



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 23, 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.

Los Padres National Forest

Back in March when we first reported on the wildflower awakening on Figueroa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest, there wasn't hope for a super display this year. A wildfire had scourged the area in July of 2024. Certainly, some post fire annuals would show up, but with so much devastation and little winter rainfall, it was thought that wildflowers would be sparse and short-lived. A different story emerged, however. A field reporter returned to Figueroa Mountain five times over the spring to photo document an amazing wildflower succession over two months. You have read these chronicles in TPF's Wildflower Hotline reports this spring. The fifth trip last week found, once again, the wildflower display was good with a variety of new species replacing the earlier spring blooms. Most of the California poppy and purple lupine displays have faded, as have the chia, blue dick, globe gilia and fiesta flowers. Instead, the displays included several late-season flowers. The lovely ruby chalice clarkia (*Clarkia rubicunda*), showy elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*), California cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*), Catalina Mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*), butter lupine (*Lupinus luteolus*), pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*), fringed onion (*Allium fimbriatum*), miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) and scorpion weed (*Phacelia* sp.) were widespread. The presence of so many clarkias, a.k.a "farewell-to-spring," makes one wonder how long Figueroa Mountain will continue to debut new wildflower species. It was indeed a successful wildflower season on Figueroa Mountain in 2025.

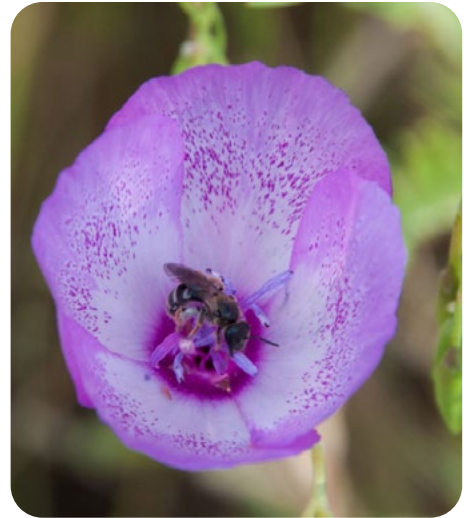


TOP: Elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unquiculata*), butter lupine (*Lupinus luteolus*), California cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*).
 BOTTOM: Fringed onion (*Allium fimbriatum*), purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*), ruby chalice clarkia (*Clarkia rubicunda*).
 Photos by Don Vogt.

Southern Sierra Foothill Region

With a massive bloom of speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*), spring is winding down in the foothill country of the southern Sierra. Intermingling with the speckled clarkia, the Spring Madia (*Madia elegans*) are still in bloom. Also prominent both along the highways and the trails are the fragrant California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) in early to mid bloom, an abundance of bright yellow rock bush monkey flower (*Diplacus calycinus*), and creamy white blooms of blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*). Along the trails one will still find colorful patches of mustang clover (*Leptosiphon montanus*) and the elegant Ithuriel's spear (*Triteleia laxa*).

While the speckled clarkia is the one most impressive, two other farewell-to-spring species are found here and announcing the long hot quiet summer season: elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) and the lovely four spot clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*).



Top row: speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*). Second row: California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*). Third row: yellow rock monkey flower (*Diplacus calycinus*) and blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*). Photos by Michael and Stephanie Wall.



Top row: mustang clover (*Leptosiphon montanus*), lthuriel's spear (*Triteleia laxa*). Second Row: four spot clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*). Third row: spring madia (*Madia elegans*) mixed with speckled clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*). Photos by Michael and Stephanie Wall.

San Gabriel Mountain and Foothill Region

At the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) have taken over the nursery. Showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) is still a prolific bloomer, decorating TPF's gardens in vivid purple. The

Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) flowers continue to open along the parking lot. 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), Elizabeth bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica* 'Elizabeth'), and mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*). Coastal cholla cactus (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*), prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*) and beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris*) are also very showy around the nursery.



Elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), coastal cholla cactus (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*), purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*). Photos by Peri Litvak.

