April 26, 2019

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

Now is the time to really get out and hike the trails searching for late bloomers. 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.

Along Salt Creek near the southern entrance to Sequoia National Park, the wildflowers are abundant and showy. Masses of spring flowering common madia (Madia elegans) are covering sunny slopes and bird’s-eye gilia (Gilia tricolor) is abundant on flatlands. Good crops of owl’s clover (Castilleja sp.) are common in scattered colonies and along shadier trails, woodland star flower (Lithophragma sp.), Munz’s iris (Iris munzii), and the elegant naked broomrape (Orobanche uniflora) are blooming. There is an abundance of Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla) and foothill sunburst (Pseudobahia heermanii). This is a banner year for the local geophytes. Mountain pretty face (Tritelia ixiodes ssp. anilina) and Ithuriel’s spear (Triteliea laxa) are abundant. With the warming temperatures farewell to spring (Clarkia cylindrical subsp. clavicarpa) is starting to show up with their lovely bright purple pink floral display and is particularly noticeable along highway 198.

Naked broom rape (Orobanche uniflora), foothill sunburst (Pseudobahia heermanii). Photos by Michael Wall

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The trails in Pinnacles National Park have their own personality reflecting the unusual blooms found along them. Along the Old Pinnacles Trail for example, you can see Mule's ears (Wyethia helenioides) named for the big floppy leaves that resemble “ears.” In the cool, shady areas on Old Pinnacles look for the pretty little woodland star (Lithophragma affine) as well. A pink/purple darling also found along the Old Pinnacles Trail in abundance is elegant clarkia (Clarkia unguiculata). The Condor Gulch Trail offers up purple pagodas or Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla) and black sage (Salvia mellifera). On Bear Gulch Trail try to locate the large seed heads of silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi) in the grasslands and California hedge nettle (Stachys bullata) in the woodlands. Other seasonal blossoms include owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), purple mouse ears (Diplacus douglasii) yellow pincushion (Chaenactis glabriuscula) and evening snow (Linanthus dichotomus). Springing up for Spring are the perennial bulbs like yellow pretty face (Tritelia lugens) and wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum). In the fields between piles of boulders find patches of cream cups (Platystemon californicus), goldfields (Lasthenia gracilis), and baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii). In dry areas look for the small blue flowers of California gilia (Gilia achilleifolia ssp. achilleifolia), bright pink phlox (Microsteris gracilis), chia (Salvia columbariae), sky lupine (Lupinus nanus) and California poppy (Eschscholzia californica). The showy yellow blossoms of bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida) can be found as beacons in the landscape.

Over in Santa Barbara County, Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest is an excellent trip for flower viewers. Start from Figueroa Mountain Road, 4 miles from the town of Los Olivos. As you cross the first cattle guard and continue from the base of the mountain up to the oak tree (Quercus agrifolia) canopy, look for both miniature (Lupinus bicolor) and sky lupines (Lupinus nanus). Accompanying them will be pink Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla), fuchsia colored flowers of hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea), purple owl’s clover (Castilleja sp.) and blue fiesta flowers (Pholistoma auritum). Driving up the mountain road and just before you get to the rusty road gate, you will spot a patch of adorable little cream cups (Platystemon californicus), a poppy cousin. Driving on, you begin to see patches yellow and gold of coreopsis (Leptosyne sp.), wall flowers (Erysimum capitatum), golden yarrow (Eriophyllum confertiflorum) and goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) mixed with bright pink prickly phlox (Linanthus californicus) and wild canyon pea. New to the party of blossoms are chia (Salvia columbariae), elderberry (Sambucus nigra ssp. caerulea), red wild onion (Allium sp.) and the elegant Catalina mariposa lily (Calochortus catalinae). Before the Tunnel Road look for hillsides covered in poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and lupine, and in the stretch just before the campground, the sky lupine is prolific and giving off a heavenly aroma. On rocky slopes with few grasses, poppies are growing strong with globe gilia (Gilia capitata) and caterpillar phacelia (Phacelia cicutaria). At the Davy Brown Trailhead there is a patch of chocolate lilies (Fritilaria bicflora). Continuing down the road, find an abundance of bush lupine (Lupinus excubitus), goldfields and, along a rusty pipe fence, lots more chocolate lilies. Arriving at Ranger Peak, the baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii) will be watching you from the shaded areas on both sides of the road. The road between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Peak is colored with all the flowers just mentioned plus yellow and purple bush lupine and bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida). Sunset Valley greets with you with pink colorful palette represented by prickly phlox, goldfields, poppies, purple nightshade, chia, fiesta flowers and wild canyon pea. At Happy Canyon look for tufted poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa), royal
lupines, purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), red Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) and golden yarrow. Stay on Happy Canyon road and it will deliver you back to Hwy 154.

The hills around Gorman are only patchy with color this year but still gorgeous with California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), spider lupine (*Lupinus bethamii*), tansy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), and globe gilia (*Gilia capitatum*). Higher up on the hills bright yellow splashes of coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), which were first to make an appearance, are still going strong in places, others they are beginning to fade. Grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) along Gorman Post Road are peaking and their fragrance is striking.

