



There are many new exciting places to visit this week, so make sure to set aside some time this weekend to get out and enjoy the bloom.

I must begin by telling you about a truly imaginative wildflower display that is in full bloom now at the [Southern California Montane Botanic Garden](#) in Oak Glen Preserve at the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains. It is called The Artist's Palette Garden. Here's how the Garden was created. They took an actual photograph of the French Impressionist painter, Claude Monet's paint palette, digitally draped the photo over an aerial photograph of the six-acre hillside, separated the botanist's palette of 24 native wildflowers by color and, using the tree islands in the Garden for reference, painted lines on the ground and sowed the seeds by color patches to re-create Monet's paint palette on six acres with wildflowers! It is a must-see display and a special venue for this Wildlands Conservancy Preserve.



Artist's Palette Garden. Photos by Tim Krantz

A friend calls this next trip wildflower nirvana! I believe him. And by the way, I've mentioned 9 Mile Canyon for the last few weeks, so it should be a definite destination. For wildflower seekers ready for a weekend adventure, head up to the Mojave high desert of Inyo County! It will be well worth your driving time! You can find yourself in the midst of fields of flowers reminiscent of last year's super bloom! You

just have to know where to look and get out of your car! As you drive Hwy 14 North (past Red Rock Canyon State Park) to its junction with the 395 North, you will be overwhelmed by the other-worldly colors of apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), Mojave indigo bush (*Psoralethamnus arborescens*), and desert senna (*Senna armata*)! Off the 395 North, past Pearsonville, take 9 Mile Canyon Road up, up, up to find fields of wildflowers to overwhelm the eyes and the nose! Be careful to keep your eyes on the road and pull over to safely to luxuriate in the bloom. The fragrances of California coreopsis (*Coreopsis californica*) and grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) combine to fill the air with a subtle sweetness. Do some scrambling to find blankets of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), Fremont's pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*), Mojave milkvetch (*Astragalus mohavensis* var. *hemigyris*), Fremont's phacelia (*Phacelia fremontii*), birds-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), Mojave sand verbena (*Abronia pogonantha*), white tidy-tips (*Layia glandulosa*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), pacific blazing star (*Mentzelia obscura*), desert chicory (*Rafinesquia neomexicana*), brown-eyed primrose (*Camissonia claviformis*), various cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), devil's lettuce (*Amsinckia tessellata*), Kern sun-cups (*Camissonia kernensis*), desert calico (*Loeseliastrum matthewsii*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), Wallace's woolly daisies (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), purple mat (*Nama demissum*), and strigose lotus (*Lotus strigosus*).



Mojave indigo bush (*Psoralethamnus arborescens*). Photo by George Nanoski

Continue on to the [Fossil Falls Scenic Area](#) for two species that are absolutely stunning against the black volcanic basalt—Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*) and thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*)! These two species are the stars of the show here. East of the cinder cone volcano and mining operation, you will find fields of desert

wildflowers with all the usual suspects including blankets of chinchweed (*Pectis papposa*) and the ethereal holy dandelion (*Glytopleura setulosa*)! Also keep an eye out for gorgeous winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*)! AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR RATTLESNAKES! THEY ARE OUT AND ABOUT!



You may be watching the Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), but the guy on the right has his eye on you! Be careful out there! Photos by George Nanoski.

Make this a camping trip and seek the solitude of Centennial Canyon (4x4 suggested) in the [Coso Range Wilderness](#). From the 395 North, take Hwy 190 towards Death Valley National Park, making a right (before Panamint Springs) on to Centennial Road. Drive through miles of Joshua Tree forest to find this gem all to yourself! Along the way, stop to enjoy towering stalks of chocolate drops (*Caulanthus pilosus*). As you hike in, you will find desert almond (*Prunus fasciculata*), desert paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*), birdcage-evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*), cold desert phlox (*Phlox stansburyi*), desert gooseberry (*Ribes velutinum*), and desert thistle (*Cirsium neomexicanum*). As you reach the upper canyon (about 3 miles in), you will find yourself surrounded by ancient petroglyphs left behind by the indigenous people that lived in the area over 10,000 years ago! Return the way you came.

Chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) and cupped leaf ceanothus (*C. perplexans*) are in full bloom along the lower part of SR79 in [Cuyamaca Rancho State Park](#). Make sure the car windows are open as you drive along SR79 or walk the south boundary road of the park. The fragrance from these two lilacs is intoxicating, especially near dusk. The mix of the scents from these species are something to experience. Near Cuyamaca Lake, there are patches of meadowfoam (*Limnanthes* sp.) in bloom and some pretty glorious Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium* var. *dictyota*) in full bloom, along with velvety false lupine (*Thermopsis californica* var. *semota*). These flowers are accompanied by quite a few other species in bloom— most of those are non-showy and fewer in number, but they would reward anyone who walks around the area.

In the [Santa Monica Mountains](#), there are two trails in Topanga State Park that are spectacular right NOW! Go there immediately! One is the Musch Trail. From the Trippet Ranch parking lot, walk up the paved road to the top of the hill and turn right onto the signed trail. You can do this as an “in-and-out” hike or make a loop by walking to the fire road (about two miles) and then turning right and walking the fire road back to the parking lot. The landscape mostly alternates between woodlands

and grasslands with a little chaparral thrown in. The grasslands have literally thousands of Catalina mariposa lilies (*Calochortus catalinae*). Mixed in with them are blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), blue eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus californica*) and some golden star lilies (*Bloomeria crocea*) but the mariposas are the true stars. The hike has a good number of other spring wild flowers; purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*), sticky monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*). The bottom of the Santa Ynez Canyon Trail can be accessed from the end of Vereda De La Montura Street off of Palisades Drive in Pacific Palisades. You can also reach it by way of a long downhill hike from Trippet Ranch. But then you have to climb back up! The predominant flower is vetch which was all along the trail. There was also a fair amount of purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), fiesta flower (*Pholistoma aurium*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*). The most exciting thing was hundreds of Humboldt lily (*Lilium humboldti*) plants. They may not survive to bloom, deer love to browse them, but they hint that there could be an amazing display in about a month. At the end of the canyon bottom trail and up into the chaparral there is chia (*Salvia columbariae*), yellow pin cushion (*Chaenactis glabriscula*) and owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.) and more. This is a wonderful hike in any season. Just be aware of poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) which is plentiful!

I've have received mixed messages about the Gorman area. I think if you want to see the best bloom, you better get there quick. It is fading.

Make your plans now for a trip to [Hungry Valley SVRA](#) if you want to see the poppies in full bloom along Tejon Pass! The parking lot at Fort Tejon State Historic Park is a safe place to view them. Hungry Valley Wildflower Viewing Areas are open and there are some remarkable blooms along the wildflower loops. On the Wheatfield Trail Loop, along Powerline Road, there is a spectacular hillside with a wide variety of wildflowers. The Stipa Trail Loop has another outstanding hillside of wildflowers located on Powerline Road between Condor and Stipa. The two hillsides are sporting a variety of different blooms on each, so try to visit each area. In the main part of the park, there are scattered poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) blooming near Edison Campground and lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) flowering along Spaghetti Pass. The yucca flat area of the park between Aliklik Campground and Lane Ranch Campground has a nice mix of wildflowers, too The weather is beautiful, the wildflowers are out, and it is time for a visit to Hungry Valley SVRA! The hills have already begun turning brown in some areas, so the wildflower season may be short while intensely vivid.

Go out and take a drive soon. Wildflower loops are two-wheel drive dirt roads, but you will need high clearance. These roads are narrow, so take advantage of turnouts, and be alert for OHVs on the roads. Driving with your windows down, will help you hear other vehicles. Careful not to park on any vegetation or block the roads while viewing the flowers. All plants (and animals) are protected at Hungry Valley, so be respectful of our flora and fauna. Download the wildflower map from our website for the self-guided tour, or you can go by the entrance station and pick up a wildflower map along with a wildflower guide. Just ask! Please remember that there is a \$5 entrance fee for the park.



