April 15, 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.

Reports are coming in about rattlesnake sightings and lots of lush poison oak along trails, so please be watchful on your hikes.

You will be rewarded with spectacular views when hiking the Cedar Springs Trail in the San Jacinto Mtns. At 6400 feet, you can see the expanse of mountain tops of the San Bernardino Mt Range with the Coachella Valley and Salton Sea lying below. View part of a recovering burn area at the PCT and Cedar Springs trail intersection and an unburned section of the Desert Divide beyond. Along this trail are vast stands of Eastwood’s manzanita (Arctostaphylos glandulosa) in flower. Bursting forth with clusters of bright yellow flowers is barberry (Berberis dictyota) in full glory. Wildflowers are just beginning at this elevation. Patches of the petite pale blue Davidson’s phacelia (Phacelia davidsonii) are a common sight. Natural rock gardens dotted with pretty lilac-color Johnston’s rockcress (Boechera johnstonii) fill the crevices. Look for Coulter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus), goosefoot violet (Viola purpurea) and pink mountain phlox (Linanthus californicus) as well.
The East and West Ridge trails along Caspers Wilderness Park in Orange County, splendid mariposa lilies (*Calochortus splendens*) dot the trail edges and hillsides with their subtle pink-lavender color. Southern monkeyflower (*Diplacus australis*) is in prime bloom and ablaze with orange red blooms. Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), with striking pillars of dense white flowers is always best on the East Ridge trail. Two additional beauties that arise from bulbs this time of year can be spotted about. On close inspection, the Catalina mariposa lily’s (*Calochortus catalinae*) lovely white flower has just a blush of pink on the petals and a deep maroon center. Golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*) on the other hand are not as subtle. Yellow star-shaped flowers burst forth like an explosion of fireworks. These can be found on the Dick Loskorn trail. Coastal sage scrub shrubs deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) are in peak bloom, while California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) is starting to bloom. All three are butterfly favorites and a diversity of these flying jewels can be seen flitting about in search of the prime nectar reward. Annual wildflowers are present but sporadic this year but look for tiny purple clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*) at the edge of the Bell Canyon trail near the parking lot.
Golden stars (**Bloomeria crocea**), splendid mariposa lilies (**Calochortus splendens**), purple clarkia (**Clarkia purpurea**). Photos by Laura Camp.

**Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park** in southern Orange County is a 2,500 acre park in the foothills of Lomas de Santiago, separated from the Santa Ana Mountains by Santiago Canyon. The Borrega trail leading northward follows the creek bed, which is shaded by coast live oaks (**Quercus agrifolia**), Western sycamore (**Platanus racemosa**), and willow (**Salix** spp.). Then the trail exits the oak woodland and traverses coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Flowering plants along the trail include elderberry (**Sambucus nigra** ssp. **caerulea**), lemonade berry (**Rhus integrifolia**), poison oak (**Toxicodendron diversilobum**), California brittlebush (**Encelia californica**), morning glory (**Calystegia macrostegia**), wild cucumber (**Marah macrocarpa**), scrub oak (**Quercus berberidifolia**), black sage (**Salvia mellifera**), Chaparral currant (**Malacothamnus fascicularis**), prickly phlox (**Linanthus fasciculatus**), Chaparral yucca (**Hesperoyucca whipplei**), beargrass (**Nolina cismontane**), and blue dicks (**Dipterostemon capitatus** ssp. **capitatus**). On the park’s eastside another trail from Glen Ranch parking lot you are rewarded with small but dense patches of chaparral gilia (**Gilia angelensis**), and fringed linanthus (**Linanthus dianthiflorus**). Other plants seen along this trail included poison oak (**Toxicodendron diversilobum**), black sage (**Salvia mellifera**), California buckwheat (**Eriogonum fasciculatum**), California buckwheat (**Eriogonum fasciculatum**), blue eyed grass (**Sisyrinchium bellum**), and just a bit off trail a very large patch full of goldfields (**Lasthenia californica**).
In the Kaweah watershed, fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys collinus*), and huge poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) displays of late winter are fading. The second act of spring bloom in these foothills east of Visalia consist of vast displays of sunny madia (*Madia elegans*) and a healthy population of wild hyacinth (*Dipterospermon capitatus*). Normally common is the blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), but this year they are especially abundant and showy on partially shaded canyon slopes. Blushing-pink mustang clover (*Linanthus montanus*) is just coming into bloom and judging by the abundant seedlings, it is going to be an excellent season for speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*). Two-foot-high spider lupines (*Lupinus benthamii*) are standing tall on sunny slopes as well.

