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 5, 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.

Native Plant School Gardens—L.A. Region

Heading into mid-April, the beginning of peak bloom is on at [Prisk Native Garden in Long Beach](#)—just in time for the Garden’s annual Open House Events. Visitors are welcome on two Sundays, April 7th and April 14th from 1–4 PM. **The garden and schoolyard habitat is nearly 30 years mature and is looking fabulous!** The blooms come and go every year, but each spring it’s as if this gorgeous display of blooms is captivating us for the very first time! The wildflower color palette includes the yellows of tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii* and *L. douglasii* ssp. *sulphurea*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and seep monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*) growing happily in the creek. Warm shades of orange and red include desert paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*), rich, red flowers on the arching branches of island snapdragon (*Gambelia speciosa* ‘Firecracker’), watermelon–red desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua* ‘Louis Hamilton’), and a variety of orange–yellow bush monkeyflowers (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) claiming territory throughout the garden. Shimmering orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), blue, lavender, and purple colors emerge from California wild lilac (*Ceanothus arboreus* ‘Ray Hartman’), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), southwestern mock vervain (*Glandularia gooddingii*) and three penstemon cousins—mojave penstemon (*Penstemon pseudospectabilis*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), and Palmer’s penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*). Bee’s bliss sage (*Salvia* ‘Bee’s Bliss’) is occupying an enormous...
amount of ground space as is Mojave sage (*Salvia mohavensis*). More cool shades paint baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), and five spot (*Nemophila maculata*). Hummingbirds are enticed to check out nectar rich pink fairy-dusters (*Calliandra* spp.) and the deep pink coral bells (*Heuchera cultivars*) growing in the Shade Garden. The cactus collection will be showcased by the hot-pink Engelmann’s hedgehog (*Echinocereus engelmannii*). Finally, bright white blossoms of popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha* sp.) and iris ‘Canyon Snow’ (*Iris douglasiana* ‘Canyon Snow’) dot the colorful landscape. Gravel pathways allow visitors to tour the Garden easily. 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. See you the next two weekends, and we can always say that your trip to Prisk will never disappoint.

Spring showers have rejuvenated the Habitat Gardens and vernal pools at Elizabeth Learning Center! The Habitat Gardens will be 18 years old on Earth Day. Colorful shrubs and perennials in the Desert Habitat Garden include desert wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), catclaw acacia (*Senegalia greggi*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Cleomella arborea*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), five needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*). Pretty desert annuals that are scattered about include desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden “wows” visitors now with sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*) blooming best in early morning and late afternoon. Colorful beauties bordering the pools include truncate leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), purple owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), sand fringepod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) and yellowray goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Larger vernal pool residents include deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), “chocolate chip* stemmed (see picture below and smile!) ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). Attractive perennials and robust woody shrubs that occupy the Chaparral Habitat Garden are southern mountain misery (*Chamaebatia australis*), Peirson’s morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), pink fairy-duster
(Calliandra eriophylla), black sage (Salvia mellifera), Santa Rosa Island sage (Salvia brandegeei), red-skinned onion (Allium haematochiton), sugar bush (Rhus ovata) and Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (Eriogonum arborescens).

Elizabeth Learning Center is located off of 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 10:30am – 12:20pm on Mondays and Thursdays; 9:00am – 10:15am on Wednesdays and Fridays. A visit can also be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.

Low Desert Region

Anza Borrego Desert State Park is almost finished around the popular wildflower viewing spots of Borrego Springs. The flower bloom is beginning to move up the slopes to higher elevations. Visitors will now have to plan to stay in Anza longer and explore the many canyon trails instead. That means getting out of the car and hiking! Good canyon trails to explore are in Hellhole and Glorietta canyons and Hawk Canyon Loop. Coyote Canyon and the Cactus Loop Trail are excellent sites to see cactus now beginning to peak. The Montezuma Grade, S–22, into ABDSP is looking significantly better. There are now enough brittlebush (Encelia farinosa) plants in bloom to make a decent display, even though many plants are still far from blooming. They have

“Chocolate chip” stemmed ceanothus (Ceanothus verrucosus), brittle bush (Encelia farinosa) with metallic sweat bee, sacred datura (Datura wrightii), climbing milkweed (Funastrum cynanchoides var. hartwegii), photos by George Nanoski.
been joined by one patch of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*) on a flat spot on the grade, that escaped the roadside mowing by being of short stature, and some poppies (*Eschscholzia* spp.) here and there, that similarly escaped the mowing. At the bottom of the grade, Fremont’s pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*) is now in good bloom, adding white to the yellow desert dandelion extravaganza. Several ocotillos have begun bloom nicely as well. Go for an adventure but always be well prepared for desert hikes.

