Theodore Payne Foundation, a non-profit plant nursery, seed source, book store, and education center dedicated to the preservation of wild flowers and California native plants. This a report for March 27, 2015. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Start out the warm spring weekend by plant shopping at the Theodore Payne Foundation’s Poppy Days Native Plant Sale. After you have purchased your favorite native beauty, get out into one of the natural areas highlighted below to enjoy nature’s ephemeral beauty in wild flowers.

Last week, a school garden was featured on the TPF Native Plant Garden Tour. This week we want to bring your attention to another great school garden that is celebrating an important anniversary. It’s the twentieth year for Prisk Native Garden in Long Beach, considered by many to be the premier example of a native-based schoolyard habitat and garden. They are having their annual Open House event Sunday, March 29, 1:00 – 4:00 pm. More information is given at the end of this report in the events section. There are lots of blooms in spite of sparse rains this year. I highly recommend a visit to this Garden. It is wondrous to consider how many young students over the years were involved in tending to and enjoying nature in this garden. You’ll see a great variety of penstemon species—showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis), desert penstemon (Penstemon pseudospectabilis), scarlet bugler (Penstemon centrathifolius), and royal penstemon (Penstemon speciosus). Contributing to the riotous color are many annuals, Mojave bluebells, (Phacelia campanularia), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), chia (Salvia columbariae), globe gilia (Gilia capitata), meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii), and various clarkias (Clarkia unguiculata, Clarkia bottae, Clarkia concinna). Perennial shrubs add to the color palette. Apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigu), various cultivated selections and colors of monkeyflower (Mimulus spp.) wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum) and Mariposa lilies (Calochortus catalinae and Calochortus splendens). Congratulations Prisk on 20 years of gardening with natives.
Here is a great road trip wild flower journal from a couple of native plant enthusiasts who traveled through Antelope Valley to the Panamints, Death Valley and back south through Barstow and Joshua Tree. Nice trip! The Antelope Valley and the Poppy Preserve had an amazing display, though apparently short lived. A couple of weeks ago, we saw plenty of wild flowers including poppies (Eschscholzia californica), fiddleneck (Amsinckia sp.), miniature lupine (Lupinus bicolor), goldfields (Lasthenia sp.), and Indian paintbrush (Castilleja sp.).

For a quieter, less visited spot, continue west on Lancaster Road to the Arthur B. Ripley Woodland Desert State Park. The wild flowers were just coming out last week so it should be a good spot for a while. Blooms included desert sage (Salvia dorrii), white layia (Layia glandulosa), chia (Salvia columbariae), interior goldenbush (Ericameria linearifolia), blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum), Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia), sun cups (Camissoniopsis sp.), and beautiful rockcress (Arabis sp). North of Mojave on State Highway 14 the desert mallows (Sphaeralcea ambigua) are blooming along the side of the road. Take a slight diversion along Red Rock-Randsburg Road to the south side of Red Rock Canyon State Park. On the south
side of the road were desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). The brown-eyed primroses (*Chylismia claviformis*) were in bloom but, along with other wildflowers, rapidly were being consumed by a horde of white-lined sphinx moth caterpillars.

Fremont pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*), white-stemmed stick-leaf (*Mentzelia* sp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.) and cryptantha (*Cryptantha* spp.), along with other small "belly flowers" were blooming along the roadside. The dirt road entering Red Rock Canyon State Park from the south is very poor and so we only went about 1/3 of a mile into the park. Still we found a spot with thistle sage (*Salvia carduaceae*), pygmy golden poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), Fremont pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*), and others. A short walk into Darwin Fall off 190, west of Panamint Springs, had occasional wild flowers including phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), broad-leafed gilia (*Gilia latifolia*), golden evening primrose (*Oenothera primiveris*), lilac sunbonnets (*Langloisia setosissima* ssp. *punctata*) and gravel ghost (*Atrichoseris platyphylla*). Seep monkey flowers (*Mimulus guttatus*) were blooming by the water. Nice wild flowers can be found on 190 on the east slope of Panamint Valley heading towards Stovepipe Wells. Look for desert five-spot (*Eremaiche rotundifolia*), broad-leafed gilia (*Gilia latifolia*), phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), desert gold-poppy (*Eschscholzia glyptosperma*), golden evening primrose (*Oenothera primiveris*) and lesser mohavea (*Mohavea confertiflora*). Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) is just coming into bloom. Continuing further on 190, between Beatty Junction and Bad Water, the desert floor is tinted yellow with desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*). A closer look reveals broad-leafed gilia (*Gilia latifolia*), desert star (*Monoptilon belliioides*) and purple mat (*Nama demissum*). There are two nice spots east of Ashford Junction on Highway 178 near Jubilee Pass and Salsberry Pass. The beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) is coming into bloom. There is Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), and a lot of other tiny wild flowers to be enjoyed, though the desert floor was not carpeted in garish color. You need to get out of the car and wander around to find them. Camp Rock Road in the Newberry Springs Wilderness, east of Barstow, has some exceptional spots. This well maintained dirt road is a great place to hunt wild flowers. We saw Bigelow's coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelovii*), poppies (*Eschscholzia* spp.), scale-bud (*Anisocoma acaulis*), Wallace's woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), golden evening-primrose (*Oenothera primiveris*), white
pincushion (*Chaenactis* sp.) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*). Finally, don't miss the Black Rock Canyon Campground area of Joshua Tree. It was just coming into bloom on March 17th. We saw phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), white layia (*Layia glandulosa*), suncups (*Camissonia* sp.), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* spp.), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* spp.), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), scale-bud (*Anisocoma acaulis*), desert gold-poppy (*Eschscholzia glyptosperma*), brandegea (*Brandegea bigelovii*), purple mat (*Nama demissum*), and bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*).

