



Wildflower Hotline

Every Weekend March through May

(818) 768-3533

Welcome to the **30th Annual Wildflower Hotline**, brought to you by the Theodore Payne Foundation, a non-profit plant nursery, seed source, book store, and education center dedicated to the preservation of wildflowers and California native plants. This a report for **April 13, 2012**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

The late rains are starting to arouse dormant wildflowers in some areas, especially in the high desert. Hopefully, many of the places that usually send hotline reports this time of year will start heralding blooms in the next few weeks.

Along the foothills of the Southern Sierra Nevada from [Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks](#), to the Merced River Canyon, Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) is spectacular with it's reddish-pink blossoms. White flowering deerbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) is also flowering along with bright patches of fiddelneck (*Amsinckia* spp.) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*).

The wildflowers at [Pinnacles National Monument](#) are just getting better and better! You cannot beat this natural wonder of a park for both spectacular wildflowers and scenery. The ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.) is in full bloom throughout the park. Cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), gilias (*Gilia* spp.) and chia (*Salvia columbariae*) are popping up everywhere along the trails. If you are hiking the High Peaks trail, look for goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*) in full bloom, shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*), wallflowers (*Erysimum capitatum*) and the spectacular pink-red Indian warrior (*Pedicularis densiflora*). Check out the checker lilies (*Fritillaria affinis* var. *affinis*) along the Old Pinnacles Trail and common phacelia (*Phacelia* sp.) and common yellow chaenactis (*Chaenactis glabriscula*) are anything but common with their blues and golden yellow colors.

Visitors to [Hungry Valley SRA](#) are seeing some color popping up in the landscape. Goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolius*) is blooming along most of the trails and roads. Coreopsis (*Leptosyne californica*) and lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) are in bloom in many areas and can be seen blanketing the surrounding hills of Gorman with small patches of yellow and purple. **The naturalists at Hungry Valley caution that you should check for road and trail closures before visiting. After the recent rainfall, many of these fragile areas are impassable and have been closed.** After it dries out and passage is allowed again, look for goldfields (*Lasthenia chrysostoma*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Davey's gilia (*Gilia latiflora* ssp. *davyi*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* sp.) and desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). The poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) bloom will be increasing after the rain as well.

Back in the LA Basin, reports have been slow to come, but there are a few places to enjoy wildflowers. At [Stough Canyon Nature Center](#) in the Verdugo Mountains hike along Stough Canyon or Wildwood Canyon Roads and enjoy the colorful and fragrant, black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), bush sunflower (*Encelia*

californica), succulent lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*) and sticky-leaf Monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*).

Tucked in the east end of the [Santa Monica Mountains](#) around the LA Zoo, the fantastic orange monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) is in full bloom all over the hills of the park. Evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.), clarkia (*Clarkia* sp.), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are also very showy in this area.

Recent rains are encouraging dormant poppies at the [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#) to come out and show off their colors. Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), Mojave sun cups (*Camissonia* sp.), and forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* sp.) are starting to bloom here and there. Grape soda lupines (*Lupinus excubitus*) are still putting on a nice show too. The best hiking route at this time is going up the Tehachapi Vista Point trail and back along the South Poppy Loop Trail. Just over the crest at the top, a nice patch of poppies can be seen on the south-facing slope. Another good spot to visit is Kitanemuk Vista Point, where a lovely patch of purple lacy phacelia (*Phacelia* sp.) can be seen.

The wildflower bloom at [Joshua Tree National Park](#) is at its peak in the southern area of the park. Hike the Mastodon Peak or stop safely along the road south of Cottonwood Visitor Center and walk into the washes for nice displays of chia (*Salvia columbariae*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), golden sun cups (*Camissonia brevipes*), yellow bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), and brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*). Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) are in bloom and attracting hummingbirds. The southern margin of the Cottonwood Mountains is an excellent wildflower area for those willing to walk a ways into the desert. Further north, Smoke Tree Wash, at mile marker 33.7 on Pinto Basin Road, is a good pullout for wildflower viewing right beside the road. In addition to the wildflowers already mentioned above, here the desert lotus (*Acemisson strigosus*) and Wallace's woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*) are also very pretty. Coreopsis (*Coreopsis* sp.) is lighting up Wilson Canyon.

