



Wildflower Hotline

Every Weekend March through May

(818) 768-3533

Welcome to the **31st 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 **March 1, 2013**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Again this year, we are at below normal rainfall and time is running out for significant rain events. Deep rooted perennials may be showy this year, but the soil surface has been drying out too quickly to sustain many annuals. Snow in the high elevations and high desert regions may contribute to a nice bloom, but not until later in the spring.

Heading south along the California coast, be sure to visit the [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach. The trails that take you through the chaparral and coastal sage scrub communities are displaying beautiful early bloomers. Look for the red fuchsia-flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) and the pink chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). There are also some late blooming manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp.). Enjoy watching the hummingbirds compete for the sweet nectar offered by these flowers! A riot of yellow blooms will catch your eye as well, and include bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron mexicanum*), California coast brittlebush (*Encelia californica*), and Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevenii*).



Flannel Bush (*Fremontodendron mexicanum*), ENC by Lori Whalen

Continuing south along the Orange County coast, head east into the Santa Ana Mountains along the Ortega Highway (Hwy 74). Stop at the [Ronald W. Caspers](#)

[Wilderness Park](#) and enjoy an easy walk along one or more of their popular trails. Lush grassy slopes serve as a backdrop for shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*) along the Quail Run and Cougar Pass trails. Hike up East Ridge and Sun Rise trails to view the bright yellow of California butterweed (*Senecio californicus*), blue-purple wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), creamy slender pod jewel flower (*Caulanthus heterophyllus*), and pink (if you are there at the right time of day!) of California four-o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis*). The variety of color inspires picture taking. Stands of fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia menziesii*) can be spotted at the bench at East Ridge and lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*) is showing off its tiny clusters of cream and pink blossoms along Bell Canyon.



Shooting star (*Dodecatheon clevelandii* ssp. *clevelandii*). Photo by Michael Charters

If your drive has you continuing down the coast to San Diego, you may want to stop at [Torrey Pines State Natural Preserve](#). There, among spectacular ocean views, lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), warty-stem ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*) can be seen lining the trails and decorated with climbing wild

cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus* var. *macrocarpus*). At ground level are patches of pink sand verberna (*Abronia* spp.), pure white milk maids (*Cardamine californica*) and yellow sea dahlia (*Leptosyne* [Coreopsis] *maritima*) Some trails in the reserve are closed or being repaired. Please check the website or drop in at the Visitor Center for more information about the trails.

Heading east from the coast to the inland valleys, through the shrub and woodlands of the Cleveland National Forest you will be treated to a mosaic of lush greens and grays of chaparral covered slopes. I'll send you off on trails to explore this area in the next few weeks when the chaparral pops into bloom.

If you go north on I-15, check out the Santa Rosa Plateau in southern Riverside County. Exit I-15 on Clinton Keith Road and head west for an adventure into the premier vernal pool habitat of Southern California.

The [Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve](#) offers several excellent hiking trails to the famous vernal pools. The cool weather stalled flowering for a while, but the shooting stars, (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*) are just starting to peak. Look in pockets of shaded areas along the trails for milk maids (*Cardamine californica*) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata* ssp. *mexicana*). With warmer weather on the way, you won't want to miss hiking the area as waves of wildflowers bloom sequentially during the spring months.

I **don't** want to send you to [Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) for spectacular wildflowers, because recent reports indicate it is going to be a another dry and disappointing year for "wow factor" blossoms. However, if you are traveling to Anza Borrego this weekend for some **other** reason like the Swainson Hawk Watch or to take in the grand desert geology, then try to get to the elephant trees natural area and check out patches of small but hardy botanical treasures. Forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.), trailing windmills (*Allionia incarnata*) and small flowered poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*) can be found blooming big time (but small in stature!).

Close to the urban scene, walking trails in the [Santa Monica Mountains](#), treats you to amazing vistas and has you escaping the nearby mega metropolis. Always check ahead on trail conditions before starting out as some may have erosion damage from winter rain. Along the Mishe Mokwa Trail at Circle X Ranch, the white flowering ceanothus are covering the hillsides like snowfall. The bigpod and the hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus* and *C. crassifolius*) bloom before, and herald their later blue-flowering cousins. Other flowering shrubs include manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp.) and chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). Both have the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) climbing up over their canopies. There are a few shooting stars (*Dodecatheon* sp.) blooming, with a promise of future wildflower species following. More rain is needed!

Last year, we began to post several reports from an urban school garden at the [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy. The asphalt-bound urbanites really appreciated an opportunity to visit this school and enjoy the lovely wildflower

displays. They are welcoming flower peepers again this year. The three Habitat Gardens at school are starting to look really nice for the Spring. In the central garden, Santa Rosa Island white-felted and the red-orange paintbrushes (*Castilleja* spp.) are in full bloom. Also blooming here are the sweet little cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). California wild lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.) are blooming In front of the Community Clinic, along with prickly poppy (*Argemone* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), and woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*). This year students planted a new Habitat Space—the Mojave/Sonoran Desert—in front of the school. Here, chia (*Salvia columbariae*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) and desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*) are blooming now.



Painbrush species (*Castilleja* sp.) at Elizabeth Learning Center. Photos by George Nanoski

Visitors are welcome to visit the campus and enjoy the flowers from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. All they need is a visitor pass from the Main Office. We are located in Cudahy on Elizabeth Street between Atlantic Blvd and Wilcox Ave. the staff, faculty and students look forward to sharing the beautiful blooms here with all visitors.

Over at the [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#), the early bloomers can be found along the Ecology Trail leading from the Nature Center. Look for the hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) at its peak bloom along with the “ribes trifecta” fuchsia-flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) and the golden currant (*Ribes aureum*). Tucked under these shrubs is the California peony (*Paeonia californica*) and scrambling over the

shrubs is the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*).



California Peony (*Paeonia californica*). Photo by Ron Kraus

The [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#) will officially open March 2. The volunteers who inventory plants along the trails reported that there were many seedlings of poppies, (*Eschscholzia californica*), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) and goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) along the trails, but they have had snowfall since and it is too early to determine if that was a good event (adding more moisture) or a bad event (freezing temperatures), so stay tuned for reports about the poppy preserve.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 8th** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

If you would like to be a wildflower reporter send your information about wildflower blooms and their location to flowerhotline@theodorepayne.org by Wednesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

Theodore Payne Foundation

Annual Poppy Day on Saturday, **March 23, Plant Sale and Festival.**

10th Annual Native Plant Garden Tour, Saturday and Sunday, **April 6 & 7** from 10 am – 5 pm. For more information and tickets, visit our [webpage](#).

Huntington Library

When They Were Wild: Recapturing California's Wildflower Heritage

March 9 – June 10, 2013

MaryLou and George Boone Gallery

A collaborative project of The Huntington, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants. For more information, go to [The Huntington](#)

California Native Plant Society Chapters

[CNPS-San Diego Chapter](#)

Field trips: **March 10 - Field Trip - Sunday**

Torrey Highlands and Crest Canyon Preserve

More information

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

Field Trip: **Sunday, March 13 - 9am** Royce Canyon (Griffith Park) Wildflower Hike 9:00 am -12:30 pm. For more information and program schedule, go to LA/SMM newsletter [The Toyon](#)

[CNPS – Orange County Chapter](#)

Field Trip: **March 10, Sunday**. Santiago Truck Trail
Go to [OCCNPS Field Trips](#) for more information.