



# 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 22, 2013**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

'Tis the season for chocolate bunnies, but instead, we have **chocolate lilies** everywhere! But don't bite their heads off!



**Chocolate Lily. Photo by Ron Vanderhoff**

Starting up north in the Coast Ranges, visit [Pinnacles National Monument](#) for a wonderful display of colorful wildflowers. The yellows, oranges and golds of fiddlenecks, (*Amsinckia menziesii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*) and Johnny-jump-up (*Viola pedunculata*) light up the landscape. Blues and purples of chia (*Salvia columbariae*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitata*) interrupt the yellow palette occasionally. Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), two shooting star species (*Dodecatheon clevelandii* ssp. *patulum* and *Dodecatheon herdersonii*) are outstanding specialties that you must see here!

In Santa Barbara County, several local species of California lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.) and manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.) are at their peak bloom on the [Burton Mesa Preserve](#) north of Lompoc and accessible on foot from the baseball field parking lot at the end of Albireo Avenue behind Cabrillo High School. Deep blue flowered Santa Barbara Ceanothus (*Ceanothus impressus*) and lavender flowered Lompoc Ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *fascicularis*) are scattered throughout the chaparral, as are La Purisima manzanita (*Arctostaphylos purissima*) and shagbark manzanita (*Arctostaphylos rudis*). For a short auto tour, take Burton Mesa Blvd east from Vandenberg Village to Harris Grade and Rucker Roads on the eastern edge of Burton Mesa, where several trailheads provide access to this unique vegetation. Look for the first, yellow flowers of the endemic Lompoc bush monkey-flower (*Diplacus lompocensis*), which are just beginning to flower. Many of these species can also be seen along trails in the [La Purisima State Historic Park](#), which features a native plant garden.

In Ventura County, Highway 33 offers flowering displays of several different California lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.). Below Wheeler Gorge, one will find blue-flowered greenbark (*Ceanothus spinosus*). Scattered throughout the chaparral above Wheeler Gorge is the blue flowered, hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*), but it is particularly common near Wheeler Gorge Campground. For several miles above the campground, and as far north as Rose Valley junction, the hillsides are dominated by white flowered hoary leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*). Along Highway 33, beyond Dry Lakes Ridge in the upper Sespe River Valley, white flowered shrubs of Palmer lilac (*Ceanothus palmeri*) and lavender to blue flowered white bark Ceanothus (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) are beginning to show. Scattered patches of annual lupines, poppies, and other annuals are also beginning to appear.



**Poppies and lupines on Figueroa Mountain. Photo by Don Vogt.**

In spite of recent snowfall on [Figueroa Mountain](#) in Santa Barbara County, the poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and lupines (*Lupinus* spp.) on the famous “poppy hill” are in full bloom and are showing signs of having multiple peaks throughout the season. The wild lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.) is also flowering nicely throughout the mountain region. The tour up to the mountain’s Fire Station starts after crossing the first cattle guard on Figueroa Mountain Road. On the grassy slopes under the tree canopy are buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), shooting stars (*Dodecatheon* sp.), Johnny-jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*) and an occasional lupine (*Lupinus* sp.). Further down the road you will encounter a slope where sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*) is beginning to fill the small hillside grassland. As you continue up the hill, California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are just beginning to open their golden buds, and if you look up on Grass Mountain, you will see large patches of purple lupine (*Lupinus* sp.). Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill climb include goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.), shooting stars

(*Dodecatheon* sp.), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). At Vista Point, stop and photograph the beautiful chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) in bloom; and in the serpentine area across the road, you'll see California poppies and shooting stars in great numbers. It is a little early for bloom as the summit, but as you head back down the mountain into Happy Canyon, survey the hills for the stunning cream colors of the buck brush and wild lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.). Just beyond the campground, you will see the vibrant, red-orange Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) adorning the rocky hillside. A little further down the road, yellow coreopsis (*Leptosyne* sp.) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are starting to make themselves visible.