In the San Bernardino Mountains on the pebble plain complex at [Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve](#) spring has arrived a little early. Walk the trails directly behind the reserve visitor center building and off Hwy 18 on the north side of Baldwin dry lake. These plants are mostly belly flowers, so you may want to wear knee pads for good photography. Parish's rock cress (*Boechera parishii*) are looking nice and its cousin the reflexed rock cress (*Boechera retrofracta*) are in flower in the understory of the pinyon pines. Many of the alkali draba (*Cusickiella douglasii*) are flowering, with several more in bud. The bristly mousetail (*Myosurus apetalus*) have been spotted underneath shrubs and adjacent large rocks where they have been protected from the late snow. The pygmy flower rock jasmine (*Androsace septentrionalis*) is reportedly a show stopper! Many individuals can be found if you look closely in the cracks between the rocks and clay. The large-flowered collinsia (*Collinsia parviflora*) is flowering in the same types of habitat as the other annuals. Several more seedlings just popping up, so they will be flowering for a few more weeks if the weather stays cool. Douglas's violet (*Viola douglasii*), gray cushion pussytoes (*Antennaria dimorpha*) are at peak bloom. Woolly pod milkvetch (*Astragalus purshii* var. *lectulus*) is flowering up a storm!

As one observer quoted, “Man, these are showy!” Bear Valley woolly pod (*Astragalus leucolobus*) is also looking good underneath the pines and adjacent the roadside.

Driving along the [Palm to Pines Highway](#) (Hwy 74) in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, flowering plants are lighting up the roadside. This road is very curvy, so use turnouts to look at plants. Above and below the Coachella Overlook there are several rosy apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua* var. *rosacea*) waving in the desert breezes. Approaching the community of Pinyon Flats, two colorful penstemon species are beginning to bloom—the magenta flowers of Cleveland's beardtongue (*Penstemon clevelandii* var. *conatus*) and scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*). There are also a lot of the pink/purple flowers of Palmer's milkvetch (*Astragalus palmeri*). In the vicinity of the Cactus Springs trail head there are a few places peppered with the yellow flowers of woolly daisy (*Eriophyllum wallacei*). Further up the road, a newly burned area near Ribbonwood is displaying popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha* spp.), yellow suncups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*), and patches of chia (*Salvia columbariae*) up through the blackened substrate. There are reliable fire followers like wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) and yellow-throated phacelia (*Phacelia brachyloba*) beginning to bloom as well. At the PCT trailhead, the golden-rayed pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta aurea*) is in bloom along with goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.). Carpets of goldfields (*Lathenia gracilis*) can be seen as you drive through Garner Valley.

Continuing on Hwy 74 from Mountain Center to Hemet elegant rock-cress (*Boechera californica*) is in bloom and stretches of bishop's lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*) are lining the Hwy. Pockets of baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and several lupine species (*Lupinus* spp.) are dressing the roadsides blue.

A nice report of flowering comes from the San Jacinto Mountains along the [Webster Trail](#), about a mile from Pine Cove and near Idyllwild. The top portion of the trail is in the pine forest. In bloom here are miner's lettuce (*Caytonia* sp.), Sierra gooseberry (*Ribes roezlii* var. *roezlii*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), southern tauschia (*Tauschia arguta*), and spring draba (*Draba verna*). The next portion follows an exposed ridge with chaparral species. It begins in a forest of manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*) in full bloom which transitions into big berry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*). The annuals include red-root cryptantha (*Cryptantha micrantha*) and sand cress (*Calyptridium monandrum*). On the ridge line you walk through chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) with clusters of blue flowers with an intoxicating fragrance on one side, and a white-flowered ceanothus possibly buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *cuneatus*) on the other. Once crossing the dry ridge and dipping into the north fork drainage, the flora noticeably changes. Here you find the yellow flowers of bush poppies (*Dendromecon rigida*), purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), blue flowers of common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) and bishop's lotus (*Acmispon strigosus*). Near the bottom there are chia (*Salvia columbariae*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum* ssp. *capitatum*) in bloom everywhere.

