



March 8, 2019

Theodore Payne Foundation's Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by donations, memberships, and the generous support of [S&S Seeds](#).

In the [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#), the Stunt High Trail within the Cold Creek Preserve is a surprisingly nice walk. Park on Stunt Rd, 1 mile from Mulholland Highway. The trail descends from the parking area and parallels a babbling creek. Milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), dozens of them, line the trail beckoning you onward. When the trail climbs out from the streamside and into the sunny chaparral, there are big pod ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*) hosting a flower fiesta with fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*) some California peony (*Paeonia californica*) and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*). The flowering ash trees (*Fraxinus dipetala*) are waving their creamy white flowers from the branches above this colorful scene.



Flowering ash (*Fraxinus dipetala*). Photo by Dorothy Steinicke.

There have been many inquiries from eager flower viewers about the bloom at [Carrizo Plain National Monument](#). The flower show is delayed because of the cool weather, but there is the beginning of some nice color with early flowering plants like goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) around Panorama Road. Hillside daisies (*Monolopia lanceolata*) can be seen on sunny slopes in the north part of the Monument and various spots on the valley floor. Visitors are reminded to be well prepared for the trip as Carrizo Plain is a very remote location with no services. Most roads are dirt and secondary roads such as Simmler and Panorama may not be passable. Check ahead.

At [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#) more sun is required to jump start the poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) bloom, so it may be a couple of weeks before we see the reserve carpeted with **California's iconic flower**. The **small, white forget-me-nots** (*Cryptantha* sp.), golden orange fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), phlox (*Leptosiphon* sp.), and fringe pod (*Thysanocarpus* sp.) are beginning to appear however. The adjacent [Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park](#) has a woodland of robust Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) with bountiful buds about to burst into flower.

The trails at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) are coloring up with pink chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) and red fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), and are attracting hummingbirds eager to start the nesting season. Hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and its cousin hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) are sporting their white and blue flowers and looking very dapper. The California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is in bud, ready to burst open and popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.) are unfurling their coils of white blossoms. **Check out the bright golden orange jack o' lantern mushrooms** (*Omphalotus olearius*) too. Coming soon to Placerita will be common pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), all in bud now just waiting for you and some sun to visit.

[Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont](#) is 85 acres of blooming natives and in the background is the magnificent snow-capped Mt. Baldy. Here is what to look for as you stroll along the pathways. There is a riot of yellow flowers covering the Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and blush pink blossoms on the manzanita (*Arctostaphylos 'Howard McMinn*). An added spectacle to the already showy manzanita, is the presence of clusters of Painted Lady butterflies! Off the mesa, in the desert garden area is a show of more yellow, but this **time it's Nevin's barberry** (*Berberis nevini*), Oregon grape and its cultivars (*Berberis aquifolium*) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*).

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach is a pretty nice hang out for the hummingbirds who drop by. The sages are their attraction. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), **Munz's sage** (*Salvia munzii*) and of course, hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*). Find them waiting their turn at the nectar bar around the fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) **as well**. **Other flowering beauties seen along the pathways include Nevin's barberry** (*Berberis nevini*), Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and the always-welcoming California encelia (*Encelia californica*).

Many of the trails in [Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park](#) are closed, but the 5.7 miles in the Bell Canyon/Cougar Pass/ East Ridge area showed masses of flowers blanketing the hillside—a local super bloom like I’ve never seen before says one happy hiker. Just a few flowering super stars include Padre’s shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), fringed linanthus (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), California poppy (*Eschscholtzia californica*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), California four o’clock (*Mirabilis laevis*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), California golden violet (*Viola pedunculata*), San Diego jewelflower (*Caulanthus heterophyllus*), and Catalina Mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*).



Catalina Mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*). Photo by Michael Charters.

[Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#) is popping with color! Many places in the Borrego Valley are excellent flower viewing sites. At the end of the paved Di Giorgio Road and starting up the entrance to Coyote Canyon there are really good displays of sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), browneyes (*Chylismia claviformis*) and desert sunflower (*Gerea canescens*). Many other colorful species are scattered about and need to be seen. **Don’t attempt to drive up Coyote Canyon. Walk if you have time.** Continue east on SR-22 into the badlands. Coachwhip Canyon and Arroyo Salado are excellent, displaying a variety of species. There are good pullouts along the road to use. The sand verbena is turning the hill sides purple and the stately ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) are all fired up with red blooms. The best way to explore this area is to wander up the canyons and washes on foot. There are wonderful little spaces among the rocks and **sandy patches which have little flowering jewels.** The Booth’s sun cups (*Eremothera boothii*) are extraordinarily large. At Arroyo Salado, south of the highway, there are patches of mixed

