



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 **March 17, 2017**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Just like popcorn, add some heat, and the kernels start popping. So it is with wild flowers in the desert. And that is *the* place to be this week! Drop everything! Change plans made for other mundane responsibilities, and GO! I always urge you to visit the websites just before you take a trip to any of these places to ensure conditions are favorable for visitors.



Along Henderson Canyon Road, ABDSP. Photo by Fred Melgert

[Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#) is wildflower Nirvana now! The bloom is excellent in numerous locations around the Borrego Valley. The end of DiGiorgio Road and Coyote Canyon are now in full bloom with dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*), verbena (*Abronia villosa*), Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), and bright yellow desert dandelions (*Malacothrix glabrata*). There are plenty of flowers right around the end of the asphalt in that location with good parking too, but hiking in a way yields the best show. This is an area that will likely be congested over this next weekend as lots of people head to Anza-Borrego to see the flowers, so try to get there early. Further to the east, the area north and south of Henderson Canyon Road is in full bloom as well, dominated by a large field of desert sunflowers (*Geraea canescens*), with sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*) and dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*) along the edges. It's

important to know that the best flower viewing is in the morning. Many flowers close up during the heat of the day. There was heavy traffic coming into Borrego Springs over last weekend, particularly on S22 coming through Ranchita and down Montezuma Grade. They expect the coming weekend to be similar. Visiting on weekdays is a good idea if possible. Free flower maps are available in ABDNHA's Nature Center, 652 Palm Canyon Drive. We update the maps daily as reports come in.



**Desert sunflowers along Henderson Canyon Road. Photo by Fred Melgert**

Good displays near the visitor center around Borrego Springs road, Henderson Canyon road, Horse Camp road, and the first mile of Coyote Creek road. Many hillsides surrounding Borrego Springs, and in the canyons, are covered with fields of flowers of Parish's poppy, (*Eschscholzia parishii*). Many places in the Borrego Badlands, especially in the southern part and in Ocotillo Wells, are covered in places with heliotrope phacelia, (*Phacelia crenulata* var. *ambigua*).



**Left: Photo is of the mountains just north of Henderson Canyon. Right: Photo of heliotrope phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata* var. *ambigua*) wash between Palo Verde Wash and Fault Wash. Photos by Tom Chester**

Last week, I mentioned the Yaqui Meadows area. Another report this week from southeast of the parking area for about 2.5 miles. A terrific trifecta of Bigelow's

monkeyflower (*Mimulus bigelovii*), Parish's poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*) and ghost flower (*Mohavea confertiflora*). Definitely worth getting to!



**Yaqui Meadow: Bigelow's monkeyflower. Ghost flower (*Mohavea confertiflora*), and lizard sunbathing. Photos by George Nanoski**

It is still a little while until peak bloom at [Carrizo Plain National Monument](#), but the bloom is progressing with the warmer weather. Check out the campgrounds around KCL and Selby, all along Soda Lake Road, and the valley floor. Look for goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), baby-blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), patches of common hillside daisies

(*Monolopia lanceolata*), milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *nigricalycis*), and areas of a few evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*) on the valley floor.

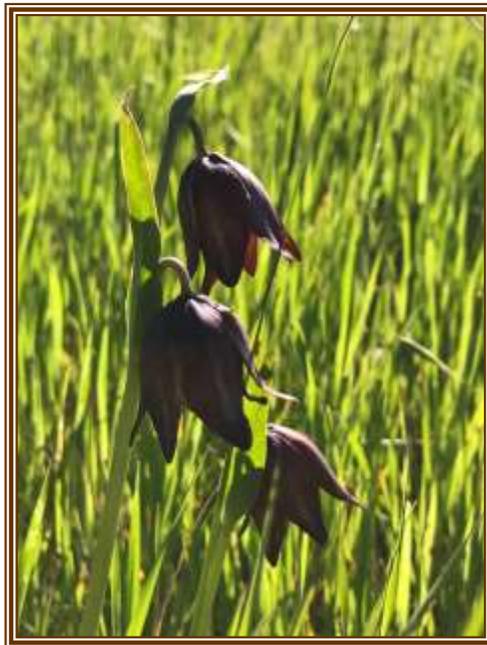


**Carrizo Plain. Photo by Benjamin Rickman**

[Charmlee Wilderness Park](#) in the Santa Monica Mountains has very nice flower displays along the Botany Trail all the way to the East Meadow Trail. There are hundreds of shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) in full bloom above the Nature Center. Patches of wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) appear on the entrance road. Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*) with, of course, lots of hummingbirds close by, are seen in the oak groves. Milk maids (*Cardamine californica*) and canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) hang out in the filtered shade while stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), Danny's skullcap (*Scutellaria tuberosa*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), wild peony (*Paeonia californica*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis*), hairy-leaf ceonothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) and purple nightshade (*Solanum xanthii*) preferring sunnier locations.

