

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.

MAY 12, 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

Mother's Day is this weekend. Forget about buying her flowers. Totally unimaginative! Take her out to see the "real deal"—native wildflowers still in bloom everywhere, especially in Southern California's native plant gardens.

THE VALLEY

The gardens surrounding the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#) have lots of the late spring perennials blooming now. The cadre of sage (*Salvia* spp.) and penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.) species and varieties are riotous in color and form from groundcover to spreading shrubs. They flaunt every imaginable shade of blue and pink. The matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*) have their own swagger, standing tall with large "sunny-side-up" crepe white flowers with bright yellow centers! A variety of intriguing annuals and orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are still going strong as well. After admiring the lively landscape and wishing these handsome plants were in your own garden, visit the TPF Sales Nursery and make those wishes a reality!



Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*).
Photo by Genevieve Arnold

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Take mom on a drive along Figueroa Mountain Road in the [Los Padres National Forest](#). Start early, or better yet, go on Monday. It is a popular drive to see wildflowers. The California Highway Patrol has been closing Figueroa Mt Rd intermittently on Saturdays and Sundays due to the massive number of cars going up the mountain. In addition, some visitors block the road when they stop to take pictures, obstructing other vehicles. PLEASE only park at turnouts. The good news is that access to Figueroa Mt. Road is passable all the way through to Sunset Valley.

One starting point is about 10 miles out of Los Olivos at the first cattle guard at the base of Mount Figueroa Road. You immediately spy blue fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), sky lupines (*Lupinus nanus*) and miniature lupines (*Lupinus bicolor*). Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) add more blue color to this scene. Some buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*) and fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.) are still adding drops yellow color. Nuggets of California golden violets (*Viola pedunculata*) can be found embedded among the grasses and other wildflowers. Sweet little cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*) are still greeting you as you pass the rusty road gate. Bright orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are everywhere. Keep an eye out for coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*) and canyon peas (*Lathyrus vestitus*). The elderberry trees are beginning to flower above the wildflower array. Arriving at the Vista Point turnout, the ground is a golden color with cheery goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.). Look for blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) here as well.

Across Vista Point and along the road to the station, poppies continue to shine, along with golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*). Beyond the station to Tunnel Ranch Road, look for more sky lupines, coreopsis, poppies, blow wives (*Achyraea mollis*) and fiddleneck. On the field right before Tunnel Ranch Road, check out the beautiful wallflowers, dancing gleefully with buttercups. Straight ahead are hillsides with poppies, sky lupines joined by the larger bush lupine. **There are convenient turnouts at Zaca Ridge Road and the Figueroa Mt. Road lookout to safely park and walk to take pictures.** At another turnout a little past and across from the Davy Brown Trailhead, stop and check out the chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria bicolor*). Along the drive to Ranger Peak, you will see Arroyo lupines (*Lupinus succulentus*) mixed with buttercups, poppies, and goldfields. Half-way up Ranger Peak, in the shaded area on your right, whimsical baby-blue eyes will be looking at you as you pass by. The stretch between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle is rapidly becoming quite the showcase! Bush lupine is starting to fill the roadsides. Bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*) are just starting to bloom. Along this stretch, also look for downslope patches of poppies, manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.), which is in full bloom, phacelia, popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.), fiddleneck, purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*) and wild canyon pea. Sunset Valley has a variety of wildflowers just starting to bloom. It will probably be quite floriferous in a week or so. Look for popcorn flower, chia, goldfields, phacelia, wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*), miniature lupine, caterpillar phacelia, ceanothus, poppies, Coulter lupine, tufted poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), purple sage (*Salvia* sp.) and elderberry.



