April 16, 2021

Theodore Payne Foundation’s Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by donations, memberships and sponsors. Please support the Hotline today!

COVID-19 restrictions are still appropriate in public places and different for each county, so visit websites first in planning your trip.

Seek out a hidden hiking haven in Buck Gully Reserve in Newport Beach. Buck Gully is a “pocket” wilderness canyon with a natural perennial stream, riparian habitat, coastal sage scrub and grasslands! It’s splendid right now with a variety of species in bloom! Look for buttercups (Ranunculus californicus), hedge nettle (Stachys ajugoides), blue eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum), fuchsia flowered gooseberry (Ribes speciosum), cliff aster (Malacothrix saxatilis var. saxatilis), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), south coast morning glory (Calystegia macrosagia ssp. intermedia), gum plant (Grindelia camporum), narrowleaf bedstraw (Galium angustifolium), sticky monkeyflower (Diplacus aurantiacus), rattlesnake sandmat (Euphorbia albomarginata), Parish’s nightshade (Solanum parishii), school bells (Dipterostemon capitatus), San Diego pea (Lathyrus vestitus var. alefeldii), bush sunflower (Encelia californica), and black sage (Salvia mellifera). As you take in the blooms, enjoy the relaxing echo throughout the canyon of Baja tree frogs as they serenade the day away! Also be on the lookout for bobcats and deer! Late afternoon is the sweet spot!

Buttercups (Ranunculus californicus), cliff aster (Malacothrix saxatilis var. saxatilis), sticky monkeyflower (Diplacus aurantiacus). Photos by George Nanoski.

The scenery in northeastern San Diego County chaparral is lovely in the spring. Along the roadside, the blue-flowered Chaparral whitethorn ceanothus (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) is in full bloom on SR76 just east of Pauma Valley. From that location to Lake Henshaw, there are hundreds of plants on the north-facing slopes to the south. Every shade of blue and even some lavender blossoms are seen in this ceanothus, so they stand out like an impressionist landscape painting. Stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*) is even prettier along that stretch than in the past, with hundreds of now-huge plants still in good bloom. Just before the Picnic Area on SR76, you pass a big patch of yellow which turns out to be mostly California sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*). Goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) are still going strong at Lake Henshaw, now accompanied by cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). There are also fields of white popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.). Along Routes S2 and S22 to Ranchita, there are huge numbers of white cupped leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*) in bloom. California brittlebush (*Encelia californica*) is in gorgeous full bloom along State Route 76 from Fallbrook to Pala. It is amazing that perennials and chaparral shrubs are doing so well with so little rain this year.

**Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest** is a favorite wildflower drive in the Santa Barbara area. Figueroa Mountain road leads out of Los Olivos. As you ascend into the National Forest, cross the first cattle guard, look for popcorn flowers *Plagiobothrys* sp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*), fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), sky lupines (*Lupinus nanus*), and milk maids (*Cardamine californica*). Further up the road on the right, look for small patches of shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*). As you continue to climb the mountain, stunning orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are blooming along the road and along the rocky hillsides. The Ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) is also in bloom, giving the appearance of snow covering its branches. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look on the ground to the right and find some adorable cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). When you get to Vista Point turnout, take this opportunity to stroll around and check out the beautiful chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) hiding within the grass, shooting stars, and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.). Across from Vista Point, along the road find more poppies mixed with yellow coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.). Continuing along the road through the Ranger Station, Davy Brown Trailhead, Ranger Peak, to Happy Canyon, you will see only spotty flower displays, mostly shooting stars and a few lupines (*Lupinus* spp.). Finally, Chicken Springs is absolutely gorgeous. It is the only place on the mountain where the poppies are really putting on a show. An underground spring allows poppies to take advantage of the extra soil moisture. Other wildflowers in bloom in this area include blue dicks, ceanothus and Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*).

It is an excellent time to visit the Sierra foothills as the earlier spring bloomers are still in good flower and the mid-season show-stoppers will peak soon. Despite the warm temperatures, the showers in late March that bypassed southern California, contributed to a good wildflower season here. Scenic drives for good wildflower viewing include Hwy 198 on the way to Sequoia Park, Dry Creek Road off Hwy 216, and Yokohl Valley Drive off Hwy 198 In the Kaweah River watershed. Of course, drive safely and pull off the road to enjoy the flowers and take photos. Along Dry Creek, foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are especially spectacular and in the Kaweah River watershed, many...
flowering plants can be seen along the BLM Salt Creek trails. Still in bloom, but fading in the sunniest sites, is Eastwood’s fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*), while heart leaf milkweed (*Asclepias cordifolia*) is just in bud. The foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermannii*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), wild hyacinth (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), pretty face (*Triteleia ixioides* subsp. *scabra*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), whisker brush (*Leptosiphon ciliates*), and various lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), are just coming into bloom under pink flowering redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*). Early blooming baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*), and Padre’s shooting star (*Primula clevelandii* var. *patula*) are still very pretty. California saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*) and common fringe pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) are mostly in their fruiting stage but still very interesting.
At **Placerita Canyon Nature Center** in Newhall this week, the Ecology Trail is especially nice. There is a diversity of chapparal shrub species in bloom. Hikers should look for the blue flowering hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) and the white blooming hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*), as they both will be fading soon. Check out the sprawling basket bush (*Rhus aromatica*) as well. Hiding underneath the shrubs is the California peony (*Paeonia californica*) with large burgundy flowers. On the same trail, look for the popular fan-favorite monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) dressed in a variety of colors—orange, yellow, or red. Purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*), and California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) are found there too. In areas where more shade and moisture are available, take in the lovely flowering ash (*Fraxinus dipetela*) and fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*). The large oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*) are showing their tassels of flowers poised on branch tips waiting for wind to catch and carry their pollen. Back out in the open, sunnier locations, look for the fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*).

