March 29, 2019

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

If you want to see a super bloom in town, Theodore Payne’s 16th annual Native Plant Garden Tour is April 6 & 7. Tickets are on sale now.

Predicting wild flower bloom at any location in real time in SoCal is fraught with weather woes. 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. Drive and park safely. Thank you, and a friend reminded me of this quote that has been widely used by botanists and naturalists.

“'No poet has yet sung the full beauty of our poppy. No painter has successfully portrayed the satiny sheen of its lustrous petals. In its abundance, this colorful plant should not be slighted: cherish it and be ever thankful that so rare a flower is common.’” —John Thomas Howell.

Flowers are looking very good at Carrizo Plain National Monument as “peak season” is on stage there. Hillside daisies (Monolopia lanceolata) are painting yellow the Valley floor and surrounding mountain slopes. There are currents of goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) and splashes of blue Valley phacelia (Phacelia ciliata) bobbing around in the yellow sea, while the smaller tidy tips (Layia platyglossa) try to find an island of soil not filled with taller flowers. Some baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii) still occupy the Overlook Hill area, but they are fading. Desert candle (Caulanthus inflatus) can be found sprinkled about as well. The recommended viewing spots for all of this colorful bloom is along Soda Lake Road. Make certain to avoid private property, have food and water for the day and a full tank of gas. The valley floor is home to sensitive endangered species habitat, so be respectful please.
The Antelope Valley California State Poppy Reserve is in “peak” bloom with poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and goldfields (Lasthenia californica) dominating the landscape. The sea of orange and gold is punctuated here and there by the lovely, fragrant grape soda lupine (Lupinus excubitus) beginning to bloom. Look also for patches of the cute little cream cups (Platystemon californicus), the poppy's botanical relative. Other colorful gems are scattered about including including pygmy leaf lupine (Lupinus bicolor), blue dicks/wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum), hairy lotus (Acmispon strigosus), lacy phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia), freckled milk vetch (Astragalus lentiginosus var. nigricalcis) and silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi). If you are visiting at the right time, evening snow (Linanthus dichotomus) opens its little flowers and puts on quite a nice show.
The 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. Photo by Mary Wilson](image)

Out in Hemet, the hillsides along the Diamond Valley Lake trails have reached “Peak Bloom” status. The diversity of wildflowers along both the Lakeview and Wildflower Trails 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 slopes. Varying shades of blue are sprinkled throughout, and include Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), wild hyacinth (*Diclelostemma capitatum*) and baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). The California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are in scattered pockets on hillsides and along the trail edges. Accompanying you along the trails are hairy lotus (*Lotus strigosus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*) and Rancher’s fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*). In a few days, the hillsides will be aglow with a brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) bloom. Don’t forget to watch the Painted Lady butterflies flitting about at the trail hilltops. Please note, the DVL facility is open Wednesday through Sunday only, and there is a fee. Check the website for more information.

![Diamond Valley Lake Trail. Photo by Bill Wagner.](image)
At the Harford Springs Reserve in Riverside, there are large patches of poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), and royal goldfields (*Lasthenia coronaria*) posed just right among the juniper trees waiting to be photographed by you. Baby blue eyes (*Nempholia menziesii*), ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), popcorn flowers, chia (*Salvia columbariae*) and California blue bells (*Phacelia minor*) make up a colorful confetti of blue, pink, purple and white among the golden canvas in this bloom as well.

The bloom at Anza Borrego Desert State Park is winding down on the valley floor. The flowers that made headlines in the past few weeks are still there, but fading and include desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), desert bluebells phacelia (*Phacelia minor*), desert sunflower (*Gerea canescens*) and many others. Ocotillos (*Fouquiera splendens*) and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) with their flaming red flowers are attracting both hummingbirds and visitors! Fortunately, just about any canyon within the park below 2000 ft is good for a diversity of lovely flowers. 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 including Bigelow monkey flower (*Diplacus bigelovii*), purplemat (*Nama demissa*), desert star (*Monopotion belloides*) and threadstem (*Nemacladus glanduliferus*). Parish’s poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*) is growing in every available section of space on rocky slopes everywhere. Borrego Badlands and Ocotillo Wells are mostly done. Check out the website posted by the Anza Borrego Desert Natural History Association for complete wildflower updates. They have excellent wildflower viewing maps that are available online or at their visitor center in Borrego Springs. They are well prepared for visitors.
The sites/facilities below do not have large, spectacular fields of flowers, but DO have an amazing variety of native flowering trees, shrubs perennials as well as annual wildflowers.

