can still be seen to your left, ranging in color from deep magenta to purple to the occasional ghost white flowers.

About a half mile further, the infamous “poppy hillside” this year has only a few small poppies blooming in scattered locations. Continuing about one half mile beyond the Davy Brown trailhead, beautiful shooting stars, lomatium and buttercups are in bloom; and a ¼ mile further, in the fields adjacent to the large dirt turnout on the left, lovely chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria bicolor*) can be found, along with shooting stars and lomatium. Other wildflowers that can be found up to the entrance of Ranger Peak, include buttercups, lomatium, poppies, shooting stars and ceanothus. While nothing is really happening at Ranger Peak at this point, the road from Ranger Peak to Cachuma is beginning to come alive with the brilliant yellow flowers of bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*). Other flowers that were spotted along this stretch include, a few bush lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) and a purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.) contrasting with striking orange poppies along the road. Sunset Valley and Happy Canyon are not doing much yet, but let’s see what happens for the next report. The Figueroa Mountain recreation area lies thirty minutes north of Los Olivos and can be reached by the Figueroa Mountain Road or the Happy Canyon Road. From Hwy 154: At Los Olivos take Figueroa Mtn. Rd. 12.5 miles northeast.



California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*). Photo by Michael Charters

We haven’t heard much from the [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#), which is surprising, maybe because things are just starting to bloom there. One report comes from the Mishe Mokwa Loop Trail at the trail-rich Circle X Ranch. At the Mishe Mokwa trailhead, there is a little bit of California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*) and woolly lomatium (*Lomatium dasycarpum*) in the chaparral. On the trek to Split Rock there are very few annuals to spot, just some greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosa*) and some wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Let’s keep in mind that this report is about ten days old, so warmer

weather probably has ignited more blooming of the usual wildflowers found in this area. Beyond Split Rock is where it begins to get interesting. Hoary leaved ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) were in very full bloom. They were interspersed with silk tassel bush (*Garrya veatchii*) and a beautiful chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). Then you begin to spot padre's shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*)—lots of them! This is a surprise because they usually bloom much earlier in the season. But there are many of them growing in large swathes and growing in places where they have not been seen in the past. Also look for the prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*) along this trail. By the way, the famous SMMNRA Backbone trail skirts the Circle X Ranch, so if you are hiking the Backbone, take a side trip along the Mishe Mokwa Loop Trail.

At the entrance to [Descanso Gardens](#) in La Canada Flintridge you will be greeted by a fabulous tree-sized 'Ray Hartman' ceanothus. This is a popular cultivar of our California wild lilac, and it is stunning! Along the pathways of Descanso's Native Garden, enjoy the fragrant lilac verbena (*Verbena lilacina* cultivars), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) and the large, golden flowers of flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* cultivars). Annuals in the Native Garden include baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). In the Oak Woodland section, you won't be able to miss the bright California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and tall pink spires of the hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*).

[Placerita Canyon](#) Natural Area continues to be nice along its popular hiking trails. Ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.) is still flowering, showing shades from pale sky blue to deep royal blue flowers; and white-flowering species scattered around as well. The elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and basket bush (*Rhus aromatica*) are enjoying their spring flowering ritual and looking quite rejuvenated after a dry winter. Go for a stroll at this lovely place.

At the [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#) there is a beautiful display of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) with scattered poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) blooming throughout the South Loop Trail, Tehachapi Vista Point and the Poppy Trail North Loop! There are also some fragrant grape soda lupines (*Lupinus excubitus*) on the Tehachapi Vista Point and some great smelling popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha* spp.) on the Vista Point to the east. Search for a sprinkling of wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*) and freckled milkvetch (*Astragalus* sp.). They are predicting the peak of the poppy bloom to happen within a week or two, which will be small but lovely.

Take a road trip along Hwy 14 to I-395 and Nine Mile Canyon Road toward [Kennedy Meadows](#) to see a nice variety of wildflowers. North of Red Rock Canyon wildflowers seen include desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata*), forget-me-not/popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* spp.), sun cups (*Camissonia* sp.), white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), purple mat (*Nama demissa*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), freckled milkvetch (*Astragalus* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), and more. It was really stunning on Nine Mile Canyon Road, 5-6 miles west of Highway 395. Masses of coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelovii*) and grape soda lupine (*Lupinus*

excubitus) overwhelm the senses.



Nine-mile Canyon Road to Kennedy Meadows. Photo by Barbara Eisenstein

Reporting about the [Mojave National Preserve](#), a recent visitor found that most of the flower sightings are spotty, the few exceptions being the smaller ground cover flowers in certain areas. More water is retained in soil adjacent to pavement so you will spot many wildflowers roadside along I-15 between Barstow and Baker. Cactus species are not flowering yet, nor are many Mojave yucca (*Yucca schidigera*) or Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) in bloom. On top of Wild Horse Mesa, you will see lots of desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) and false woolly daisy (*Syntrichopappus fremontii*). Look for chia (*Salvia columbariae*), vervain (*Verbena gooddingii*), and turpentine broom (*Thamnosma montana*) in between Mid Hills and Hole-in-the-Wall campgrounds. Caterpillars are everywhere in the Castle Peaks and Wild Horse Mesa areas. Just one question. Who gets to the plants first? You with your camera or the hungry caterpillars! The race is on!

