March 4, 2022

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

The acclaimed Theodore Payne Wild Flower Hotline offers free weekly on-line and recorded updates on the best locations for viewing spring wild flowers in Southern and Central California. All locations are on easily accessible public lands and range from urban to wild, distant to right here in L.A. We balance the spectacle of annual flower displays with perennial plants and their spring color.

Please enjoy the beautiful native flora without diminishing the resource. We encourage people to treat these treasures with care and respect. Please stay on the paths, stand on bare ground, leave the flowers unharmed and take only photographs.

At Placerita Canyon Nature Center, the trails are just starting to come up red, white and blue. The scarlet fuchsia-flowering gooseberry and the scarlet bugler are flagging red blossoms. Hoary ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius), big berry manzanita (Arctostaphylos glauca) and climbing wild cucumber (Marah macrocarpa) are displaying tiny, white flowers. Finally, there are the blue wild hyacinth (Dipterostemon capitatus), and larkspur (Delphinium sp.). Other eye-catching specimens include golden currant (Ribes aureum) and purple nightshade (Solanum parishii). Enjoy watching the hummingbirds tussle over ownership of the gooseberries and golden currents.

Golden currant (Ribes aureum). Photo by RuthAnne Murthy

Along Route 223, northeast of Arvin Cross, look for some colorful landscape. On the south side of the road, golden fiddlenecks (Amsinckia spp.) cover the hills and valleys. Poppies (Eschscholzia californica), lupines (Lupinus spp.) and popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys spp.) were interspersed among the gold. The light bark of the leafless western sycamores (Platanus racemosa) and the dark twisted branches of the blue oaks (Quercus douglasii) added color and structure to the landscape. Other spring beauties that require exiting the vehicle to study, include wishbone bush (Mirabilis laevis) Stanislaus milkvetch (Astragalus oxyphysus), miner’s lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata), white fiesta flower (Pholistoma membranaceum), Arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), caterpillar scorpion-plant (Phacelia cicutaria), and blue dicks (Dipterostemon capitatus).

Golden fiddleneck (Amsinckia spp.), Blue Oak (Quercus douglasii), Stanislaus milkvetch (Astragalus oxyphysus), Photos by Barbara Eisenstein.

If you are in the Newport Beach area, The Environmental Nature Center is a lovely place for the family and friends to visit on a special outing. Throughout the Garden find colorful California poppies (Eschscholzia californica), Arroyo lupines (Lupinus succulentus), fragrant wild lilac species (Ceanothus spp.) and the eye-catching Western redbuds (Cercis occidentalis). Do seek out the giant coreopsis in the Coastal Strand section and take selfies with the crazy looking, yellow-flowered giant coreopsis (Coreopsis gigantea). They won’t be blooming for long. The Desert Section displays warm colors of Indian mallow (Abutilon palmeri), desert mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), and bladderpod (Peritoma arborea). Finally visit the Chaparral planting and relax in the shade of the California live oaks, (Quercus agrifolia), while savoring the fragrance of our local native, Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii).

Wild lilac (Ceanothus sp.). Photo by Lori Whalen

It is a bad year for blooms on the desert floor east of Borrego Springs in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Actually, there aren't any annuals at all, due to a lack of enough rainfall to germinate their seeds. Even in Borrego Springs, there is no germination of the hardy, hairy sunflower (*Gereae canescens*) in the field across from Henderson Canyon Road. The end of the pavement of Di Giorgio Road appears just as desolate, but close inspection finds some very tiny annual germination has occurred. If there is no further rain, no one will even notice the tiny flowers those tiny plants will produce. No one expects most people to hike into a desert canyon to seek out a few dozen tiny flowers, but the following is a great story for wildflower enthusiasts:

Although it is very dry from S22 to the mouth of Moonlight Canyon, there are very enjoyable plants in upper Moonlight Canyon itself. Of course, many of the species are represented by just one to five plants each, and many of them are tiny. The highlight by far is finding the teeny-tiny Jacumba Mountain linanthus (*Linanthus maculatus* ssp. *emaculatus*) plants in bloom! One hiker who spotted this specimen hailed, “This is just an incredible plant with white flowers the size of a coarse grain of sand. It's amazing that we found it at all, and to get it in flower is mind-blowing”. Below are photos of what is involved in looking at this little gem.

On hands and knees to spot the tiny linanthus (*Linanthus maculatus* ssp. *emaculatus*). Photos by Tom Chester.

**Elizabeth Learning Center’s** Habitat Gardens are rewilding Southeast LA, and despite the dry winter, many species are beginning to flower! Colorful desert shrubs include catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*) and fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*). Look for pretty annuals and perennials like climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*).

emoryi), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), Vernal popcorn flower and (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*).

Additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolarosa*), Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne gigantea*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*) and Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*).

Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy. Most gardens can be seen from the sidewalk in front of the school without having to check in at the Main Office.

Cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), wart stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*). Photos by George Nanoski

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 11** 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**

- **POPPY DAY SPRING PLANT SALE, April 1-2**

  Create an at home superbloom! TPF will have a great selection of colorful annuals and other beautiful Spring wildflowers. Sign up for a shopping time slot at: [bit.ly/PoppyDaysSpringSale2022](bit.ly/PoppyDaysSpringSale2022).

- **2022 THEODORE PAYNE NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR**
  April 23-2

After two years of virtual tours, we’re thrilled to announce that the 2022 Native Plant Garden Tour will be back in-person on April 23 & 24.

Highlights include 10+ new gardens, a new stylized tour guide filled with vivid stories and interviews, and an after-party at L.A. State Historic Park. Visit nativeplantgardentour.org for more details.