Check out some of the LA County’s wildlife sanctuaries like the George Bones Wildlife Sanctuary at the western edge of the Mojave Desert just north of the Liebre Mountains. There, it is just starting to bloom. Fiddlenecks (Amsinckia sp.) and California goldfields (Lasthenia californica) are most commonly seen with small patches of lacy phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia) and Bigelow’s coreopsis (Leptosyne bigelovii) in scattered patches. Also find occasional white tidy tips (Layia glandulosa), strigose lotus (Acmispon strigosus) and pale yellow sun cup (Camissoniopsis pallida). Much more to come here and at other wildflower sanctuaries soon.

At Red Rock Canyon State Park a huge variety of flowers are blooming. Look out for masses of the endemic Red Rock Monkey flower (Erythranthe rhodopetra) at the "Red Rooster" area near the Tamarisk Grove at the Park. Other endemics such as Red Rock Poppy (Eschscholzia Minutiflora var. twisselmannii) and Red Rock tarweed (Hemizonia arida) can be found as well. Nearby, desert candles (Caulanthus inflatus) line the sides of the Mojave-Randsburg Road to the Tortoise Preserve.

![Red Rock Monkey flower (Erythranthe rhodopetra). Photo by Naomi Fraga.](image)

This next trail 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 Couter’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),

© Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants, Inc. No reproduction of any kind without written permission.
California gooseberry (Ribes californicum), California bay (Umbellularia californica) are lovely and fragrant flowering shrubs. 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 laciniatus), 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. 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 Ecology Trail at Placerita Canyon Nature Center is finally starting to bloom. The buds California peonies (Paeonia californica) finally decided to open along with little white popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys spp. and Cryptantha spp.), yellow California sun cups (Camissoniopsis bistorta), fiddleneck (Amsinckia sp.) and Fremont’s star lily. (Toxicoscordion fremontii). Look for the dainty eucrypta (Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia) growing near the hoary ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius), fuschia flowering gooseberry (Ribes speciosum) and black sage (Salvia mellifera). Miner’s lettuce (Claytonia sp.) hairy ceanothus (Ceanothus oliganthus) and lanceleaf dudleya (Dudleya lanceolata) can be found along the Hillside Trail.
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 cultivars) in shades of blue and creamy white along the pathways. Hard to miss the bright red penstemons (Penstemon eatonii & P. centranthifolia) and the pinks of blooming Western redbud (Cercis occidentalis) and coral bell cultivar (Heuchera 'Wendy'). Blue eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), popcorn flowers (Plagobothrys sp. and Cryptantha sp.), 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 species and cultivars (Ceanothus spp.). The sugar bush (Rhus ovata) is in fine bloom as well. Fuchsia flowering 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 encelia (Encelia californica) and now it’s desert cousin brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) are lovely clothed in yellow flowers.

What a week for the Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center! The wildflowers at Elizabeth Learning Center continue to come on strong! Most of them can be observed from Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. Anyone who would like access to the gardens from within 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. Exploring their Desert Habitat Garden, you will find cream cups (Platystemon californicus), sticky teucrium (Teucrium glandulosum), catsclaw (Senegalia greggii), desert lavender (Condea emoryi), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), desert holly (Atriplex hymenelytra), Spanish needle (Palafoxia arida), desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), chuparosa (Justicia californica), blue bells (Phacelia campanularia), bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor) and coulter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus). Most of the vernal pools STILL contain

Painted Lady butterflies on Manzanita (Arctostaphylos sp.). Photo by Deb Woo
water, alive with fairy shrimp, clam shrimp and other vernal pool endemics! Look here also for Douglas’ meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), 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*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include Guadalupe island senecio (*Senecio palmeri*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Baja bird bush (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*), 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 orcutti*).

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 5th** 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**

**16th Annual Native Plant Garden Tour**
Saturday & Sunday, April 6 & 7
10:00am – 5:00 pm
Tickets and more information at [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center**
Wildflower hike at Placerita every 4th Saturday.
“Blooms of the Season” walk, 9:30 – 10:30
We always find 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: [www.rsabg.org/events-programs/wildflower-week](http://www.rsabg.org/events-programs/wildflower-week)