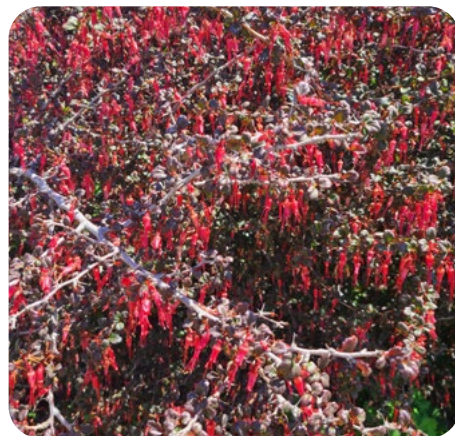
Some spectacularly colorful plants are still in bloom at the [California Botanic Garden](#). Heading the list of unusual colors is the sulfur yellow Conejo buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*). Electric and royal blues, bright pinks, lavenders are represented by several penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.), and 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 relatives. Photos courtesy of CalBG.

San Bernadino Mountains

With warmer days, the spring bloom is really ramping up at the Oak Glen Preserve! Perfect weather and temperatures in the mid- to upper 70s can be enjoyed while the valleys below are hitting the mid- to upper 90s! The [Southern California Montane Botanic Garden on the Oak Glen Preserve](#) is situated at an elevation of 4,800 feet in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains, so spring arrives later here than elsewhere in the SoCal valleys. The Botanic Garden features more than 150 native wildflowers of the Southern California mountains, with several venues, such as Ruth's Butterfly Garden and Hummingbird Hill, with species selected for their attraction to butterflies and moths and hummingbirds, respectively. But the real attraction for wildflower enthusiasts is the Artist's Palette--a six-acre hillside that used to be covered with weeds is now covered with native wildflowers. A prominent feature is "Sendero del Sol"--the Trail of the Sun--highlighting a "sun" with 100-feet long white-yellow rays composed of fringed linanthus (*Linanthus dianthiiflorus*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), tidy-tips (*Layia platyglossa*), sun cups (*Camissoniopsis* spp.) and popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha intermedia*), surrounded by a "sky" of blue and purple flowers comprised of desert bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), tansy-leaved phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), and purple owl's-clover (*Castilleja exserta*). The Hummingbird Hill venue is also looking good in early bloom with Eaton's firecracker (*Penstemon eatonii*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*) and fuchsia-flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) in good show.



Scenes from Southern California Montane Botanic Garden wildflower displays. Photo by Tim Krantz.

San Jacinto Mountains

Driving along Hwy 74 in the San Jacinto Mountains you will come upon Morris Ranch Road in [Garner Valley](#). The road is lined with flowers in its uphill section, but most were small except for the nice stand of grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) at the beginning of the south fork of the San Jacinto River. The Bajada lupine (*Lupinus concinnus* ssp. *optatus*) is in full bloom along the immediate roadside as well. The sunny yellow interior goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*) is starting to lighten up the region while the smaller chia (*Salvia columbariae*) is filling in spaces between them making for a nice purple and yellow color combination. There are pleasing blooms on the lower part of the Cedar Spring Trail, including Davidson's phacelia (*Phacelia davidsonii*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), common cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), and strigose lotus, (*Acmispon strigosus*). Cupped leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*), Eastwood manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*), and pink bracket manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringlei*) are in lovely bloom there too. On the sun exposed upper part of the trail, wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) are a delight with to behold dotting the landscape purple-blue color. Near the top of the trail Johnston's rockcress (*Boechera johnstonii*) was in bloom. This area is just starting to bloom well and should be good to visit during the next month or so if it doesn't get too hot.



Pink bracket manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringlei*), strigose lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*), wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*). Photos by Tom Chester.

San Diego County

Manzanitas and ceanothus species have faded from their bloom in most regions of Southern California below 3500 feet. In San Diego county's Laguna Mountains, however, manzanitas and ceanothus are still putting on a spectacular show especially along the [Garnet Peak Loop trail](#). I'll add a note that the Pacific Crest Trail connects here in the Laguna Mountains as well. One scenic route to arriving to the Garnet Peak Loop trail is travelling along SR76 south from Palomar Mountain. Flowers along the south side of Palomar are mostly done. Clearly spring is mostly over there. However, starting in Santa Ysabel Valley to Julian, spring is still going full blast. Somehow the blue chaparral whitethorn is still blooming gangbusters there. Fields of cream