Above: Nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), sky lupines (*Lupinus nanus*). Below: California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*). Photos courtesy of Santa Lucia Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

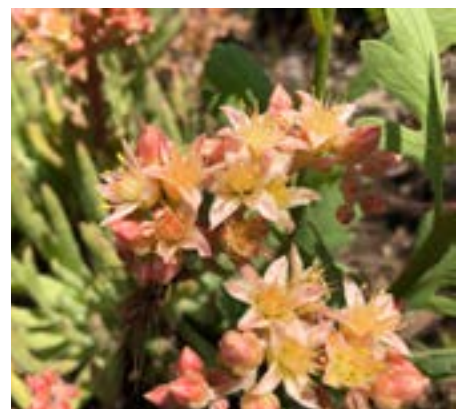
A visit to [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is perfect for a Mother's Day outing. After a stroll or hike on one of the trails, have a picnic under the cool shaded oak groves surrounding the Nature Center. Several trails extend out from the Nature Center and vary in length. The main trail is closed because of running water in the creek, but all other trails welcome visitors. A popular route and one mom would enjoy is the Ecology Trail. There is a wonderful variety annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees displaying blooms in both shade a sun. It is a joy to walk the trail. Pretty pastel-colored wildflowers will cheerfully greet you. They can be found in open sunny places along trails and growing in patches between shrubs. Spanning the pink to purple color range is wild Pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*) and wine cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*). Warm yellows and golds are represented by whispering bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and Southern sun cups (*Camissoniopsis* sp.). White and cream-colored flowers speckle the trail as well. Cliff asters (*Malacothrix saxatilis*), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), pincushions (*Chaenactis* sp.), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*) and Nuttall's snapdragons (*Antirrhinum nutallianum*) may be white, but are definitely not dull! The perennials scattered among the wildflowers are not so subtle in their color advertisement to visitors. Scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), red cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), bright orange sticky monkey flowers (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), woolly blue curls

(*Trichostema lanatum*), hot pink sacapellote (*Acourtia microcephala*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*), and pearly white California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) will catch your eye. The taller shrubs favor showing off their shades of green and the variety of textures that can be found in their handsome foliage. They include sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), Southern honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) and yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*). Learn to recognize poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and steer mom clear of it!



Sacapellote (*Acourtia microcephala*), golden stars (*Bloomeria crocea*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Photos by Michael Charters.

A Mother's Day phenomena at the [California Botanic Garden](#) is the annual blooming of California buckeyes (*Aesculus californica*). You can't miss the prolific spikes of fragrant blush pink flowers. Up on the Mesa, make your way to the reflecting pond to see the lovely stream orchids (*Epipactis gigantea*). Along the path to the pond look for the Coast Range triplet lily (*Triteleia lugens*) that has also sprung up. Its golden flowers compete with the stream orchid for your attention. You don't have to choose which to admire. Linger and enjoy both! In the SoCal Gardens below the Mesa, the hollyleaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) has started flowering and soon will develop fruits devoured by all sorts of critters in late summer. In the same area, the bright green succulent, dudleya (*Dudleya virens*), is showing off its delicate flower clusters arranged on long stems. The Desert Garden hosts a parade of hummingbirds attracted to the hot pink flowers of the fairy-duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*).



California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), Coast Range triplet lily (*Triteleia lugens*), dudleya (*Dudleya virens*), Photos courtesy of CalBG.

ORANGE COUNTY

Mom would really take pleasure in waking at [The Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach. The coral color of desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), golden orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), blue showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and lavender tansy-leaved phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) are growing throughout the garden for her to enjoy. The lacy flowered Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and the lush Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*) will provide dappled shade while you enjoy viewing white sage (*Salvia apiana*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), sticky and red monkeyflowers (*Mimulus aurantiacus* and *M. puniceus*) and Island mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*). Flowering prickly pear cactus (*Optuntia littoralis*) and Mojave yucca (*Yucca schdigera*) are particularly showy now in the desert garden section.

