April 17, 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.](https://www.theodorepayne.org/)

Widespread closures remain in place. If you find an accessible trail, please practice social distancing precautions. The purpose for the Wild Flower Hotline now is NOT to send you out to localities to view wild flowers, but to post photos that assure you—virtually—that mother nature is still open for business for flowers and their pollinators.

For so many Angelinos who are missing their frequent recreational trips into Griffith Park, there is a bit of promising news. The critters living at the LA Zoo have been keeping the remaining essential zoo staff apprised of what’s blooming in the nearby hills. There are hillside patches of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) with the showy matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) growing among them. By the way, it’s the staff taking the photos, not the animals; although it is fun to muse about chimpanzees with cameras!

California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*). Photos by Andrew Lyell.

At a small South Pasadena nature park, native plants are blooming and abundant. Coast sunflower (*Encelia californica*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are ablaze with yellow and orange. Standing out among the flames are the cooler colors of showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitatum*), woodland clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), tansy-leafed phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), and Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*). The big trees—coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica*)—are also showing off their own subtle but handsome flowers. Be sure to check out the other-worldly cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*) too.

The Sierra foothills east of Visalia are fabulous with wildflowers. Frequent rain showers are helping this to be a banner year for the wildflowers and their allies. Rusty-haired popcorn

flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) and Eastwood’s fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) are still dominant in fields and hillsides. Foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are coming into their own and are quite amazing at this time. A suite of delightfully-named flowers in full bloom include owls clover (*Castilleja purpurea*), spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*), birds-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), butter-'n'-eggs (*Triphysaria eriantha*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), mustang clover (*Leptosiphon montanus*), pretty face (*Triteleia ixioides*), and pink fairy lanterns (*Calochortus amoenus*). Still to come is what looks to be an excellent crop of speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*), woodland clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) and purple clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*) here and there.
Driving along I-8 in eastern San Diego County, the landscape along Mountain Springs Grade is a sea of yellow with flowering brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*). Fields upon fields of the deep pink Bigelow’s monkeyflower (*Diplacus bigelovii*) are in bloom and visible across the wash from I-8. The monkeyflower is no more than 6 inches tall, so it says something about their numbers if you can see huge areas of them from I-8. Off the interstate, in the area around Ocotillo, one can stumble upon an odd but stunning little parasitic plant called sand food or desert Christmas tree (*Pholisma arenarium*). You will see it growing out of the sand near its host plant which is usually a shrub in the sunflower family. The blueish purple flowers cover the stem. It is a beautifully bizarre plant!
You do not need to leave your home to see the poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) at the Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve. Just view the live stream online at the preserve via the PoppyCam. It is interesting to see how the changing daylight waxes and wanes over the poppy landscape.

For years, the wild flower hotline has happily announced the Open House events for Prisk Native Garden in Long Beach at Prisk School. This is the garden’s 25th anniversary. Unfortunately, as with everything else, it is closed to the public. Reportedly, the garden is looking its best this spring. The good news is that you can see photos on the Prisk Native Garden facebook page, [https://www.facebook.com/prisknativegarden/](https://www.facebook.com/prisknativegarden/). Remember, an anniversary lasts for a year, so we look forward to celebrating Prisk’s 25th Anniversary Open House in April 2021.

The essential staff still at the closed Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach want to let you know that the residents of the Butterfly House are loving the nectar producing hedgenettle (*Stachys bullata*). Yum!

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 24th 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.

TPF POPPY HOUR - FRIDAYS, 5:30-6:30 PST
Join the online community as Theodore Payne Foundation hosts a one-hour celebration of California native plants via either Zoom or Youtube. See the nativeplantgardentour.org for details.

Episode 2 on April 17 will be in honor of CA Native Plant Week and feature CNPS Senior Director of Communications Liv O'Keeffe, and CNPS Lead Conservation Scientist Nick Jensen to talk about Native Plants Near You.