cups (*Platystemon californicus*) and lupine (*Lupinus* spp.) are painting the landscape with pastel colors. The yellow lupine or California golden banner (*Thermopsis californica*) was in bloom in a field just before Julian and just past Julian, the white palmer's ceanothus (*Ceanothus palmeri*) is in glorious full bloom. There were a few patches of goldfields just above Lake Cuyamaca, and some stunning areas of redbuds along Sunrise Highway. Also spotted is serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*) in full bloom near the beginning of Garnet Peak Trail at Sunrise Highway. One month ago, there were essentially no flowers in this area, and very little annual germination. An amazing transformation occurred in the last month, to have tons of flowers here! On the Garnet Peak trail, the star bloomers were cupped leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*) and chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) producing slopes of white from the cupped leaf ceanothus and rivers of blue from whitethorn ceanothus. Close to Garnet Peak, pink bracted manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pringlei*), with its deep pink flowers, joined the show. There were also good patches of Eastwood manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*) in bloom in several places along this route. Garnet Peak is covered with rocky slopes of Laguna Mountain goldenbush (*Ericameria cuneata* var. *microcephala*), an endemic species to this area. There are abundant annuals and perennials in places. Close to the trailhead there were baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), strigose lotus (*Acemispson strigosus*), coastal gilia (*Gilia diegensis*), and Washoe phacelia (*Phacelia curvipes*), among others. Garnet Peak was beautiful now, so make the trip soon.

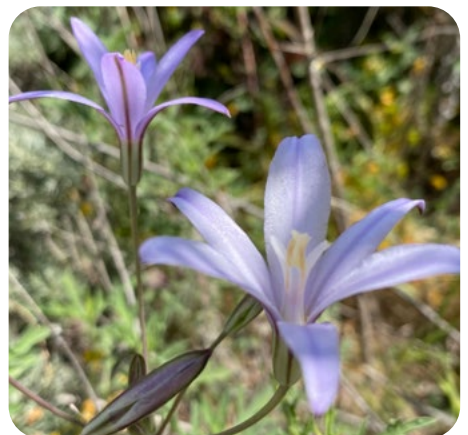


Eastwood manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*), cup-leaved ceanothus (*Ceanothus perplexans*), view of Garnet Peak, *Phacelia* sp., river of chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.) Photos by Don Vogt.

Urban Los Angeles Region

The wildflower show at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) is dynamic and diverse! The gigantic creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*) are STILL IN FULL BLOOM! The Desert Garden has fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), violet twining snapdragon (*Maurandella antirrhiniflora*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *villosa*), wine cup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Cleomella arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*). Desert five spot (*Eremalche rotundifolia*) joined the blooms in our Desert Garden this week. The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden delights with alkali mariposa lily (*Calochortus striatus*), Baja California sage (*Salvia californica*), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*), 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*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), 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 the Chaparral Garden include island ceanothus (*Ceanothus arboreus*), fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), splendid mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*), yellow evening primrose (*Oenothera elata*), 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.





Five beautiful bulb species blooming at ELC: Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*), alkali mariposa lily (*Calochortus striatus*), chaparral brodiaea (*Brodiaea jolonensis*), fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), splendid mariposa lily (*Calochortus splendens*). Lynx spider checking out a possible snack! Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, May 30th 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

Placerita Canyon Nature Center

🌸 Blooms of the Season | May 24 | 9 AM

Learn about native plants with RuthAnne Murthy. 4th Saturday of every month, meet on the patio at 9:00AM for a one-hour stroll. Bring your camera and questions.

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌸 Botanical Portraits with Marie Astrid Gonzalez | May 24 | 9:30 AM

Learn the best techniques to photograph your favorite wild flowers and native plants! Sign up [HERE](#).

🌸 Understanding and Adapting to Climate Change with William Selby | May 24 | 1 PM

A comprehensive look at how Southern California's changing climates are impacting our plants and native landscapes. Sign up [HERE](#).

🌸 Monarchs & Milkweed: Creating Native Plant Habitats with Lou Avery Douglas | May 28 | 6 PM

Discover the unique connection between our western population of monarchs and California native plants! Online class. Sign up [HERE](#).