



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.

May 2, 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.

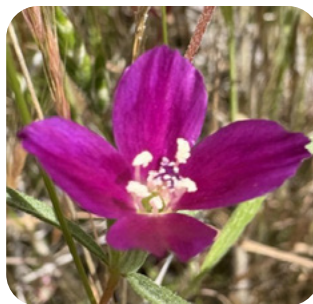
Please always...

- ✿ 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.

In Southern California, the cool weather we have been having is extending the spring bloom. Plan an escape to the outdoors soon before it all sets seed and disappears for another year.

Coastal California

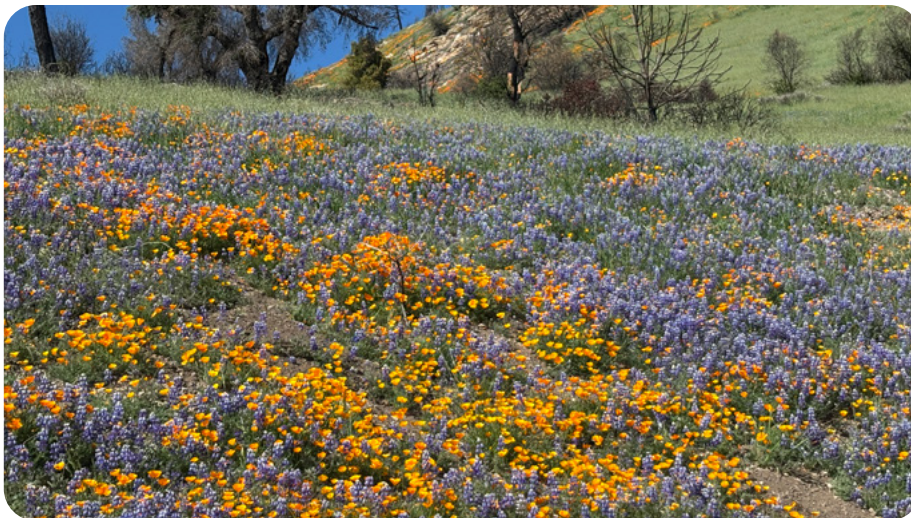
In the Coast Ranges of California at [Pinnacles National Park](#), mid-spring wildflowers are popping up along the many trails available to visitors (and maybe a glimpse of a rare Condor circling above!). Gray mule ears (*Wyethia helenoides*) row in sunny open areas. They have large fuzzy leaves that resemble big floppy ears. Wind Poppy (*Papaver heterophyllum*) are often found in shady foothill areas in loamy soils. Winecup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*) is widespread in the Park. This pretty flower supports a wide range of pollinator species.



Winecup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), wind poppy (*Papaver heterophyllum*), gray mule ears (*Wyethia helenoides*). Photos by Sadie Albert, Sara Gorski and Shelly Seymour.

Los Padres National Forest

Wildflower enthusiasts are flocking to [Figueroa Mountain](#) in the Los Padres National Forest. Notably, the poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) display currently is beyond belief! Look for the fire followers, fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* spp.), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), Mariposa lily (*Calochortus* sp.), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), red skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*), various phacelias (*Phacelia* spp.), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), chocolate lily (*Fritillaria bicolor*), yellow monkeyflower (*Diplacus brevipes*), sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), California golden violet (*Viola pedunculata*) and many more. Some perennials are making their way back as well including silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*). Make the effort to visit before the weather gets hot.



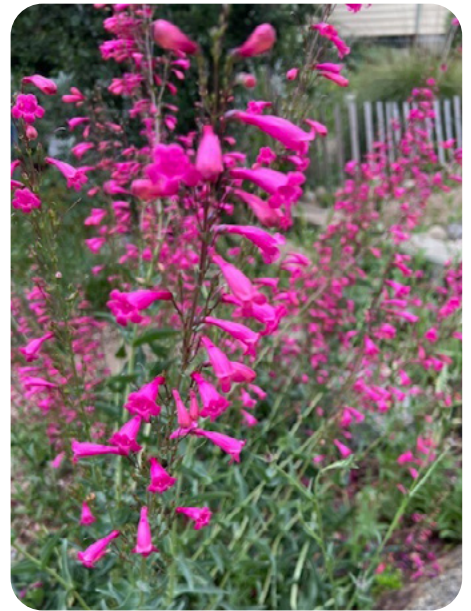
California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) at Figueroa Mountain. Photos by Don Vogt.

