



THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

Wild Flower Hotline

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

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 online 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.

March 28, 2025

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY!

While California's 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 always...

- ✿ Stay on designated trails.
- ✿ Stay out of burn areas.
- ✿ Share the trails; be respectful of others.
- ✿ Do not collect or step on wildflowers.
- ✿ Remember your experiences through photos and leave no trace.
- ✿ Visit on weekdays and/or off-peak hours, if possible.

The herbaceous perennials, woody shrubs, and trees (and icky exotic annual grasses) have leafed-out and blossomed well following the mid-March rain events. A few hardy annuals have started to appear like goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* spp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.) and some lupine (*Lupinus*) species. It doesn't seem promising for wild landscape superblooms. Our best wildflower shows are at maintained gardens like Theodore Payne Foundation, California Botanic Garden, and many home gardens that you can visit on the [Native Plant Garden Tour, April 5 & 6](#). We are still hopeful though that "April showers will bring May flowers." *Fingers crossed.*

Coastal California

Millions of years ago, a series of volcanic eruptions shaped the landscape that is now [Pinnacles National Park](#). The remnants of these ancient eruptions have formed a striking terrain of rocky spires and deep canyons. Visitors can explore diverse environments, from chaparral and oak woodlands to the cool, shaded depths of canyon floors. From short, easy trails for the whole family to strenuous hikes for the serious adventurer, Pinnacles has it all! In the woodlands along the riparian corridors, 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 poaching nutrients from the roots of other plants, is abundant in the shade

beneath oaks and shrubs. Check them out if you are walking the High Peaks Loop.



Milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*), warrior's plume (*Pedicularis densiflora*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*).

Photos by Sara Gorski and Holly Eichrodt.

The Carrizo Plain

The **Carrizo Plain** got less than 2 inches of rain a couple of weeks ago and turned the landscape a little greener, but wildflowers are still scarce, so the “green” may be the emergence of exotic grasses only. Along Highway 58, heading east from San Luis Obispo, wildflowers were visible along the road, but they were small and widely scattered. Shell Creek, which often provides a spectacular display, showed only a few stands of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) Entering Carrizo Plain at the northwest corner, there is one area with a small display of phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) in a plowed field and goldfields again along Soda Lake Road. The spectacular show of hillside daisies (*Monolopia lanceolata*) is conspicuous by their absence. There is still a small chance for the shrubs and late geophytes to put on a modest show, but overall, this year is shaping up to be a disappointment for expanses of colorful wildflowers. Still, grand vistas of rolling hills and open spaces formed by California's iconic geologic history, no matter what the color, is worth visiting.



A limited area of phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) in California Valley near Highway 58. Photo by Neil Havlik.

Southern Sierra Foothills

Across the Great Valley in the [Southern Sierra foothill region](#) east of Visalia, redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*) are still blossoming and dot the slopes with their fuchsia pink buds and flowers. Eastman's fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*), rusty popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*), hound's tongue (*Adelinia grandis*) and not one, but TWO species of baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii* and *N. pulchella* ssp. *pulchella*) along with silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*) are in peak bloom. Blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) are poking up everywhere. Still in bloom, but fading, are shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii* var. *patula*), buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), and Greene's saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*),



Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii* and *N. pulchella* ssp. *pulchella*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Photos by Michael Wall.

The past couple of rain events at the [Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve](#) dropped less than 1 inch of rain, not enough to significantly improve poppy germination rates. The hardy poppy plants that have grown are small and sparsely scattered throughout the park. The best trail to hike for flowers is the ADA trail that connects the north and south loop of the Poppy Trail. Along the way, grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) is blooming and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) is pushing up in places. There are scattered fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and some miniature lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) growing slowly as well. As with Carrizo Plain, don't expect any superbloom here at AVSPR either, but if you enjoy visiting rare places where you can take in grand panoramas, hike or just meditate on nature, the Poppy Reserve is right for you.

Check out the [Trail map](#). There is possibility of more flowers still. Keep tabs on the scene via the Park's PoppyCam live feed [here](#).

San Gabriel Mountains & Foothill Region

The usual riotous wildflower bloom at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) has not appeared yet this year. However, the hills within and around the park are shrouded in places with shades of white and blue blossoms

of hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus* var. *oliganthus*). The fragrance in the air is delightful.



Hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus* var. *oliganthus*) at Placerita Canyon.
Photos by RuthAnne Murthy

Two new annuals have joined the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) this week at the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#). The two newcomers, fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) and California sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*) have popped up in the Demonstration Garden, the Nursery and on Wildflower Hill. Two amazing perennials also made their debut this week—the electric blue and pink showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and the dramatic and rare Peninsular beargrass (*Nolina cismontana*). Cheery yellow blossoms of bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) and Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*) are brightening up pathways everywhere. Trekking up Wildflower Hill adjacent to the sales yard, you will encounter fragrant Cedros Island verbena (*Verbena lilacina*) and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*)—both sport lovey lavender flowers and are very fragrant and can also be purchased at the TPF nursery!



