May 24, 2019

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

As the inland deserts and valleys transition to a summer landscape, one can still enjoy spring wild flowers near the coast or above 3000 ft in our inland mountains.

In the Santa Monica Mountains, a few areas remain closed due to Woolsey Fire damage, but most trails and parks are open and should be explored. Trekkers who have hiked the park trails have noticed subtle changes in vegetation throughout the spring as fire-following native wild flower species appear and disappear in succession over time. The most prominent now is the large flowered phacelia (Phacelia grandiflora). People have described seeing acres and acres of this pretty lavender blue flowering plant. A recent visitor hiking the Grotto Trail off of Yerba Buena Road, saw magnificent displays of the large flowered phacelia. From Yerba Buena Road and the Circle X Ranger Station, the Grotto trail has more traditional chaparral species in unburned areas. As you traverse the hillsides, shrubby species including bush monkey flower (Diplacus auranticus), California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), and yucca (Hesperoyucca whipplei) are blooming and catch your eye. Other colorful perennials growing here include wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum), foothill penstemon (Penstemon heterophyllus), golden yarrow (Eriophyllum confertiflorum) and scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthifolius). Cute little annuals like caterpillar phacelia (Phacelia cicutaria), purple clarkia (Clarkia purpurea) and collarless poppy (Eschscholzia caespitosa), are seen in small patches as well. Descending into the Grotto, look for shade and moisture loving canyon sunflower (Venegasia carpesioides), Indian pink (Silene laciniata) creek monkey flower (Mimulus guttatus) and bleeding heart (Dicentra formosa). This trail is 3.5 mile round trip and rated moderate. The return hike is uphill and about a 500 ft. elevation gain. If you are not familiar with the trail, check the Santa Monica Mountains website for maps and other helpful information.
The rain has extended the bloom at Hungry Valley State Vehicle Recreation Area and encouraging new species to come out. Please be aware that when it rains and the roads get too wet, the grassland area is closed to protect the fragile soil. Once it opens, you can take the self-guided flower trail in the grasslands and find a nice variety of flowers along Powerline Road and Stipa Trail. The red-tipped Indian paintbrush (Castilleja sp.) has been spotted in many areas of the park. Head out toward the Oak Grove for a stunning mix of the bright red paintbrush and goldenbush (Ericameria linearifolia) growing together. There are also dozens of the elegant orange desert Mariposa lily (Calochortus kennedyi).
scattered among these shrubs. A new bloomer is a the perennial giant four o’clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*) at the southern junction. More gold, yellow and red colors form the small mounds of the bright golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) throughout the landscape, with an impressive display at the turnoff to Smith Forks Campground. If you enjoy prickly plants, the beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), prickly poppy (*Argemone* sp.) and Western thistles (*Cirsium occidentale*) are beginning to be seen in a few areas. Look, but dare to touch! Make plans to visit Hungry Valley now while the poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are still blooming in the park. However, you will need to wait for a warm sunny day to find them open. Hungry Valley is an off road vehicle recreation park, so drivers visiting in passenger cars should park off road in designated turnouts to enjoy the scenery.

![Desert Mariposa lily (*Calochortus kennedyi*)](image)

Visit [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](https://www.placeritacanyonnaturecenter.org) for a lovely hike through blooming chaparral landscape. Annuals include elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), cliff aster (*Malacothrix saxatilis*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.). Shrubby perennials purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), monkey flower (*Diplacus* sp.), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Parish’s purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*) and morning glory vines (*Calystegia macrostegia*) are quite lovely. Walking the Hillside trail, you will notice the California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) in peak bloom and serving up plenty of nectar for the birds and the bees. Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) are attracting a good amount of butterfly activity as well. The showy yellow Mariposa lily (*Calochortus* sp.) has started to bloom as well.

