

WILD FLOWER HOTLINE

MARCH – MAY 2023

Celebrating
40
Years



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.

MARCH 17, 2023

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

While super blooms are a beautiful and awe-inspiring natural phenomenon, they are also delicate and are easily damaged by human activity, so it is important to enjoy them responsibly and minimize the impact on fragile ecosystems. Please...

- ✿ Stay on designated trails
- ✿ Share the trails; be respectful of others
- ✿ Visit on weekdays and/or off-peak hours, if possible
- ✿ Do not collect or trample wildflowers
- ✿ Remember your experience(s) through photos

Spring is starting off wet and soggy. We are eager to see wildflowers, but access to many places is still restricted because of storm related trail closures. Having said that, I think the weather will soon turn sunny and warm. While we wait for trails to dry, and creeks to subside, visit the many locations that have maintained, hard surface pathways or places mostly unaffected by recent storms. Some are mentioned in this week's report. Just remember to check weather and road conditions before heading out.

SUN VALLEY

This is the 3rd week of the 2023 Hotline and time to talk about what is blooming in the gardens at our "mothership"— the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#). Magnificent specimens of ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp. and cultivars), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp. and cultivars) and chaparral bush penstemon (*Keckiella antirrhinoides*) catch your attention immediately when you arrive. While inspecting these stunning specimens, your eyes will soon be diverted to butterflies flitting around the lilac-colored, fragrant flowers of the Cedros Island verbena (*Verbena lilacina*)—a lovely garden perennial. If you are visiting at the right time of day, the California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*) will be opening lavish pink flowers inviting its crepuscular pollinators to visit. Annual wildflowers seen scattered about include vivid blue wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) and stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*). Lupines are known for their dramatic spikes of flowers but check out the leaves of this lupine.

(See below in the photos.) You will understand how it got its name “stinging lupine”. It may be harder to spy blossoms of the spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*). The tiny white flowers of this delicate annual are concealed in masses of spring green, fern-like leaves. There is much more to relish here including the sweet scent of black sage filling the air as you stroll in the gardens. Enjoy your visit.



From left to right: Leaves of stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), chaparral bush penstemon (*Keckiella antirrhinoides*), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*); foliage (left), flowers (right).

Photos by Michael Charters.

SOUTHERN SIERRA FOOTHILLS

In the southern Sierra foothill woodland east of Visalia, fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) and popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) are blooming nicely, and soon other colorful wildflowers will be joining them. The diminutive but splashy red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*) are putting on a “red-hot” show of their own. Standing out in the landscape you may spot a whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*)—a handsome shrub with soft pink urn-shaped flowers clustered among whitish-green foliage. Foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are opening their bountiful pale-yellow blossoms slowly as the temperature warms regionally. Soon they will carpet the hillsides along with silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*). If you are driving near and about Lake Kaweah, be sure visit Dry Creek and Yokhol Valley Road for grand displays of the fiddleneck and popcorn flower spectacle.



Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) and popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) in foothills near Lake Kaweah in southern Sierra foothills. Photos by Mike Wall.

If you prefer to view wildflowers through your windshield, cruise Hwy 223 east of Arvin toward Hwy 58. Swathes of golden-orange fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.) and bright blue lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) sprinkled with white popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.) occupy the roadsides and hills. If you stop and pull off the highway safely, a closer look may reveal many more flowers.

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

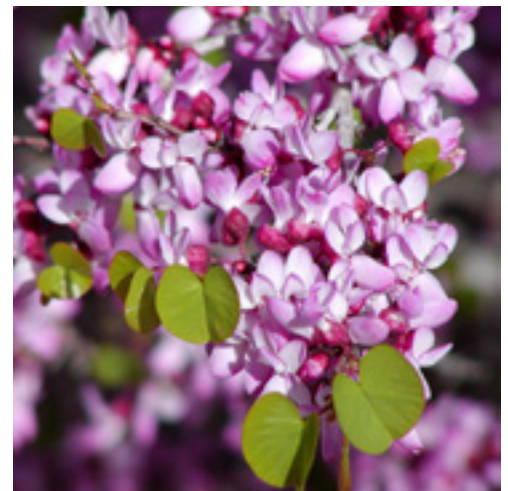
[The Stunt High Trail](#) in the Santa Monica Mountains near Calabasas is a lovely in and out trail that traverses different plant communities. You begin on a tree shaded pathway alongside a creek. It isn't long before you come upon pretty milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*) and baby-blues-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) lining the trail. The creekside segment ends when you emerge into sunlight and into a tunnel of white big pod ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*) in full bloom. Coming to the "T" in the trail, turn left and continue into the meadow. Look for blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) and California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) standing out above the grasses. Seek out the red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.) concealed within the grasses. Continuing uphill into the chaparral you will encounter fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*) and eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*) as well as flowering ash trees (*Fraxinus dipetala*). Please note that portions of the trail are muddy.



Flowering ash (*Fraxinus dipetala*); flowers (left), fruits (right), fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*).
Photos by Michael Charters.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

At the [California Botanic Garden](#) in Claremont, some flowers are still hiding out until sunnier conditions. Others, like fuchsia-flower gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), are peeking out despite the gloom. The Baja Rose (*Rosa minutifolia*) is bringing the pastel colors of spring to visitors who venture out into California Communities section of the Garden. Up on the Mesa, the California redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) has branches cloaked with pinkish-red clusters of flowers to be witnessed only until new spring leaves emerge! In sunny places along the Mesa pathways, look for patches of cheerful blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and its cousin fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*).