Wildflowers are scarce but are making a valiant effort to bloom on Figueroa Mountain this year. The dry winter significantly reduced both the quantity and variety of annuals. It might be a short season there so check them out as soon as possible. Northeast of Los Olivos take Mt. Figueroa Road to the first cattle guard on the road. Ascend slowly through dappled shade and enjoy seeing the deep pink flowers of hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), patches of Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), shimmering yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), azure blue fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*) and the occasional California chicory (*Rafinesquia californica*). As you continue your ascent, California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are starting to bloom along the road and among the rocks and boulders on nearby hillsides. Bright pink prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*) and golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) paint spots among the orange poppies. Search the landscape for soft pink Catalina lilies (*Calochortus catalinae*) peaking through the grasses. In shaded areas along the hillsides, wild canyon pea (*Lathyrus* sp.) is slinking its way over the branches of taller plants to reach the sun. Creamy white flowers of blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caeralea*) are experiencing an early bloom here. At Vista Point blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) with a sprinkling of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) can be spotted. As you approach Tunnel Ranch Road check out patches of golden-orange wall flowers (*Erysimum capitatum*) waiting for a chance to dance. At this point, gaze straight ahead and enjoy the neon display of orange California poppies. A half mile further, more poppies, but here accompanied by the riotous, fragrant bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*). Around the Davy Brown Trailhead and Ranger Peak area, phacelias (*Phacelia* sp.), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and some lingering fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) begin to join the colorful tableau. The stretch © 2021 Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants. No reproduction of any kind without written permission.
between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle is quite the spectacle! Bush lupines in full bloom line both sides of the road forming a fragrant entry into the valley. Along this stretch too, yellow-flowered bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*), keeping company with golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), white popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), red paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) decorate the rocky hillsides. Cruising into Sunset Valley and Happy Canyon you may spot tufted poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), larkspurs, (*Delphinium* sp.) purple nightshade (*Solanum xanti*), golden yarrow, and purple sage. Quite visible are a trio of ramblers — clematis (*Clematis* sp.), wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*), and canyon wild pea covering other plants like colorful silky ropes. Coming to the end of your journey, be on the lookout for patches of fiesta flowers and beyond in open, sunny areas, find prickly phlox, paintbrush, lupine and more poppies. Finally, interspersed in the grassy fields, are displays of Catalina mariposa lilies, shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) and buttercups, bidding you good-bye.

Scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), Catalina lilies (*Calochortus catalinae*). Photos courtesy of the US Forest Service.

At **Placerita Canyon Nature Center** in Newhall, enjoy a leisurely walk on any trail to see a diversity of native California plants in flower. The Ecology Trail hosts a cast of blooming beauties. Look for woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), southern honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata*) black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), Fremont’s white star lilies (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) and charming golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*). The Heritage Trail sports blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) while the Hillside Trail showcases chaparral favorites like chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*). If you can find the Hidden Trail, the reward will be slender sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*), cliff asters (*Malacothrix saxitalis*) and sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*). Attractive chaparral standards can be found on the Canyon Trail including sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), deerweed (*Acmispon glabrata*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera californica*). Inspect, but do not touch, the flowering poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)!

The Habitat Gardens at Elizabeth Learning Center continue to bloom. Desert species include colorful favorites like thistle sage (Salvia carduacea), desert senna (Senna armata), Coves’ cassia (Senna covesii), sweet bush (Bebbia juncea), showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis), desert lavender (Condea emoryi), apricot mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua), bladderpod (Peritoma arborea), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa), wishbone bush (Mirabilis laevis var. villosa), climbing milkweed (Funastrum cyananchoides var. hartwegii), silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi), blue bells (Phacelia campanularia), bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor) and Coulter’s lupine (Lupinus sparsiflorus). The vernal pool area contains five spot (Nemophila maculata), California sage (Salvia californica), owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), fringe-pod (Thysanocarpus curvipes), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), golden spined cactus (Bergerocactus emoryi), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), yellow-rayed goldfields (Lasthenia glabrata), cliff spurge (Euphorbia misera), chia (Salvia columbariae) and vernal popcorn flower (Plagiobothrys undulatus). Some additional species in the chaparral garden include wooly paintbrush (Castilleja foliolosa), calico monkeyflower (Diplacus pictus), fairy lantern (Calochortus albus), splendid mariposa lily (Calochortus splendidus), apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), southern mountain misery (Chamaebatia australis), purple nightshade (Solanum xanti), Nevin’s barberry (Berberis nevini), pink fairy duster (Calliandra eriophylla), black sage (Salvia mellifera), arroyo lupine (Lupinus succulentus), 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.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 22nd 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

• 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.

PLACERITA CANYON NATURE CENTER

Blooms of the Season Hikes
4th Saturday of each month at 9:30, (April 24)
Meet at the front steps of the Nature Center.
Open House is May 14 from 10-2
Visit Placerita Canyon Nature Center