Gorman

landscape. Photo by Michel Wall

[Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is an pleasant place to take short strolls along trails close to the Nature Center, or longer hikes on trails that radiate farther out into the park. There are also wonderful family programs on weekends. Along the Oak Woodland trails, large coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) are flowering now. Look for long catkins of male flowers at the tips of the branches and tucked among the new spring foliage that is greenish-pink in color. The elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cearulea*) is also very showy. Handsome shrubs like the blue flowered hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*) are in bloom as well. Lower to the ground are common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissima*), and sun cups (*Camissoniopsis* sp.). If you are on the trails in the late afternoon to twilight, look for the wispy white blossoms of the soap root plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) on long stalks arising above dark green undulating leaves. Interesting plant. An interesting spectacle now is the prickly pods of wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) splitting open to release its seeds. Don't miss it.

From the Sierra foothills around [Three Rivers](#), we have reports of an explosion of spring flowers coming up under beautiful blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) canopies. There are fields of understory flowers including fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) and popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*). A very special

Wildflowers are starting to pop along the lower sections of the [Mt. Wilson Trail above Sierra Madre in the San Gabriel Mountains](#). There is a good variety of species, but only a few of each species. There were some nice displays of wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*), chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) and hairy ceanothus (*C. oliganthus*). You will also find blunt leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), two species of cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium*

spp.), climbing morning glory (*Calystegia* sp.), fringe pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), common pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), prickly cryptantha (*Cryptantha muricata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*), Douglas's nightshade (*Solanum douglasii*), clematis (*Clematis* sp.), and Western wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*). These are flowers you'd normally expect along this trail, but more than the hiker/reporter had expected given the kind of year we're having.

Here is the update this week for a nice driving tour of [Figueroa Mountain in Los Padres National Forest](#). There are frequent turn outs along the road. Please be sure to use them and for safety. Starting at the first cattle guard and continuing to the tree canopy area, glistening yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), beautiful fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*), are in bloom. Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) are showing up as well. You can also find wild onion (*Allium* sp.) and lupine (*Lupinus* sp.). The tree canopy area is fading, but popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* sp.) is still looking very nice. As you continue to climb up the hill, the familiar golden-orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are dominant along with patches of adorable, tiny cream cups (*Platystemon californica*). Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill drive include, California buckwheat (*Eriogonum* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), Mariposa lily (*Calochortus* sp.) and still some fading ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.) with more and more lupine showing among the grassy slopes. At the serpentine turnout, a picturesque scene is directly in front of you with poppies, goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), popcorn flowers and shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*). Look for golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and live-for-ever (*Dudleya* sp.) as well. Across the road from Vista Point and up to the station, the only flowers currently blooming include poppies, lomatium, coreopsis and wild hyacinth and lupine. The field before Tunnell Road has buttercups (*Ranunculus californica*), and wallflowers (*Erysimum wallacei*). From Figueroa Campground to Davy Brown trailhead are beautiful California poppies, sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), fiddleneck and purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.). Beyond the Davy Brown trailhead, shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) are still plentiful and buttercups, goldfields, poppies, chia, and ceanothus can be found up to the entrance to the Ranger Station. Baby blue eyes are peeking out at you in patches up to Ranger Peak. Ranger Peak is beginning to bloom with manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.) just starting to flower now and Sunset Valley and Happy Canyon will peak bloom soon. Look for elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) in this area. There will be a guided tour of Figueroa Mountain wildflowers this weekend. For information, see Events section of this report below.