East of [Lake Henshaw](#) near where SR79 and S2 converge, you will see nice displays of goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*) accompanied by quite a few

(*Malacothrix californica*). This area and south to Julian and Lake Cuyamaca in eastern San Diego County is a nice drive for flower peepers.



Fields of flowers east of Lake Henshaw on S2. Photos by Tom Chester

The recommended place to hike in [Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) this week is NOT for the faint of heart. It is off S2 between Rainbow and Blair Valley with the Sawtooth Mountains in sight to the east. The hike is 13 miles round trip up a wash through rough sand and gravel. According to the “uber-hikers” and field reporters, it is well worth it even if there are few good wildflower sightings until mile 5! Go if you want to see mountain cryptantha (*Cryptantha micrantha* var. *lepida*), goldenhead (*Acamptopappus sphaerocephalus* var. *sphaerocephalus*) and an exceptional variety of bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus* var. *medius*). There are many other lovely species as well.

The bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) at the [Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve](#), is very showy now, and along the trails that take you through chaparral, bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), Chaparral beard-tongue (*Keckiella antirrhinoides*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*) and chamise

(*Adenostema fasciculatum*) will surround you with subtle color and fragrance. Tucked in among those shrubs are baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) and woolly lomatium (*Lomatium dasycarpum*). North Granite Loop Trail has balloon clover (*Trifolium depauperatum* var. *truncatum*), California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and colorful splashes of ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), while on the open slopes, Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora* ssp. *sparsifolia*), silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*) and stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*) share the spotlight with owl's clover (*Castilleja densiflora*) and wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*). Lining the pathways on wooded trails, Chinese houses (*Colinsia heterophylla*), and western buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*) stand out in the shade of trees.



Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora* ssp. *sparsifolia*) Photo by Kay Madore

A drive along the paved South Main Divide Road at the crest of Hwy 74 in the [Cleveland National Forest](#) is a worthwhile trip. Recent burn areas along the first 2-3 miles are showing many annuals, including large displays of popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), grape soda and other lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), peony (*Paeonia californica*), meadow rue (*Thalictrum fendleri*) and many others. At the six mile mark, in the fields below Elsinore Peak, chocolate lily (*Fritillaria biflora*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila* sp.), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californica*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), violets (*Viola pedunculata*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*) and tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*) are showy. Rare sightings in the area include death camas (*Toxicoscordion venenosum*), pitted onion (*Allium lacunosum*), long-spurred plectritis (*Plectritis ciliosa*) and Danny's skullcap (*Scutellaria tuberosa*).

The best place to see wildflowers in Newport Beach and environs is walking the trails at the [Environmental Nature Center](#). A visit there definitely will cheer you as you take in the colors and textures and fragrances of California. Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) greet you at the visitor center. Sit and watch hummingbirds defend their territory around their favorite blossoms of sticky-leaf

monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), Indian mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*), and fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*). Ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.) and Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) are providing bright spots of color throughout the nature trails.

The Habitat Gardens at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy are “out-of-control beautiful” and dressed to celebrate California Native Plant Week, April 15-22. Again, this school garden is a slice of inspiring nature in a concrete and asphalt city. At the flagpole garden, clarkia (*Clarkia* spp.), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), sulphur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), desert bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), owl’s clover (*Castilleja* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), Lindley’s blazingstar (*Mentzelia lindelyi*), poppies (*Eschscholzia* spp.) bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), paintbrushes (*Castilleja* spp.), bush poppies (*Dendromecon* spp), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), desert marigold (*Baileya* sp.), Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) are breathtakingly colorful. The second Habitat Garden in front of the Family Center & Elizabeth Street Clinic, has many of the above mentioned species in bloom along with many species of lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) poppies (*Eschscholzia* spp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), prickly poppy (*Argemone* sp.), tidy tips (*Layia* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), and Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*). The general public is always welcome to visit the gardens at the Elizabeth Learning Center from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. Anyone interested in visiting just needs to get a Visitor's Pass from the Main Office and say they are here for the Habitat Garden Wildflowers.

