March 18, 2022

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

The 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.

It is the season for spring break vacations. If your break starts this week, here are some places worth exploring.

In the northern coast ranges, check out Pinnacles National Park north of King City. There are trails for every sort of hiker. Along the trails look for buckbrush (Ceanothus cuneatus) smothered in tiny white flowers, the large yellow blossoms of bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida), and silver bush lupine (Lupinus albilfrons) with spikes of blue, lavender or purple flowers. Other eye-catching beauties to seek out closer to the ground are, chia (Salvia columbariae), Padre’s shooting stars (Primula clevelandii), purple pagodas (Collinsia heterophylla), Western wall flowers (Erysimum capitatum) and tufted poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa). The bright red woolly paintbrush (Castilleja foliolosa) can be found among boulders and rocky crevices on the High Peaks and Condor Gulch trails. By the way, look up sometimes. You may be lucky enough to see a California Condor (Gymnogyps californianus). Checker lily (Fritillaria affinis) sightings are limited in the park, but you might find them on north-facing slopes along the Old Pinnacles Trail.
Another lovely trip is to Pine Flat Lake in the western Sierra Foothills 30 miles east of Fresno. The landscape is entirely yellow-orange with foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*). Scattered about along road are baby-blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Henderson’s shooting stars (*Primula hendersoni*), and popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothovulus*). Yokohl Valley Drive off Hwy.198 east of Visalia is another scenic wildflower excursion in the region to view swaths of foothill poppies and fiddlenecks. Delightful discoveries in the well protected areas are shooting stars, both pink and white forms, California goldfields, baby blue eyes, and spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*). Coming into bloom over the next few weeks will be and western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) in addition to the usual assortment of charming foothill woodland annuals.

If your spring break vacation takes you to Joshua Tree National Park, you will see wildflowers. Keep in mind though, there are no large displays of wildflowers to be seen along the main roads in the park. You must hike the trails and washes to search for the few hardy specimens that exist. On your hikes, look in sheltered places like rock crevices, along edges of washes, under trees and along north-facing slopes. The desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), and creosote bushes (*Larrea tridentata*) are in bloom. Annuals like browneyes (*Chylismia claviformis*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), blazing stars (*Mentzelia spp.*), pygmy poppies (*Eschscholzia minutiflora* ssp. *minutiflora*) and sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*) can be found as well. Though not flowering now, do appreciate the beauty and structure of the Joshua Trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*), fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) and cholla cactus (*Cylindropuntia* spp.) surrounded by the gorgeous geology, blue sky and fresh air. There is no bad time to visit Joshua Tree.

The live stream PoppyCam at the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, is showing much more orange acreage covering the hillsides this week. California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) are in full bloom. The time to visit is NOW! If visiting the Reserve, hike to the north loop of the Antelope Trail for a good display of poppies. Lupines (Lupinus sp.) can be seen blooming on the Tehachapi Vista Trail. Fiddlenecks (Amsinckia sp.) and large patches of goldfields (Lasthenia sp) are flowering throughout the Reserve. If visiting, check the weather forecast before leaving. The weather can change suddenly, and it is frequently windy there during the spring.

It’s the Canyon Trail that is really lit up with flowers this week at Placerita Canyon Nature Center. Two ceanothus species, the hoary ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius) and hairy ceanothus (Ceanothus oliganthus) are blooming nicely. Two of the currants, the golden currant (Ribes aureum) and the pink flowering chaparral currant (Ribes malvaceum) add lovely colors to the flora along the trail. Black sage (Salvia mellifera), purple nightshade (Solanum parishii) and mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus betuloides) add to the flowering shrub category. Annual wildflowers like miner’s lettuce (Claytonia perfoliata), baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii), common phacelia (Phacelia distans), blue larkspur (Delphinium sp.), Western lupine (Lupinus formosus), goldfields (Lasthenia sp) and blue dicks (Dipterospermon capitatus) cluster at the trail edges.
Charmlee wilderness park in the Santa Monica Mountains has some lovely wildflowers blooming. Along the Botany Trail to East Meadow Trail, look for shooting stars (Primula clevelandii) and blue dicks (Dipterostemon capitatus). Hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea) is in bloom with Anna’s Hummingbirds feeding on them in the oak (Quercus agrifolia) groves. Also find canyon sunflower (Venegasia carpesioides), Danny’s skullcap (Scutellaria tuberosa) and milk maids (Cardamine californica). Out in the open spaces, reside prickly phlox (Linanthus californica), paintbrush (Castilleja sp.), hairy leaf ceanothus (Ceanothus oliganthus) and purple nightshade (Solanum parishii).

In Claremont, visit the California Botanic Garden (formerly Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden) on a day trip. Walk the Mesa and Desert trails to experience a variety of blooming, fragrant beauties. California brittlebush (Encelia californica), poppies (Eschscholzia californica), sun cups (Camissoniopsis sp.), and desert marigolds (Baileya multiradiata) are blooming throughout the garden. Large swaths of Douglas Iris (Iris species and cultivars) in shades of purple, blue and lavender grow in the shelter of large oaks (Quercus spp.), producing an impressionist painting. Pink flowering currants (Ribes spp.) are attracting many hummingbirds on the Mesa trails. Fragrant sages (Salvia spp. and cultivars) and woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum) are in bloom and attracting many pollinators. For a short time, the amazing white blossoms of the tree anemone (Carpenteria californica) are also visible. Be sure to look for them on the Mesa trails. Along the Desert pathways, Mojave Yucca (Yucca schidigera) are showing spikes of white flowers poking out of sword-like leaves, red flowering chuparosa (Justicia californica) signaling to hummingbirds to visit them and barberries flashing clusters of yellow blossoms soon to turn into juicy berries for birds to feed on in the summer.

The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center are popping with color! The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center in southeast LA are popping with color! Desert species include catclaw (Senegalia greggii), jojoba (Simmondsia chinensis), creosote bush (Larrea tridentata), desert lavender (Condea emoryi), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), cryptantha (Cryptantha sp.), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (Thymophylla pentachaeta), climbing milkweed (Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii), blue bells (Phacelia campanularia) and bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor). The vernal pool area contains Menzies’ fiddleneck (Amsinckia menziesii), owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), fringe-pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), wart stemmed ceanothus (Ceanothus verrucosus), school bells, a.k.a. blue dicks (Dipterostemon

capitatus) golden spined cactus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), spinescrub (*Adolphia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*) and Orcutt's quillwort (*Isoetes orcuttii*). Some additional species in the chaparral garden include woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), purple nightshade (*Solanum xanti*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne gigantea*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*) and Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*). 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.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 25 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/PoppysSpringSale2022](https://bit.ly/PoppysSpringSale2022).

- **2022 THEODORE PAYNE NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR**

  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.

PLACERITA CANYON NATURE CENTER

**Blooms of the Season Hikes**
4th Saturday of each month at 9:30, (March 26)
Meet at the front steps of the Nature Center.

**Open House is May 14 from 10-2**