Peak displays of California lilac (*Ceanothus*), tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii* and *D. rigida.*), flannelbush (*Fremontodendron* species and cultivars), and several different species of native sages (*Salvia* spp.) currently dominate the landscape of the [Santa Barbara Botanic Garden](#). The Desert Section near the Garden entrance currently features fairy dusters (*Calliandra eriophylla*), desert marigolds (*Baileya* sp.), and Shaw's agave (*Agave shawii*). The iconic Meadow Section is beginning to show patches of meadow foam (*Limnanthes* spp.), verbena (*Verbena lilacina*), pitcher sage (*Salvia spathacea*), canyon gooseberry (*Ribes menziesii*), and the first patches of bright orange California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), all collectively framed by a backdrop of La Cumbre Peak and the Santa Ynez Mountains. Most of these species, in addition to patches of blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) can be found along the Garden's Porter Trail, which also offers, on a clear day, a splendid view of the northern Channel Islands. Along the edge of the Meadow Section, one can find the rare bird bush (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*) in full bloom, with an understory of brilliant pink alumroot (*Heuchera*) cultivars.

As long as we are featuring botanic gardens, here are a couple more beauties to visit.

At [Descanso Gardens](#) in La Cañada-Flintridge, the native wildflowers growing in the California Garden are proudly wearing their State colors of blue and gold. The bright baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), tidy tips, (*Layia platyglossa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) are spread around the showy flowering perennials, golden currant (*Ribes aureum*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), and monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*). Lilac verbena (*Verbena lilacina*) and sages (*Salvia* spp.) add lavender hues to the landscape.

Have out-of-town family visiting for spring break? Take them out to [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic](#) Garden in Claremont and immerse yourselves in a full spring experience. Near the entrance California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*) stand out among the still showy but fading blues of the many different ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.) and red-pink Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*). Tall spikes of creamy white flowers on the yucca (*Yucca whipplei*) and beargrass (*Nolina parryi*) rise above this colorful scenery. There are native trees and shrubs displayed here that you would have to drive many miles to see in the wild. The golden flannel bush, (*Fremontodendron californicum*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and white bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica*) are the showiest among them. Enjoy the grand impressionistic displays of coral bells (*Heuchera* spp. and cultivars), and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) gathered under the shade of oaks.

An updated report at Circle X Ranch in the [Santa Monica Mountains](#) takes us along the Canyon View Trail – the trail less traveled. There is an excellent diversity of habitats along this quiet path that will present you with delightful wildflower sightings. Highlights among the showy annuals include twining

snapdragon (*Antirrhinum kelloggii*), collarless California poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), Parry's phacelia (*Phacelia parryi*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), blue larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.) and shooting stars (*Dodecatheon* sp.). Also, get a look-see before they disappear for the year—the California peony (*Paeonia californica*).



**Twining snapdragon. Photo by Michael Charters**

Over at the [Placerita Canyon Natural Area](#), the wild lilacs and bush poppies are coloring up the Los Pinetos Trail. Look for the hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*), hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) and chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) at their peak bloom. In contrast to all the blue, the bright yellow bush poppies stand out. This is a wonderful area for a family outing.



**Chaparral whitethorn at Placerita. Photo by Ron Kraus**

The desert habitat garden at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) in Cudahy is at peak bloom NOW! The riotous color explosion includes goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), owls clover (*Castilleja* sp.), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), thistle sage (*Salvia carduacea*), Canterbury bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Mojave lupine (*Lupinus ordoratus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), desert gold poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), desert chicory (*Rafinesquia neomexicana*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), and desert pincushion (*Chaenactis fremontii*). The central habitat garden has many wildflowers, but the perennial paintbrushes (*Catilleja* spp.), and bush poppies (*Dendromecon harfordii*) stand out even more. The garden in front of the family clinic has all the wildflowers listed above as well as showy woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) and prickly poppy (*Argemone* sp.). Visitors are welcome to visit the campus and enjoy the flowers from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. They need a visitor pass from the Main Office. The school is located in Cudahy on Elizabeth Street between Atlantic Blvd and Wilcox Ave. Travel further south along the coast and stop at the [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach to enjoy the display of chaparral shrubs in full bloom along the Center's many tranquil trails. Bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron mexicanum*), California coast brittlebush (*Encelia californica*), and desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) are guaranteed to arouse a sunny cheer in you. Also enjoy chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) and the many wild lilac species (*Ceanothus* spp.) providing waves of pink, green and blue color. Everyone loves the giant purple flowers of the Island bush