At [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden](https://www.rsan-botanicgarden.org) the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) with its large spikes of fragrant pink and white flowers is a real stunner and is in peak bloom throughout the garden now. Another showy display of color is the wild flower meadow just inside the entrance to the Garden. Elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), golden yarrow, (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) are just some of the colorful blooms occupying that space now. In the

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In Newport Beach, walking through the Environmental Nature Center you can listen to the music of flowers. There is the sage quartet with black sage (Salvia mellifera), white sage (Salvia apiana) and purple sages (Salvia leucophylla) and Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii), the sunny encelia duo, California encelia (Encelia californica) and brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) along with the merry band of yellow, orange and red monkey flowers, (Diplacus aurantiacus). Appearing in many communities is the mallow melody section—coral colored desert mallow, (Sphaeralcea ambigua), chaparral mallow (Malocothamnus fasciculatus), Indian mallow (Abutilon palmeri) and Island mallow (Lavertera assurgentiflora). The scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthifolius) leads the brass section with the bold percussion of Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri), prickly pear (Optuntia litoralis), and California poppy (Eschscholzia californica). Conducting this musical magic is the California buckeye (Aesculus californica). Go and listen to the concert!

A few weeks ago we mentioned the Artist’s Palette display at the Southern California Montane Botanic Garden. The area is a re-creation of the painter Monet’s paint palette in wild flowers. Located at the Oak Glen Preserve in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains, snow melt and cool weather slowed the spring appearance of flowers, but the 5,000 foot venue is in full bloom now. A network of paths through the wildflower field allow visitors to walk through without trampling the flowers. Chia (Salvia columbariae), tidy tips ©Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants, Inc. No reproduction of any kind without written permission.
The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center are POPPING with prolific blooms! Most of the wildflower show can be seen from Elizabeth Street in front of 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 their Desert Habitat Garden, you will find paperbag bush (Phacelia cicutaria), Chuckwalla cholla (Cylindropuntia chuckwallensis), 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 tridentata), sticky teucrium (Teucrium glandulosum), catsclaw (Senega ligna greggi), desert lavender (Condea emoryi), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambiguа), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), desert holly (Atriplex hymenelytra), Spanish needle (Palafoxia arida), bearded cryptantha (Cryptantha barbigera var. barbigera), desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabra), fish hook cactus (Mammillaria dioica), beavertail cactus (Opuntia basilaris), skeleton milkweed (Asclepias subulata), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), five-needle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentacheta), chuparosa (Justicia californica), blue bells (Phacelia campanularia), bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor) and coulter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus).

Most of the vernal pools contain very little water now, but are hopping with spadefoot and western toadets! Look here for Otay Mesa mint (Pogogyne nudiuscula), San Diego mesa mint (Pogogyne abramsii), toothed calicoflower (Downingia cuspidata), Hoover’s calicoflower (Downingia bella), Farnsworth’s jewelflower (Streptanthus farnworthianus), bull clover (Trifolium fucatum), calico monkeyflower (Diplacus pictus), Douglas’ meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii), California sage (Salvia californica), chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum), clustered tarweed (Deinandra fasciculata), Otay mountain lotus (Hosackia crassifolia), fringed-pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes) Menzies’ fiddleneck (Amsinckia menziesii), globe gilia (Gilia capitata), thread-leaved brodiaea (Brodiaea filifolia), 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), Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri), Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), woolly Indian paintbrush (Castilleja foliolosa), Baja bird bush (Omithostphalos oppositiflora), mesa horkelia (Horkelia cuneata puberula), black sage (Salvia mellifera), pink fairy duster (Calliandra eriophylla), torrleaf 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.

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Cholla and prickly pear cacti at ELC. Photos by George Nanoski

That's it for this week. Look for our last report of the season on **Friday, May 31st** 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.
“Blooms of the Season” walk, 9:30 – 10:30
We always find something interesting to see.

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Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
The Butterfly Pavilion at RSABG will open this Saturday May 11 (open until August 3, 2019). [https://www.rsabg.org/events-programs/exhibitions](https://www.rsabg.org/events-programs/exhibitions)

Environmental Nature Center
Butterfly House Opening & Spring Festival:
For more information visit [www.encenter.org](http://www.encenter.org)

The Wildland Conservancy’s Oak Glen Preserve
Wildflower Walks
June 1st, 10:00am and 12:00pm
[https://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/botanicgarden.html](https://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/botanicgarden.html)