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.

April 12, 2024

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY!

While superblooms 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 always...

- 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 experiences through photos and leave no trace.

Desert Regions

There is plenty of speculation, but nobody really knows what is going on at the Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve. It seems that cool weather has stymied the poppy bloom. Some think it will start soon, others think it may not come at all. You can keep yourself updated by viewing the live PoppyCam. The Reserve is not completely barren of color. There are goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) blooming in patches. Purple owl's clover (Castilleja exserta) is starting to bloom along the North Poppy Loop trail and the trail between Kitanemuk Vista Point and Antelope Butte. Also, more grape soda lupine (Lupinus excubitus) has been spotted. Keep checking the PoppyCam and weather reports, or call the Reserve before heading out.

The Coast Ranges

Depending on the trail you choose, spring flowers can be seen throughout Pinnacles National Park. Entering the park at the Eastern portal, you can't help but notice the large perennial silver bush lupines (Lupinus albitrons) peppering the landscape. Pinnacles has more than 30 miles of trails that showcase the beauty of the park and accommodates hikers of different abilities and experience levels. Along the Condor Gulch Trail, for instance, the blue-purple bluewitch nightshade (Solanum umbelliferum) and yellow California buttercups (Ranunculus californicus) are very showy. Fiddlenecks, uncoiling their orange flowers on top of bristly stems and goldfields...
(Lasthenia gracilis) can be found in grassy open spaces. Vernal meadows like those along the Rim, Balconies, and Blue Oak Trails serve as good habitat for low growing mats of baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii) and stands of seep monkeyflower (Erythranthe guttata). On the dry slopes of High Peaks Trail, look for bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida), and closer to the ground, magenta-colored warrior’s plume (Pedicularis densiflora) and patches of yellow tufted poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa). Old Pinnacles and Bench Trails host mission bells (Fritillaria affinis), California poppies (Eschscholzia californica), and common goldfields (Lasthenia gracilis). Tiny white fiesta flowers (Pholistoma membranaceum) are abundant in shady areas on those trails as well. Finally, on the west side of the park, you will likely encounter cheery yellow California golden violets (Viola pedunculata) springing up everywhere.

Always check on road or trail closures before visiting the Park. Closures protect wildlife, especially raptors, during breeding season. Park staff thank climbers and hikers for their support of our efforts to protect the spectacular birds of prey at Pinnacles. For more information about raptors at the park, please refer to the Raptors page.

The Carrizo Plain

There is an increase in color and continued improvement of the wildflower display at Carrizo Plain National Monument, especially on the low Plain, including around Soda Lake and the gentle slopes of the Temblor Range. Patches of color other than yellow are appearing; most notably the purple owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), the sky–blue baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii), Great Valley phacelia (Phacelia ciliata), and the orange blazing star (Mentzelia sp.) has been reported in the Temblors. Of course the bright yellows of the hillside daisies (Monolopia lanceolata), goldfields (Lasthenia californica) forked fiddlenecks (Amsinckia furcata) continue to dazzle the landscape just in sheer numbers and color. Two recent rainfall events have kept the soils in Carrizo moist and given a boost to the late season wildflowers, so it is expected that the peak season is still slightly ahead of us. If you plan to visit, always check out the area’s weather report and road conditions,
Visit on a weekday if possible. Also, please continue to be cautious on the back roads; the recent rains have kept the wet spots in the roads wet, and it is a long wait for towing help if you get stuck! And stay on the trails, things are warming up and the rattlesnakes are coming out. Leave them alone and they will leave you alone. Enjoy your outing to Carrizo Plain, and be sure to add your voice to those speaking out for more protection for this special place!

Los Padres National Forest

Driving along Figueroa Mountain Road from Los Olivos, good flower displays start to appear at the first cattle guard (about 11 miles from Los Olivos). As you climb the mountain road to the Ranger Station, look for buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), lovely fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), scattered sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), California golden violet (*Viola pedunculata*), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), blow wives (*Achyrachaena mollis*), and purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*). As you continue to climb the mountain, stunning orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are starting to bloom along the road and lupines are becoming more prominent. Right before the rusty gate, sweet cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*) are in bloom, however, they are very few and quite small this year but are definitely photo worthy. Orange, gold, and yellow paint the roadsides with poppies, coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and western wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*). Scattered about in this sea of yellow/orange is the bright pink prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*). The moist, shaded areas embedded on the rocky hillsides are home to the climbing wild canyon pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*). At the Vista Point turnout, the chocolate lilies have gone to seed, but blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), has taken its place and large patches of goldfields here too make a nice color contrast to their blue-purple influence. Look for fool’s onion or wild hyacinth (*Triteleia hyacinthina*) popping up here as well. Driving further on, check out the field to the right just before Tunnel Ranch Road, and behold the beautiful combination of wallflowers and buttercups! Approaching Zaca Ridge Road, there is a stunning display of poppies and lupines and continuing to Ranger Peak, you will find adorable baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) watching you afar from the rocky hillsides. From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle stately
manzanitas (Arctostaphylos sp.), bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida), paintbrush (Castilleja sp.) and bush lupine (Lupinus sp.) are beginning to color up the terrain. Sunset Valley is much improved from our last report. The warmer weather has brought on the full bloom of fiddlenecks (Amsinckia sp.), foothill poppies (Eschscholzia caespitosa), chia (Salvia columbariae), baby blue eyes, popcorn flower (Plagiobothrys sp.), goldfields, lupines, and prickly phlox. Happy Canyon is notably different. Warmer weather has not enabled the wildflower bloom to take hold yet. You can see some scattered California poppies, California golden violets, and fiesta flowers waving good bye as your Figueroa Mt. journey comes to an end.

