April 29, 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.

This is the last report for the month of April. Spring is slipping away, so get out and enjoy our SoCal flora during the next few weeks.

The recent update about Figueroa Mountain wildflowers, reports that many flowers are rapidly going to seed—their life span cut short by drought. Having said that, make the trip as soon as possible to see the remaining colorful variety of spring displays. Northeast of Los Olivos travel about 12 miles on Mt. Figueroa Road to the first cattle guard. Begin your ascent through dappled shade of oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and seek out the last of the pink-flowering hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) and fading but still colorful patches of Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*). Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) are starting to bloom in great numbers. As you resume your ascent, California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) open their brilliant orange flowers greeting you from the side of the road. Search the landscape for the large, white, trumpet-shaped flowers of datura (*Datura* sp.). There are Catalina lilies (*Calochortus catalinae*) peeking through the grasses as well. Other spots of color that focus your eyes include blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), purple wild onion (*Allium fimbriatum*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), red Western thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*) and the creamy white flowers of elderberry (*Sambucus nigra ssp. caerulea*). The field on the right at Tunnel Ranch Road is sprinkled with charming orange wall flowers (*Erysimum capitatum*). From this point, up to the Davy Brown Trailhead, one will find poppies, bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*), purple wild onion, speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), golden yarrow and Mexican elderberry. Over the stretch between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle, the bush lupine and bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*) continue to steal the show with orange sticky monkey flowers (*Diplicius aurantiacus*) beginning to join the act. The scene is gorgeous, but it is recommend seeing it before the plants retire until next year. Along this stretch also, look for golden yarrow, paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) and globe lilies (*Calochortus albus*). Be
sure and check out the clematis (*Clematis* sp.) climbing up and around shrubs and trees. It has made its mystical transformation from flower to its pom-pom seed pod stage. Passing through Sunset and Happy Valleys, look for the large red thistle globes poking up from the grasses. Other colorful cohorts include golden yarrow, bright pink speckled and elegant clarkias, Nuttall’s larkspurs (*Delphinium nutallianum*), poppies, lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) and purple sage. Spotty areas of flowers can be seen as you end your cruise of the Figueroa Mt. wildflower excursion.

There are ample wildflowers flowers along the trails at Malibu Creek State Park. Much of the area is still recovering after the 2018 Woolsey fire, and you can encounter some of the traditional fire-following species. These include the bright blue chia (*Salvia columbariae*), purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exerta*), lavender large-flower phacelia (*Phacelia grandiflora*), blue dicks (*Dipterospermon capitatus*), and yellow bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*) blooms. Other flowering jewels include scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unquiculata*), blue field gilia (*Gilia capitata*), canyon dudleya (*Dudleya cymosa*) and milkweeds. The narrow-leaf (*Asclepias fascicularis*) and hairy leaf (*Asclepias sp.*) milkweeds are appearing just in time play host to passing monarchs.

The Devils Punchbowl area on the northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains was devastated by the 2020 Bobcat Fire. Located at 4700 feet in elevation, trail-hiking in the park offers spectacular views of rock formations, the mountain range above and desert regions below. Those views still exist of course, but you can add to that an outstanding view of vegetation recovery. Drive Longview Rd or route N6 from Hwy 138 in

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Pearblossom to Devil’s Punchbowl Road. Witness along the way the riotous gold and red colors provided by flowering Fremont phacelia (*Phacelia fremontii*), Western wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and miles of golden bush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) in full bloom lining the road.

![Fremont phacelia (*Phacelia fremontii*), Western wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*). Photos by Earl Goldberg.](image)

At [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) in Newhall, you can celebrate Earth Day by enjoying a hike with family or friends and see a diversity of native California plants in flower. The Ecology, Heritage, Hidden, and Canyon trails are some of the suggested routes for your botanical explorations. The larger chaparral flowering shrubs include blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), southern honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), chamise (*Adenostema fasciculatum*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), Blackberry (*Rubus* sp.), flowering ash (*Fraxinus dipetela*). Blooming perennials include sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), deerweed (*Acmispon glabrata*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), nightshade (*Solanum* sp.) and cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*). Annuals that are showy now but will go to seed soon include, yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), slender sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*), cliff asters (*Malacothrix saxitalis*), evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.), Goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), Southern sun cups (*Camiissiopsis* sp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.) and the three Clarkia sisters—elegant, wine-cup and farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia unquiculata*, *C. purpurea*, *C. amonea*).