San Gabriel Mountain and Foothill Region

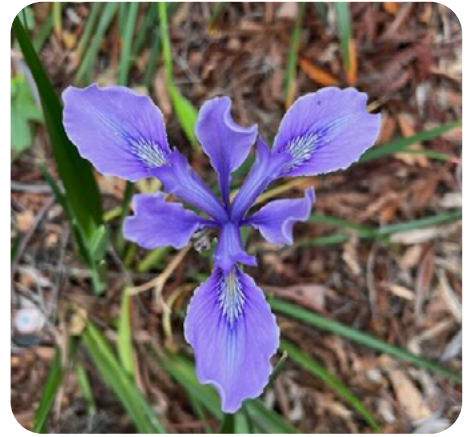
At the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) is a prolific bloomer decorating TPF's gardens in vivid purple – and even a creamy white flowering version of the species up on Wildflower Hill. The pink flowering Violet penstemon (*Penstemon x parishii*) are dotting the various demonstration gardens. Also exciting, the first of the Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) flowers have opened along the parking lot and are inviting visitors to explore more in the garden. Chia (*Salvia columbariae*) can be found blooming around the demonstration gardens, Wildflower Hill, and the sales yard along with California brittlebush (*Encelia californica*), common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), many sages (*Salvia* spp. and cultivars), and Elizabeth bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica* 'Elizabeth'). Both prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*) and beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris*) are also very showy. In the understory of the gardens' mature trees and shrubs, Douglas irises (*Iris douglasiana*) are coming up all over in a rainbow of colors.



Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Elizabeth bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica* 'Elizabeth'). Photos by Peri Litvak.



Purple flowering and white flowering showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), Violet penstemon (*Penstemon x parishii*). Photos by Peri Litvak.



Douglas irises (*Iris douglasiana*). Photos by Peri Litvak.

Some spectacularly colorful plants are in bloom now at the [California Botanic Garden](#). Heading the list of unusual colors is the sulfur yellow Conejo buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*). Electric and royal blues, bright pinks, lavenders are represented by several penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.), and an array of sages (*Salvia* spp.). Pretty but prickly are colorful hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus coccineus*), cholla cactus species (*Cylindropuntia* spp.), prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*), and beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*). Evening primrose (*Oenothera* spp.), phlox species (*Leptosiphon* spp.), yucca (*Hesperoyucca* and *Yucca* spp.) and agave (*Agave* spp.) are quite dramatic even if they are dressed “only” in white blossoms!



Conejo buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*), phlox species (*Leptosiphon* spp.), blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) a sage relative. Photos courtesy of CalBG.

Inland Empire

The word from recent visitors to the [Santa Rosa Plateau](#) is that annuals and geophytes are blooming nicely, and it is an excellent time to hike the trails! The Sylvan Meadows Trail and the Vernal Pools Trail are good places to see some iconic Plateau species. The various oaks (*Quercus* spp.) have fresh new foliage and are in flower, and provide a lovely canopy along some pathways. The California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is

tucked near and under protective chaparral shrubs and are just starting to bloom. California golden violet (*Viola pedunculata*), milkvetch (*Astragalus* sp.), Southern checkerbloom (*Sidalcea sparsifolia*) and great numbers of blue dicks (*Dipterospermon capitatus*) can be found in open, sunny areas along trails. The lovely Mission manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*) is past bloom, but just starting to go to fruit. Check out their bountiful bunches of copper-red berries.



