March 22, 2019

Theodore Payne Foundation’s Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by donations, memberships, and the generous support of S&S Seeds.

Predicting wild flower bloom at any location in real time in SoCal is fraught with weather woes. We are having rain cycle through our region again this week and perhaps next. It’s always good to call or check the location’s website if you can and adjust your expectations accordingly before heading out.

Please enjoy your outing, and please use your best flower-viewing etiquette. Take photos and selfies from the trail, and let the flowers continue to bloom for humans and other animals. Keep dogs on leash or consider leaving them at home. Drive and park safely. Thank you.

Still 2-3 weeks away from peak bloom, the flowers at Carrizo Plain National Monument have finally opened to smile at the sun. Hillside daisies (*Monolopia lanceolata*) cover the mountain slopes with some hints of blue of Great Valley phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) scattered here and there. Desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*) can be found sprinkled about as well. The best show however is in the Temblor Range on private property and visitors are reminded to respect all signs and not cross barbed wire fences. On the valley floor, seen from Soda Lake Road, hillside daisies are visible, but still not in full bloom. Finally, large patches of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) are showing strong between Panorama Road and KCL Campground. We highly recommended visitors stick to Seven Mile and Soda Lake Road for the best flowers and best road conditions. Be sure to bring food and water for the day and a full tank of gas. This is a remote location with no services. Check the weather ahead of visiting. The two free, first-come, first-served campgrounds fill quickly, so we recommend having alternate plans, if that is the case. The valley floor is home to sensitive endangered species habitat, so please be respectful.
The Antelope Valley California State Poppy Reserve finally has a nice display of its namesake plant, the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*). It can be seen blooming throughout the park. When walking the trails, look for other wildflowers, as well. Pygmy leaf lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), desert parsley (*Lomatium nevadense*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha pterocarya*), strigose lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*) and lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) add colors other than orange to the landscape. If you are visiting at the right time of day, evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*) puts on quite a nice show. Other side shows include seeing a lot of painted lady butterflies nectaring on fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*) and, for the birders, the horned larks have returned.
Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) at the adjacent Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park are in varying states of bloom from bud to full open flower.

Joshua Trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) at Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park. Photos by Dan Pierce

At **Diamond Valley Lake** in Hemet, both the Lakeview Trail and Wildflower Trail are near peak wildflower bloom for this season and have definitely picked up since last week, thanks to the warmer weather. The overall diversity in wildflower species blooming at this time is amazing, and the plants are all in great flowering condition. The yellow California goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) continue to blanket the hillsides on the sunnier south-facing slopes. Perhaps the biggest change this week is the increase in Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) and the continued amazing bloom in wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) on both trails. The California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) are in scattered pockets on hillsides and along the trail edges. Baby blue eyes (*Mentzelia menzeii*) and strigose lotus (*Lotus strigosus*) can be found mostly on the Lakeview Trail, and large flowered cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*) is excellent everywhere. What is lacking so far this year are the hillsides aglow with a brittlebush bloom. It will come, but so far no flowering. Please note, the DVL facility is open Wednesday through Sunday only, and there is a fee. Check the website for more information.
The wildflowers are still outstanding at Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park in Orange County. Bell Canyon is a short walk and worth visiting, and if you can climb a steep hill, the far end of East Ridge is a color fiesta (4.6 miles round trip) bordered with tiny endangered Palmer’s grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*) along the edge of the path. The east slope of East Ridge area showed masses of flowers blanketing the hillside—a local super bloom. The early specialties like Padre’s shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), fringed linanthus (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), California poppy (*Eschscholtzia californica*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) are still prolific along Cougar Pass and elsewhere. Catalina Mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*) is lovely as well. “Too many flowers to mention,” says on enthusiast. For example, she goes on, “I saw four different
species of white wildflowers in an arrangement surrounding a single lupine flower.” Do go and see for yourself!