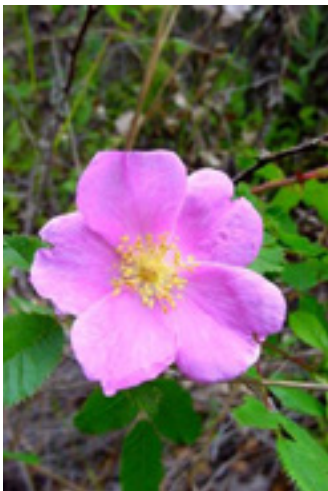


Fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*). Photo by Michael Charters. Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), California redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*). Photos courtesy of CalBG.

Poppies at the [Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve](#) are waiting for warmer temperatures to assemble their spectacular show of color but you can monitor the progress via the live [PoppyCam](#).

COASTAL ORANGE COUNTY

[The Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach displays some of the showiest members of Southern California's native plant communities. The Chaparral Garden, paths are lined with tansy leafed phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) and thorny California wild rose (*Rosa californica*) set back a little from passersby. The Riparian habitat accommodates large stands of stream-side mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) that serves as a hiding place for numerous migrating birds. The sunny desert area is host to bright yellow desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and red fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), a nectar plant for hummingbirds. The flora of California's Channel Islands is represented by island mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*) and Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*). Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia* var. *agrifolia*) have enjoyed spring rain and are displaying their tassel-like flowers tucked within a fresh new growth of blushing pink and green leaves. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are everywhere.



California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), island mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*). Wild rose, island mallow, mule fat photos by Michael Charters. Desert brittlebush by George Nanoski.

INLAND EMPIRE

[Diamond Valley Lake](#) is a reservoir in Hemet at the base of the San Jacinto mountains. It is a gem of a get-away to view wildflowers and is popular with the Inland Empire residents. Diamond Valley hosts a diverse flora representing annual species from both the desert and inland valleys. For spectacular vistas of the lake and its colorful hillsides, walk the Wildflower Loop Trail near the entrance. Take in the gorgeous array of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), tidy-tips (*Layia platyglossa*), lupines (*Lupinus spp.*), cream-cups (*Platystemon californicus*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), encelia (*Encelia farinosa*) and so much more.



Scenes along the Wildflower Trail, Diamond Valley Lake. Photos by Emily Sluiman.

SANTA ANA MOUNTAINS

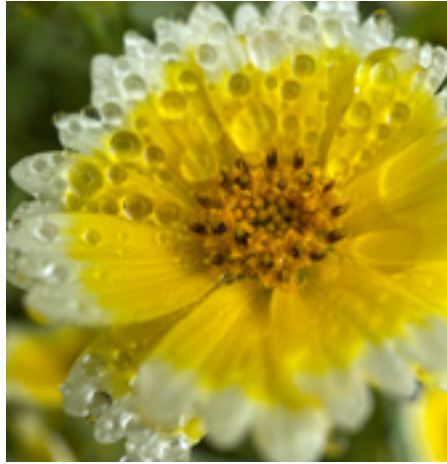
The [Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve](#) is located in the Santa Ana Mountains in southwest Riverside County. The reserve is a hidden gem that offers a fascinating glimpse into the natural history of the area. The Reserve protects unique ecosystems such as Engelmann oak woodlands, riparian wetlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, bunchgrass prairie, and vernal pools. There are more than two dozen trails. The Vernal Pool and the Transpreserve Loop trails are the most popular and they both wind their way through many habitats allowing visitors to see a diversity of plants. Grassy slopes hold shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), and Southern checkerbloom (*Sidalcea sparsifolia*). Chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) will be soon seen dotting the slopes as well. Woodlands shelter California golden violets (*Viola pedunculata*), milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia sp.*). Hiking through the chaparral brings you close-up to hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) in full bloom and tucked in among chaparral shrubs are some flowering California peonies (*Paeonia californica*). **Please note that trails are temporarily closed until March 21.**



California golden violet (*Viola pedunculata*), Southern checkerbloom (*Sidalcea sparsifolia*). California peony (*Paeonia californica*). Photos by Emily Sluiman.

URBAN LOS ANGELES

The wildflowers at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) continue to delight with renewed vigor with the moisture of another atmospheric river! Desert Garden plants include catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pools are surrounded with truncate-leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia* var. *otayensis*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), deerweed (*Acemispion glaber*), school bells, a.k.a. blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). All the vernal pools are full and teeming with fairy shrimp and other ephemeral creatures! Additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).



Climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*) with raindrops, woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*). Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 24 and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT AND WILD FLOWER EVENTS

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

POPPY DAYS SPRING SALE | MARCH 31-APRIL 1 | 8:30AM-4:30PM

Create an at-home superbloom! We'll have a great selection of colorful annuals and other beautiful spring wildflowers.

Members receive a 15% discount and nonmembers receive a 10% discount on all plants, seeds, and TPF gear.

RSVP for parking: poppydays.eventbrite.com

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR | APRIL 15-16 | 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Experience the superbloom in the city! Buy your tickets today for exclusive access to 37 exemplary gardens across LA County, including 18 gardens new to the tour, as well as our favorite returning gardens, new videos, and a podcast.

Details at: nativeplantgardentour.org

LA TIMES FESTIVAL OF BOOKS | APRIL 22-23

Theodore Payne Foundation is honored to join latimesplants at the LA Times Festival of Books.

Stop by our booth for info and inspiration!

Details at: events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks