April 10, 2020

Theodore Payne Foundation’s Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by donations, memberships and sponsors. You can support TPF by shopping the online gift store as well. A new, pay by phone, contactless plant pickup system is now available. Details here.

Widespread closures, including trails Visitor Centers and campgrounds, at National, State and County parks and reserves remains in place. If you find an accessible trail, please practice social distancing precautions. Situations change quickly, so it is advised that you check on websites before venturing out. A list of some web links appears at the end of the report.

The rain this week may extend the bloom season into early summer unless it gets very hot. There are lots of poppies (Eschscholzia californica) to be seen on Avenue I and Avenue D in Lancaster going towards the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve. But you do not need to leave your home to see the poppies. Just view the live stream online at the preserve via the PoppyCam. It is interesting to see how changing daylight over time changes the landscape.

This week’s report takes us long the Pacific Coast Trail in San Diego County. There are a number of nice blooms on the drive along State Route 76 from Fallbrook to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Grand patches of owl's clover (Castilleja sp.) are in bloom on the south side of the highway just east of Pala, and at the junction of State Route 79 and Route 2. The plantings at the new roundabout between Pauma and Valley Center are in full bloom, dominated by bush sunflower (Encelia californica) and San Diego County viguiera (Bahiopsis laciniata). Look just east of the new round-about. You can’t miss it!

Owl’s clover (Castilleja sp.) and California poppy. Photos by Fred Melgert and George Nanoski.

Blue-flowering ceanothus (Ceanothus spp.) covers the north-facing hillsides on the Palomar slopes, with a handful of plants in full bloom along State Route 76. The vining San Diego sweet pea shows (Lathyrus vestitus var. alefeldii) beautiful wine-red blossoms in a number of spots along the highway. Our native morning glory (Calystegia macrostegia) can be seen climbing up, down and around shrubs as well.

![Flowers](image1)


The parasitic dodder or witch’s hair (Cuscuta sp.) covers many plants along the lower part of Highway 76 with its neon orange-yellow color. The display of goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) at Lake Henshaw paints beautiful, brilliant patches of gold in places.

![Goldfields](image2)

Goldfields (Lasthenia sp.). Photo by Fred Melgert

Entering the PCT at Barrel Springs Trailhead, the sheer number of baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii) will take your breath away! It is always a good hike if there are baby blue eyes in bloom, and an especially good hike when they are in so many places along the trail. Young plants not yet blooming, mixed with patches of flowering plants indicates that the trail should be delightful for some time to come. While standing stunned and enchanted with this scene, the wonderful fragrance of cupped leaf ceanothus (Ceanothus

perplexans) wafts over you. You can view large stands of this stately shrub out into the landscape.

In some areas the ground is absolutely covered by the little star-like flowers of narrow-leaved miner’s lettuce (Claytonia parviflora). There are probably more in one place than you will see in a lifetime. Among the miner’s lettuce you can find the flowers of narrow-leaved lace pod (Thysanocarpus laciniatus) poking up from very small plants!

Other beauties you will find along the way include Western Lupine (Lupinus formosus) with large spikes of blue flowers and patches of cream cups (Platystemon californicus)—a poppy relative. Fringed linanthus (Linanthus dianthiflorus), little white forget-me-nots (Cryptantha sp.) and wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum) fill the spaces between the ceanothus and bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida).
Western lupine (*Lupinus formosus*). Fringed linanthus (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*). Cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). Photos by Fred Melgert.

Also, along the PCT, there is a good chance you’ll see a painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) migration in progress, all heading northwest. Wish them a safe journey!

Painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*). Photo by Tom Chester

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 17th** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southland central California wildflowers.

Below is a short list of web links for local parks for access information and current conditions.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park,
Santa Monica Mountains,
Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve,
Joshua Tree National Park
Carrizo Plain National Monument
Death Valley National Park
LA County Parks
Placerita Canyon Nature Center

NATIVE PLANT AND WILD FLOWER EVENTS

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION For the sake of public health and safety, Theodore Payne Foundation is temporarily closed to the public. A new, pay by phone, contactless plant pickup system is now available. A silver lining to this crisis is that you’ll be able to put extra time into your garden, and plants will be available for pickup. Details here.