



Theodore Payne Foundation
for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

Wild Flower Hotline

Call 818-768-1802 ext 7 | Weekly Updates March–June

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 17, 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.

San Gabriel Mountain Region

Good news for butterfly enthusiasts! The first flower of narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) opened at the [Theodore Payne Foundation's](#) demonstration garden and a Monarch butterfly was spotted visiting! Many more milkweed plants and visiting butterflies are soon to join. Also in the demonstration garden visitors are oohing and awing at the Matilija poppies (*Romneya coulteri*) known for their large, white flowers and center of yellow stamens giving it the appearance of a fried egg (sunny side up). Other floral delicacies include blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), beavertail cactus (*Optuntia basilaris*), firecracker penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) and pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*). These SoCal beauties are joined by some southern neighbors— the Baja California nightshade (*Solanum hindsianum*), Baja California spurge (*Euphorbia xanti*) and Baja bush sunflower (*Encelia ventorum*). The nursery area is still a little slow to embrace the seasonal change so visitors can still enjoy seeing iconic spring wildflowers including baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), five spot (*Nemophila maculata*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), wild heliotrope (*Phacelia distans*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). They are joined, however, by a flowering newcomer in the nursery—Palmer's abutilon (*Abutilon palmeri*) dressed in velvety-gray leaves and golden cup-shaped flowers. Hiking up Wildflower Hill, your senses will quicken with mysterious sights and smells. The distinct aromas of white sage (*Salvia apiana*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) may seem familiar, but the scents coming from

California cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) and vinegarweed (*Trichostema lanceolatum*) might be alien, but not unpleasant! Enjoy the riotously funny sight of bumble bees trying to maneuver into the nectar rich clarkias, showy penstemons, and phacelias along the trail.



White sage (*Salvia apiana*) and complex flowers of narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), photos by Hannah Perez.

[Cherry Canyon Park](#) in La Canada has an abundance of bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) in bloom along the trails outnumbered only by the black sage which is also in prolific bloom now. Follow your nose to the iconic aroma of chaparral to the many California everlasting or cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium* sp.) plants commonly growing among other chaparral species. Mingled in the spaces among the above associates is the ubiquitous but ever-charming popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* spp.) Many other of our chaparral wildflowers are present as well. A nice little suburban excursion.

Above the Mojave Desert along the north slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains, road trips lead in every direction to picturesque desert vistas and wildflowers. Driving from Wrightwood west to [Devil's Punchbowl](#), roads like Big Pines Hwy, Valyermo, Palette Creek, Fort Tejon and Mt. Emma Roads near the Little Rock Recreation Area deliver special treats for day trippers. There are also areas to pull off and search more closely for those treasures here and there above gullies and along off-road-carved trails. The luminous pinkish lavender flowered Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*) is standing out on road cuts and along gullies off-road. Stands of vivid purple-blue chia sage (*Salvia columbariae*), yellow Bigelow's coreopsis (*Leptosyne bigelovii*), mixed with white tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*) and brilliant red desert paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*) can be nearby, but still away, from the roadsides and down and into the gullies. Lush bushes of deep blue-purple Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorrii*) are occupying space there as well and filling the warm desert air with the distinct scent of sage. Pink desert calico (*Loeseliastrum matthewsii*), growing low in sandy and loose granite as a "belly flower", may take some bending of knees to get a careful look. It is well worth the effort! Be cautious when pulling off and walking near roadsides.



Mojave aster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), desert paintbrush (*Castilleja chromosa*), Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorrii*), photos by Mile Letteriello.

Flowers are blooming in every nook and cranny across the [California Botanic Garden](#) in Claremont. It is possibly the best show of the season! Visit the Wildflower Garden on the Mesa just north of the Cultivar Garden and admire the large pink blossoms unfolding on the California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), the different species of purple, blue and yellow annual lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), the coral-pink mallows (*Sphaeralcea ambigua* and cultivars), the multiple hues of hot to subtle pink blossoms of elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) and many more colorful characters. Keep following the Mesa path north as it dips into the "California Communities" section of the Garden. There you will encounter a bit of a superbloom happening. Large dramatic specimens of white sage (*Salvia apiana*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), vivid blue-purple showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), and perennial lupines—grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) and the silver lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*). Tree poppies (*Dendromecon rigida* and *Dendromecon harfordii*) are at their utmost best dressed in bluish green foliage and displaying large 2-inch yellow flowers like huge decorative buttons on a Sunday-best frock. In the moist soil of the woodland area, a special treat is in store for visitors with the appearance of yellow seep monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*) and giant stream orchids (*Epipactis gigantea*).



Giant stream orchid (*Epipactis gigantea*), California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), chick lupine (*Lupinus microcarpus*), photos courtesy of CalBG.

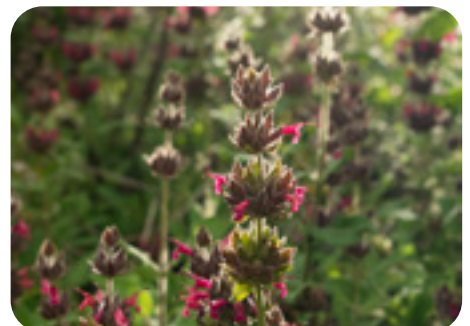
Orange County

Take your friends to the [The Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach and she will be delighted with the confetti of colors that greet them. There are “put-your-sunglasses-on” sunny yellows of brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne gigantea*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera elata*). The peachy orange bush monkeyflowers (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), the iconic orangeness of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), the golden Indian mallows (*Abutilon palmeri*) and flannel bushes (*Fremontodendron californicum* and *F. mexicanum*) will warm her heart. Vibrant magentas, purples, lavenders, and pinks hail from Island bush mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), fragrant pitcher sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), and Southern hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*). Shades of blue can be seen in the cadre of fragrant sages in purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), and Munz’s sage (*Salvia munzii*). Make sure to visit the Pollinator Garden to learn about and see the strange looking flower of the Dutchman’s pipevine (*Aristolochia californica*) pollinated by fungus gnats trapped inside the flower! Lastly, Mom will definitely be impressed by the showy spikes of flowers of the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) found in the Oak Woodland habitat garden.



