



FINALLY! A crop of wildflowers have been seen popping up in a variety of sites around Southern California, and in very accessible areas, too, if you can take a short holiday escape during spring break. Let's start along the coastal regions.

A wonderful wildflower outing is to be had if you check out the [Colorado Lagoon](#) in Long Beach off of 4th Street and Park Ave. Look for wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne sp.*), Santa Barbara milkvetch (*Astragalus trichopodus*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*) and golden bush (*Isocoma sp.*). Enjoy walking the new paths around the entire lagoon and marvel at the habitat restoration of this important wetland area!



Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) and tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*).
Photos by George Nanoski.

Mostly perennials and a few annual species of flowers can be seen along the Brightwater Trail in the [Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve](#), and specifically around the 'pocket' in Huntington Beach for those who know the reserve. Look for California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*), bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*). Blue-eye grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) and fiddleneck (*Amsinckia sp.*) are in sunny open areas along the trails too. By the way, this is a great birding location, so bring the binoculars as well as a wildflower guide.

While enjoying fresh ocean breezes and sunshine, there are many showy natives to enjoy along the trails at the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach. Among them are the Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) with pink-red flowers

and bright green foliage. The lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*) makes a handsome partner to that lady in pink. From our Channel Islands hail Island snapdragon (*Gambelia* [*Galvezia*] *speciosa*), San Clemente Island mallow (*Malacothamnus clementinus*) and Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), red monkeyflower (*Diplacus puniceus* [*Mimulus aurantiacus* var. *puniceus*]), along with the California flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*), color the trails with sunny yellows, oranges, and reds.



Flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*). Photo by Michael Charters.

Down along the San Diego coast, visit [Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve](#) for a great day-outing. If you haven't been to Torrey Pines lately, you will find that many of the trails are now refurbished and ADA compliant, and provide beautiful views of our Pacific coastline. This time of year, look for blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), star-lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), and wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum* ssp. *capitatum*). San Diego sea dahlia (*Leptosyne maritima*), and bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) provide a lot of cheery yellow color along with Southern goldfields (*Lasthenia coronaria*). The vine species like wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus* var. *macrocarpus*) and San Diego sweet pea

(*Lathyrus vestitus* var. *alefeldii*) twine up the branches of the shrubs, so they can get a sunny spot and your attention. Classic beauties blooming now include miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), coastal sand verbena (*Abronia maritima*), California peony (*Paeonia californica*), Cleveland shooting star (*Primula clevelandii* ssp. *clevelandii*), and woolly-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus tomentosus*).



San Diego sea dahlia (*Leptosyne maritima*) and San Diego sweet pea (*Lathyrus vestitus* var. *alefeldii*). Photos by Michael Charters.

Some flowers have been spotted at Will Rogers State Historic Park in [the Santa Monica Mountains](#). On the Inspiration Point Loop Trail, the California brittle brush or bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) is blooming nicely. From the parking lot just beyond the park gate (bring money for parking), the trail heads up the mountain to the left of the tennis courts west of the ranch house and ranger office. The trails were fairly muddy in some areas on the day after heavy rain, but otherwise easily accessible. After a week of dry weather, trails are lovely and there will be many, many more flowers bursting out for picture-taking hikers. I challenge you to be the first to post photos of them!

[Caspers Wilderness Park](#) in Orange County is experiencing some flowering of hardy natives along the trails after the spring rains. The 4.2 mile loop trail starting up the newly routed and renovated Dick Loskorn trail, north on West Ridge trail, down Starr Rise, and returning via Bell Canyon, yielded the following sightings: chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*), slender-pod jewel-flower (*Caulanthus heterophyllus*), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*) and shooting-star (*Primula clevelandii*) on a slope area next to Starr Rise. Only one Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*) was seen on Dick Loskorn where there were hundreds last year. Lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*) is in bloom everywhere and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) is still in berry on some trees. At

the horse corral area, the entire interior corral is carpeted in a popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* sp.), and there is a nice display of golden fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) across from the corral.



Slender-pod jewel-flower (*Caulanthus heterophyllus*) and fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.). Photos by Michael Charters.

Now to our desert parks, always beautiful, no matter the wildflower status!

As of late March in [Death Valley National Park](#), wildflowers have been sparse. The best blooming areas are small strips of flowers along the paved roads where water runoff and water retention is best. Highway 190 between Furnace Creek and North Highway has had *some* blooming, but recent strong winds damaged many of the flowers. Look for an occasional desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), little golden poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), notch-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*) and desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). They are sparse and small this year, so get out of the car and search!