Southern Sierra Foothills

There are many areas in the state with spectacular wildflower displays that are perfectly enjoyable from along the road or turnout. Most of the Sierra Foothill region is private property (no access except with permission) and gorgeous right now. For “drive-by petal peepers” one of these special places is Dry Creek Road West of Lake Kaweah off Hwy 198 leading to Sequoia National Park. Dry Creek Road is just northwest of the junction of Highway 198 and 216. The best displays do not come into view until you are about seven miles in. Dry Creek is famous for its foothill poppy (Eschscholzia caespitosa) displays. They are just now coming into full bloom and the cool weather and extra rain should keep them coming well into spring. Deep yellow Eastwood’s fiddlenecks (Amsinckia eastwoodiae) are still prominent along with its seasonal cohort, rusty popcorn (Plagiobothrys nothofulvus) flower. Along Dry Creek, which is anything but dry this time of the year, are especially nice
displays of California goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*) and bird’s-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*). Wild hyacinths or blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) are abundant along with an especially high number of woodland stars (*Lithophragma heterophyllum*). Other bulb species are also coming into bloom now including mountain pretty face (*Triteleia ixioides*), pink fairy lanterns (*Calochortus amoenum*), and Ithuriel’s spear (*Triteleia laxa*). While they are beginning to fade, higher up in elevation the redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*) are still in mid peak bloom. Visitors will also notice fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermannii*), seep monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*), several lupine species (*Lupinus* spp.), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), clematis (*Clematis* sp.) and caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*). This is cattle country and there are also many picturesque ranches along the way. Respect should be given when driving these roads as cowboys doing business, and in a hurry, may not appreciate tourists gawking at the wildflowers driving twenty miles per hour. There are occasional turnouts providing opportunities to safely get out of the way and enjoy a closer look at nature’s bounty in this region.
San Gabriel Mountain Region

The creek is still running wild at Placerita Canyon Nature Center. The Canyon Trail up to the first water crossing, about 1/2 mile into the trail, is starting to finally bloom now that seasonal warmer weather is finally upon us. The hairy ceanothus (Ceanothus oliganthus) is at its peak covering the hillside with lavender color. There is a carpet of goldfields (Lasthenia sp.) growing in open sunny areas. The western wallflowers (Erysimum capitatum), purple larkspur (Delphinium parryi), golden yarrow (Eriophyllum confertiflorum), popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys sp.) and tiny gilia (Gilia sp.) are just starting to bloom, last call to see the California peony (Paeonia californica) and hoaryleaf ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius) as they fade away until next spring on the Ecology Trail. However, they leave behind interesting looking fruit worthy of closer inspection. Still blooming are purple nightshade (Solanum xanti), sun cups (Camissoniopsis intermedia), black sage (Salvia mellifera), and fiddleneck (Amsinckia sp.). The sugar bush (Rhus ovata) is blooming after its long budding period. The hollyleaf redberry (Rhamnus ilicifolia) is beginning to bloom too. Wild cucumber (Marah macrocarpa) is winding its way up and around other larger plants to get its place in the sun. Look for the large prickly fruits on the wild cucumber.

Mountain prettyface (Triteleia ixioides), pink fairy lanterns (Calochortus amoenus), blue dicks (Dipterostemon capitatus), photo by Mike Wall.

Hollyleaf redberry (Rhamnus ilicifolia), photo by RuthAnne Murthy. Purple larkspur (Delphinium parryi) and western wallflower (Erysimum capitatum), photos by Mike Wall.
The happy hum of pollinators fills the air at the Theodore Payne Foundation, as flowering annuals and perennials reach their peak spring bloom. The Demonstration Gardens display a rainbow of color, red–pink hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), orange California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), California sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*), multiple shades of green foliage, blues/indigo colors represented by chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and sages (*Salvia* spp.); and violet by Baja California nightshade (*Solanum hindsianum*). Heading towards the nursery, clusters of reddish pink flowers adorn the otherwise bare branches of western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), contrasting with the unique yellow blooms of Baja California senna (*Senna purpurii*). By the nursery entrance, another pollinator favorite, Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), is just beginning to pop open its bright yellow flowers which line each branch in abundance. Along the nursery paths, common eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), wild heliotrope (*Phacelia distans*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), and fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*) continue to peep out around established perennials. Taking a stroll from the nursery up the path to Wildflower Hill will reveal the inflorescences of tiny pink sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*) and the tassel–like flowers of the iconic coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia* var. *agrifolia*). Further along the path you will see pink clouds of desert wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*) interspersed with chia (*Salvia columbariae*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatum*) and the delicate white flowers of wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*).
Ribbons of purple, blue, and white Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) grow in dappled shade under oaks and pines on the Mesa area at the [California Botanic Garden](#). In sunnier locations on the Mesa, look for sages (*Salvia* spp. and their cultivars) dressed in varying pinks and purples joined by lavender, blue or white California lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.), pink western redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*), and peachy-orange bush monkeyflowers (*Diplacus aurantiacus*). Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) are lining many Mesa paths. North of the Mesa gardens follow the pathway into the “Communities” section of the botanic garden. Multiple species of lupines are flowering including the grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) and the silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*). Those interested in unusual flowers can find the Dutchman’s pipevine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*) under the oaks in the Channel Island Garden south of the forest pavilion. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) grace the landscape everywhere in the garden.

Silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), dutchman’s pipevine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*), photos courtesy of CalBG.

**Orange County**

There are many reasons to visit [The Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach, but their Pollinator Garden is a wonderful opportunity to learn about garden plants that attract pollinators. Sunny yellows from brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), Indian mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*), and lavender-flowered Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*) are handsome shrubs that are hardy and attractive to pollinators. Umbrella–like clusters of tiny flowers seen on common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) make perfect platforms for visiting butterflies to rest and feed. Assorted buckwheat species (*Eriogonum* spp.) and coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) along with mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) found in sunny, shady and riparian habitats are good nectar stops for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Cobwebby thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* sp.) and sages (*Salvia* spp.) will always have pollinators hanging around. There is plenty of useful information available to inform you how to establish these plants in your home garden.
Native Plant School Gardens—LA Region

Open House Part 2 will take place at Prisk Native Garden in Long Beach on Sunday April 14th from 1–4 PM. The event will take place rain or shine. Last week, the Hotline described in Open House Part 1, the rainbow colors of flowering wildflowers at the Prisk garden. Seems like shades of pink have become more prominent in the garden in the past few days. The hot pink category includes Engelmann’s hedgehog (Echinocereus engelmannii) and desert penstemon (Penstemon pseudospectabilis). Turn up the volume from hot to neon pink and you will be describing the unusual color variant of fairy duster (Calliandra eriophylla) growing, as far as we know, only in the Prisk garden. Let us know if you’ve seen one like this anywhere else (photo below)!

Visitors will find the rosy-pink cultivar of coral bells (Heuchera ‘Wendy’) in the Shade Garden, the long delicate stems swaying in the breeze. Nearby, growing close to the ground, are strawberry-pink flowers of, what else but, California wild strawberry flowers (Fragaria vesca cultivar). Blush pink is well represented in the population of elegant clarkias (Clarkia unguiculata) and in a trailing vine that hails from California’s Channel Islands—Island morning glory (Calystegia macrostegia ‘Anacapa Pink’). Lavender and magenta pinks are assigned to the blossoms of southwestern mock vervain (Glandularia gooddingii) and Island mallow (Lavatera assurgentiflora ‘La Purisima’). There is a flowing stream and fishpond complex with native arroyo chub fish for curious kids to enjoy. A vernal pool has been added and the ephemeral plant species there are just starting to pop. Garden founder Mike Letteriello, will be present to proudly explain Prisk Native Garden’s development and its floral contents to visiting guests.
Wildflowers representing important natural habitats in SoCal delight students, faculty, and visitors at Elizabeth Learning Center! Colorful beauties in the Desert Habitat Garden include desert tobacco (*Nicotiana obtusifolia*), desert wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), catclaw acacia (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Cleomella arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), five-needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*).

The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden inspires with golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*), truncate leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), “chocolate chip” stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), spine shrub (*Adolphia californica*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa ssp. crassifolia*). Additional species in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include chaparral brodiaea (*Brodiaeajolonensis*), southern mountain misery (*Chamaebatia australis*), Peirson’s morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolsa*), 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 (*Sisyrisichium bellum*). The Habitat Gardens will be 18 years old on Earth Day. 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 Monday - Friday (no Tuesdays), contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via email: gtn5586@lausd.net. His conference period is 10:30 AM–12:20 PM on Mondays and Thursdays, 9:00am–
10:15am on Wednesdays and Fridays. Or a visit can be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 5th and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern California wildflower regions to visit.
Native Plant & Wildflower
Events Across SoCal

Placerita Canyon Nature Center

🌟 Blooms of the Season | 4th Saturdays | 9:30 AM
Learn about native plants on a hike with a docent. 4th Saturday of every month, meet on the patio at 9:30AM for a one-hour stroll. Bring your camera and questions. Visit Placerita Nature Center website for more information.

Prisk Native Garden

🌟 Prisk Native Garden Open House | April 14 | 1–4 PM
Admission is free. The garden is on the grounds of William F. Prisk Elementary School in Long Beach.

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌟 Native Plant Garden Tour | April 13 & 14
Get ready to explore stunning gardens across greater Los Angeles! Each garden is a harmonious creation of Southern California’s climate, soil, natural vegetation, and native wildlife—don’t miss the chance to witness beauty and support critical wildlife habitat in one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots.
Tickets & details at: nativeplantgardentour.org

LA Times Festival of Books | April 20–21
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