San Clemente Island White-Felted Paintbrush (*Castilleja grisea*) and owl’s clover (*Castilleja* sp.)
Photos by George Nanoski



Another very special school garden, [Prisk Native Garden](#) located in Long Beach, is getting ready for their annual Open House events the next two Sundays, April 15 and 22. **See event notices below for more detail.** The garden is in full bloom and ready to receive visitors. Mojave bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), woolly blue-curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), punchbowl godetia (*Clarkia bottae*), wind poppy (*Stylomecon heterophylla*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* sp.), coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) and four varieties of blooming penstemon: royal, splendid, desert or Palmer's and Eaton's penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.) are in spectacular bloom. Help Prisk celebrate their beautiful habitat garden and their hard work by visiting them during the Open House events.

Prisk Native Garden, Long Beach. Photos by Mike Letteriello



That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 20** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

[Theodore Payne Foundation](#)

9th Annual Native Plant Garden Tour, Saturday and Sunday, April 14 & 15 from 10 am – 5 pm. For tickets and more information visit our [webpage](#).

California Native Plant Society Chapters & California Native Plant Week

Chapters statewide are celebrating California native Plant Week April 15-22 with events and activities. Go to the [CNPS website](#) to check out what is going on in your area.

[CNPS-Los Angeles Santa Monica Mountains Chapter](#)

April 21, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Native Plant Week Symposium, Wildflower Show and Plant Sale, Sepulveda Garden Center. For more information go to: <http://lasmmcnps.org/>

[CNPS-San Diego Chapter](#)

April 28 & 29, San Diego Chapter will hold its Inaugural Native Garden Tour. Go to www.cnpsd.org/tour for more information.

[CNPS-San Gabriel Mountains Chapter](#)

Eaton Canyon Plant Walks: Second Sunday of each month except July and August. Meet in front of Eaton Canyon Nature Center at 9:00 a.m. Then go on a leisurely walk, about 2 hours, through the native plant garden that surrounds the Center and into the nearby wild areas. The walk is different each time — what's leafing out, flowering, in seed, etc., determines what your leader will talk about — and different leaders bring different points of view.

[CNPS—Riverside/San Bernardino Chapter](#)

Field Trip: Sunday, April 15, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Harford Springs Annual Hike for Families. Go to www.enceliacnps.org/ for more information.

[Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve](#)

Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center opens on, March 18th from 10am - 4pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm weekends for the duration of the wildflower season.

[Whitewater Canyon Preserve](#)

Second annual Art Festival Benefit and Auction 2 days, Saturday April 14th and Sunday April 15th. For the flier, please see our website www.wildlandsconservancy.org

[Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)

Saturday 4/14 10am: **Charmlee Wilderness Park**, Wildflower Hike Learn to recognize some of our local native plants and flowers. Meet at upper parking lot. Reservations required: 310-317-1364. \$4 parking fee. 2hrs CMPRD

[Hungry Valley SRA](#)

Hungry Valley Wildflower Tours Postponed Due to Inclement Weather

The first weekend of Hungry Valley Wildflower Tours will now begin on April 21st & 22nd due to recent rains. Blooms have also been quite sparse throughout the area. Please check back next week for current conditions.

[Prisk Native Garden](#) The **first** Open House is this Sunday, April 15, from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

The **second** Open House is on following Sunday, April 22 (Earth Day), 1:00 – 4:00 pm.

Prisk Native Garden is located in Long Beach near the corner of San Vicente and Los Arcos. (Around corner from school address at 2375 Fanwood Ave., Long Beach 90815.) Admission free. Take Palo Verde turnoff in Long Beach. Further info: letteriello@charter.net or Mike at 562-481-5216.