Peninsular beargrass (*Nolina cismontana*) on display in the demonstration garden, canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*)

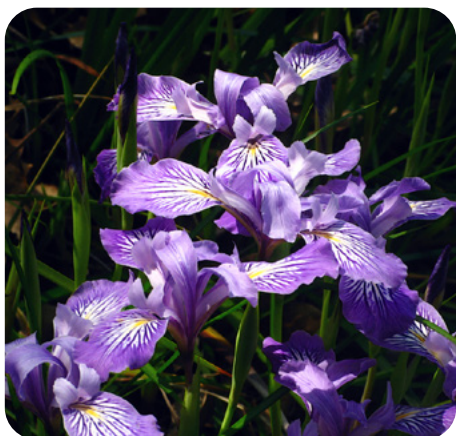
blooming in the nursery. Photos by Hannah Perez.

Not far from the cities of La Cañada, Burbank and Glendale, the Whiting Woods Trail in the [Verdugo Mountains](#) is an escape from urban life into oak and sycamore riparian habitat. There is plenty of evidence of things popping up after the rain. Two-color rabbit tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium biolettii*) is in full bloom now, but other colorful wildflowers will be popping up as soon as next week.



Two-color rabbit tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium biolettii*). Photo courtesy of No Canyon Hills

Shades of blue and lavender dominate the color scheme this week at the [California Botanic Garden](#). Check out the various lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), fragrant sages (*Salvia* spp.), little purple houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), assorted phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.) and the many lovely ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.). The flashes of red exploding on the scene and catching your attention are the firecracker penstemons (*Penstemon eatonii*). Low to the ground, the upturned faces of sunny yellow Southern sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*) can be found in many open areas of the garden. Other plants along the maze of picturesque trails include desert globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), California redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*), wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*), sticky monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), Baja rose (*Rosa minutifolia*) and sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*). Of course, you would expect at the California Botanic Garden, you might find California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*); and indeed, they are everywhere!



Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), Baja rose (*Rosa minutifolia*), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.). Photos courtesy of CalBG.

San Diego County

The [Iron Mountain Trail](#) near Poway is a popular hiking area for San Diego area trekkers. On this fabulous hike, you will see hundreds of plants of the warrior's plume (*Pedicularis densiflorus*), which is scattered along two places of maybe one mile each, each area starting about 1.5 miles from the trailhead. Slopes are covered as far as the eye could see with Eastwood manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*) and mission manzanita, (*Xylococcus bicolor*). There is bush poppy, (*Dendromecon rigida*) in bloom as well. Woolly leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus tomentosus* ssp. *olivaceus*), was covered in buds and soon there will be hundreds of these blue-flowering shrubs in bloom. Snowdrop bush, (*Styrax redivivus*), is just leafing out, so it will be a month or so before it pops with lovely white blossoms!



Mission manzanita, (*Xylococcus bicolor*), bush poppy, (*Dendromecon rigida*). Photos by Fred Melgert. Warrior's plume (*Pedicularis densiflorus*). Photo by Hannah Perez

Urban Los Angeles

The Habitat Gardens at the [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) are responding nicely to the sun and warmer weather with new blooms! The Desert Garden has fishhook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), Fremont barberry (*Berberis fremontii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum heterophyllum*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden contains golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), "chocolate chip" stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), school bells (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), spine shrub (*Adolphia californica*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). Additional species in the Chaparral Garden include Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), island barberry (*Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), rooreh (*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, contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via email: gtn5586@lausd.net His conference period is 2:00pm – 3:30 on Mondays and Thursdays. Or a visit can be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.



Fishhook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), "chocolate chip" stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*). Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 4th and check back each week for the most up-to-date information on Southern California wildflower regions to visit!

Wild Flower & Native Plant Events Across SoCal

Theodore Payne Foundation

✿ Alexander Vidal Opening Reception | From Coast to Crest | March 29 | 3–5 PM

From Coast to Crest is a new exhibition featuring Alexander's studies of the wildlife across Los Angeles in ink and paint. [RSVP here](#).

✿ Native Plant Garden Tour | April 5 & 6 | 10 AM – 5 PM

Taking place April 5th and 6th, 2025, the Native Plant Garden Tour is a two-day, self-guided tour across Greater Los Angeles. Since 2003, more than 700 public and private landscapes have participated in the Native Plant Garden Tour. Ranging from coastal container gardens to experimental urban homesteads, each unique design offers beauty and critical habitat for wildlife. The gardens on this tour contain at least 50 percent native plants. [Get tickets & gear here!](#)

South Pasadena Nature Park

✿ Sustainability Fair, Plant Swap, and Garden Tour | March 29 | 1–4 PM

Garden Tour of Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park. Native Plant Gardening Talk and Plant Swap. More information [can be found here](#).

California Native Plant Society: Riverside/San Bernadino Chapter

✿ Spring Native Garden Ramble | March 29 | Redlands: 9 AM–12 PM, Riverside 12 PM–4 PM

Come see gardens full of California native plants with spring blooms and the butterflies and birds that they attract. Addresses will be sent out several days before the event. Sponsored by the California Native Plant Society Riverside/San Bernardino Chapter. Families welcome! Register at Eventbrite [here](#). More info [here](#).

The Wildlands Conservancy: Whitewater Preserve

✿ Colors of Spring: Guided Hike | April 6 | 9 AM

Moderate 3.8 mile hike of the Canyon View Loop. Whitewater Preserve. Info, map, [sign-up here](#).

Wild Flower & Native Plant Events Across SoCal

Prisk Native Garden

🌸 Prisk Native Garden's Annual Open House Event | April 6 | 1–4 PM.