



March 15, 2019

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

Predicting wild flower bloom at any location in real time in SoCal is fraught with nature's fickleness. In the few days that pass between receiving information and getting to print, extremes of temperature—cold to hot, back to cold, rain/snow and wind can shatter fragile flowers. It's always good to call or check the location's website if you can and adjust your expectations accordingly before heading out. Please enjoy your outing!

**Take care not to harm the wild flowers.** Do not pick them. Stay on the trails. Keep dogs on leash or, better yet, let them stay home. Leave the flowers and plants for humans and other animals to enjoy, now and in the future.

The low desert regions from Anza Borrego (see report below) to the southern region of [Joshua Tree National Park](#) of the I-10 exit and around the Cottonwood entrance, is a cadre of colorful wildflowers making a dramatic display. Along the alluvial and bajada landscapes on Old Dale road, blooms include the blues and purples of Arizona lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*) and desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*). Desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), sand blazing star (*Mentzelia involucrata*), Parish's gold-poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*), Emory's rock daisy (*Perityle emroyi*) and desert chicory (*Rafinesquia neomexicana*) make splashes of yellow and white. In the washes and sandy patches look for star gilia (*Gilia stellata*), purplemat (*Nama demissa*), Wallace's woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*) and the ethereal gravel ghosts (*Atrichoseris platyphylla*) and desert trumpets (*Ergonum inflatum*). The coral red and yellow combo of bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) and apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) dominate the pretty perennials in bloom.



Scenes along road to Cottonwood entrance to JTNP. Photos by Barbara Eisenstein

Now that the weather is beginning to warm up, overall wildflower bloom at [Diamond Valley Lake](#) in Hemet, should really pick up this weekend along both the Wildflower Trail and Lakeview Trail. The patchwork quilt of yellow of California goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and orange California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) are starting to blanket the hillsides. Punctuating the gold/yellow landscape are patches of blue and purple of lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.) and baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). The Painted Lady butterflies (*Vanessa cardui*) are currently passing through southern California, with many stopping to nectar along the Wildflower Trail.



.Diamond Valley Lake Wildflower Trail. Photos by Bill Wagner

Officials at [Carrizo Plain National Monument](#) tell us that the flower show is beginning with early flowering plants such as goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) around Panorama Road.

Hillside daisies (*Monolopia lanceolata*) and a few patches of Great Valley phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) can be seen on sunny slopes in the Temblor mountains and various spots on the valley floor. The BIG bloom is yet to come, so stay tuned! 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.

If you are planning a spring break trip, try escaping to the Sierra Nevada foothills around Three Rivers and [Sequoia National Park](#). Along Hwy198 leading to the Park, Eastwood's fiddle-neck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) and silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*) are in peak bloom. The tufted poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are just beginning to flower, and it appears that it will be a banner year for them. Not as obvious from the highway but entering into bloom are the white-leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) and buckbrush ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus*). Western redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*) are just beginning to display their bright pink blossoms, as are the tasseled flowers of the blue oaks (*Quercus douglasii*). Along trails and obvious to the hiker are foothill shooting stars (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), and red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*). With all the rain, it is also a lush season for the colorful and fascinating lichens, and mushrooms of many kinds, colors and shapes.





Above mushroom and lichen, below whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*).  
Photos by Mike Wall

At [the Antelope Valley California State Poppy Reserve](#), they are starting to see lots of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) bloom. Many small “belly flowers” include slender phlox (*Microsteris gracilis*), common goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), and red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*). Also in bloom are common fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), slender keel fruit (*Tropidocarpum gracile*), and desert parsley (*Lomatium nevadense*). The adjacent [Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park](#) has a woodland of robust flowering Joshua (*Yucca brevifolia*) and fruiting juniper (*Juniperus californica*) trees that are truly beautiful and bountiful. Visit both parks and take in the grand diversity of California flora.

The trails at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) are coloring up with pink chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) and red fuchsia-flowered 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*), sugarbush (*Rhus ovata*), and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), all in bud now just waiting for you and some sun to visit.

Visit [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden](#) to walk among some spectacular shrubby natives. Along the pathways in the north end of the garden called the “communities,” woolly-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus tomentosus*) are covered with blue flowers. Enjoy the sweet aroma as you watch the native bumble bees and the Painted Lady butterflies hover around the flowers. There is a riot of yellow flowers covering the Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*). Blue however is the “color of the week” in the garden with grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus* var. *excubitus*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), and Pacific blue sage (*Salvia brandegeei* ‘Pacific Blue’) waving their flowers like welcoming banners.