Flowers along the Brightwater Trail in Huntington Beach and the [Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve](#), are distracting (in a good way!) the casual bird-watcher who comes here for the incredible diversity of birds. Eye-catching California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*), bush or California sunflower (*Encelia californica*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) are blooming along the trails. Dune evening primrose (*Oenothera elata*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) and fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) are in sunny open locations near the pathways too. Two cactus species you would ordinarily take a wide berth around on your walk are flowering and very pretty—the coast cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*) and prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*).

The gorgeous plant called oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) is showing up appropriately at the [Environmental Nature Center](#) by the ocean in Newport Beach. You can find it in the Yellow Pine Forest section of this native plant garden along with

white sage (*Salvia apiana*). An outstanding duo; and the blooming elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) and desert mallow duo in the Desert Garden are trying to compete with them for your “photo ops” While in the Desert Garden, don’t forget to check out the Indian mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and flowering prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*). For spectacular color though, you can’t beat the electric blue and golden orange of the showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) scattered all over the nature center.

At [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont](#), you can wander about on your own or enjoy a lovely guided tour. A good spring day will provide your eyes a feast of colorful blooms with the magnificent and rugged San Gabriel Mountains as a backdrop. Various ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp. and cultivars), monkeyflowers (*Diplacus* spp. and cultivars), bush poppies (*Dendromecon harfordii* & *D. rigida*), barberry (*Berberis* spp. and cultivars), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), silk tassel bush (*Garrya* spp.), sages (*Salvia* spp. and cultivars) and currants and gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.) are the showiest of the big shrubs now with annuals desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) and phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.), adding color at ground level. Others in bloom include coral bells (*Heuchera maxima* and cultivars), Pacific coast iris (*Iris douglasiana* and cultivars). Make sure to see the California pipevine (*Aristolochia californica*) in flower along the mesa slope.

[Prisk Native Garden](#) in Long Beach is celebrating its second spring Open House event on Sunday, April 15th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. This garden is also designated a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat. If you went to last Sunday’s event, you probably want to return because many more wildflowers have blossomed this week adding to the already exciting bouquet of color. You can find goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), thistle sage (*Salvia carduaceae*), five-spot (*Nemophila maculata*) desert bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Western desert penstemon (*Penstemon incertus*), desert penstemon (*Penstemon pseudospectabilis*) and Palmer’s penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*). Other vibrant and showy perennials include woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Eaton’s penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*), lilac verbena (*Verbena lilacina*), chaparral nightshade (*Solanum xantii*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), monkeyflowers of many colors (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] spp. cultivars), and waves of pink coral bells (*Heuchera* ‘Wendy’ cultivar). New to flower this week include tufted evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*), and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*). If you think that you are seeing red spots before your eyes, you’ve probably spotted the handsome red thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*). Finally, canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) brightens up the shady areas with spots of yellow. Don’t forget to seek out Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), blue Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitatum*) and yellow meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*). Don’t miss visiting this colorful garden.



Prisk Native Garden. Photo by Mike Letteriello

The [Elizabeth Learning Center's Habitat Gardens](#) continue their wildflower show in Cudahy! Most blooms can be seen from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. The Desert Garden contains prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), pale sun cup (*Camissoniopsis pallida*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), five-needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*).

The Vernal Pool Garden has Otay mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), Lindley's blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), California sage (*Salvia californica*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leafed lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), and beautiful blankets of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), wine cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), tornleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), and Blue Palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*). Elizabeth Learning Center 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, April 20th** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

Theodore Payne Foundation – THIS WEEKEND

15th Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour

Saturday & Sunday, April 14 & 15, 2018 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Tickets On Sale Now

Full details at <http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/>

Prisk Native Garden OPEN HOUSE

Open House is Sunday, April 15th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Admission free. Donations accepted. No restrooms. Prisk Native Garden is on the grounds of Prisk Elementary School, 2375 Fanwood Ave., Long Beach, CA 90815. The Garden is around the corner from that address near the intersection of San Vicente and Los Arcos Streets. The Garden is also across the street from Stanford Middle School. Not wheelchair accessible. Take the Palo Verde turnoff off the 405 in Long Beach. Call Mike at 562-826-9266 for more info.

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Wildflower Show - April 14-16, 10 am – 4 pm Free with admission.

Plants collected locally from the San Gabriel Mountains and a couple of desert locations including Sand to Snow National Monument. Plants from the garden will also be displayed.

Wildflower Walks

Weekends, March 24 through April 29.

Saturdays, 10 a.m. and Sundays, 1 p.m.

Guided walking tours with Garden nature interpreters featuring beautiful California wildflowers and seasonal highlights. Tours are approximately 60-90 minutes. Free with standard Garden admission. Tours depart from the admissions kiosk. www.rsabg.org

Los Angeles County Natural History Museum

SATURDAY STROLLS IN THE NATURE GARDENS

Sat. April 14 (second Saturdays, Feb.-July, 2018)

9:30-11 am

The theme will be plant selection and appreciation with an emphasis on attracting garden wildlife. Free with Museum entrance. Register via 213-763-3499 Nature Gardens Director, Carol Bornstein, will lead walks with a view to plant selection and wildlife attraction.

www.prisk-lbusd-ca.schoolloop.com/cms/section?d=x&group_id=1257795358223

<http://www.ocparks.com/parks/whiting/>

www.encenter.org

www.rsabg.org

<https://www.parks.ca.gov/>