mallow (*Malva assurgentiflora*), and the perfummy aroma of Catalina currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*). Some other favorites are purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), wild rose (*Rosa californica*) and purple nightshade (*Solanum xantii*).

If your drive has you continuing down the coast to San Diego, stop at [Torrey Pines State Natural Preserve](#) for a hike and picnic. There, warty-stem ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*) and coast brittlebush (*Encelia californica*) will avert your attention from the spectacular ocean views. Also along the trails you can find pink sand verbena (*Abronia* spp.), pure white milk maids ([Cardamine californica](#)), yellow sea dahlia (*Leptosyne* [Coreopsis] *maritima*) and pretty, bright paintbrushes (*Castilleja* spp.). You need not travel out to the Mojave desert to see flowering Mojave yucca (*Yucca schidigera*). Enjoy it among the Torrey Pines! This is a lovely park in our treasure chest of State Parks and Beaches.

Wildflowers continue to be good at [Harford Springs Preserve](#) in Western Riverside County. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are blooming in large patches on several hillsides with California bells (*Phacelia minor*), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* spp.) and cream cups (*Platystemmon californicus*) plentiful beside the trails. Chia (*Salvia columbariae*) is abundant but shorter in stature this year. Chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) and Fremont's lilies (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) are up next to junipers in the grassy slopes near Ida Leona Road. There are patches of baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and patches of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) in the shade of the magnificent junipers as well. Ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*) are in the southern part of the park for the first time in several years.

The [Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve](#) has some additional spring flowers starting this week and the hiking weather is perfect. Growing among ground pinks (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*) and California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are yellow carpet (*Blennosperm nanum*), very robust red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*), and goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*). In the grassy meadows and slopes, you should be able to spot blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*) and blue dicks, (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). The show-stopping chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are also scattered around. Among the chaparral shrubs you will find bush monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), and the very pretty Eastwood Manzanita (*Arcostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *zacaensis*), and purple sanicle (*Sanuicula bipinnatifida*). Look in shaded areas along the trails for milk maids (*Cardamine californica*), Western buttercups (*Ranunculus occidentalis*), violets (*Viola douglassii*) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata* ssp. *mexicana*). The bush lupines (*Lupinus excubitus* var. *hallii*) are spectacular and the pink-red San Diego pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*) is twining over shrubs here and there. The SRP has many **fragile** soils, lichens and plants. Please stay on the trails to take pictures of flowers.

In the [Cleveland National Forest](#) the grasslands and adjacent areas near Elsinore Peak in the Southern Santa Ana Mountains are showing very good color this week and are highly recommended. There are abundant annuals. Some of the early annuals include fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), red maids, (*Calandrinia ciliata*), evening primrose (*Camissoniopsis* sp.), chaparral gilia (*Gilia angelensis*), goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), ground pink (*Linanthus dianthiflorus*), deervetch (*Acmispon maritimus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii* var. *menziesii*), and Johnny-jump-up (*Viola pedunculata* ssp. *pedunculata*). With some careful hunting the very rare little Hammitt's claycress (*Sibaropsis hammittii*) can also be located. Chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*) are especially well represented this year and are in perfect bloom now. Flowering perennials include lots of wild onion

(*Allium haematochiton*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), wild celery (*Lomatium dasycarpum* ssp. *dasycarpum*), California peony (*Paeonia californica*), buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), purple sanicle (*Sanicula bipinnatifida*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).

[Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) wildflowers are still sparse and tiny. Entering the park down the Montezuma grade (S22) will offer up sightings of desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) with a few ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) rising above them. Along the road at Yaqui Pass look for creosote (*Larrea tridentata*), desert brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and lots of desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). The nicest hikes will be in the canyons and washes above 1000 ft. in the northern part of the park and above 2000 ft. in the southern end of the park. Walking the PCT north of scissors crossing at SR 78 will offer up some nice little blossoms.

In [Joshua Tree National Park](#), the wildflower bloom is developing nicely in Cottonwood Canyon and on the Bajada Trail with more than 30 species reported, although just a few of each. You will need to get out of the car and hike around to appreciate the diversity of flowering plants. Brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) and desert pea (*Hoffmannseggia microphylla*) are the showy shrubs that can be seen along the road. Annuals that you will encounter hiking in Cottonwood wash include white stem blazing star (*Mentzelia albicaulis*), brown-eyed primrose, (*Chylismia claviformis*), for-get-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.) and my personal favorite, desert star (*Monoptilon bellioides*).

Traveling south of JTNP through Box Springs Canyon, pull off the road and explore the washes and canyons. Tucked around crevices and rocky canyon walls are a few hardy annuals like little golden poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), notch-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), ghost flower, (*Mohavea confertiflora*) and desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*). Perennials include chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), desert pea (*Hoffmannseggia microphylla*) Mecca aster (*Xylorhiza cognata*), desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) and sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*). There are no great displays of color, but enough interest to enjoy a short hike and picture-taking.

Reports from the [Bureau of Land Management Office in Needles](#) indicate that there are flowers along the highways between I-15 and I-40 and I-95 in the eastern Mojave. Sand vebena (*Abronia villosa*), dune evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), notch-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia crenulata*) and desert encelia (*Encelia farinosa*) are all visible from the highways.



**Who let the dogs out? Eastern Mojave Desert; sand verbena, dune primrose and canines**

In [Death Valley National Park](#) flowers are starting to appear in the south end of the park in the area between Jubilee Pass and Salsberry pass. Already there are signs of life with Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*), small flowered poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), desert sunflower (*Geraea canescens*), Panamint forget-me-not (*Cryptantha angustifolia*), evening primroses (*Chylisma claviformis* and *Chylisma brevipes*) in bloom, along with perennials such as bur sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) and creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*). Park off the pavement and take a hike to enjoy all the little beauties.

For those of you wondering about [Carrizo Plain](#), the report is that due to low rainfall, very little is flowering there now. Keep fingers crossed for the next few weeks.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 29** 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](mailto: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.**

**10<sup>th</sup> 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**

Mary Lou 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](#)

**Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden**

**March 30 and 31 Annual Wildflower Festival (Free with Garden**



admission). Wildflower Festival indoor exhibition is open from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### **Garden Tours**

Weekends, March 23 through June 9, 1 p.m.

Guided walking tours with Garden nature interpreters featuring beautiful California wildflowers and seasonal highlights. Free with standard Garden admission.

### **California Native Plant Society Chapters**

[CNPS-San Diego Chapter](#)

**March 30 - Public Plant Hike - Sunday**

**San Diego National Wildlife Refuge**

[More information](#)

[CNPS – Orange County Chapter](#)

Field Trip: **March 31, Sunday. 8:00 am** Elsinore Peak Region, Santa Ana Mountains. Go to [OCCNPS Field Trips](#) for more information.

[CNPS – Channel Islands Chapter](#)

March 30, 9 am – 12:30 pm Nature hike on Sulphur Mt., Ventura County. See [calendar](#) of activities for chapter for more information.

### **[Harford Springs Preserve](#)**

**March 23.** 9:00 am – 12:30 pm \$2/person

**Wildflower walks** are being offered through Hidden Valley Nature Center-Reservations required. **Call 951.785-7452.** Parking is at the entrance on Gavilan Road.