Very common for a wet year, the wildflowers are getting a late start at [Figueroa Mountain](#). There really aren't many yet, but finally enough for a short report. Most of the wildflower that are currently blooming are in the lower elevation, below 3,000 feet, with the exception of the south facing slopes, which get the sun shine most of the day. A friendly reminder. When you stop to look and take pictures of all the beauties, please make sure that you park on the shoulder of the road and not on the road itself. If there isn't a place to stop, find a turn-out and walk back to the area. Please do not block the road at any time as this will be enforced. Starting at the first cattle guard all the way through to the enchanting tree canopy area, bright buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), delightful fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*), and miners lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), are in bloom. As you continue up the

hill, beautiful California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are beginning bloom. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look to the right and find some tiny cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*) in bloom. Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill climb include, ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), a few lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), carpets of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), stunning orange wall flowers (*Erysimum capitatum*), shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), and coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.). At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), the exquisite chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are in flower. Also look for shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and wild onions (*Alium* sp.). In the serpentine area across Vista Point and along the road leading to the station, there are California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and more wild onions (*Alium* sp.). As you pass the station, fields of gorgeous (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) can be seen, ranging in color from deep magenta to purple to the occasional white blooms. Buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.) can also be spotted here. About a half mile further, the infamous poppy hillside is about one quarter filled. This year the poppies in this area appear smaller, but still beautiful. It also seems as though they will be sharing the spotlight with lovely lupine (*Lupinus* sp.). About one half mile further, you will find some colorful fields housing beautiful shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), lomatium (*Lomatium* sp.) and buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.). From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, because of the higher elevation, the flowers are just starting to bloom. At this point, because of the damage incurred to the dirt section of Happy Canyon Road by the heavy rains, it is recommended that only high clearance vehicle exit the mountain through Happy Canyon Road. People in low clearance vehicles are advised to turn around and exit the mountain via Figueroa Mountain Road.



**Chocolate lily (*Fritillaria biflora*) at Figueroa Mtountain. Photo by Helen Tabet**

As of March 13th, patches of poppies have started opening at the [Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve](#) on the east end of the park! It's looking like this weekend will be the real start of the bloom, and it may last through mid to late April if the weather is cooperative. There won't be a solid carpet of poppies across the park, but a couple areas look like they're about to explode into a beautiful sea of orange. Note that it can be very windy at the Reserve in the spring. Check the forecast before visiting and dress accordingly. Remember that going off of the trails to walk in the poppies could get you a ticket unless they're growing on the official trails; it can't be avoided in some places.



**California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Photo by Barbara Eisenstein**

The [San Jacinto Valley](#) is putting on a rare spectacular show of poppies and bluebells along Gilman Springs Rd. and Soboba Road. People who have lived there 30+ years do not remember a display like this. Pretty terrific show coming and going in and out and about the valley these past couple weeks. Nearby Bautista Creek, is still early. South facing hillsides will be pretty showy in a couple more weeks with chia (*Salvia columbariae*), hairy lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), pincushion (*Chaenactis* sp.), bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* sp.), and a whole lotta California Four O'clocks (*Mirabilis laevis*) which, as they are literally covering many of the hillsides right now, are the show to be seen. Be sure to visit them in the afternoon, anytime around, well, four o'clock when this lazy plant gets around to opening its flowers! Despite the wonderful rains, the porous, sandy alluvial terraces along the creek are rather dry. Lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) are coming along pretty well however. The north slope is rich with a variety of shade and moisture loving species. We can only hope for a showing of Mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* sp.), the extravagant jewels of the wildflower world. No matter the show, Bautista Creek is always beautiful.

Nearby in the Hemet region, [Diamond Valley Lake](#) also has some excellent displays of wildflowers along its trails. Get a map at the visitor Center.



**Poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and California bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*).**  
**Photos by Michael Wall**

[Amboy Crater](#) in the east Mojave Desert is an iconic landscape feature that guides travelers along [Route 66](#). The site provides easy access (low-clearance 2wd) to visitors wanting to experience [Mojave Trails National Monument](#). Mojave Trails National Monument spans 1.6 million acres and includes rugged mountain ranges, ancient lava flows and fossil beds, and spectacular sand dunes. The Monument, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also contains irreplaceable historical resources, such as the longest-remaining undeveloped stretch of the iconic Route 66 and World War II training camps. They are sharing more wildflower photos and locations as part of their [#TracktheBloom](#) campaign on social media; feel free to share anytime and/or tag them.





**Wildflower scenes around Amboy Crater, Mojave Trails National Monument.  
Photos by Bob Wick, BLM.**

In [Joshua Tree National Park](#), the most spectacular bloom can be seen in Cottonwood Canyon and along the Bajada Trail. Among the showiest species include the blue spikes of Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), the prolific little brown eyes (*Chylismia claviformis*), and two poppy species, Parish's poppy and small-flower poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii* and *E. minutiflora*). The fire-red flowers of ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) provide a red contrast to the yellow and white flowers. The teddy bear "don't-hug-me" cholla (*Cylindropuntia bigelovii*), is also beginning to bloom along the Cholla Cactus Garden Nature Trail. There's lots more coming into bloom as the weather warms. Be aware that Caltrans will be working on the Cottonwood Springs on/off ramp along Interstate 10. The highway may be closed intermittently during this time. Call Caltrans at 1-800-427-7623 for current closure information.

Be sure to check out [Box Springs Road \(to Mecca\) and neighboring Painted Canyon](#), south of I-10, opposite the Joshua Tree exit. Same caution about CalTrans closure applies here. Do check conditions before you visit, but it is well worth the effort

Also, word is that [Ford Dry Lake, Cottonwood Springs, Red Cloud Mine Road](#) are good pull off wildflower viewing if you are traveling the long drive from Palm Springs to Phoenix.

Along the coast in Orange County, the [Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach](#) is even more beautiful than we reported last week. The pathways that guide you through the different plant habitats of Southern California display different species of California wild lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.) and elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cerulea*). Fragrant mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) and Munz's sage (*Salvia munzii*) tickle your nose, and California encelia (*Encelia californica*) and Baja Desert Rose are outstanding! The ubiquitous but "Stately" California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) and baby-blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) are blooming everywhere!

[Elizabeth Learning Center](#) is a K-12 Span School in LAUSD and an urban oasis of wildflowers! Their Habitat Gardens continue to have vernal-centric rings of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*) as the heat of the week has the flowers bolting. Other vernal pool endemics blooming in and around the water's edge include woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), Otay mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), thread-leaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), dense-flowered spike primrose (*Epilobium densiflorum*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), winged water-starwort (*Callitriche marginata*), Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*), flowering quillwort (*Triglochin scilloides*) and owls clover (*Castilleja exserta*). The Desert Garden is experiencing its own "Super Bloom", with Baja vizcaino (*Viscainoa geniculata*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), desert plantain (*Plantago ovata*), birds-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), Mojave sun cups (*Camissonia campestris*), devil's spine-flower (*Chorizante rigida*), Mojave lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*), Coville's pygmy poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora covillei*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), catsclaw (*Acacia greggii*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), pebble pincushion (*Chaenactis*

*carphoclinia*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), panamint cryptantha (*Cryptantha inaequata*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), fishhook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), red and yellow flowering chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), and desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*). Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), woolly indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliosa*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy-tips (*Layia platyglossa*), poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), and pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*) round out the Chaparral garden offerings. These wonderful educational gardens are located at Elizabeth Learning Center on Elizabeth Street in Cudahy between Atlantic Ave and Wilcox Ave. They are open to the public during school hours by checking in at the Main Office and getting a visitor's pass.



Vernal Pool at ELC. Photo by George Nanoski.



Fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*). Photo by George Nanoski

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>** 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](mailto:flowerhotline@theodorepayne.org) by Tuesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

### **NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:**

#### **Theodore Payne Foundation**

**Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale** <http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/>

*Saturday, March 18, 8:30 am-4:30 pm*

An annual celebration of our State flower and huge native plant sale, offering the region's largest and most interesting selection of California native plants.

<http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/>

#### **2017 Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour**

*Saturday & Sunday, April 1 & 2, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm*

[Tickets On Sale Now](#)

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

### **California Native Plant Society Hikes & Events**

Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter

**Saturday, March 25, 2017, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm – Horsetheif Canyon Preserve Field Trip-** Take this special opportunity to explore this beautiful preserve with CNPS. There are many species in flower and diverse vegetation including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, and rich riparian plant communities. For more information go to <http://riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org>