Desert star (*Monoptilon belliioides*), Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), scale bud (*Anisocoma acaulis*). Photos by Barbara Eisenstein
Heading east along Highway 198 through Three Rivers into the lower elevations of the **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park**,** California poppies** (*Eschscholzia californica*) are beautiful, especially along the Kaweah Reservoir, and elegant madia (*Madia elegans*) is beginning to flower along the highway into Sequoia. The wild pink color of Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) is fading at lower slopes but in full bloom as you get to around 3,000 ft. in elevation. Same story with the cute little forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.). Buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albilrons*), and spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*) are showy all along the highway into the parks. Flowering is about one month ahead of season here because of warm, dry weather. But weather can change quickly in this area and you should be prepared for changeable temperatures and conditions.

Wildflowers on **Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest** started early this year, including some of the late season flowers that we usually do not see until April. Crossing the first cattle guard, look for popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), buttercups (*Ranunculus californica*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), Johnny jump-up (*Viola pedunculata*), fiesta flowers (*Pholiostoma auritum*), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), and milk maids (*Calindrinia californica*). At the second bend, you will add to your previous sightings down the road, the vivid, red Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) starting to bloom on the rock formations and a carpet of shooting stars (*Dodecatheon* sp.). Further up on the left are more lupine, buttercups, popcorn flowers, fiesta flowers, and blue dicks. Soon you encounter the road lined with lovely, white flowering ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.) along with prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), wild onions (*Allium* sp.), orange wall flowers (*Erysium capitatum*), and coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.). The charming and beautiful chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are making their grand entrance at Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom). In the serpentine area across the road, you’ll see more California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), buttercups, blue dicks, shooting stars, wild onions and coreopsis. About a mile beyond the Figueroa Fire
Station, the slopes on your left are rapidly beginning to fill with sky lupine and California poppies. Along this stretch, also look for bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), and the beginning of caterpillar phacelias, (*Phacelia cicutaria*). Beautiful displays of flowers continue past the Davy Brown Trailhead. As you continue for yet another quarter mile, there is a turnout on the left. Walk a few steps into that field to see gorgeous chocolate lilies, popcorn flower and shooting stars. From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, the Ceanothus continues to bloom, along with bush lupine, bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*), sticky leaf monkey flowers (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), purple nightshade (*Solanum sp.*), Indian paintbrush, purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), and prickly phlox. These wildflower displays continue to amaze as you start your descent down Happy Canyon, through the old Cachuma Campground, to the end of your journey through Figueroa Mountain. This drive is well worth the trip. You are encouraged to use the turnouts often and be safe on the road.

**Clematis (Clematis ligusticifolia) and fiesta flower (Pholistoma auritum)**

Photos by Irina Shchipanova

Native wild flowers are at peak bloom at [Descanso Gardens](http://www.descansogarden.org) in La Canada. Visit the New Oak Woodland and the Native Garden trails. There you will enjoy the excellent blooms of tidy tips, (*Layia platyglossa*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), the cute little five spot (*Nemophila maculata*), and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Under the majestic oaks look for bright spots of color displayed by California sunflower (*Encelia californica*), monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthiflorus*), and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*). Make sure you stop at the Natives Desert Garden to see the fairy dusters—the Baja (*Calliandra californica*) and the pink (*Calliandra eriophylla*). You’ll probably have to share the space around the fairy dusters with the hungry little hummingbirds! You and the hummingbirds will also like the red and yellow chuparosas (*Justicia californica*) and cheery apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambiguа*).

