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

The weather has warmed, and spring storms have passed. The super bloom at lower elevation grasslands and deserts is over. Still, wild flowers o' plenty can be found at higher elevations and higher latitudes.

[Pinnacles National Park](#) which we have mentioned before in these reports is in the higher latitude category. Located in the Diablo Range in San Benito County, the trails have their own personality reflecting the unusual blooms found along them. Along the Old Pinnacles Trail for example, you can see Mule's ears (*Wyethia helenioides*) named for the big floppy leaves that resemble "ears." In the cool, shady areas on Old Pinnacles look for the pretty little woodland star (*Lithophragma affine*) as well. A pink/purple darling also found along the Old Pinnacles Trail in abundance is elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*). The Condor Gulch Trail offers up purple pagodas or Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*). On Bear Gulch Trail try to locate the large seed heads of silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*) in the grasslands and California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) in the woodlands. Other seasonal blossoms include owl's clover (*Castilleja exerta*), purple mouse ears (*Diplacus douglasii*) yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*) and evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*). Springing up for Spring are the perennial bulbs like yellow pretty face (*Tritelia lugens*) and wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). In the fields between piles of boulders find patches of cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), and baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). In dry areas look for the small blue flowers of California gilia (*Gilia achilleifolia* ssp. *achilleifolia*), bright pink phlox (*Microsteris gracilis*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*). The showy yellow blossoms of bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) can be found as beacons in the landscape.

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Mule's ears (*Wyethia ovata*). Photos by Michael Charters

Along Salt Creek near the southern entrance to [Sequoia National Park](#), the wildflowers are abundant and showy. Masses of spring flowering common madia (*Madia elegans*) are covering sunny slopes and bird's-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) is abundant on flatlands. Good crops of owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.) are common in scattered colonies and along shadier trails, woodland star flower (*Lithophragma* sp.), Munz's iris (*Iris munzii*), and the elegant naked broomrape (*Orobanche uniflora*) are blooming. There is an abundance of Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) and foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermanii*). This is a banner year for the local geophytes. Mountain pretty face (*Tritelia ixiodes* ssp. *anilina*) and Ithuriel's spear (*Tritelia laxa*) are abundant. With the warming temperatures farewell to spring (*Clarkia cylindrical* subsp. *clavicaarpa*) is starting to show up with their lovely bright purple pink floral display and is particularly noticeable along highway 198.



Munz's iris (*Iris munzii*). Photo by Michael Wall

Over in Santa Barbara County, [Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest](#) is an excellent trip for flower viewers. Start from Figueroa Mountain Road, 4 miles from the town of Los Olivos. As you cross the first cattle guard and continue from the base of the mountain up to the oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) canopy, look for both miniature (*Lupinus bicolor*) and sky lupines (*Lupinus nanus*). Accompanying them will be pink Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), fuchsia colored flowers of hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), purple owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.) and blue fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*). Driving up the mountain road and just before you get to the rusty road gate, you will spot a patch of adorable little cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), a poppy cousin. Driving on, you begin to see patches yellow and gold of coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), wall flowers (*Erysimum capitatum*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) mixed with bright pink prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*) and wild canyon pea. New to the party of blossoms are chia (*Salvia columbariae*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), red wild onion (*Allium* sp.) and the elegant Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*). Before the Tunnel Road look for hillsides covered in poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and lupine, and in the stretch just before the campground, the sky lupine is prolific and giving off a heavenly aroma. On rocky slopes with few grasses, poppies are growing strong with globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*) and caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*). At the Davy Brown Trailhead there is a patch of chocolate lilies (*Fritilaria biflora*). Continuing down the road, find an abundance of bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), goldfields and, along a rusty pipe fence, lots more chocolate lilies. Arriving at Ranger Peak, the baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) will be watching you from the shaded areas on both sides of the road. The road between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Peak is colored with all the flowers just mentioned plus yellow and purple bush lupine and bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*). Sunset Valley greets with you with pink colorful palette represented by prickly phlox, goldfields, poppies, purple nightshade, chia, fiesta flowers and wild canyon pea. At Happy Canyon look for tufted poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), royal lupines, purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), red Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) and golden yarrow. Stay on Happy Canyon road and it will deliver you back to Hwy 154.