Watch out for the blue witch (*Solanum umbelliferum*) seen along the trails at [Pinnacles National Park](#). Other colorful characters you will encounter are milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), Johnny jump-up (*Viola pedunculata*), lacey parsnip

(*Lomatium dasycarpum*), Douglas wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), Fremont star-lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), and buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*). I don't know for sure, but I really hope the baby blue-eyes and the pretty pink California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) are growing side by side, because the blue and pink colors are wonderful together! One flower that you definitely need to see is the bitter root (*Lewisia rediviva*). It is a tiny plant with a flower that looks like it is just sitting on the ground, so keep a watchful eye for it. There is lots of blue along the trails from displays of Bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), Parry's larkspur (*Delphinium parryi*) silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), and chia (*Salvia columbariae*).

Enjoy walking under the grand tree canopy in the Oak Woodland section of [Descanso Gardens](#) in La Canada-Flintridge. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and chia (*Salvia columbariae*) cheer you on along the pathway edges, and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*) will wink at you while standing further back in the shade of the oaks. Move on to the sunny Native Garden and find waves of Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) at the El Portal along with darling little bleeding hearts (*Dicentra formosa*). Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*) and showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) make colorful little patches in the garden as well.

The Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) and Pacific Coast iris hybrids are also at peak bloom at [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont](#). You can wander about on the Mesa pathways and see infinite shades and combinations of purple, blue, lavender in this iris display. The other plant group that is going crazy with color now are the various penstemons (*Penstemon spectabilis*, *P. heterophyllus*, *P. eatonii*, *P. palmeri*, *P. centranthifolius*). In the Channel Island section search for the rare (*Crossosoma californicum*) along with the Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). Flowering shrubs throughout the garden include, barberry (*Berberis* spp. and cultivars.), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), silk tassel bush (*Garrya* spp.), sages (*Salvia* spp. and cultivars), fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), and desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*). Annuals showing up in sunny locations are phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.) large flowered linanthus (*Leptosiphon grandiflorus*), hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) and desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*). Others in bloom include coral bells (*Heuchera maxima* and cultivars. The desert garden, just inside the entrance, has members of the cactus community blooming, including prickly pear (*Opuntia* ssp.) and hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus* ssp.). The blue paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*) is the umbrella canopy for these desert beauties.

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach continues to please the senses with color and fragrance this week. The various sage species are extraordinarily nice with black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), Munz's sage (*Salvia munzii*) and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*) taking the lead. Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus auranticus*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cearulea*), and desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea abigua*) have all been flowering beautifully. Along with all that color comes the showy spikes of the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and their amazing fragrance of grape soda. Take several rest breaks while walking through this garden to accommodate your sensory overload!

The Habitat Gardens at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) are experiencing a mini urban “Superbloom”. Most of their wildflower show can be appreciated from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. The Desert Garden wows with desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*), prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *retrorsa*), prince’s plume (*Stanleya pinnata*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), pale sun-cup (*Camissoniopsis pallida*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pool Garden has Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), Hoover’s calicoflower (*Downingia bella*), clustered tarweed (*Deinandra fasciculata*), Lindley’s blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), California sage (*Salvia californica*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leafed lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), spinescrub (*Adolphia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), Orcutt’s quillwort (*Isoetes orcuttii*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), and beautiful blankets of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Additional species in the Chaparral Garden include Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), wine cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *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*), and blue paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



What a difference a day makes! Desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*) in bud, then open flower the next day. Photos by George Nanoski

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 4th** 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](#)

Blooms of the Season guided hike. Saturday, April 28, 9:30 am

[California Native Plant Society, Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter](#)

Saturday April 28, 2018:

Lone Pine Canyon, Swarthout Canyon and Mormon Rocks area. <https://riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org/>

[Southern California Montane Botanic Garden](#)

The Wildlands Conservancy, Oak Glen Preserve, 39611 Oak Glen Road, Yucaipa, CA 92399. Now through May!

<https://www.facebook.com/OakGlenPreserve/>

[Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden \(rsabg.org\)](#)

The California Butterfly Pavilion is opening this Saturday April 28, 2018. See all Events at rsabg.org.

[Figueroa Mountain, Los Padres National Forest](#)

Wildflower Tour. May 5, 2018, 9 am – 2 pm. For morer information, contact
htarbet@fs.fed.us