Get out to Malibu Creek State Park in the [Santa Monica Mountains](http://www.parks.ca.gov/) to find some nice spring flowers. The hills are lush and green and flowers of all kinds can be seen along Mulholland Drive. Begin hiking from the corner of Mulholland Hwy and Cornell Road where there are some nice patches of owl's clover (*Castilleja sp.*), goldfields (*Lasthenia sp.*) and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Drive over the hills to PCH and you will see some of the royal blue phacelias (*Phacelia sp.*). If it doesn't get
too hot, they might be there for a little bit longer. Lot’s of lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) are along the road near Malibu Lake.

![Owl’s clover (*Castilleja* sp.) and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.)](image)

*Photo by Terry Lucas*

[Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) invites you to come and visit. The brand new Interpretive Center is now open and will designed to inform visitors about the three ecosystems within the park: oak woodland, riparian, and chaparral. The Ecology Trail hosts all three of these ecosystems within a 1 1/2 mile loop trail. At this time there are at least 20 plants that are budding, blooming, or producing fruit. The California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is in full bloom and will soon begin to fade. The Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*) covers a large slope at the top of the trail. The spectacular purple blooms are a sight to see. Also of note are the fiddle neck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) with their bright yellow blooms and the unique form.

In [Joshua Tree National Park](#), the area around Black Rock Campground are starting to have showy patches of color. Joshua Trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) are ready to burst into bloom. Joshua Tree National Park’s own poppy (*Eschscholiza androuxii*) is brilliant now and contrasts nicely with the baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and tidy-tips (*Layia glandulosa*). Woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*) is dotting the washes with chia (*Salvia columbariae*). The wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*) is creeping up into the shrubs and along rock edges. At Jumbo Rocks, the shrub with the pretty pink blossoms—desert almond (*Prunus fasciculata*)—is blooming widely in the area. Wilson Canyon to Pinto Basin and in Porcupine Wash, the perennial shrubs are looking good and attracting pollinators. Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), thick- Leaved ground-cherry (*Physalis crassifolia*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), and globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigu*a) are a few that are splendid now, especially if the starvine (*Brandegea bigelovii*), is decorating their branches. At the southern end of the park along Cottonwood canyon Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) are in bloom at mile-post 33. Be careful of dive-bombing hummingbirds! Walk a bit in the
area and you may come across the gorgeous blue Canterbury bells (*Phacelia campanularia*) and much more of what we mentioned above.

Hedge hog cacti (*Echinocereus* sp.) in Joshua Tree National Park  
Photo by Amy Jahnke

Chemehuevi Valley is west of I-95 between Needles and Vidal Junction. For whatever reason you are in that area (lost!) check out the abundant ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) in bloom, giving a red hue to the landscape as far as the eye can see. There must be some pretty happy hummingbirds around as well. Most washes will have a light bloom of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*) and notch-leaved phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*). Hwy 62 From Vidal Junction to Earp has an average bloom with some Lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambiguа*), and notch-leaved phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*). Beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris*) and hedge hog cacti (*Echinocereus* sp.) can be found here and there even though it seems early for desert cactus species to be blooming. The Amboy neighborhood is very dry, flowers obvious only immediately along roadsides of route 66. Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), senna (*Senna armata*), some lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), a few palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*). No guarantee, but if you walked out in the washes and rocky crevices, there may be some fine, but few blooms, of tiny species that can’t be seen from the road. In the North Ship Mountain region south of Cadiz, visit the dunes area. There are swaths of desert sunflowers (*Geraea canescens*), creosote (*Larrea tridentata*), sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), pincushion flowers (*Chaenactis* spp), desert dandelions (*Malacothrix glabrata*), evening primroses (*Oenothera* sp.) in bloom.
In the Inland Empire out at the MWD Diamond Valley Lake, the flowers along the North Hills Wildflower Trail and the Lakeview Trail are quite lovely, and much better than past years. Recent heat wave makes your trip here to see the peak bloom ever more urgent. This must be a good year for forget-me-nots (Cryptantha spp.) and popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys spp.) They are covering the hillsides with their tiny white flowers. Sprinkle some blue into the white landscape with arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), fern-leaf phacelia (Phacelia distans), wild Canterbury bells (Phacelia minor) and wild hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum) along with some orange and yellow California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), California goldfields (Lasthenia californica), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), and California sun cups (Camissoniopsis bistorta) and you get a lot of photo-worthy color.
Again this week I want to introduce you to a new wild flower area. **La Alba is a Riverside County Habitat Conservation Area**; some of the land is semi-privately held. An urban park located next to housing tracts, it maintains pristine coastal sage scrub and riparian oak woodland habitats. From I-15 (Murrieta/Temecula area) take the Winchester Rd/N Hwy79 exit. Go north on Winchester Rd. approximately 4 miles to La Alba Dr. Turn left on La Alba, and drive to end of street and park. The trailhead is directly ahead and to the left of the trailhead sign. For the best blooms, take the small trail just beyond the main trail on the right. The switchback has good color to enjoy. Trailside blooms include black and white sage (*Salvia mellifera* and *Salvia apiana*), yellow bush penstemon (*Keckiela antirrhinoides*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), phacelia species, (*Phacelia* spp.), royal goldfields (*Lasthenia coronaria*), ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), owl’s cover (*Castilleja* sp.) and splendid Mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*).
In Newport Beach, the Environmental Nature Center is colorful and fragrant with spring blooms. In the desert section, look for the Indian mallow (Abutilon palmeri), fairy duster (Calliandra eriophylla), brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) and desert lavender (Hyptis emoryi). From the desert, walk over to the freshwater marsh habitat. There, the odd looking yerba mansa (Anemopsis californica) is flowering. All shades of yellow are seen with Nevin’s barberry (Berberis nevini), Island bush poppy (Dendromecon harfordii), California encelia (Encelia californica) and bladderpod (Peritoma arborea). Always cheery in their California-beckoning colors of gold and blue are California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and Arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus). Other show-stoppers include live-forever (Dudleya spp.), seaside daisy (Erigeron glaucus), Conejo buckwheat (Eriogonum crocatum) and woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum).