![Pinnacles National Park flowers](image1)

*The Coast Ranges*

One of the best landscapes representing California’s tectonic past is found within the spirals of rock and cliffs that give [Pinnacles National Park](https://www.nps.gov/pinn/index.htm) its name. Over the millennia, oak woodlands, chaparral, grasslands, and riparian plant communities have emerged and now host a diversity of flora and fauna. The geography of the park provides raptors with ideal nesting sites, both on the inaccessible cliffs and rock formations used by prairie falcons, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels, and on the oaks and pines along the riparian corridors. Pinnacles has more than 30 miles of trails that showcase the beauty of the park up close and personal and accommodate hikers of different abilities and experience levels. Depending on the trail you choose, early spring flowers can be seen throughout the park. The bluewitch nightshade (*Solanum umbelliferum*) is common in chaparral and wherever the buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) is in bloom along the trails, it fill the air with the sweet, subtle fragrance of ceanothus flowers. The deep shade cast by rock formations and oak and other riparian trees give refuge to the shade loving California saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*). Fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), uncoiling their orange flowers on top of bristly stems and goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*) can be found in grassy open areas, especially now along the Bench Trail. Milkmaids
(Cardamine californica) and shooting stars (Primula clevelandii) are occupying meadows, like those along the Rim Trail. The magenta-colored warrior’s plume (Pedicularis densiflora), a root parasite growing on other plants, is abundant in the shade beneath oaks and shrubs. Check them out if you are walking the High Peaks Loop.