The [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach is heralding a gorgeous display of their pink flowering Western redbuds (*Ceris occidentalis*) surrounded by blooming blue and white ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.). The lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*) and Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*) are starting to bloom as well. The fuchsia-flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) are serving up nectar for hungry hummingbirds. Cheery California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) line the pathways to welcome you into the garden.

The wildflowers are still outstanding at [Ronald W. Caspers Wilderness Park](#) in Orange County. Bell Canyon is a short walk and worth visiting, and if you can climb a steep hill, the far end of East Ridge is a color fiesta (4.6 miles round trip) bordered with tiny endangered Palmer’s grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*) along the edge of the path. The east slope of East Ridge area showed masses of flowers blanketing the hillside—a local super bloom. The early specialties like Padre’s shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), fringed linanthus (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), California poppy (*Eschscholtzia californica*), and Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) are still prolific along Cougar Pass and elsewhere. Catalina Mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*) is lovely as well. “Too many flowers to mention,” says one enthusiast. For example, she goes on, “I saw 4 different species of white wildflowers in an arrangement surrounding a single Lupine flower.” Do go and see for yourself!



Caspers Wilderness Park. Photo by Laura Camp

[Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#) is full of flowers and visitors to see them! It's a rare event in Southern California and people from all over want to celebrate. 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 (walking is recommended for people with ordinary passenger cars), there are really good displays of sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), browneyes (*Chylismia claviformis*), Bigelow's monkeyflower (*Diplacus bigelovii*) and desert sunflower (*Gerea canescens*). Many other colorful species are scattered about and need to be seen include notch-leaved phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*), desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*), dune evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*) and California evening primrose (*Eulobus californicus*).

Still in Anza Borrego: In Coyote Canyon, look for Cooper's broomrape (*Aphyllon cooperi*), a parasitic plant. Continue east on SR-22 into the badlands. Coachwhip Canyon and Arroyo Salado are excellent, displaying an assortment of species. There are good pullouts along the road. 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 that 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's monkeyflower (*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.

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 involucrata*), wedge-leaved draba (*Draba cuneifolia*), California mustard (*Caulanthus lasiophyllus*), gilia (*Aliciella* spp.), milkvetches (*Astragalus* spp.), and apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*). Jones' linanthus (*Linanthus jonesii*) opens up in the evening—a perfect day's-end experience. There is much more. Off the I-10, 10 miles east of Desert Center then six miles south on a maintained gravel road OK for passenger vehicles.

The Habitat Gardens at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy are a secluded refuge for re-wilding in SoEast LA! 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*), desert blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pool Habitat Garden is in glorious 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 Blair's wirelettuce (*Munzothamnus blairii*), Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), fringed-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), blunt-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*), sugarbush (*Rhus ovata*), and Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Blair's wirelettuce (*Munzothamnus blairii*). Photo by George Nanoski

Home at the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#) in Sun Valley, several shrubby perennials are blooming strong, including various ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp. and cvs.) and sage (*Salvia* spp. and cvs.). The fragrant-leaved evergreen currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*) and the golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) are lovely, along with Oregon grape (*Berberis* sp. and cultivars), and the bright yellow Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). It's the tail end of winter flowering for the manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp. and cvs.), but some are still putting out blooms for the last call. Lupines abound with Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), blunt-leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), hairy lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), and silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*) all in flower at various locations on the property. Other annuals with good shows include wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), and common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*). The California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are just starting to "pop" and will be in full swing in the next few weeks. Other colorful beauties to look for include desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*) and monkeyflowers (*Diplicus* spp. and cvs.), which are just starting to open. One plant not to missed is the coastal or Shaw's agave (*Agave shawii*), now shooting up its tall inflorescence of golden yellow blossoms. Visit TPF next Tuesday-Friday to make a checklist of all the plants you want to buy at our Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale, next Saturday, March 23.



Agave (*Agave shawii*) at the Theodore Payne Foundation. Photo by Tim Becker

**New book for wild flower chasers: *A Guide to Wildflower Locations –Southern and Central California* by Spencer Westbrook. [Learn more and get your copy.](#)**

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 22** 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**

Offering the region's largest and most interesting selection of California native plants, including seasonal specialties include iris, heuchera, buckwheat, sage, annual wild flowers and native bulbs. Discounts to all on plants, seed and TPF gear.

**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)