MARCH 24, 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…

スタイオン指定のトレイル
・共有するトレイルは他の人々に敬意を示しましょう
・週間の時間帯に訪れるか、もしくはオフピーク時間に訪れる
・野生の花を釣り上げたり踏みつけないように
・経験を共有する方法は写真です

If you are lucky enough to be on spring break, maybe you have time to take extended road trips to wildflower-rich places like Anza Borrego or the southern Sierra. Always check weather conditions before leaving home.

LOW DESERT REGION

Descending into the Anza Borrego Desert on State Highway 22, be prepared to be amazed as you travel through the Culp Valley area. The roadside is filled with desert apricot (Prunus fremontii) in full bloom! The display of ephemeral blush pink to white blossoms creates a “cherry blossom festival-like scene.” Further down the Montezuma Grade, Nature waved her magic wand, filling hillsides with “gold dust” of yellow Parish’s poppies (Eschscholzia parishii) in full bloom from about 2000 feet elevation to the desert floor. Brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) is popping into bloom on the roadsides along the Grade as well. Peak bloom for brittlebush will be in the near future. Once in Anza Borrego State Park the destination will be Borrego Palm Canyon. The campground is where the trailhead to Borrego Palm Canyon begins. As the trail leads away from the campground, you soon spot, or rather smell, the fields of narrow leaved Johnstonella (Johnstonella angustifolia). The delightful fragrance emitted from masses of these plants will have you raving about it to friends at parties long after the plant has gone to seed. There are bountiful displays of annual flowers throughout the hike. There is a field of common phacelia (Phacelia distans) mixed with wild canterbury bells (Phacelia minor) which is so artistic a hiker titled it “A study in blue”. One normally un-
assuming plant called sea muilla (*Muilla maritima*) has small greenish-white flowers, but when the stamens open to visiting pollinators, what is revealed is dazzling neon-turquoise pollen. Taking all nature’s beauty in is not for the faint of heart! Make sure you check out pictures of these plants on the website version of the Wildflower Hotline.

Top: Johnstonella (*Johnstonella angustifolia*), plant and flowers, Bigelow’s monkeyflower (*Diplacus bigloveii*).
Middle: Sea muilla (*Muilla maritima*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) mixed with wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*).
Bottom: Purple mat (*Nama demissa*), Canyon wall scene with Parish’s poppies (*Eschscholzia parishii*). Photos by Tom Chester and Don Rideout.
Not far from Borrego Palm Canyon are Rockhouse Canyon and Butler Canyon trails which take you through washes where flowers are overwhelming in size and quantity. Butler Canyon hosts Parish’s poppies filling spaces everywhere between boulders coloring the canyon walls yellow. Expect the peak of poppy bloom in a week or two. In Rockhouse Canyon, big flowering annuals are everywhere. In normal years it would be absurd to call most desert wildflowers “big,” but do not take the word “big” as hyperbole this year. Annual wildflowers of most species are both larger and denser. Among the “giants” are desert lilies (*Hesperocallis undulata*), whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), purple mat (*Nama demissa var. demissa*) and many more. Water is flowing in channels and straits of the washes which adds to the drama.

**SOUTHERN SIERRA FOOTHILLS**

Let’s beam up north now to the southern Sierra. Take a stroll up Case Mountain Road and the Salt Creek trail near the community of Three Rivers to observe some breathtaking landscape. The terrain here is carpeted mostly with two kinds of flowers—the rusty haired popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) and Eastwood’s fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*). The white popcorn flowers and gold fiddlenecks are enjoying their place in the sun. Soon, the oak trees (*Quercus douglasii*) in this woodland will leaf out, throwing shade and stealing the wildflowers’ vital sunlight. Nature definitely gives us awesome things to ponder. The white blossoms of popcorn flowers are only about 1/2 inch in size. In order to blanket so much area as to make it look like a light snowfall, imagine the number of single flowers needed to put on such a show. Wait, there’s more to this dramatic scenery! The silver leaf bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) with their tall spikes of blue flowers can be found occasionally interrupting this domination of white popcorn flowers and gold fiddlenecks. Just coming into bloom, and soon...
will replace the white and gold colors along this trail, is hot pink bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and shades of blue provided by wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and spider lupines (*Lupinus benthamii*), all accompanied by swathes of yellow foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*). Rocks and boulders are crusted with lime green, orange, golden and copper-colored lichens. Pretty little bird’s foot ferns (*Pellaea mucronata*) are tucked in rock crevices. The skinny plants with tall stems of maroon and butter yellow flowers—Coulter’s jewel flower (*Caulanthus coulteri*) love the soils around these rocky areas too. Finally, the majestic white leaf manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) are in full bloom with clusters of pink urn shaped flowers. In the background of all this beauty you can gaze upon the cascading Falls of Salt Creek.
In the gardens at 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), stinging lupine (Lupinus hirsutissimus) and spotted eucrypta (Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia). 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.

Chaparral bush penstemon (Keckiella antirrhinoides), spotted eucrypta (Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia), Photos by Michael Charters. Stinging lupine (Lupinus hirsutissimus). Photo by George Nanoski.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

This week at the California Botanic Garden in Claremont, the desert plants have been making their debut in spite of the rain and cool temperatures. Joshua Trees (Yucca brevifolia) are starting to flower, which has been a hopeful sight. The Mojave Yucca (Yucca schidigera) are joining in on the yucca bloomfest as well. 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). Additionally, the manzanitas (Arctostaphylos spp.), mostly done flowering, are starting to show fruit—berries that look like tiny apples and are so cute.
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](https://www.poppycam.com). The regional desert neighborhoods around the Reserve are fields of wildflowers.

**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.

**Diamond Valley Lake** 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 \((Salvia columbariae)\) and wild canterbury bells \((Phacelia minor)\) More perennials are coming into bloom now. The encelia \((Encelia farinosa)\), California buckwheat \((Eriogonum fasciculatum)\), deerweed \((Acmispon glabrata)\), California four o’clock \((Mirabilis laevis)\) and so much more.
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).
New wildflowers at Elizabeth Learning Center continue to join the visual cacophony of the spring 2023 bloom! 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 area contains 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 ( Acmispon glaber), blue dicks ( Dipterostemon capitatus), California poppy ( Eschscholzia californica), yellow-rayed goldfields ( Lasthenia glabrata), cliff spurge ( Euphorbia miser), and Del Mar manzanita ( Arctostaphyllos glandulosa ssp. crassifolia). All the vernal pools are full and teeming with fairy shrimp and other ephemeral creatures! Additional species in their Chaparral Garden include matilija poppy ( Romneya coulteri), stinging lupine ( Lupinus hirsutissimus), 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 haematotrichon), sugar bush ( Rhus ovata), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat ( Eriogonum arborescens), and blue-eyed grass ( Sisyrinchium bellum).

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. For a more immersive visit Tuesday - Friday, contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via email: gtn5586@lausd.net. His conference period is 10:30am - 12:20pm. Or a visit can be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.
Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri). Photo by George Nanoski.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 31st and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern California wildflowers regions to visit.
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

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