Various oaks (*Quercus* spp.), blue dicks (*Dipterospermon capitatus*), California peony (*Paeonia californica*). Photos by Emily Sluiman.



Southern checkerbloom (*Sidalcea sparsifolia*), Mission manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*). Photos by Emily Sluiman.

A short, easy hike along the [Pacific Crest Trail at Crowder Canyon](#) in the Cajon Pass near Phelan will delight you with an array of spring blooms. You will encounter a lovely mix of Mojave Desert and chaparral flowering perennials and annuals. Lots of ceanothus, (*Ceanothus* spp.) are still in flower along with narrowleaf goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) and bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*). Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.) are blooming, though somewhat patchy in occurrence. Also find decent numbers of baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*), Mojave Desert parsley (*Lomatium mohavense*), California butterweed (*Senecio californicus*), blazing stars (*Mentzelia* sp.), and blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*).



Blazing star (*Mentzelia* sp.), bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus*), Mojave Desert parsley (*Lomatium mohavense*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.). Photos by Tom Benson.

Urban Los Angeles Region

The wildflower show keeps getting better at Elizabeth Learning Center! The gigantic creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*) are in glorious FULL BLOOM and smell amazing! There is also an Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) "super bloom" happening in front of the on-campus Community Health Clinic! The Desert Garden has fish-hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *villosa*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden delights with toothed calicoflower (*Downingia cuspidata*), Orcutt's quillwort (*Isoetes orcuttii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), truncate leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), "chocolate chip" stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), school bells (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), chaparral prickly pear (*Opuntia oricola*), coastal cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), sacred thorn apple (*Datura wrightii*), spine shrub (*Adolphia californica*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). Additional species in their Chaparral Garden include fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), splendid mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*), showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), chaparral brodiaea (*Brodiaea jolonensis*), 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.



Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) in ELC Habitat Garden. Photo by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 9th 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

California Native Plant Society: Channel Island Chapter

🌸 Figueroa Mountain Field Trip | May 4 | 9 AM – 5 PM

This trip will be a car caravan field trip that will travel from Los Olivos/Santa Ynez to Figueroa Mountain along Figueroa Mountain Road. RSVP required. More information [here](#).

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌸 California Grasses: Morphology and Ecology with Ella Andersson | May 8 | 6 PM

There's more to spring than just superblooms! In fact, meadows of wild flowers often occur in grasslands... those ephemeral fields that rustle in the wind year round. Purchase tickets [here](#).

🌸 Botany for Gardeners: Three-Part Series with Valerie Wong | May 16, 23, & 30 | 4:30 PM

Join us for this fascinating online series exploring how the plants in your garden are adapted to water, light, air, and soil. Purchase tickets [here](#).

California Native Plant Society: LA/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

🌸 Big Tujunga Wash at Orcas Park | May 10 | 9 AM

This two-hour, two-mile hike on equestrian trails will traverse pristine upland and riparian habitat within Hansen Dam flood control basin. Meet at Orcas Park, at the third paved parking lot past the horse park entrance, accessed from Foothill Blvd. and Orcas Ave., midway between I-210 freeway exits at Osborne Street and Wheatland Ave. Send questions to Bill Neill at bgneill@earthlink.net.

🌸 Bioblitz Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve | May 10 | 9:30 AM – 1 PM

Your chance to get to the Santa Monica Mountains this spring! Join us at UCLA Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve for our Spring Biodiversity Bioblitz. Reservations required via the link at the bottom of this [information page](#).

Wild Flower & Native Plant Events Across SoCal

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

🌸 Nature Walk at Elings Park | May 10 | 9 AM – 10:30 AM

Introduction to the iNaturalist plants for pollinators project. Free. Meet at Elings Park – 1298 Las Positas Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. The group will meet in the softball field's parking lot. To access Elings Park site map using this [link](#).

🌸 Oso Flaco Lake & Dunes Day Trip | May 16 | 9 AM – 1 PM

Experience the wildflowers of Oso Flaco Lake, located at the border of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, with botanist Steve Junak. Details [here](#).