**Prisk Native Garden** in Long Beach is extending last weekend’s Open House for one more day, **Sunday, April 18th from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**. There are many colorful and eye-catching native blossoms to view while strolling the pathways. Check out the large magnificent flowers of Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) and the bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica*). Both golden (*Lupinus densiflorus* var. *aureus*) and blue lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) reside there. Competing for attention are prickly red thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), hedgehog (*Echinocereus coccineus*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), and the neon yellow Conejo buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*). Other drama-queens include elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), birds’ eye (*Gilia tricolor*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcia ambigua*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*); tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), and some of the monkeyflower varieties (*Diplacus* sp. and *Mimulus* sp.). Equally attractive are Ithuriel’s spear (*Triteleia laxa*) verbena (*Verbena lilacina*), blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), and many sage varieties including black sage (*Salvia mellifera*); Brandegee’s sage (*Salvia brandegee*). No admission, but donations are always accepted for this "schoolyard habitat" on the grounds of Prisk Elementary School. Small groups will be admitted over time to avoid crowding. Everyone will wear masks, social distance and follow the one-way arrows on the paths. Contact Mike at letteriello@charter.net
The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center are still putting on a show in southeast LA! Most of their blooms can be seen from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus! Flowers in the Desert Habitat Garden include climbing milkweed (Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii), paper bag bush (Scutellaria mexicana), thistle sage (Salvia carduacea), bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor) catsclaw (Senegalia greggii), desert lavender (Condea emoryi), Emory’s globe mallow (Sphaeralcea emoryi var. emoryi), creosote bush (Larrea tridentata), jojoba (Simmondsia chinensis), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), cryptantha (Cryptantha sp.), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentachaeta), chuparosa (Justicia californica), blue bells (Phacelia campanularia), and Coulter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus). Their Vernal Pools Garden contains toothed calico flower (Downingia cuspidata), Baja California sage (Salvia...
California), Menzies' fiddleneck (Amsinckia menziesii), owl's clover (Castilleja exserta), blue dicks (Dipterostemon capitatus), miniature lupine (Lupinus bicolor), arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), truncate leaf lupine (Lupinus truncatus), coastal cholla (Cylindropuntia prolifera), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), wart-stemmed ceanothus (Ceanothus verrucosus), sawtooth goldenbush (Hazardia squarrosa), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), spinescrub (Adolphia californica), chia (Salvia columbariae), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), boxthorn (Lycium californicum), goldfields (Lasthenia glabrata), fringe-pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes), Del Mar manzanita (Arctostaphylos glandulosa ssp. crassifolia), and golden spined cereus (Bergerocactus emoryi). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.

Milkweed (Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii), thistle sage (Salvia carduacea). Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 23 and check back each week for the most up to date information on southland central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT AND WILD FLOWER EVENTS

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

2021 THEODORE PAYNE ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR: April 16-18

For details go to https://theodorepayne.org

Prisk Native Garden… School Habitat Garden Open House

Sunday April 18, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm.
No admission, but donations are always accepted for this "schoolyard habitat" on the grounds of Prisk Elementary School. Small groups will be admitted over time to avoid crowding. Everyone will wear masks and follow the one-way arrows around the paths. No restrooms available at site. Contact Mike at letteriello@charter.net with any questions.

**ENVIRONMENTAL NATURE CENTER**

**SELF GUIDED WILDFLOWER WALK**

May 23, 2021, 12:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Join us for a Wildflower Walk! Tour the grounds in search of blooming natives. Bring a camera or your nature journal to capture their beauty, but please stay on the trail! Sign up for a window at [https://encenter.org/blog/events/wildflower-walk/](https://encenter.org/blog/events/wildflower-walk/) Space is limited to keep everyone safe. Masks required when not physically distanced. Children 2 and under are free.

**NATIVE PLANT USES WALK**

May 23, 2021, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Join us for a Native Plant Uses Walk on May 23! Herbalist William Broen will discuss traditional and modern uses of plants as well as how a plant’s survival tactics affect how they are used by us, how we can tell a lot about plants through our senses, plant folklore, and other related topics. All participants will be required to wear face coverings and physically distance. Space is limited, and only those registered to attend will be admitted. The ENC is currently closed to the public except to those registered for programs. Register at [https://encenter.org/blog/events/native-plant-uses-walk-2/](https://encenter.org/blog/events/native-plant-uses-walk-2/)

**Whitewater Preserve**

Spring has arrived at Whitewater Preserve and the Preserve's ponds, park and picnic areas, parking lot, and restrooms are **open daily free of charge from 8 am to 5 pm** for you to enjoy the season. [Whitewater Preserve](https://www.whitewaterpreserve.com/) is a lovely, easy escape for everyone.