



WILD FLOWER HOTLINE

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Weekly Updates March–May

Theodore Payne Foundation's Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by [donations](#), and [sponsorships](#). 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 22, 2026

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.
- ✿ Do not collect or step on wildflowers.
- ✿ Obey posted closures and warnings
- ✿ Share the trails; be respectful of others.
- ✿ Leave no trace.
- ✿ Visit on weekdays and/or off-peak hours, if possible.

Thank you to our 2026 sponsors, Alonzo Wickers and [Cuyama Buckhorn](#).

CENTRAL COAST RANGES

In the Coast Ranges of California at [Pinnacles National Park](#), late spring bloomers are now dominating the sunny spaces and rocky cliffs along many trails. Visitors should keep their eyes peeled close to the ground for the pink inflorescence of Douglas's spineflower (*Chorizanthe douglasii*). This small plant is quite common within the park and can be seen on most trails, but the species is limited to the central coastal mountain ranges of California. Pinnacles is one of the limited places to see it. The pretty purple dwarf brodiaea (*Brodiaea terrestris* subsp. *kernensis*), also can be found just under-foot on many of the trails as well. Another California endemic plant species found throughout the park now is sticky snapdragon (*Antirrhinum thompsonii*). This plant sends up large, showy spikes of pink flowers, inviting visitors to approach for a closer look. Common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), one of the most well-known California native plants, recognizable by its feathery leaves and umbrella-like inflorescences composed of many small white flowers, is scattered about in sunny, open places, beckoning many pollinators. Growing among other herbs and grasses is the magenta colored, bowl-shaped winecup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*). And finally, commonly seen along the road to the Old Pinnacles trailhead, are the red, trumpet-like flowers of the scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*). Once called the "hummingbird's dinner horn", the flowers are primarily

pollinated by hummingbirds, so look for those flying jewels as well.



Douglas's spineflower (*Chorizanthe douglasii*), dwarf brodiaea (*Brodiaea terrestris* subsp. *kernensis*), common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Photos by Sydney Booth and Casey Clarke.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS AND FOOTHILLS

A large plot of narrow-leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) is clearly visible along the Natives Loop at [Descanso Gardens](#). They are not quite open yet, but the buds appear ready to pop within the next couple of days. When the milkweed does come into flower, look for the diverse community of spiders, beetles, bugs, caterpillars, and other insects interacting with each other in a complex food web on this remarkable plant. Elsewhere, the riparian area in the Natives Garden display draws visitors' attention to a splendid patch of blue globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), and some elegant western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), mingled with goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), monkeyflower (*Diplacus* sp.), and Hooker's evening primrose (*Oenothera elata* ssp. *hookeri*). Showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and California ladies' tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) are dressing up the roadway edges and the nearby buckeye trees (*Aesculus californica*) are at the peak bloom. The Desert Garden features Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), and the subtle, ghostly gray-and-blue desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), all flowering like mad. Nearby, the Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) plot is still going strong—much taller, and more densely flowered than the garden staff has seen in years. Walk the shady forest paths of the Oak Arboretum to see a lush meadow of colorful wildflowers including pink, white, and magenta elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*), bird's-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), and golden orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*).



Bird's-eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*).

Photos by Michael Wall.

SAN BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOREST

The wildflower show has begun in SoCal's Mountain resorts. [Heaps Peak Arboretum](#) in the San Bernardino National Forest has exploded with flowering perennials and annuals. Deer brush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*) is in full bloom along with sticky cinquefoil (*Drymocallis glandulosa*), golden-flowered California flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum*), mountain pink currant (*Ribes nevadense*), and many others. The scenic Sequoia Trail is open to visitors and the weather is perfect for an exploratory hike to seek out the lovely few-flowered blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), sulphur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), Hartweg's Iris (*Iris hartwegii*), Grinnell's beardtongue (*Penstemon grinnellii*) and many other pleasing wildflowers.



Few-flowered blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), sulphur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), Grinnell's beardtongue (*Penstemon grinnellii*), Hartweg's Iris (*Iris hartwegii*). Photos by Gina Richmond.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Something very unusual has been spotted on the [Black Mountain Trail](#) in the San Jacinto Mountains. It is the uncommonly seen California ground cone (*Kopsiopsis strobilacea*). Ground cones, which are root parasites on chaparral shrubs like manzanita, look very much like odd fleshy conifer cones. The ones seen on this trail are so full of flowers that it is a beacon of pink color from a distance, at least to a plant enthusiast! The trail also had very large, white-veined wintergreen (*Pyrola picta*) and little prince's pine (*Chimaphila menziesii*) growing with them. This trio of plants seen together is a treat for botanists. You must work hard to get a chance to spot these beauties as the trail is strenuous but well worth the effort.



California ground cone (*Kopsiopsis strobilacea*), white-veined wintergreen (*Pyrola picta*). Photos by Don Rideout.