The bloom at Anza Borrego Desert State Park is entering a new and very beautiful phase. It’s a rare event in Southern California and people from all over want to celebrate. Many places in the Borrego Valley are excellent flower viewing and the Anza Borrego Desert Natural History Association is well prepared for visitors. They have excellent wildflower-viewing maps that are available online or at their visitor center in Borrego Springs. The paved part of Di Giorgio Road and off the main roads around town have been electrified with carpets of yellow desert dandelions (*Malacothrix glabrata*) and purple phacelia (*Phacelia minor*) with some fields of desert sunflower (*Gerea canescens*). The flowers that made headlines in the past few weeks are still there, but fading, and now being taken over by the new bloom of different species.

Still in Anza Borrego: About one mile plus up Coyote Canyon (the road is in good condition) is a beautiful display of mixed flowers too many to mention here. Henderson Canyon and along the road south of Christmas Circle are recommended for spectacle species. Standing above the carpet of desert dandelions are ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) with their flaming red flowers and desert lilies (*Hesperocallis undulata*) growing very near the road. For hikers, trekking up Hellhole Canyon is an excellent wildflower experience. See washes full of common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) and wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*). Belly flowers carpet the washes include Bigelow monkey flower (*Diplacus bigelovii*), purplemat (*Nama demissa*), desert star (*Monoplectis belloides*) and threadstem (*Nemacladus glanduliferus*). Parish’s poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*) is growing in every available section of space on rocky slopes everywhere.
Bigelow's monkey flower (Diplacus bigelovii), desert star (Monoplectis belloides).
Photos by Tom Chester

The low desert regions from Anza Borrego (see report above) to the southern region of Joshua Tree National Park of the I-10 exit and around the Cottonwood entrance, is a cadre of colorful wildflowers making a dramatic display. Along the alluvial and bajada landscapes on Old Dale road, blooms include the blues and purples of Arizona lupine (Lupinus succulentus), chia (Salvia columbariae) and wild Canterbury bells (Phacelia...
campanularia). Desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata), sand blazing star (Mentzelia involucrata), Parish's gold-poppy (Eschscholzia parishii), Emory's rock daisy (Perityle emroyi) and desert chicory (Rafinesquia neomexicana) make splashes of yellow and white. In the washes and sandy patches, look for star gilia (Gilia stellata), purplemat (Nama demissa), Wallace's woolly daisy (Eriophyllum wallacei) and the ethereal gravel ghosts (Atrichoseris platyphylla) and desert trumpets (Erogonum inflatum). The coral red and yellow combo of bladderpod (Peritoma arborea) and apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) dominate the pretty perennials in bloom.

The sites/facilities below do not have large, spectacular fields of flowers, but they DO have an amazing assortment of native flowering trees, shrubs, and perennials, as well as annual wildflowers.

This next location is for an experienced hiker. There are many lovely things to be seen in bloom on the lower stretches of the Mt. Wilson Trail in the San Gabriel Mountains. The trail has one the best displays of the wishbone bush (Mirabilis laevis) recently seen, especially between about 8 and 10 in the morning. Along the trail, you will also see a trio of lupines, hairy lupine (Lupinus hirsutissimus), blunt leaf lupine (Lupinus truncatus) and Coulter's lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus). Wild cucumber (Marah macrocarpa) and common Pacific pea (Lathyrus vestitus) can be found clambering over other plants along the trail. Chaparral whitethorn (Ceanothus leucodermis), green bark ceanothus (Ceanothus spinosus), hoary leaf ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius), California gooseberry (Ribes californicum), and California bay (Umbellularia californica) are lovely and fragrant flowering shrubs and trees. Strigose lotus (Acmispon strigosus), prickly cryptantha (Cryptantha muricata), common fiddleneck (Amsinckia intermedia), miner’s lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata), spotted eucrypta (Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia) are found scattered along side of nightshade (Solanum xanti), wallflower (Erysimum capitatum), baby blue-eyes (Nemophila menziesii), narrow-leaved lacepod (Thysanocarpus lacinatus), blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum), black sage (Salvia mellifera), and wild Canterbury bells (Phacelia minor).