California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*), photos by Mike Wall. Dutchman’s pipevine (*Aristolochia californica*), photo courtesy of CalBG.

[Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary](#) is also under the stewardship of the Environmental Nature Center. Tucker is a 12-acre wildlife sanctuary located in Modjeska Canyon in the Santa Ana Mountains. Tucker is well known by regional birders who enjoy visiting their bird observation deck and the native plant demonstration garden. The garden has many specimens of bird and insect pollinator friendly plants now blooming and include greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*), chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), bladderpod (*Cleomella arborea*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*).



Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), photo by Diego Blanco. Blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), photos by Hannah Perez.

Inland Empire–Riverside & San Bernardino Counties

There's a nice bloom in Landers, Yucca Valley, both along Linn Road between Belfield Blvd and Landers Lane and on Reche Road. Wildflowers include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert calico (*Loeseliastrum matthewsii*), basket evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*), desert sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*), Mojave Desert woolly aster (*Eriophyllum mojavensis*), desert senna (*Senna armata*), prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), white daisy tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), and desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*). Hidden Valley Nature Trail and Ryan Mountain Trail, cacti are in bloom in this northern part of [Joshua Tree National Park](#) including Mojave mound cactus (*Echinocereus mojavensis*), hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), and beavertail cactus (*Optuntia basilaris*). The showstopper, though, is Parry's beargrass (*Nolina parryi*) along the Hidden Valley Trail. Other wildflowers are sprinkled around including Mojave woodaster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), Panamint live forever (*Dudleya saxosa*), narrowleaf goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia minor*), chaparral beardtongue (*Keckiella antirrhinoides*), and more. It is definitely past peak, however, there are lots of pretty wildflowers to find.



Panamint live forever (*Dudleya saxosa*), prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), Mojave woodaster (*Xylorhiza tortifolia*), photos by Barbara Eisenstein.

As spring wildflowers fade at low elevations, flower peepers need to travel up in elevation, where in some places, the bloom is just beginning. One such locality is [Old Control Road](#) near Idyllwild. Exit State Route 243 at the Road sign indicating Idyllwild Arts Academy. Continue along the road past the Academy. Old Control Road is in terrible shape due to the past winter weather, but visitors tell me they have pulled off and just walked, botanizing along the road at a leisurely pace for as long as they wanted before returning to their car. It is a delightful little excursion! There is still flowering whitethorn ceanothus (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) in all its gorgeous hues of blue, handsome bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), tiny but charming, cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*), school bells (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), slender popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys tenellus*), and purple owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*). Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), Indian pinks (*Silene laciniata*), and clarkias (*Clarkia* spp.) are just beginning their bloom.

One highlight is seeing two species of woodland star (*Lithophragma affine* & *L. bolanderi*) in flower at places, but the best treasure of your hunt will be the rare, but plentiful at this location, small-flowered fairy poppy (*Meconella denticulata*).



Old Control Road, woodland star (*Lithophragma affine*), small-flowered fairy poppy (*Meconella denticulata*), photos by Tom Chester.

Native Plant School Gardens—LA Region

Wildflowerpalooza is in full effect at Elizabeth Learning Center's Habitat Gardens! Colorful beauties in the Desert Habitat Garden include beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), paper bag bush (*Scutellaria mexicana*), desert beardtongue (*Penstemon fruticiformis* var. *fruticiformis*), 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*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), 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 Habitat Garden wows with thread leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*), San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*), truncate leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), purple 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*), yellowray goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and spine shrub (*Adolphia californica*). Additional species in their Chaparral Habitat Garden include blue paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*), chaparral honeysuckle (*Lonicera interrupta*), San Clemente Island bush mallow (*Malacothamnus clementinus*), wine-cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), island bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus parviflorus*), Douglas Iris (*Iris douglasiana*), island ceanothus (*Ceanothus arboreus*), fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), island pitcher sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*), chaparral brodiaea (*Brodiaea jolonensis*), Southern mountain misery (*Chamaebatia australis*), Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Southern California black walnut (*Juglans*

californica), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), rooreh (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematichiton*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*). Visits can be made Monday–Friday (no Tuesdays), contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via email: gtn5586@lausd.net.



Blue palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*), pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), and a male valley carpenter bee on black sage. Splendid mariposa lilies (*Calochortus splendens*), catclaw acacia (*Senegalia greggii*), and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 24th 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.

Arroyo Seco Woodland & Wildlife Nature Park

🌸 Park Volunteer Day | May 18 | 9 AM–12 PM

Celebrate as we work stewarding our little piece of wild in urban Southern California. We will weed, clean up litter, and tidy up paths. For more information, go to weedingwildsuburbia.com/nature-park.

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌸 Attracting Native Pollinators with Native Plants | May 24 | 10:30 AM

Join us as we introduce the fascinating world of native pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, and birds. We'll explore the art of creating thriving habitats for these vital creatures by cultivating native plant in your home—or container—garden. Tickets and details [here](#).

🌸 All About Bulbs with Tim Becker | May 24 | 1 PM

Join Tim Becker, TPF's Director of Horticulture, in this exciting class focusing on native California bulbs! Tickets and details [here](#).