The weather has become warmer at [Hungry Valley State Vehicle Recreation Area](#) and a dynamic transition from early spring flowers to the late spring bloomers is happening. The higher elevations in the northern section of the park have the most wildflowers blooming. Noticeably the purple bush lupines (*Lupinus excubitus*) are in full bloom, and there are some outstanding patches of poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) in the grasslands as well as along Wheatfield Trail. Stipa Trail has a variety of flowers not seen elsewhere in the park. Pygmy lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) mixed with poppies and sun cups (*Camissoniopsis* sp.) cover the hillsides. Patches of little pink and white Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), lavender Davy's gilia (*Gilia latiflora* subsp. *davyi*), and bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) are eye catching just beyond Condor Trail junction. There are two turnouts at the top near the

gate where you get out and admire this colorful landscape. On Powerline Trail, there is a display of evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*) in all its color forms, white, pink and lavender. You will also come upon sky blue globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), chia sage (*Salvia columbariae*), and white pincushion flowers (*Chaenactis* sp.). At the bottom of Powerline, look for scattered bright pink-purple owl's clover (*Castilleja exerta*). At the junction of Maxey Road and Schmidt Ranch Road there is a pastel quilt sewn by the colors of purple chia sage, pink rock cress, goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), pink Davy's gilia, red-tipped paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) and lavender thistle sage (*Salvia carduaceae*). Purple sage (*Salvia dorii*) with its grey foliage and dense whorls of deep purple blue flowers is in full bloom mixed with goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) along the S curves at Smith Forks Campground. The goldenbush, deep yellow flowered bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) and pale yellow hillside daisies (*Monolopia* sp.) brighten up the Circle Canyon Campground area. Plan to visit hungry Valley to see one of the last and best poppy displays in So Cal. For passenger car driving flower viewers, remember this is a park established for off highway vehicles, so be cautious when driving and park only in turnouts. Park fees apply.



Bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) at Hungry Valley. Photo by Margaret Hurley

The flowering plants along the Ecology Trail at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is increasing in number and variety. The stately Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and the flowering ash both have dainty catkins of flowers hanging from tips of branches. Under the canopy, elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) is sporting creamy white bunches of flowers as the blue haze of ceanothus blossoms fade. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), holly leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum*

*fasciculatum*) are in peak bloom and serving up plenty of nectar for the birds and the bees. Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Parish's purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*) are just starting their annual flowering. Little wildflowers like yellow pincushions (*Chaenactis glabriscula*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale* var. *occidentale*), cliff aster (*Malacothrix saxatilis*) common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), and goldfields dot the landscape with a colorful bouquet of pastel colors. Finally, the chaparral yucca has shot up its tall flowering stalk with large white flowers like a flag.

While the LA County wildlife sanctuaries in Antelope Valley are now pretty dry, the [Devil's Punchbowl County Park](#) at 4,700 ft elevation is blooming well. Color is tucked in among the rocks and boulders in scattered patches. You will find Fremont's phacelia (*Phacelia fremontii*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), Bigelow's monkeyflower (*Mimulus bigelovii*), Western wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*), common muilla (*Muilla maritima*) and chia sage (*Salvia columbariae*). The muilla is a perennial bulb flowering in spring. Look closely in the tiny white flowers and notice it has blue pollen instead of the usual yellow or gold. There is also narrow leaf golden bush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) which serves as a dramatic backdrop for the little jewels of wildflowers. Soon the red paintbrush will be joining the golden bush for a spectacular red and gold landscape.

