May 13, 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.

The current report out of Pinnacles National Park north of King city, features many remarkable May flowers. The highlight plant this month is the pink-lavender fairy fan (Clarkia breweri). This plant is endemic to California where it is known from only seven counties in the central part in the state. It is a beautiful notch-petaled, pink-lavender colored clarkia that commonly flowers in late spring. Look also for the butterfly mariposa lily (Calochortus venustus) poking up in the landscape. This flowering bulb plant is a dramatic member of the lily family. The flowers vary in size and color, but all forms are intricately patterned. Mariposa means “butterfly” in Spanish. Another lovely bloom is that of the crinkled wild onion (Allium crispum). You know that you have correctly identified this beauty by noticing the wrinkled, deep pink, inner petals. Elsewhere in the Park, catch sight of the scarlet bugler (Penstemon centranthifolius) and it appears to be in perpetual motion, because the red flowers are rarely seen without hummingbirds flitting about from blossom to blossom. Other colorful members of the Pinnacles flora on display now include yellow pincushion (Chaenactis glabriuscula) woolly blue curls (Trichostema lanatum), orange fire poppy (Papaver heterophyllum), golden ear-drops (Dicentra chrysantha), and pink hedge nettle (Stachys rigida).

Fairy fan (Clarkia breweri), butterfly mariposa lily (Calochortus venustus), crinkled wild onion (Allium crispum). Photos courtesy of Pinnacles National Park.
As you enter the **Santa Ynez Canyon** trailhead in the Santa Monica Mountains, you walk through dense oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*). There are many flowers blooming in this shady area including caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*), bush lupine (*Lupinus sp.*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), wild rose (*Rosa californica*) and heartleaf penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*). When the trail splits, left to Trippet, right to the waterfall, take the waterfall branch. As the sign warns, this trail is not maintained, and the hike does involve some scrambling. Your efforts are rewarded with lovely displays of fire-following annuals. Giant-flower phacelia (*Phacelia grandiflora*) is painting the landscape with lavender-blue color. There are also impressive displays of cardinal red catchfly (*Silene lanciniata*), seep monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*), farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia amoena*), chaparral gilia (*Gilia angelensis*), yellow whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*) and purple nightshade (*Solanum parishii*). The trail ends at the waterfall and there is currently a bit of water falling. Because of the seeping water and nectar flowers available along this trail, you can see a variety of butterflies like California sisters, mourning cloaks, sulfurs, and cabbage whites. The abundant poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) in the canyon is difficult to avoid. Wearing long pants and a long-sleeved shirt is recommended. Take Sunset Blvd. and Palisades Drive from PCH to the end of Vereda de la Montura Street.

![Cardinal catchfly (*Silene lanciniata*). Photos by Michael Charters.](image)

At **Placerita Canyon Nature Center** in Newhall, the Canyon an Ecology trails are suggested pathways for seeing a variety of colorful, flowering native plants. Chaparral flowering shrubs include the creamy-white flower clusters of chaparral yucca (*Herperoyucca whipplei*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), Southern honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata*), holly-leaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) and chamise (*Adenostema fasciculatum*). California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), has tiny, subtle pink flowers loved by butterflies. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) are dressed in lavender and purple blossoms. Heart-leaf bush penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*) stands out from the others with red flowers frequented by hummingbirds. Blooming perennials are a riot of gold and red and include sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), deerweed (*Acmispon glabrata*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*). Annuals

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that are showy now but will go to seed soon include, yellow pincushion, (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), cliff asters (*Malacothrix saxitalis*), Southern sun cups (*Camissiopsis* sp.), California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californica*) and the three Clarkia sisters—elegant clarkia, winecup and farewell-to-spring clarkias (*Clarkia unquiculata, C. purpurea, C. amonea*).

Driving north along State Route 371 in Riverside County, a sunny yellow field of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*) surprises passersby immediately east of the Cahuilla Casino. There is a dirt road one can take opposite Cary Road, to see the flowers without being bothered by highway traffic. Trek into the field to look at them and the intensity of color from the flowers almost hurts your eyes. It is simply stunning! There were also some owl's clover (*Castilleja* sp.) and California sun cup (*Camissonia* sp.) there as well. Another highlight in that region is the thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*) west of Anza. The hillside has purple patches from large plants in bloom. Further north, turn west onto Hwy 74. Near the Kenworthy Fire Station and just east of Morris Ranch Road, a trail that paralleling the creek has many Munz’s mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri* ssp. *munzii*) in full bloom. Also notice white flowering serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*), desert almond (*Prunus fasciculatus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*) and narrow pod locoweed (*Astragalus filipes*), all in full bloom. A few plants of flowering calico cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii* var. *munzii*) can be found as well.

If you just want a leisurely stroll surrounded by a multihued California plant palette, the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach is your destination. The Nature Center is transitioning to late spring colors, and annuals are giving way to intriguing perennials. Perfumed flowers of California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), lemonade-berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*) and mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), mixed with the scent of the salty Pacific Ocean air, transports you to a familiar paradise every Californian recognizes.
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 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. Walking the trails will reward you with many lovely annuals as well.

Throughout the California Botanic Garden in Claremont, the Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) just started showing clusters of tiny white flowers. Later in the summer and fall, these blossoms turn to the red berries we like to call holly-berried. Other new blooms this week include Hooker’s evening primrose (*Oenothera elata*) standing tall and greeting you with lovely yellow blossoms. Other notable blooms to seek out include cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), many-flowered linanthus (*Leptosiphon floribundus*), and Colorado four o'clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*). Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), and several prickly pears (*Opuntia sp.*) are blooming in the desert garden. The large, colorful clusters of flowers on the desert willows (*Chilopsis linearis*) are bursting into bloom. Some of the bold Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) can also be found scattered in the desert garden. Other exciting new blooms include California buckeye, (*Aesculus californica*) growing on the mesa. The red-flowered, heart leaved keckiella (*Keckiella cordifolia*) is also occupying some prime real estate on the mesa under the Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*).

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 cyaneus), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), chia (Salvia columbariae), San Diego mesa mint (Pogogyne abramsii), and Orcutt's quillwort (Isoetes orcuttii). Additional species in the chaparral garden include Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri), blue paloverde (Parkinsonia floridal), woolly 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), chaparral nightshade (Solanum xanti), pink 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.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 20th 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

PLACERITA CANYON NATURE CENTER

Blooms of the Season Hikes
4th Saturday of each month at 9:30, (May 28)
Meet at the front steps of the Nature Center.
Open House is May 14 from 10-2
Visit Placerita Canyon Nature Center

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