



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.

April 11, 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.

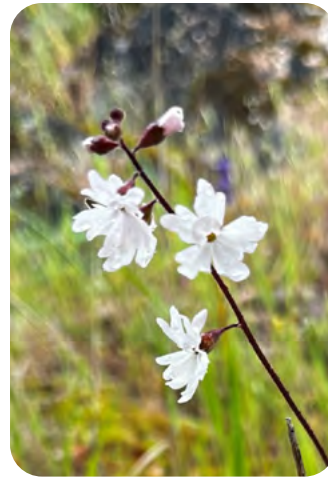
Please always...

- ✿ 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.

Coastal California

A great place to enjoy a recreational spring fling is [Pinnacles National Park](#). Signs of spring are everywhere. The geography of the park provides raptors with ideal nesting sites, both on the inaccessible cliffs, craggy rock formations and on the oaks and pines along the riparian corridors. Although some of the trails are closed during peak nesting season (check park website), you may spot prairie falcons, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels to name a few. Entering the park at the Eastern portal, you can't help but notice the large perennial silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) peppering the landscape. Depending on the trail you choose, and there are many, early spring flowers can be seen throughout the park. The blue purple blue witch (*Solanum umbelliferum*) is common in chaparral. Look there too for Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) growing among the grasses and under chaparral shrubs. The deep shade cast by oaks and other riparian trees give refuge to the shade loving California saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*), purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*), small flower woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*) and fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*). All of them like to hang out in shady areas with the sunlight filtering through tree canopies. Find them now along the Bench Trail or occupying meadows like those along the Rim Trail. Also preferring grassy open areas but in sunnier locations are baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). It's impossible to choose the "cutest" flower in California but cream cups seen along the North Wilderness Trail, would be a contender. Each creamy petal grades to a buttery yellow at

the center where you find a pompom of filaments and stamens.



Silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), small flower woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*), Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*). Photos by Sara Gorski, Sadie Albert, Shelly Seymour.

Southern Sierra Foothills

The foothills of the Three Rivers region and the Kaweah River basin is experiencing an excellent wildflower season! Driving around [Kaweah Lake](#) on Sierra Highway (198) the cool moist spring is keeping the early blooming fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) and popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) populating the hillsides and spring flowering madia (*Madia* sp.) is just beginning to bloom. While always common on these blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) dominated hillsides, the fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*) is having a banner year too. Vast patches of their pale blue flowers are popping up all over. Accompanying them are pockets of purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*) just coming into bloom. Flowering caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*) is also commonly seen here. As you explore the normally barren 'bathtub ring' region of the lake, deep blue patches of what appears to be lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) are making quite a colorful sight. On the sunnier slopes, foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are in full flower and often blooming with tall spikes of spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*) painting an impressionistic yellow-gold and blue landscape. To accent this palette of color, the redbuds should still be making a big pink splash for a couple more weeks. Getting out of the car and onto the trails, you will encounter this bountiful wildflower experience close-up. Coming into focus on the closer look will be the abundant blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) and their distant geophytic cousins, pretty faces (*Triteleia ixioides*) unveiling their soft yellow star-shaped flowers. Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) are still flowering here and there while their diminutive cousins, Eastwood's nemophila (*Nemophila pulchella*) are abundant, often blooming in great patches with the bright white popcorn flowers or miniature lupines (*Lupinus bicolor*) also blooming in great profusion. Recently "bursting" onto the scene is foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermannii*), woodland star (*Lithophragma heterophyllum*), both purple and white variants of owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), butter n' eggs (*Triphysaria eriantha*) and rock bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus calycinus*). Virgin's bower (*Clematis* sp.) is vining its way up into the branches of trees and shrubs everywhere.



Fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) with spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*), Virgin's bower (*Clematis* sp.). Photos by Michael Wall.

San Gabriel Mountain and Foothill Region

The iconic colors of California—the rich golds and blues—are unfurling through the gardens at the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#). Joining the California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia menziesii*), sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) and California sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*) are, this week, the Palo Verde trees (*Parkinsonia florida*) now in glorious bloom. This palette of yellows is now coupled with desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*) several sage species (*Salvia* spp.) and the electric blue showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*). 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*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) and California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis*). Enjoy this explosion of color and by the way, many of these can also be purchased at the TPF nursery!



Fiddlenecks (*Amsinkia menziesii*), lilac verbena (*Verbena lilacina*), western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*). Photos by Hannah Perez.

Orange County

Casper's Regional Park in Orange County is undergoing a decent wildflower bloom throughout the trails and ridges. Hiking and equestrian trails range from easy to difficult and include popular loop trails, Quail Run, East Ridge, Sun Rise, and Bell Canyon. There is an impressive display of shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*) in a large field seen from Sun Rise Trail. Hurry to see them as the recent hot weather will hasten their bloom. Chaparral gilia (*Gilia angelensis*), Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), and blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) were dominant. Look also for paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), jewel flower (*Caulanthus* sp.), lupine (*Lupinus* sp), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), and some huge chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*). There are spectacular vistas of Orange County's wildlands from the ridges as well.



Chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*). Photos by Laura Camp

San Diego County

A few miles southeast, as the crow flies (but unfortunately no easy direct road for humans) from Caspers in Orange County to San Diego County just north of Fallbrook, one can enjoy hiking in the [Santa Margarita River Trail Preserve](#). The Wildlands Conservancy in partnership with Fallbrook Trails Council maintain equestrian and hiking trails along the oak- and sycamore-shaded Santa Margarita River. The SMR is one of the last free-flowing wild rivers in Southern California and the southernmost range of steelhead trout. The plants along the SMR South trail are lush. There are annuals, both native and [unfortunately] non-native, galore, including large swaths of fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum* var. *auritum*). In many places the fiesta flowers are only in bud but when these plants do bloom, the blue wash of color will be spectacular. Take caution during your walk as there are several poison oak plants in flower and looking very, very happy. Fortunately, the trails here are trimmed for horse traffic, so the poison oak is well away from the center of the trail. The most beautiful and abundant blooms are from hoary leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*). There are complete hillsides of it in bloom! There are also some stunning plants of Ramona lilac (*Ceanothus tomentosus* var. *olivaceus*) in full bloom. The beguiling fragrance of these two ceanothus species hangs in the air. There is a trail spur off the SMR South called the 500 Foot Trail. It follows a railroad route carved out in the 1880s. Its steep banks are delightful with lots of bank-loving plants, such as ferns and Jepsonia (*Jepsonia* sp.). The trail parallels the river at 500-foot elevation (thus the name 500 Foot Trail) and transverse chaparral habitat. As with Caspers Regional Park, the vistas from the 500 Foot trail is worth the hike.



The vista of the Santa Margarita River Trail Preserve from the 500 Foot trail. Photo by Don Rideout.

Even If you do not have any reason to go to San Diego via the Inland route, I-15, you probably should find one. The drive through the Fallbrook to Escondido corridor along 1-15 is a spectacular treat. The woolly leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus tomentosus*) is in bloom and has turned the hills adjacent to the freeway a stunning blue for only a couple of weeks. One destination, northeast of Escondido is [Daley Ranch](#). Numerous trails will have you botanizing and birding through sumptuous green grasslands, chaparral, and oak woodlands. The lushness of the landscape looks like it would in a normal rain year! The most impressive plants include abundant milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*) and a number of sugar bushes (*Rhus ovata*) all in good bloom along the Rock Ridge Trail. There are lots of happy ferns (7 species!), One of the fern species, the California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*) is only found in San Diego County. Another is the California maiden hair (*Adiantum jordanii*) which grows in shaded hillsides in chaparral areas.



California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*), California maiden hair (*Adiantum jordanii*), Milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*). Photos by Fred Melgert and Tom Chester.

Urban Los Angeles Region

Celebrate with [Prisk Native Garden](#) its second Open House of the 2025 season, Sunday April 13 from 1–4 pm. Visitors will learn about the 30-year-old native plant school garden in Long Beach that has a mission to engage children in nature's joyful and restorative experiences. Warmer weather this week encouraged many more colorful blossoms burst open in addition to the ubiquitous California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), five-spot (*Nemophila maculata*) and mounds of baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). Get the cameras handy because the Mojave bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), and globe gillias (*Gilia capitata*) are the most vividly blue as ever seen! To stimulate your sense of smell, visit the Cedros Island verbena (*Verbena lilacina*) and the various fragrant sages (*Salvia* spp.). Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorrrii*) in particular, brings home the wild aroma of the high desert in spring bloom. A Baja California giant, the cardon cactus (*Pachycereus pringlei*), dominates the scene in the Desert Wash section. Alongside the Engelmann's hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*), is the desert wheelbarrow

display. Pink and purple owl's clover (*Castilleja exerta*) is sitting pretty with the yellow daisy-like small charmer, paralena (*Thymophylla pentachaeta* var. *belenidium*). The dramatic prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*), that is commonly seen along the roads in the western Mojave, is growing robustly in the Desert Wash at Prisk—a delightful surprise! Elsewhere, look for meadow foam (*Limnanthes douglasii*) in the shadier, moister areas. Shrubs in all the garden habitats have been flowering prolifically including Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) showing off their large yellow flowers and hot pink fairy duster beaconing passing hummingbirds. There are various colorful monkey flowers (*Diplacus* sp. and cultivars) growing on "Chaparral Hill." Bright yellow seep-spring monkey flower (*Erythranthe guttata*) is growing vigorously everywhere along the water feature. By the way, solar panels run the pump that recirculates pond water the Garden.



Seep-spring monkey flower (*Erythranthe guttata*) is growing along the water feature, various colorful monkey flowers (*Diplacus* sp. and cultivars), Baja California giant cardon cactus (*Pachycereus pringlei*), in the Desert Wash section. Photos by Mike Letteriello and K. Hickox.

The wildflower show is taking off at Elizabeth Learning Center as many new blooms make their appearance! Their Desert Garden has Fremont barberry (*Berberis fremontii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden delights with San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), 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*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). Additional species in their Chaparral Garden include matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), 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.



Golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 18th 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

Prisk Native Garden

🌸 Annual Open House | April 13 | 1–4 PM

Admission free, donations gladly accepted. The Garden is around the corner from Prisk Elementary School, at 2375 Fanwood Ave. Long Beach, 90814. The Garden gate is located under a large banner (“Prisk Native Garden”) on Los Arcos St. near the intersection of San Vicente St. For more info: letteriello@charter.net

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌸 Monarchs & Milkweed: Creating Native Plant Habitats | April 17 | 10:00 AM

Discover the unique connection between our western population of monarchs and California native plants! Register for this class [here](#).

🌸 Poppy Days Sale | April 18 & 19 | 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Make your garden pop for spring! Members receive a 15% discount and non-members receive a 10% discount on all plants, seeds, and Theodore Payne Foundation gear. Reserve a parking reservation [here](#).

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

🌸 ReWild Ojai Garden Tour | April 26 | 9 AM – 3 PM

Annual garden tour in the Ojai Valley with home gardens that feature California native plants. More information [here](#).