The Carrizo Plain

A tapestry of yellow and orange covers the rolling hills of the Carrizo Plain, as the hillside daisies (Monolopia lanceolata), goldfields (Lasthenia californica) forked fiddlenecks (Amsinckia furcata), have suddenly become prominent. It appears it will be a decent wildflower year at Carrizo Plain National Monument. Warmer and drier weather are launching a bloom that blankets the low spots on the Plain, including around Soda Lake and gentle slopes of the Temblor Range. Soon, patches of blues and purples will appear within the yellow-orange landscape as the purple owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta), Great Valley phacelia (Phacelia ciliata), and baby blue eyes (Nemophila menziesii) popup. Unfortunately, exotic grasses are doing well this year as well and can compete with and obscure the colorful wildflowers in places. One final note of caution: Most of the roads in Carrizo Plain are in decent shape, but several of them—especially Simmler Road and Panorama Road which cross the Plain—have low spots that are still wet and muddy and are places where one can get a car stuck. Towing services are not available, so be safe and don’t take chances with your vehicle or yourself.
Driving Figueroa Mountain Road from Los Olivos, the most exciting flowers of Figueroa Mountain are best at lower elevations. Starting up the mountain road (about 11 miles from Los Olivos), plenty of splendid blooms can be seen and include shiny yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), lovely fiesta flowers (*Pholistoma auritum*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), scattered sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), California golden violets (*Viola pedunculata*), Cleveland’s shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii var. clevelandii*), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.) and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*). As you continue to climb the mountain, stunning orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are starting to bloom along the road and on the rocky hillsides. Right before the rusty gate, sweet cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*) are in bloom, however, they are very few and quite small. Continuing up the hill, coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.) and shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii var. clevelandii*) dominate the landscape. There are a couple of areas in the distance, along the lower part of the mountains where one can see carpets of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.). In the moist, shaded areas along the rocky hillsides, pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*) is also starting to bloom. At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), the grass is lush and green but look closely and you will find quite a few chocolate lilies (*Fritilaria biflora*) scattered within the grass. Shooting stars are also plentiful in this area. Look for patches of goldfields, and fiddleneck as they are starting their bloom here as well. Approximately half a mile further, the famous poppy hill is coloring up with orang poppies and sky lupines. Beyond the Davy Brown Trailhead, the grassy fields leading up to the bottom of Ranger Peak are showing off the plethora of shooting stars! This is a magnificent “shooting star” year. Also look for buttercup, and lovely manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* sp.) in bloom. From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle only a handful of California poppies and a couple of tree poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*) are beginning their bloom. Sunset Valley trough Happy Canyon few flowers are blooming. You’ll spot occasional poppies, popcorn flower, ceanothus (*Ceanothus* sp.), buttercups, coreopsis, blue dicks, shooting stars and lupines. It is respectfully requested that when coming out to see the wildflowers, please do not stop or park in the middle of the road nor block any part of the road, as this hinders traffic and in the event of an emergency, would prevent emergency vehicles from getting through.
Placerita Canyon Nature Center is still experiencing more cool than warm days and the creek is flowing fast. Visitors will enjoy walking along The Ecology Trail, an easy loop trail that begins and ends behind the Nature Center. It takes you through chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian communities, all stunning now with fresh spring foliage. Hoaryleaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*), an early bloomer, is beginning to fade. The hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) with masses of sky-blue blossoms is now emerging as the dominant flowering ceanothus. Find black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), a sun loving plant, illuminated in open spots of sunshine along the trail. California peonies (*Paeonia californica*) and purple nightshades (*Solanum xanti*) are blooming, accompanied now by white popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.), orange fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.) and cheery yellow sun cups (*Camissoniopsis intermedia*). Standing out above the trail are canopies of cottonwood trees (*Populus fremontii*) resplendent with tassel-like catkins of flowers—a lovely show but lasts only a short time. Wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) is winding it way up and around other larger plants to get its place in the sun. Look for the large prickly fruits on the wild cucumber.
Visiting the **Theodore Payne Foundation** is a satisfying experience in many ways. If you are eager to do a short hike for exercise and seeking awesome vistas, walk the Wildflower Hill trail that starts adjacent to the TPF sales yard. You will encounter fragrant purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), Cedros sage (*Salvia cedroensis*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*) and De La Mina verbena (*Verbenula lilacina* ‘De La Mina’). Returning back to TPF turf, wander over to their Demonstration Garden where you will chance upon more sagy characters like hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), and bee’s bliss sage, (*Salvia* ‘Bee’s Bliss’) mixing it up with sunny yellow desert marigolds (*Baileya multiradiata*). Visiting the sales yard to purchase a sage to take home might be next. Walk back to your car slowly so you can enjoy the colorful array of natives including baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), Baja spurge (*Euphorbia xanti*), common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambiguus*), and many others. Note the towering flower stalk of the Shaw’s agave (*Agave shawii*).

It’s the dawning of April at the **California Botanic Garden** and visitors are coming to see the spectacle of Douglas irises (*Iris douglasianna*) now blooming near the administration building and around the ponds on the garden’s Mesa. The red firecracker penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) and orange bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) are also ablaze on the Mesa’s sunnier portions. Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) are lining many Mesa paths. Sages (*Salvia spp.*) abound dressed in varying pinks and purples joined by lavender, blue and white California lilacs (*Ceanothus spp.*), pink western redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*), and orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), all producing an impressionist painting of color. North of the Mesa gardens follow the pathway into the “Communities” Section. If you like treasure hunts, search for the diminutive calico monkeylflower (*Diplacus pictus*) blooming out there. It’s hard to find in this vast area, but this super special plant is worth the hunt! Most plants in the Communities Section are trees and large shrubs. The calico monkeyflowers are no taller than a few inches and flowers no bigger than a dime.
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 crassfolium*) 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.
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.

CNPS San Diego

🌟 10th Anniversary Native Garden Tour | April 6 & 7
See the gardens at your own pace on this two-day tour. Your ticket gives you garden access on both days. General Admission Tickets: $40 through April 7th, 2024 Free admission for children 17 years and younger. More information: cnps-sd.squarespace.com/native-garden-tour-2024

Prisk Native Garden

🌟 Prisk Native Garden Open House | April 7 & 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