URBAN LOS ANGELES

The [Arroyo Seco Woodland and Wildlife Park](#) in South Pasadena (South Pasadena Nature Park), for short) is a four-acre habitat park along the Arroyo Seco flood control channel. Vegetation includes mature trees: coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), southern California black walnuts (*Juglans californica*), and western sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*). There are also blue elderberries (*Sambucus mexicana*), toyons (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), golden currants (*Ribes aureum* var. *gracillimum*) and other coastal sage scrub shrubs. Right now, showy penstemons (*Penstemon spectabilis*), scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), wild cucumbers (*Marah macrocarpa*), black sages (*Salvia mellifera*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), and Nevin's barberries (*Berberis nevinii*) can be found blooming in the park. In addition, a chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) believed to have been planted in December 2014 is in full bloom. It is located next to the owl box in the center of the park. Also, of special interest are the penstemons that resulted from hybridization of scarlet buglers (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and showy penstemons (*Penstemon spectabilis*). A new Demonstration Garden with low-volume irrigation was installed this past winter. It is located on the eastern side of the park adjacent to the golf course driving range and next to the bicycle/pedestrian path. The Park, open every day, has been maintained since 2006 by Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park volunteers. Our next volunteer day will be held on May 20, 9 am – noon. More information can be found at www.WeedingWildSuburbia.com/nature-park





Above: Blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) with visiting hoverfly, chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*). Below: chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), hybrid of scarlet bugler and showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis* X *P. centranthifolius*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*). Photos by Barbara Eisenstein.

So many new blooms are joining the wildflower show [\[CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO!\]](#) at Elizabeth Learning Center! The Desert Habitat Garden dazzles with wine-cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *basilaris*), desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*), desert paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *villosa*), catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Emory's globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea emoryi*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden delights with alkali mariposa lily (*Calochortus striatus*), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), thread leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), chaparral prickly pear (*Opuntia oricola*), gum plant (*Grindelia camporum*), San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), golden-spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), Nuttall's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum nuttallianum*), 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*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), coastal cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), school bells (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), and cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*). Additional species in their Chaparral Habitat Garden include fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), splendid mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), chaparral brodiaea (*Brodiaea jolonensis*), Island barberry (*Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis*), southern mountain misery (*Chamaebatia australis*), southern california black walnut (*Juglans californica*), 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 haematochiton*), 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.



Alkali mariposa lily (*Calochortus striatus*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), gum plant (*Grindelia camporum*). Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 19th and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern California wildflower regions to visit.

NATIVE PLANT AND WILD FLOWER EVENTS

IDYLLWILD NATURE CENTER

LEMON LILY FESTIVAL | JUNE 24 or JULY 15

Something to look forward to this summer! Predicting when the lemon lilies will bloom in the San Jacinto Mountains and scheduling the festival to correspond with that bloom is always a tough call. The lilies have appeared later this year, so it is presumed that they will bloom later as well. As a consequence, the festival may be scheduled on July 15 instead of the June 24 date that was first reported.

CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN

FLOWER HOUR: MOTHERS DAY AT CALBG | 4 PM - 6 PM | MAY 14

Celebrate Mother's Day at California Botanic Garden with a one-of-a-kind party. Woodland Roasting Company will provide California native plant coffee and tea drinks (with optional alcohol "toppers"), accompanied by sweet treats from Saca's Mediterranean Cuisine and Some Crust Bakery, live harp music by Pheobe Madison Schrafft, and Mother's Day themed activities for all ages. Beer & wine also available.

calbg.org/event/flower-hour-mothers-day-at-calbg

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

ALL ABOUT BULBS | 10 AM - 12 PM | MAY 17

Join Tim Becker, TPF's Director of Horticulture, in this exciting class focusing on native California bulbs!

Taught primarily in our beautiful bulb house, participants will learn seed propagation and division propagation of bulbs, culture and care in both containers and ground; and botany and floristic diversity of native geophytes

Feel free to bring your cameras to capture the stunning expression of blooms that have taken years to show!

allaboutbulbs.eventbrite.com

WESTERN MONARCHS: CREATING HABITAT WITH NATIVE PLANTS | 4 PM - 6 PM | MAY 26

Join us in understanding about their life cycle and needs in this informative class. Learn the in-depth the unique connection between the western population of monarchs and California native plants, and how to attract and nurture these iconic butterflies. Learn which native milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) are best for the caterpillars and which flowering plants provide nectar for adults — with tips on butterfly garden design and maintenance.

westernmonarchs.eventbrite.com