



This is the beginning of Native Plant Week, and we have areas all over Southern California that you can visit to appropriately celebrate the event. Let's start in the Sierra Nevada.

From the Sierra foothills around [Three Rivers](#), we have reports of an explosion of spring flowers coming up under beautiful blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) canopies. There are fields of understory flowers including fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) and popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*). A very special find is the delicate white flowered Greene's saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*).





**Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) canopies, Greene's saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*)
Photos by Michael Wall**

Last week, we took you up the eastern side of the Sierras along 395 to Nine Mile Canyon Road toward [Kennedy Meadows](#). This week, we can include Short Canyon and Grapevine Canyon, as well. They are also west of Hwy 395 north of the 14/395 junction and south of Nine Mile Canyon. Short and Grapevine canyons are, however, unpaved roads. It slows you down enough to enjoy the small belly flowers. See if you can find a pygmy poppy (*Canbya candida*) in Short Canyon. 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. Nine Mile Canyon Road is stunning. Masses of coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelovii*) and grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) overwhelm the senses.



**Nine Mile Canyon Road. Photo by Barbara Eisenstein.
Pygmy poppy (*Canbya candida*). Photo by Michael Charters**

Here is the update this week [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 the 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 flower. 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.

The warm weather is bringing out the wildflowers at [Hungry Valley SRA](#) at the I-5 and 138 split north of Pyramid Lake. The Gorman Hills are showing a patchwork quilt of orange, yellow, purple, and blue with poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelovii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) and globe gilia (*Gilia capitatum*). The next few weeks should be spectacular, so watch the weather and start thinking about a trip that way. The roadsides in the park are showing an abundance of yellow with the bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), golden bush (*Ericarmeria* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and blazing stars (*Mentzelia* sp.) blooming throughout the park between Lane Ranch Campground and Aliklik Campground. White tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*) are in full bloom in this area too.

Look closely and find the red stalks of the scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and the red-orange flowers Indian paintbrush (*Castellija* sp.), both adding a nice red contrast to the yellow and white flowers blooming along the roads. Purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*), California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), the bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) are flowering nicely along the S curves, near Edison Campground and Spaghetti Pass in the northern Park landscape. You may want to continue your trip along Gorman Post Road to see the Gorman Hills starting to show their beautiful mosaic of colorful wildflowers. Please remember that the warm weather is bringing out rattlesnakes, so please use caution while hiking through the grassy areas looking for flowers. A wildflower map for a self-guided tour through the grasslands is available for downloading at



Indian paintbrush (*Castellija* sp.), white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*).
Photos by Margaret Hurley

[Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is a pleasant place to take short strolls along trails close to the Nature Center, or longer hikes on trails that radiate farther out into the

park. There are also wonderful family programs on weekends. Along the Oak Woodland trails, large coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) and the shrubby scrub oak (*Q. beberidifolia*) are both flowering now. Look for long catkins of male flowers at the tips of the branches and tucked among the new spring foliage that is greenish-pink in color. The elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) is also very showy. Handsome shrubs like the blue flowered hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and deerweed (*Acemison glaber*) are in bloom as well. Lower to the ground are white star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissima*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), and sun cups (*Camissoniopsis* sp.). If you are on the trails in the late afternoon to twilight, look for the wispy white blossoms of the soap root plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) on long stalks arising above dark green undulating leaves. Interesting plant. Don't miss it.

Wildflowers are starting to pop along the lower sections of the [Mt. Wilson Trail above Sierra Madre in the San Gabriel Mountains](#). There is a good variety of species, but only a few of each species. There were some nice displays of wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*), chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) and hairy ceanothus (*C. oliganthus*). You will also find blunt-leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), two species of cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium* spp.), climbing morning glory (*Calystegia* sp.), fringe pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), common pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), prickly cryptantha (*Cryptantha muricata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*), Douglas's nightshade (*Solanum douglasii*), clematis (*Clematis* sp.), and Western wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*). These are flowers you'd normally expect along this trail, but more than the hiker/reporter had expected this dry year.



Hairy ceanothus (*C. oliganthus*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*).
Photos by Michael Charters

In San Diego County, check out the [Pacific Crest Trail](#) section between Lake Henshaw and Barrel Springs. There are many lovely species in bloom now, including grand patches of baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) with exceptionally large and bright blue flowers. Others that occur in great abundance are fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), chaparral gilia (*Gilia angelensis*), hundreds of blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) and common cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*). The sheer number of cryptantha make it unusually showy this year. In between good thickets of cup-leaved ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexens*) are patches of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), and some cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). Check out the large, handsome specimens of sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*) and chaparral yuccas (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), as well. On the drive to Lake Henshaw along Route 76 and through the Cleveland National Forest, you will see huge numbers of blue flowering ceanothus. Roll down the window to smell the sweet fragrance of these wild lilacs as you pass them by.

There are lots of wildflower happenings on the San Jacinto River alluvial benches in San Jacinto-Hemet area. There are trails around the Soboba Indian Reservation and [Bautista Creek](#). The sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*) are especially heavy as are goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), sun cups (*Camissiospis bistorta*) and forget-me-not (*Cryptantha* sp.). Phacelia (*Phacelia* sp.) is also popping up in this area.



**Sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), and forget-me-not (*Cryptantha* sp.).
Photos by Mike Wall**

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach has exploded with color this week. Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*), Island snapdragon (*Galvesia speciosa*), sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus longiflorus* [*Mimulus auranticus*]), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), and desert

mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) have all been flowering, but something happened this week, the excellent weather maybe, made them actually burst in full bloom! Along with all that detonation of flower color comes the showy spikes of the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and their amazing fragrance of grape soda. Take several rest breaks while walking through this garden to accommodate your sensory overload!

Watch out for the blue witch (*Solanum umbelliferum*) seen along the trails at [Pinnacles National Park](#). Other colorful characters you will encounter are milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), Johnny jump-up (*Viola pedunculata*), lacey parsnip (*Lomatium dasycarpum*), Douglas wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), Fremont star-lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), and buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*). I don't know for sure, but I really hope the baby blue-eyes and the pretty pink California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) are growing side by side, because the blue and pink colors are wonderful together! One flower that you definitely need to see is the bitter root (*Lewisia rediviva*). It is a tiny plant with a flower that looks like it is just sitting on the ground, so keep a watchful eye for it. There is lots of blue along the trails from displays of Bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), Parry's larkspur (*Delphinium parryi*) silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), and chia (*Salvia columbariae*).



Blue witch (*Solanum umbelliferum*), bitter root (*Lewisia rediviva*).
Photos by Michael Charters

Spring has really sprung at the E.L.C. Habitat Gardens in Cudahy as many new species are flowering. Most can be observed from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. The Desert Garden contains prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis retrorsa*), prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), pale sun-cup (*Camissoniopsis pallida*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix*

glabrata), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). Their Vernal Pool Garden has Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), Lindley's blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), California sage (*Salvia californica*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), 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 paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*).
Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 27th** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT & WILD FLOWER EVENTS:

This week is California Native Plant Week. Many celebrations are taking place statewide. Go to the California Native Plant Society website www.cnps.org and check out the activities, plant sales and local hikes of the Chapter near you.