

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 5, 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

The "layering-on" season is starting. You may begin hiking on a trail at low elevation foothills, and as elevation increases, you start "layering on" warmer apparel! During this late spring heat up, start exploring elevations above 3500' for a new bloom experience or stay low and check out great native plant urban gardens.

URBAN LOS ANGELES

If you missed getting out to the low desert earlier for the spectacular bloom [\[CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO!\]](#), Elizabeth Learning Center continues to wow with its wildflowerpalooza! The Desert Habitat Garden pops with 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 contains San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), golden-spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), Nuttall's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum nuttallianum*), truncate-leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia*

menziesii), Otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia* var. *otayensis*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), 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.



San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), white fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*). Photos by George Nanoski.

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.

GREAT CENTRAL VALLEY

There's still a little time to appreciate the wildflowers at [Carrizo Plain National Monument](#). The wildflower display is fading, especially at lower elevations. The temperatures lately have been in mid 80's, but a cooler trend this week may extend the bloom season at higher elevations for a while. Plants in favorable spots—north-facing slopes, some wetter areas, and land at higher elevations continue to look good. Perennial shrubs like the narrow leaved golden bush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), bush lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), and bladder pod (*Peritoma arborea*) continue to produce flowers. Stands of the magenta tipped desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*) can still be found high in the Caliente and the Temblor Ranges. The yellow hillside daisies

(*Monolopia lanceolata*) are bright at higher elevations as well. There will still be some nice late bloomers—the reddish-purple farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia* spp.) and late blooming bulbs such as the mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* spp.) should also show up here and there although they are not particularly common. A visit now will still be worth it, and not just for the wildflowers. Carrizo Plain is beautiful and serene all year long. Soda Lake is still near full, though it will dry up soon enough and the weather is still pleasant:



Higher elevation at Temblor Range from Panorama Road, Carrizo Plain National Monument. Photo by Mike Wall.

SANTA BARBARA MOUNTAINS

Popular with wildflower viewers is Figueroa Mountain Road in the [Los Padres National Forest](#). Maybe a little too popular! 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 to the volume of cars coming up Figueroa Mt Road, some visitors block the road when they stop to take pictures, obstructing other vehicles trying to pass. PLEASE only park at turnouts where NO PART of your tires are on the black top. You are encouraged to visit on weekdays when there is less traffic and to plan on getting an early start. 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 (*Achyraena mollis*) and

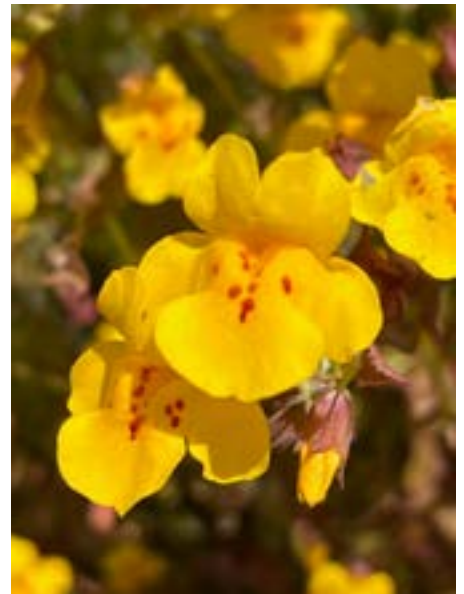
fiddleneck. On the field right before Tunnel Ranch Road, check out the beautiful wallflowers, dancing gleefully with buttercups. Straight ahead are hillsides with poppies, sky lupines joined by the larger bush lupine. There are convenient turnouts at Zaca Ridge Road and the Figueroa Mt. Road lookout 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.

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

In the Santa Monica Mountains, the [Mishe Mokwa Trail](#) near Circle X Ranch, and the Backbone Trail from the Mishe Mokwa parking lot are worth a day of exploration. On the Backbone trail down to a marshy area is a large group of red skinned onions (*Allium haematochiton*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) and seep monkeyflowers (*Erythranthe guttata*). Along these trails, also encounter succulent lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), Pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), wide throated yellow monkey flower (*Diplacus brevipes*), tomcat clover (*Trifolium willdenovii*), Kellogg's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum kelloggii*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), white star lilies (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), Danny's skullcap (*Scutellaria tuberosa*) and globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*).



Above: Succulent lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), wide throated yellow monkey flower (*Diplacus brevipes*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*) with curious bug. Below: Marshy area on Backbone Trail with red skinned onions (*Allium haematochiton*) and seep monkeyflowers (*Erythranthe guttata*). Photos by Joseph Brooks.

At Topanga State Park, the [Temescal Ridge Trail](#) is a ridge top trail/fire road without much shade. It's appeal in the spring lovely member of the pea family that does not grow in many places. Currently, it is in full and beautiful bloom. There are also a lot of bush lupines (*Lupinus* sp.), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), and purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.). But the milkvetch is the star of this walk.



Bush lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), milkvetch (*Astragalus* sp.). Photos by Dorothy Steinicke.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

The main trail at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is still closed due to running water in the creek! The Heritage and Hillside Trails, and the plants in front of the Nature Center however have a wonderful variety right now and it is a joy to explore. Choose to take selfies with the handsome hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), chamise (*Adenostoma fascicularis*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) or California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). New along these paths are purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) and soap plant (*Chlorogalum* sp.). Annual wildflowers can be found in open sunny places along trails and growing in patches between shrubs, including cliff aster (*Malacothrix saxatilis*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.). Brightening up the trails is also golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*).



Golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), soap plant (*Chlorogalum sp.*), purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*). Photos by Michael Charters.

Up on the Mesa pathways of the [California Botanic Garden](#) the California buckeyes (*Aesculus californica*) are starting to bloom. Another flowering shrub is opening its large white flowers—the tree anemone (*Carpenteria californica*). The tree anemone has a short-lived bloom, so visit this rare phenomenon soon. Down in the SoCal Desert Gardens, the pink fairy-duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*) is eye-catching with its bright cluster of hot pink stamens. Other “hot pink” newcomers are the cactus flowers such as the beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *basilaris*), which is bringing bright hues of

pinks to both the California Communities and Desert Garden! Around the same area, the white many-flowered Linanthus (*Leptosiphon floribundus*) is looking like it snowed in the Garden. The garden is also well known a great birding spot as well. Join the Pomona Valley Audubon Society for their monthly bird walks for families.



Many-flowered linanthus (*Leptosiphon floribundus*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), tree anemone (*Carpenteria californica*). Photos courtesy of CalBG.

LOW DESERT — SAN DIEGO COUNTY

In Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the [Wilson Trail](#) and in drainages north and south of the trail the bloom is getting on very well. This area is at the western boundary of the park, east of Ranchita and south and above Culp Valley, at elevations of 4000 to 4300 feet. The Borrego Valley floor and its washes are withering but exploring the higher elevations within the Park is quite satisfying. The flowering is occurring mostly on the south-facing slopes of pinyon woodlands near the Wilson Peak ridgeline. Full bloom now seems very hard to believe, since not that long ago, there was snow there! But the plants sense that heat is coming, so they need to bloom now before they run out of moisture. Another surprising thing is that the annuals are mostly small. Despite all the rain this area has received, the very unusual cold winter kept the plants from growing large. Most of them make up for their tiny stature by being very abundant, and hence still produce nice carpets of color. Pretty bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*) and hairy lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*) are in bloom everywhere forming carpets along the Wilson Trail. The sweet little belly flower, Wallace's woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), is producing beautiful displays in nearly all the drainages. Common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) is producing large patches of color at the base of many shrubs all along the route, as it typically does in good years. There are large numbers of white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), in full bloom in many places. Some areas also have abundant California coreopsis (*Leptosyne californica*) and yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*) displays in washes and quilting hillsides. There is one stunning hillside north of the Wilson Trail that was covered by chia (*Salvia columbariae*) in full bloom, producing a purple haze from a distance. Some shrubs are in the blooming game, too. Cupped leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*) are stunning clouds of white scattered about. Interior goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) is just beginning to be showy here. They have their first flowers, and many more are budded up with flowers soon to come. Although Parry's jujube (*Ziziphus parryi*) produces no blooms to write home about, a single shrub has a very strong, lovely fragrance that can be detected from 100 feet or so away. They will produce much olfactory pleasure along your hike. It is considered a highlight to find some plants of cushion cryptantha (*Greeneocharis circumscissa*) along this trail as well. Getting to the Wilson Trailhead requires 2.4 miles of driving on a dirt road south of S22. The last mile of the dirt road is very rutted in areas, requiring careful driving. Although 2 wd cars with decent clearance can easily negotiate this road, there are spots where timid drivers will not want to risk falling into a rut. Some people may therefore wish to just drive the 1.4 miles of the Jasper Trail Road from S22 to the junction with the Old Culp Road, and park there and walk the remaining mile to the Wilson Trail.

If you are driving east from I-15, along SR76 from Fallbrook to Lake Henshaw in the Palomar Mtn area, a blue ceanothus is now in full bloom, with a number of plants along the road, and hillsides on the north-facing slopes across the San Luis Rey canyon. This species is also in full bloom along the drive from S22 from the junction with S2 to Ranchita. The hillsides south of S22 were dappled with white in the vicinity of the PCT. It is always surprising to see how many Ceanothus bushes there are in this area that otherwise looks like it is solid chamise and oaks. There are tons of stinging lupine in bloom all along the road. The beautiful San Diego pea is producing patches of reddish color in a handful of areas and the first elderberries are in bloom in the Pala area of SR76. Goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) continue to be in full bloom in the Lake Henshaw area.



Above: Goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) color variants. Below: white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), California coreopsis (*Leptosyne californica*), cupped leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*).



Left: Chia (*Salvia columbariae*) in full bloom, producing a purple haze from a distance. Below: A tiny trio of cushion cryptantha (*Greeneocharis circumscissa*), Wallace's woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*). Photos by Jim Roberts and Tom Chester.





Critters: Ornate Checkered Beetle (*Trichodes ornatus*), Blainville's Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*). All photos by Jim Roberts and Tom Chester.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 12th 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

CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN

CONTAINER GARDENING WITH CA NATIVE PLANTS | 11 AM - 12:30 PM | MAY 7

Planting California native plants at home is becoming more and more popular. But what if you don't have a yard large enough to plant them? Or no yard at all? We've got you covered! Mariana Ramirez Rodriguez, our Grow Native Nursery Manager, and Horticulturist Laura Christianson will show you the best options on how to garden in containers with California native plants. The class will cover topics such as the best types of containers to use, soil, watering and fertilization requirements, ideas on how to top-dress your containers, and additional container plant tips. There will also be a demonstration on how to pot up your native plants and a Q&A for any lingering questions you might have!

calbg.org/event/container-gardening-with-ca-native-plants-050723

FLOWER HOUR: MOTHER'S DAY AT CALBG | 4 PM - 6 PM | MAY 24

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, 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

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.