From someone who stayed in the Wonderland of Rocks area in [Joshua Tree National Park](#) recently, the report is that most stuff is just starting to show. So it looks like maybe April, at least in the northern part of the park, will bloom modestly. For now, get excited about the budding yuccas (*Yucca/Hesperoyucca* spp.), at least three different phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), a couple of penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.) and along the roadside berms, desert trumpet (*Eriogonum inflatum*). In the washes, try to find an occasional Wallace's woolly star (*Eriophyllum wallaceii*). There is even an early blooming Mojave mound cactus (*Echinocereus mojavensis*). Except for a few sheltered spots, the south end of the park will as always, have spectacular landscape scenes, but few annuals will be expected. Again, like in all desert regions, hiking to areas where soil retains

moisture and where plants are sheltered from wind, will be the best places to spot flowering plants.



Mojave mound cactus (*Echinocereus Mojavensis*). Photo by Sam Ward.

The back country of San Diego County is looking nice and green, maybe awaiting some flowers. Chaparral white thorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) and hoary-leaved ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) are blooming white and blue, and still Eastwood's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *glandulosa*) is in full bloom. Entering [Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#) from Julian along SR78 to Scissor's Crossing there are few flowers to be seen! At higher elevations, there are some bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) along the grade to the desert floor. The ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) are blooming in Anza Borrego—nice because they have had a miniscule of moisture—but not spectacular. Look for them on 78 west of Ocotillo Wells and throughout the park. Chuparosas (*Justicia californica*) have a few blooms and in places the creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) is blooming nicely and filling the air with their distinctive scent that tells you “welcome to the desert.” Similarly, there is a modest display from brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*). A flowering desert trumpet (*Eriogonum inflatum*), was spotted and some patches of forget-me-not (*Cryptantha* sp.) fill a few of the spaces between other plants. North and Northeast of Borrego Springs, along the roads to Henderson Canyon, Rockhouse Canyon and Clark Dry Lake, there is not much blooming, but a beautiful drive as always! Though the flowers were sparse, the desert is never disappointing. The paucity of wildflowers just reminds us of how special it is when we get a superbloom!



Creosote (*Larrea tridentata*). Photo by Barbara Eisenstein)

[Pinnacles National Park](#) has many lovely things that usually bloom a little earlier but are making a show now. Look for Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*) in the Oak Woodland areas of the Park. The lace parsnip (*Lomatium dasycarpum* ssp. *dasycarpum*), Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) are showing up with baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*) and shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii* var. *patulum*). The buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*), with its white to lavender flowers, and silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons* var. *albifrons*) scent the air with a lovely fragrance. Probably the best find will be the checker lily (*Fritillaria affinis*). Look for it along the Old Pinnacles Trail on shaded north-facing slopes.

Right now the Poppy Trail South Loop is the best trail to see a few scattered poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) blooming at [Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve SRA](#). There are scattered patches of pretty little goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and the fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) is unfurling its golden-orange flowers on most trails in the park. On the Tehachapi Vista Point, there are still only a handful of poppies blooming, but the silver foliage and fragrant flowers of grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) distracts you from thinking about the poppies for a while..Forget-me-not flowers (*Cryptantha* sp.) dot the landscape of the Poppy Trail North Loop, and you will find really nice wild hyacinths (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) blooming on the Kitanemuk Vista Point trail. Poppy plants everywhere are still rather small.

Spend some time at [Placerita Canyon](#) Natural Area, and you will be treated to delightful sightings of natives in flower. The bright red fuchsia-flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) is still in bloom along with sugar bush (*Rhus*

ovata), hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.). The California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is just opening its handsome burgundy flowers. With many of the flowering natives still yet to come, Placerita will be a favorite visiting place for many months.

Even though Elizabeth Learning Center is closed for Spring Break, most of their blooms can be seen from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus! Flowers are taking off in all three Habitat Gardens. The Desert Garden includes prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), 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*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). Their Vernal Pool Garden contains Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), blue field gilia (*Gilia capitata*), 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*), spinescrub (*Adolphia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), orcutt's quillwort (*Isoetes orcuttii*), California Orcutt's grass (*Orcuttia californica*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Some additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata puberula*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), torhleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), and Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*).
Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 6th** 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

Fire-wise Garden Tour, hosted by Mountains Restoration Trust & Theodore Payne Foundation

Saturday, April 7, 10:00am-4:00pm

A self-driven journey to three fire-wise homes and native plant landscapes in Calabasas. Tickets: \$5 www.mountainstrust.org

15th Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour

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

[Tickets On Sale Now](#) – Early bird prices through midnight, Saturday, March 31.

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

Native Plant Symposium, Wildflower Show & Plant Sale

Saturday, April 7, 2018 - 9am-4pm
Sepulveda Garden Center

The Symposium features speakers, wild flower displays, and plant sales throughout the day. This is an annual event of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains chapter of CNPS with the Theodore Payne Foundation. Full details at: <https://www.lasmmcnps.org/>

Caspers Wilderness Park

Adventure Day, April 7th.

Free admission and special displays and activities for the public.

www.ocparks.com/parks/ronald

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

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.rsabq.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.