There is a transition of bloom at **Hungry Valley State Park**. Early spring flowers are fading as the late spring bloomers are beginning. The park has yellow hillsides of coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.) and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) on both sides of the valley. Poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are scattered throughout the park, with a large display of poppies and coreopsis blooming along Powerline Road east of Saltlick Trail. There is also a solid patch of poppies showing on the hillside west of the Freeman Canyon Trail off of Hungry Valley Road. Some of the densest blooms, as well as a wide variety of flowers, are along Schmidt Ranch Road. Near the junction of Maxey Road, look for the purple chia sage (*Salvia columbariae*), bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), as well as the red-tipped paintbrush (*Castileja* sp.). A large eye-catching display of goldfields and white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*) are blooming between Jack Rabbit Trail and Cougar Trail, and look close to see a small patch of white Parry’s gilia (*Linanthus parryae*) in the mix of flowers. The goldfields team up the Davy’s gilia to create a yellow and purple landscape between the shrubs along the south end of Schmidt Ranch Road and Gold Hill Road. (Please remember that vehicles must be street legal to be on Gold Hill Road.) Worth seeing in bloom now is the purple sage (*Salvia dorii*) between Lower Scrub Campground and Smith Forks Campground with their bright purple whorls. Hungry Valley is an Off Highway Vehicle state recreation park, so watch or motorized traffic like dirt bikes on the roads and trails. Please use turnouts to view flower displays. Park fees apply.

Poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) at Hungry Valley. Photo by Margaret Hurley
As the super bloom in deserts and grasslands fades the variety of flowering plants along the Ecology Trail at Placerita Canyon Nature Center is increasing in number and variety. The shade trees lining the trail are still flowering. The stately Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and the flowering ash both have dainty catkins of flowers hanging from tips of branches. Under the canopy, elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) is sporting creamy white bunches of flowers as the blue haze of ceanothus blossoms fade. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), holly leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) are in peak bloom and serving up plenty of nectar for the birds and the bees. Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), Wooly blue curls (*Trichostoma lanatum*), Parish’s purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*) are just starting their annual flowering. Little wildflowers like yellow pincushions (*Chaenactis glabriscula*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale var. occidentale*), cliff aster (*Malacothrix saxatilis*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), are dot the landscape with a colorful bouquet of pastel colors. Finally, the chaparral yucca has shot up its tall flowering stalk with large white flowers like a flag.

The wildlife sanctuaries in the high desert region maintained by Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation are beginning to fade; but one is just starting to bloom. If you haven’t been to Devil’s Punchbowl, part of the Los Angeles County Park system, then you might want to consider going this year it. Devil’s Punchbowl is a little jewel nestled in the north slope foothills and Pinyon-Juniper woodland of the San Gabriel Mountains. An incredible geology sets the scene for a show of lovely blooming plants. Look for Fremont’s phacelia (*Phacelia fremontii*), white daisy tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), narrowleaf goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) and Western wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*). Alpine Butte Wildlife Sanctuary is declining but still has areas of Bigelow’s coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelowii*) and goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*). Around the buttes are Wallace’s wool ydaisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), white-stem stickleaf (*Mentzelia albicaulis*), broad-flowered gilia (*Gilia latiflora*) as well as an occasional desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*) and in sandy pockets, dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoids*). Jackrabbit Flat Wildlife Sanctuary is starting to decline in bloom, but has still scattered patches of Bigelow’s coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelowii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), Mojave sun cup (*Camissonia campestris*), and evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*). You can still enjoy lots of Parry’s linanthus (*Linanthus parryae*) in large patches. Lacy Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) under the creosote bushes. Also found are white daisy tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), golden linanthus (*Leptosiphon aureus*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) and purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*). Theodore Payne Wildlife Sanctuary has a good variety of flowers, majority are Mojave sun cups (*Camissonia campestris*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), and broad-flowered gilia (*Gilia latiflora*) and nice patches of purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), and Parry’s linanthus (*Linanthus parryae*). Taking shelter under creosote bushes are lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*). George Bones Wildlife Sanctuary still has California goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and small patches of lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) and Bigelow’s coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelowii*). Phacelia Wildlife Sanctuary has large areas covered in goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) underneath Creosote bushes.
At the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, there are still a lot of California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) in bloom or in bud getting ready open up their bright orange flowers. The weather this week has been warmer and windier, so visit before the poppies disappear for another year. Yellow goldfields are gone, but wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum), forget-me-nots (Cryptantha pterocarya), lacy phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia), cream cups (Platystemon californicus), grape soda lupine (Lupinus excubitus) and silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi) are still nice. The purple owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta) and hot pink fringed onion (Allium fimbriatum) have expanded their bloom as the sunny yellow and orange colors of the Reserve fade to the purple and pink of twilight.