On the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, wildflowers are doing well despite the insufficient rainfall. Some foothill regions east of Visalia are already browning. However, within the blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland, on cooler, mesic north and east facing slopes, wildflowers are doing quite well. Most prominent are still the cheerful, yellow spring madia (*Madia elegans*) which carpet these slopes along with clusters of pink speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*). If you get out of the car and hike the trails, you are likely to come across abundant displays of pretty face (*Triteleia ixoides*). © 2022 Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants. No reproduction of any kind without written permission.
These are constellations of buttery-yellow, star-shaped flowers erupting from the center stem of an underground bulb. Another bulb plant making an appearance are pink fairy lanterns (*Calochortus amoenus*). Along with wild hyacinth (*Dipterospermon capitatus*) and its pink cousin, the twining brodiaea (*Dichelostemma volubile*), there are many scattered patches of Chinese houses (*Collinsia concolor*) and stunning displays of pink mustard clover (*Linanthus montanus*). Entering the show are the local clarkia species—four spot clarkias (*Clarkia quadriulvulnera*) and elegant clarkias (*Clarkia unguiculata*) looking like large, pink and purple spiders gathering on long stems. The yellow, creekside monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*), stands out in the wettest soil areas. Finally, after their blazing display this late winter, foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) can still be found here and there in the last efforts to set seed for next season. Naturally there are many more floral sights to enjoy, but these are the principal ones observed on hikes and drives in the area. Oh, and in bud and ready to pop are the California buckeye trees (*Aesculus californica*)

Closer to home in Claremont, the desert display just beyond the entrance to the California Botanic Garden is starting to attract the seasonal water-color artists. The desert garden is at its most colorful right now. The ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), and several prickly pears (*Opuntia sp.*) are in bloom. The large, colorful clusters of flowers on the desert willows (*Chilopsis linearis*) are beginning to burst into flower. Some of the bold Matilija poppy can also be found scattered in the desert garden. Other exciting new blooms include Spicebush (*Calycanthus occidentalis*) found up on the Mesa in the Riparian habitat with California buckeye, (*Aesculus californica*) growing nearby. Hall's mule ears (*Wyethia elata*) are also on the Mesa Trail. The name 'mule ears' will become evident as soon as you cast a look at this large leafed plant. The red-flowered, heart leaved keckilla (*Keckiella cordifolia*) is also occupying some prime real estate on the mesa under the Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*)

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Heart leaved keckiella (Keckiella cordifolia), desert willows (Chilopsis linearis)
Photos courtesy of California Botanic Garden.

The Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach is transitioning to late spring colors. Resident plants in the desert section of the nature center display sunny pastel colors like golden-flowered Indian mallow (Abutilon palmeri), pink desert fairy duster (Calliandra eriophylla), yellow-flowered Coast cholla (Cylindropuntia prolifera), desert mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua) and Baja desert rose (Rosa minutifolia). Visitors can also see flowering natives that reside in natural habitats along the coast. Colors represented in these species include yellow bush sunflower (Encelia californica), red monkeyflower (Diplacus puniceus), blue Pacific aster (Symphyotrichum chinense), thick-leaved Yerba Santa (Eriodictyon crassifolium) and buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum). Flowering trees and shrubs include lemonade berry (Rhus integrifolia), Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii), Coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia) and black walnut (Juglans californica). Orange poppies (Eschscholzia californica) are the found everywhere in the garden.

Spring isn’t slowing down at the Elizabeth Learning Center habitat gardens. The desert garden includes thistle sage (Salvia carduacea), desert senna (Senna armata), Coves’ cassia (Senna covesii), catclaw (Senegalia greggii), sweet bush (Bebbia juncea), creosote bush (Larrea tridentata), 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 cynanchoides var. hartwegii), silver puffs (Uropappus lindleyi) and bird’s eye gilia (Gilia tricolor). The vernal pool habitat contains thread leaved brodiaea (Brodiaea filifolia), clustered tarweed (Deinandra fasciculata), five spot (Nemophila maculata), california sage (Salvia californica), chaparral prickly pear (Opuntia oricola), coastal cholla (Cylindropuntia prolifera), tidy tips (Layia platyglossa), deerweed (Acmispon glaber), golden spined cereus (Bergerocactus emoryi), San Diego ceanothus (Ceanothus cyanus), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), chia (Salvia columbariae), San Diego mesa mint (Pogogyne abramsii), and Orcutt's quillwort (Isoetes orcultii). Additional species in the chaparral garden include Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri), blue paloverde (Parkinsonia floridah), woolly paintbrush (Castilleja foliolosa), calico monkeyflower (Diplacus pictus), fairy lantern (Calochortus albus), splendid mariposa lily (Calochortus splendidens), Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), southern mountain misery (Chamaebatia australis), chaparral nightshade (Solanum xanti), pink

© 2022 Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants. No reproduction of any kind without written permission.
fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), California rose (*Rosa californica*), 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.

![San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), Photos by George Nanoski.](image)

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, May 5th** 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**

- Many education classes on gardening with natives are being offered at the Theodore Payne Foundation this month. Find more information and registration details at [theodorepayne.org](http://theodorepayne.org).

**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](http://placeritacanyonnaturecenter.com)

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