The Desert Garden at Elizabeth Learning Center is still amazing..especially the showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis) and catsclaw (Senegalia greggii)! Other desert highlights: desert bluebells (Phacelia campanularia), mojave sun cups (Camissonia campestris), mojave lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea) spanish needle (Palafoxia arida), pebble pincushion (Chaenactis carphoclinia), brittlebush (Encelia farinosa), desert lavender (Hyptis emoryi), desert holly (Atriplex hymenelytra), desert gold (Geraea canescens), owls clover (Castilleja exserta), chia (Salvia columbariae), panamint cryptantha (Cryptantha inaequata), skeleton milkweed (Asclepias subulata), desert marigold (Baileya multiradiata), fishhook cactus (Mammillaria dioica), sweetbush (Bebbia juncea), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentachaeta), arizona four-nerve daisy (Tetraneuris acaulis var. arizonica) & southwestern mock vervain (Verbena gooddingii).

Meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii) at ELC. Photo by George Nanoski

In the Vernal Pool Garden, get up close and personal with hoover’s calicoflower
(Downingia bella), prostrate navarratia (Navarretia prostrata), woolly marbles (Psilocephalum brevissimus), california orcutt grass (Orcuttia californica), san diego button celery (Eryngium aristulatum var. parishii), otay mesa mint (Pogogyne nudiuscula), thread-leaf brodiaea (Brodiaea filifolia), dense-flowered spike primrose (Epilobium densiflorum), vernal popcorn flower (Plagiobothrys undulatus), bolander’s water-starwort (Calitrichce heterophylla var. bolanderi), sanford’s arrowhead (Sagittaria sanfordii) & douglas’ meadowfoam (Limnanthes douglasii). There are also spadefoot/western toad tadpoles and fairy shrimp still swimming about in the deepest vernal pool! AND...the very rare soft-leaved paintbrush (Castilleja mollis) is blooming in our nursery! Come on by...we are in Cudahy between Atlantic and Wilcox. Check in as a guest at the Main Office. You may visit the Desert and Vernal Pool gardens anytime as they are in front of the school.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 3 and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

If you would like to be a wildflower reporter send your information about wildflower blooms and their location to flowerhotline@theodorepayne.org by Wednesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

Theodore Payne Foundation

Poppy Days Plant Sale

Friday & Saturday, March 27 and 28, 8:30am-4:30pm

An annual celebration of our State flower and huge native plant sale, offering the region’s largest and most interesting selection of California native plants – with expert advice and discounts to all!

TPF members 15% off all day; non-members 10% off after 11:00 am; memberships available at the door.

Prisk Native Garden

Open House event Sunday, March 29, 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Admission free. Donations accepted. Going south on the 405 in Long Beach take the Paloverde turnoff. Garden is near the corner of San Vicente and Los Arcos in Long Beach. School address is 2375 Fanwood, L.B. 90815. For more info: letteriello@charter.net or 562-0439-6002

Placerita Canyon Nature Center

We invite you to our Blooms of the Season Hike on the 4th Saturday of the month (March 28) at 9:30. There is always something new and fascinating to see.
Los Padres National Forest
Spring 2015 Figueroa Wildflower Tour. **Saturday, March 28.** Starts at 9:00 am. Duration of the tour is 3 to 4 hours. For more information, call Helen Tarbet (805) 925-9538 ext. 246 or email htarbet@fs.fed.us