A first-of-season report comes from Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest. Start from Figueroa Mountain Road, 4 miles from the town of Los Olivos. The first cattle guard crossing from the base of the mountain through the oak tree canopy has buttercups (Ranunculus californica), blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum), fiesta flowers (Pholistoma auritum), milk maids (Cardamine californica), miniature and sky lupines (Lupinus bicolor and L. nanus) and California golden violet (Viola pedunculata). Dainty little shooting stars (Primula
clevelandii) are also starting to show. Continuing up the mountain, California poppies
(Eschscholzia californica) are beginning to bloom on rocky slopes. Just before you get
to the rusty gate at the road, you will spot adorable little cream cups (Platystemon
californicus), a poppy cousin. Driving on, Grass Mountain is coloring up with an
extravaganza of poppies. Lupines are weaving patches of purple in the poppy orange
carpet. At Vista Point, about 11 miles from the start point, enjoy an opportunity to get
out of the car to see patches of goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) mixed with chocolate lilies
(Fritillaria bicolor), buttercups, and more shooting stars.

Still on Figueroa Mountain: There is spacious pull-out parking at Grass Mountain and
Vista Point. Continuing for a mile past the ranger station, more poppies and sky lupine
can be seen in various areas leading to the Figueroa Campground. From the
campground until the descent into Sunset Valley there is not much to see yet because
of the high elevation cool temperatures. In Sunset Valley however, the show of color
picks up again. Yellow tufted poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa) are carpeting the
hillsides and slopes. Popcorn flowers (Cryptantha sp. and Plagiobothrys sp.) and blue
dicks can also be seen, and further on, Happy Canyon is just starting to bloom. A
couple of reminders to all wildflower viewers: When stopping to take pictures or to take
a hike, please do not block the road or double park at any time. If the weather is cloudy,
rainy or cold, the poppies wrap themselves up and do not open. Pick a sunny, warm day
for your visit.

The trails at Placerita Canyon Nature Center are slow to show a riotous bloom, nothing a
little warmer weather won’t solve. The buds on the California peonies (Paeonia
californica) finally decided to open, and the little white popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys
spp. and Cryptantha spp.), yellow California sun cups (Camissoniopsis bistorta) and
fiddleneck (Amsinckia sp.) are showing up to the party, as well. Chaparral currant
(Ribes malvaceum) and golden currant (Ribes aureum) are fading in bloom, but budding
hoary ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius), hairy ceanothus (Ceanothus oliganthus) and
black sage (Salvia mellifera) are waiting in the wings to take the spotlight. We just need
some sunshine and warmer weather.

If you are planning a spring break trip, try escaping to the Sierra Nevada foothills around
Three Rivers and Sequoia National Park. Along Hwy198 leading to the Park,
Eastwood’s fiddleneck (Amsinckia eastwoodiae) and silver bush lupine (Lupinus
albifrons) are in peak bloom. The tufted poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa) are just
beginning to flower, and it appears it will be a banner year for them. Not as obvious from
the highway but entering into bloom are the white-leaf manzanita (Arctostaphylos
viscida) and buckbrush ceanothus (Ceanothus cuneatus). Western redbud (Cercis
occidentalis) are just beginning to display their bright pink blossoms, as are the tasseled
flowers of blue oaks (Quercus douglasii). Along trails and obvious to the hiker are
foothill shooting stars (Dodecatheon hendersonii), miner’s lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata),
and red maids (Calandrinia ciliata). With all the rain, it is also a lush season for colorful
and fascinating lichens, and mushrooms of many kinds, colors and shapes.

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If you visit Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, take a walk around the “mesa” and out to the far north of the garden called the “communities.” There are some lovely ceanothus (Ceanothus spp. and cvs.) in shades of blue and creamy white along the pathways. Watch the native bumble bees and the Painted Lady butterflies hover around the sweet flowers. Blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), popcorn flowers (Plagobothrys sp. and Cryptantha sp.), and sun cups (Camissoniopsis bistorta) are scattered around, too.

The Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach is heralding a gorgeous display of their pink-flowering Western redbuds (Cercis occidentalis) surrounded by blooming blue and white ceanothus (Ceanothus spp. and cvs.). The sugarbush (Rhus ovata) is in fine bloom, as well. Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry (Ribes speciosum) and black sage (Salvia mellifera) are serving up nectar for hungry hummingbirds. Tansy-leaved phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia), California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and yellow California bush sunflower (Encelia californica) line the pathways to welcome you into the garden.

What a week for the Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center! Many public visitors stopping by to see the re-wilding of Cudahy! ELC is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox avenues in Cudahy. Most of the wildflowers can be seen from Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. Anyone who would like access to the gardens from within the school needs to arrange a visit with Mr. Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator. His email is gtn5586@lausd.net, and his conference period is 11:15 to 12:45. Explore their Desert

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Also at ELC: Most of the vernal pools are STILL in glorious wet phase, alive with fairy shrimp, clam shrimp and many other vernal pool endemics! Look here also for Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), Douglas’ meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), fringed-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leafed lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Eschscholzia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*).

Additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Baja bird bush (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata puberula*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), torhleaf goldeneye (*Viguieria laciniata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), chaparral tree poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), and Orcutt’s hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*).

Home at the Theodore Payne Foundation in Sun Valley, wildflowers and perennials continue to put on good displays. Bush sunflowers (*Encelia spp.*) are blooming on the hills and in the garden. Bulbs are starting to pop with blue dicks (*Dicheostemma capitatum*) and red-skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*). Purples abound with wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) and California wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis var. crassifolia*) making a beautiful patchwork of color for the visitors. Honey-scented
ceanothus (Ceanothus spp. and cvs.) are at their peak with plenty of blue, purple and lavender color. An interesting shrub not to miss is the yellow-flowering chuparosa (Justicia californica) adjacent to the north parking lot. Desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata) and chia (Salvia columbariae) are blooming all over the desert demonstration garden as well. And the Shaw’s agave (Agave shawii) near the nursery gates is still unveiling its magnificent golden-yellow flowers. You may be able to take some of these beauties home with you! See plant sale information below.

Red-kinned onion (Allium haematochiton). Photo by Tim Becker

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 29th 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**  Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale
One day only: Saturday, Mar 23, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Our big spring sale, offering the region’s largest and most interesting selection of California native plants, with expert advice and discounts to all on plants, seed, and TPF gear. Shop early for best selection!

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center**
Wildflower hike at Placerita every 4th Saturday. (This month, March 23)
“Blooms of the Season” walk, 9:30 – 10:30 – Always something interesting to see.

**Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden** will have many activities during **Wildflower week April 13-21, 2019:**
Wildflower Happy Hour, Wildflower Show, The Art of the Wildflower, Wildflower Trails, Tram Tours, and a Field Trip to Sand to Snow National Monument
For details see: https://www.rsabg.org/events-programs/wildflower-week

**California Native Plant Society Hikes**

LA/ SMM Chapter CNPS
**Sunday March 24,** 9 am to 1 pm
**Malibu Creek State Park**  
Come hike with Doug Allan (former Santa Monica College botany instructor) to see what is in bloom after the Woolsey Fire. Meet at the main trailhead in Malibu Creek State Park (innermost parking lot near the restroom with the soda machine). Parking $12 at the entrance kiosk. Bring water, lunch, wear sturdy shoes and weather appropriate clothing. Rain cancels. Email topcreek1@verizon.net for further details.

San Gabriel Mountains chapter of CNPS.
**Saturday, March 23, 10:00am.**
Field trip/hike at **Deukmejian Wilderness Park,** in Glendale.
Grade: moderate. Round trip approximately 2.5 miles, elevation gain and loss approximately 800 feet For directions and more information, please visit the chapter's outings page at https://cnps-sgm.org/activities.php#r241.
Rain cancels.

Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter CNPS
**Saturday, March 23. 9AM – noon.** Field trip/hike to Harford Springs Reserve in the Gavalin Hills. More information at riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org

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