At the [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#), there are still patches of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) in bloom, but fading. Visit before the poppies disappear for another year. Mother's Day would be a nice outing. Gone to seed and still interesting are goldfields, wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha pterocarya*), lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) and silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*). The purple owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*) and hot pink fringed onion (*Allium fimbriatum*) are still doing well and showing color along the trails.

Just west of the poppy reserve is the scenic [Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park](#). The female California Juniper (*Juniperus californica*) trees have pretty gray "berries." (The fruits that look like berries actually are fleshy cones that when dry, are woody.) The Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) still have the flowers and some are forming seedpods. Colorful wildflowers are starting to bloom throughout the park and include goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), linear-leaf goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolius*), comb-bur (*Pectocarya* sp.), comet blazing star (*Mentzelia albicaulis*), blue sage (*Salvia dorii*), desert sun cups (*Camissonia palmeri*), Mojave sun cup (*Camissonia campestris*), bladder pod (*Peritoma arborea*), and rock cress (*Arabis pulchra*).



[Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park](#). Photo by Mary Wilson.

The wild flower trail near the entrance to [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden](#) in Claremont is a rainbow of colors welcoming visitors to the garden. Desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), firecracker penstemon (*Penstemon eatoni*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), and common sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) fill in the warm color spectrum of a rainbow, while baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), nightshade (*Solanum xanthii*), foothill penstemon, (*Penstemon heterophyllus* 'Margarita BOP') and woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), all with their lush green foliage, fill in the cool colors of the rainbow. Walk a little north of the wildflower trail to see more colorful beauties in the Percy Everett Garden at the base of the mesa. There you'll encounter the sweet pink flowers of California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*), bright pink prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*) blossoms and golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*). A bright pure white variety of penstemon (*Penstemon* 'GMR White') stands out as well. In the desert garden find the fluffy pink flowers of the fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*). Photo right by Debra Woo.



The California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) at the [Environmental Nature Center](#) are in peak bloom now and are a delightful sensory experience. The ceanothus species and cultivars (*Ceanothus* spp.) are still looking good and blooming in multiple plant communities. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*) and brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) along with the yellow, orange and red monkeyflowers (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) light up the pathways with their cheery warm colors. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*) and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) like sunny locations where their fragrance hangs aloft in the warm air. Appearing in the desert section is the coral colored desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) accompanied by the Baja desert rose (*Rosa minutiflora*) and blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*). Walking through the Channel Islands garden, look for creamy white floral sprays of the Island cherry (*Prunus illicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*). This is a really nice place to visit with mom on Mother's Day.

The Habitat Gardens at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) are resplendent with wildflowers of all kinds. Most of them can be observed from Elizabeth Street in front of the campus. Anyone who would like access to the gardens for a more in-depth tour can arrange a visit with Mr. Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator. His email is gtn5586@lausd.net and his conference period is 11:15 to 12:45. Exploring the Desert Habitat Garden, you will find whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), browneyes (*Chylismia claviformis* ssp. *claviformis*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), desert plantain (*Plantago ovata*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), sticky teucrium (*Teucrium glandulosum*), catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), desert holly (*Atriplex hymenelytra*), spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), bearded cryptantha (*Cryptantha barbiger* var. *barbiger*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), 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*). Most of the vernal pools STILL contain water, alive with spadefoot toad and baja tree frog tadpoles, clam shrimp and other vernal pool endemics! Look here for toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), Farnsworth's jewelflower (*Streptanthus farnsworthianus*), calico monkeyflower (*Diplacus pictus*), Douglas' meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), clustered tarweed (*Deinandra fasciculata*), Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), fringed-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leafed lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), spinescrub (*Adolphia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), and goldfields

(*Lasthenia glabrata*). Additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include Guadalupe Island senecio (*Senecio palmeri*), purple Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Baja bird bush (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata 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*), chaparral tree poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), and Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), calico monkeyflower (*Diplacus pictus*).

Photos by George Nanoski

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 10th** 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](#)**

Wildflower hike at Placerita every 4th Saturday.

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

We always find something interesting to see.

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