Just west of the poppy reserve is the scenic Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park. The female California juniper (Juniperus californica) trees have pretty gray “berries.” (The fruits that look like berries actually are fleshy cones that when dry, are woody.) The Joshua trees (Yucca brevifolia) still have the flowers and some are forming seedpods. Colorful wildflowers are starting to bloom throughout the park and include goldfields (Lasthenia californica), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), linear-leaf goldenbush (Ericameria linearifolia), comb-bur (Pectocarya sp.), comet blazing star (Mentzelia albicaulis), blue sage (Salvia dorii), desert sun cups (Camissonia palmeri), Mojave sun cup (Camissonia campestris), bladder pod (Peritoma arborea), and rock cress (Arabis pulchra).

The wild flower trail near the entrance to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont is a rainbow of colors welcoming visitors to the garden. Desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), firecracker penstemon (Penstemon eatoni), scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthifolius), and common sunflowers (Helianthus annuus) fill in the warm color spectrum of a rainbow, while baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii), desert bluebells

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(Phacelia campanularia), blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), nightshade (Solanum xantii), foothill penstemon, (Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margarita Bop’) and woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum), all with their lush green foliage, fill in the cool colors of the rainbow. Walk a little north of the wildflower trail to see more colorful beauties in the Percy Everett Garden at the base of the mesa. There you'll encounter the sweet pink flowers of California hedge nettle (Stachys bullata), bright pink prickly phlox (Linanthus californicus) blossoms, red columbine (Aquilegia formosa) and golden yarrow (Erigeron confertiflorum). A bright pure white variety of penstemon (Penstemon ‘GMR White’) stands out as well. Walk up to the mesa to see more lovely specimens of California natives in bloom like the stunning flannel bush (Fremontodendron spp. & cultivars) varieties.

Flannel bush cultivar (Fremontodendron sp.) at RSABG. Photo by Debra Woo

The California buckeye (Aesculus californica) at the Environmental Nature Center are in peak bloom now and are a delightful sensory experience. The ceanothus species and cultivars (Ceanothus spp.) are still looking good and blooming in multiple plant communities. California poppies (Eschscholzia californica), California encelia (Encelia californica) and brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) along with the yellow, orange and red monkeyflowers (Diplacus aurantiacus) light up the pathways with their cheery warm colors. Black sage (Salvia mellifera), white sage (Salvia apiana) and purple sage (Salvia leucophylla) like sunny locations where their fragrance hangs aloft in the warm air, while hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea) prefers cooler locations. Appearing in the desert section is the coral colored desert mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) accompanied by the Baja desert rose (Rosa minutiflora) and blue elderberry (Sambucus nigra ssp. caerulea). Walking through the Channel Islands garden, look for creamy white floral sprays of the Island cherry (Prunus illicifolia ssp. lyonii) and the pretty yellow blossoms of the Island bush poppy (Dendromecon harfordii).

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The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center are resplendent with wildflowers of all kinds. Most of them can be observed from Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. Anyone who would like access to the gardens for a more in-depth tour can 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 the Desert Habitat Garden, you will find whispering bells (Emmenanthe penduliflora), silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi), showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis), browneyes (Chylismia claviformis ssp. claviformis), owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), desert plantain (Plantago ovata), creosote bush (Larrea tridenata), 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), bearded cryptantha (Cryptantha barbigera var. barbigera), desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata), fish hook cactus (Mammillaria dioica), beavertail cactus (Opuntia basilaris), skeleton milkweed (Asclepias subulata), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), five needle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentachaeta), 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 water, alive with spadefoot toad and baja tree frog tadpoles, clam shrimp and other vernal pool endemics! Look here for toothed calicoflower (Downingia cuspidata), Farnsworth's jewelflower (Streptanthus farnsworthianus), calico monkeyflower (Diplacus pictus), Douglas' meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii), chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum), clustered tarweed (Deinandra fasciculata), Otay mountain lotus (Hosackia crassifolia), fringed-pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes) menzies' fiddleneck (Amsinckia menziesii), globe gilia (Gilia capitata), truncate-leafed lupine (Lupinus truncatus), miniature lupine (Lupinus bicolor), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), sawtooth goldenbush (Hazardia squarrosa), california poppy (Eschscholzia californica), spinescrub (Adolphia californica), chia (Salvia columbariae), boxthorn (Lycium californicum), and goldfields (Lasthenia glabrata). Additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include Guadalupe Island senecio (Senecio palmeri), purple chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla), red maids (Calandrinia menziesii), matilja poppy (Romneya coulteri), Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), woolly Indian paintbrush (Castilleja foliolosa), Baja bird bush (Ornithostrophyllos oppositifolia), 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), chaparral tree poppy (Dendromecon rigida), caterpillar phacelia (Phacelia cicutaria), and Orcutt's hazardia (Hazardia orcutti). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.

Toothed calicoflower (Downingia cuspidata), calico monkeyflower (Diplacus pictus).

Photos by George Nanoski
That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 3rd** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

**NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:**

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center**
- Wildflower hike at Placerita every 4th Saturday. (Next is **APRIL 26**)
- “Blooms of the Season” walk, 9:30 – 10:30
- We always find something interesting to see.