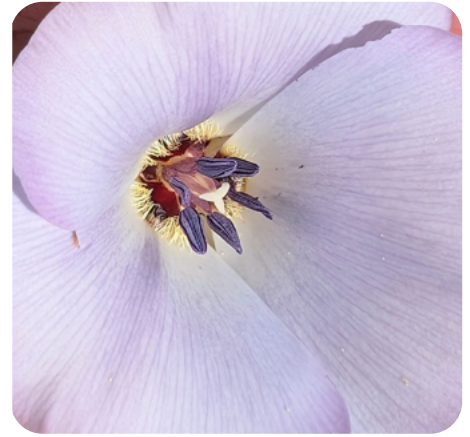
The nearby [Deer Springs Trail](#) begins on Hwy 243 one mile north of Idyllwild. This is a lovely spot to see thread plant (*Nemacladus longiflorus*) in bloom, which has the largest flowers of all the usual thread plant (*Nemacladus* spp.) species. "Large flower" is a relative term regarding a thread plant. As you can see from the photo below, thread plant is tiny, with thread-like stems that are well camouflaged with the substrate it is growing in. If not focused on looking closely, one can unwittingly step on or over it. There are also oodles of Southern California monkeyflower (*Diplacus fremontii*), Lemmon's linanthus (*Leptosiphon lemmonii*) and golden-rayed pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta aurea*) in bloom.



Thread plant (*Nemacladus longiflorus*), Lemmon's linanthus (*Leptosiphon lemmonii*), golden-rayed pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta aurea*), Southern California monkeyflower (*Diplacus fremontii*). Photos by Don Rideout.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Three trails from the Laguna Mountains Visitor Center, the Pinyon Point loop trail, the Desert View Picnic area, and the Wooded Hill Trail show visitors an exciting array of wildflowers including abundant dusky onion (*Allium campanulatum*) and an expansive field of popcorn flower (*Cryptantha intermedia*) in full bloom. The sheer numbers of these plants are unexpectedly surprising! On the Pinyon Point Trail, look for yellow clustered broomrape (*Aphyllon franciscanum*), a root parasite on California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). Some other highlights are several flowering plants of American vetch (*Vicia americana*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), San Diego pea (*Lathyrus vestitus* var. *alefeldii*), bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), golden yarrow; (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and prairie flax (*Linum lewisii*), shy mariposa lily (*Calochortus invenustus*), southern Chinese houses (*Collinsia concolor*), diamond clarkia (*Clarkia rhomboidei*), and Parish's larkspur (*Delphinium parishii*).



Dusky onion (*Allium campanulatum*), yellow clustered aphyllon (*Aphyllon franciscanum*), shy mariposa lily (*Calochortus invenustus*). Photos by Don Rideout.

URBAN LOS ANGELES REGION

Slender Mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus* var. *gracious*) closes out mariposa lily (*Calochortus* spp.) season at [Elizabeth Learning Center's](#) habitat gardens! The Desert Garden continues to wow with creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), along with California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*), Chuckwalla cholla (*Cylindropuntia chuckwallensis*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*), turpentine bush (*Ericameria laricifolia*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), desert wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), and fiveneedle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*). The Vernal Pools Habitat Garden keeps the show going with variegated dudleya (*Dudleya variegata*), Baja California sage (*Salvia californica*), sacred thorn apple (*Datura wrightii*), male Encinitas baccharis (*Baccharis vanessae*), golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), San Diego barrel cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*), coastal cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*), chaparral prickly pear (*Opuntia oricola*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), Otay mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and spineshrub (*Adolphia californica*). Additional species, in flower or fruit, in the Chaparral Habitat Garden include Nuttall's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum nuttallianum*), San Clemente Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum giganteum* var. *formosum*), California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*), Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*), Peirson's morning glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), San Clemente island brodiaea (*Brodiaea kinkiensis*), island ceanothus (*Ceanothus arboreus*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*), blue paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), and Santa Cruz island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*).

To visit, contact George Nanoski via email: gtn5586@lausd.net.



Slender mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus* var. *gracious*), Nuttall's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum nuttallianum*), Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*). Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week.

Look for our last report of the season on Friday, May 29th 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 CHAPTERS

✿ OC Chapter CNPS | May Events

Join OC CNPS for exciting workshops, programs, and field trips. [More info here.](#)

✿ San Gabriel Mountains Chapter CNPS | May 16 | 10 AM—2 PM

Habitat Care at Santa Fe Dam – Friday, May 22: 8:00 – 10:30 am. For more information go to [CNPS-SGM website](#)

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

✿ Spring Native Plant Maintenance Walk-and-Talk | May 23 | 1 PM–3 PM

Explore spring native plant care during a guided walk-and-talk focused on seasonal maintenance in the garden. Learn what to prune, what to leave, and how to support healthy growth as plants move into their active spring season. Class cost is \$43. [Sign up here.](#)

✿ Right Plant, Right Place | May 27 | 6 PM–8 PM | Online

This class is designed for those interested in incorporating California native plants into their home or community garden but who are not sure where to begin. Join us online to explore the why, what, when, and how of planting with native plants. Class cost is \$35. [Sign up here.](#)