flowers including desert lilies (*Hesperocallis undulata*), lupine, desert sunflower, sand verbena along with all sorts of colorful mixed minis, too numerous to list. Hikers will also love trekking up Hellhole Canyon. See washes full of common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), Bigelow monkey flower (*Diplacus bigelovii*), purplemat (*Nama demissa*), wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), and Parish's poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*). For the 4 x 4 crowd, visit the area around Ocotillo Wells SRVA, specifically Devil's Slide. Dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*) is carpeting the area and is gorgeous. It is critical to get there soon, because when the hungry caterpillars discover so much of their favorite food, they will quickly decimate the area. More drama commences when the caterpillars are spotted by migrating Swainson's hawks who pig out on the juicy caterpillars. Then come the hoards of human birders to watch this spectacle. With birders scanning the sky and flower peepers searching the ground, all kinds of "crazy" ensues. Be sure to have a "designated driver" who keeps their eyes on the road.



Dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*) and Bigelow monkey flower (*Diplacus bigelovii*). Photos by Fred Melgert

Further north and east of Palm Springs, the [Coachella Valley Preserve](#) in Thousand Palms is a rich habitat system of desert palm oases, desert riparian, sand dunes and alluvial plains. And there are wonderful, accessible trails through much of it. A recent visitor says it is popping with flowers! Just some to mention are primrose (*Chylismia claviformis*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), thick leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*), Mojave ghostflower (*Mohavea confertiflora*), Spanish needles (*Palafoxia arida*), and so many more!

Far, but worth the drive and a weekend exploration, is [Corn Springs Campground](#) in the Chuckwalla Mountains. There, among the California fan palm oasis, are washes, rocky slopes (check out the protected **petroglyphs**), and “desert pavement” **bajadas with displays of** notched leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*), small flowered fagonia (*Fagonia laevis*), yellow cups (*Chylismia brevipes*) and ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*). A few south facing rocky slopes had striking displays of yellow and purple of yellow cups and phacelia. Also in bloom: white tack-stem (*Calycoseris wrightii*), forget-me-not flowers (*Cryptantha nevadensis*, *Cryptantha pterocarya*), Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza torifolia*), alkali phacelia (*Phacelia neglecta*), sand blazing star (*Mentzelia involucreta*), wedge leaved draba (*Draba cuneifolia*), California mustard (*Caulanthus lasiophyllus*), gilia (*Aliciella* spp.), milkvetches (*Astragalus* spp.), and desert globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*). Jones' linanthus (*Linanthus jonesii*) opened up in the evening—a **perfect day's**-end experience. There is much more. Off the I-10, ten miles east of Desert Center then 6 miles south on a maintained gravel road OK for passenger vehicles.



**Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza torifolia*), Photo by Michael Charters.**

The Habitat Gardens at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy are a secluded refuge for re-wilding in SoEast L.A. ! Most of the wildflower show can be seen from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus without having to check in at the Main Office! Explore the Desert Habitat Garden to find cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), desert lavender

(*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), **bird's eye gilia** (*Gilia tricolor*) and **Coulter's lupine** (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pool Habitat Garden is in glorious wet phase after all the rain, and all five vernal pools are alive with fairy shrimp, clam shrimp and many other vernal pool endemics! Look here also for Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), fringed-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) **Menzies' fiddleneck** (*Amsinckia menziesii*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Some additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), torhleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), and Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*). Photo by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 15 and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

## NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

### [Theodore Payne Foundation Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale](#)

[Saturday, Mar 23, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM](#)

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.

### [Theodore Payne Foundation Native Plant Garden Tour](#)

[Saturday & Sunday, April 6 & 7, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM](#)

Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, Theodore Payne Foundation partners with homeowners to showcase excellent native plant landscapes on this two-day, self-guided tour across Los Angeles County.

### [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#)

Wildflower hike at Placerita every 4th Saturday. (This month, March 23)

“Blooms of the Season” walk, 9:30 – 10:30

We always find something interesting to see.

### [Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#)

Saturday, March 16

[Borrego Desert Garden Tour](#)

FEE. Purchase tickets on line at [www.abdnha.org](http://www.abdnha.org)

### [California Native Plant Society, Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter: Native Plant Week Symposium, Flower Show & Plant Sale](#)

Saturday, April 13, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

The Symposium and Native Plant Sale includes speakers, a native plant and nature book sale and a wildflower show using cuttings from local gardens (not the wild).

© 2019 Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants, Inc.  
No reproduction of any kind is allowed without written permission.