

WILD FLOWER HOTLINE

MARCH – MAY 2023

Celebrating
40
Years



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 on-line 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.

MARCH 31, 2023

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

While super 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...

- ✿ Stay on designated trails
- ✿ Share the trails; be respectful of others
- ✿ Visit on weekdays and/or off-peak hours, if possible
- ✿ Do not collect or trample wildflowers
- ✿ Remember your experience(s) through photos

We were hit by heavy rain again this week, but my 10-day forecast tells me no more rain in the near future and that warmer temperatures are on the way. Its finally Spring in SoCal! It will be a perfect weekend to purchase native wildflowers at the Theodore Payne Foundation's Poppy Day sale. See details at end of this report.

LOW DESERT REGION

Before descending down into Anza Borrego Desert State Park once again, there has been confusion among our readers, and I want to clarify between State Route 22 and California State Highway S-22. State Route 22 goes east/west through Orange and LA counties basically from Santa Ana to Long Beach and is called the Garden Grove Frwy. State Highway S-22 is a 50-mile highway that leads from the mountains of east San Diego County through Anza Borrego and ends at the Salton Sea. Check out this [video](#) about the hidden history of S-22.

The bloom is STILL very good in most of Anza Borrego. Descending into the [Anza Borrego Desert](#) on State Highway S-22, be prepared to be amazed as you travel through the Culp Valley area. The roadside is filled with desert apricot (*Prunus fremontii*) in full bloom! The display of ephemeral blush pink to white blossoms creates a "cherry blossom festival-like scene." Further down the Montezuma Grade, Nature waved her magic wand, filling hillsides with "gold dust" of yellow Parish's poppies (*Eschscholzia parishii*) in full bloom from about 2000 feet elevation

to the desert floor. Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) is popping into bloom on the roadsides along the Grade as well. Peak bloom for brittlebush will be in the near future. Once in Anza Borrego State Park the destination will be Borrego Palm Canyon. The campground is where the trailhead to Borrego Palm Canyon begins. As the trail leads away from the campground, you soon spot, or rather smell, the fields of narrow leaved Johnstonella (*Johnstonella angustifolia*). The delightful fragrance emitted from masses of these plants will have you raving about it to friends at parties long after the plant has gone to seed. There are bountiful displays of annual flowers throughout the hike. There is a field of common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) mixed with wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*) which is so artistic a hiker titled it "A study in blue". One normally unassuming plant called sea muilla (*Muilla maritima*) has small greenish-white flowers, but when the stamens open to visiting pollinators, what is revealed is dazzling neon-turquoise pollen. Taking all nature's beauty in is not for the faint of heart!

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Top: Johnstonella (*Johnstonella angustifolia*), plant and flowers, Bigelow's monkeyflower (*Diplacus bigloveii*).
Middle: Sea muilla (*Muilla maritima*), common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*) mixed with wild canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*).
Bottom: Canyon wall scene with Parish's poppies (*Eschscholzia parishii*).
Photos by Tom Chester and Don Rideout.

Good to great bloom now at Anza. Borrego Palm, Rockhouse, Butler and Harper Canyons and the Cactus Gardens, an area dense with blooming cacti north of end of pavement of DiGorgio Rd. Some trails take you through washes where flowers are overwhelming in size and quantity. Butler Canyon hosts Parish's poppies filling spaces everywhere between boulders coloring the canyon walls yellow. Big flowering annuals are everywhere. In normal years it would be absurd to call most desert wildflowers "big," but do not take the word "big" as hyperbole this year. Annual wildflowers of most species are both larger and denser. Water is flowing in channels and straits of some washes which adds to the drama.

SOUTHERN SIERRA FOOTHILLS

This region we first reported on last week is still very good as well. Take a hike up Case Mountain Road and the Salt Creek trail near the community of Three Rivers to observe some breathtaking landscape. The terrain here is carpeted mostly with two kinds of flowers—the rusty haired popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) and Eastwood's fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*). The white popcorn flowers and gold fiddlenecks are enjoying their place in the sun. Soon, the oak trees

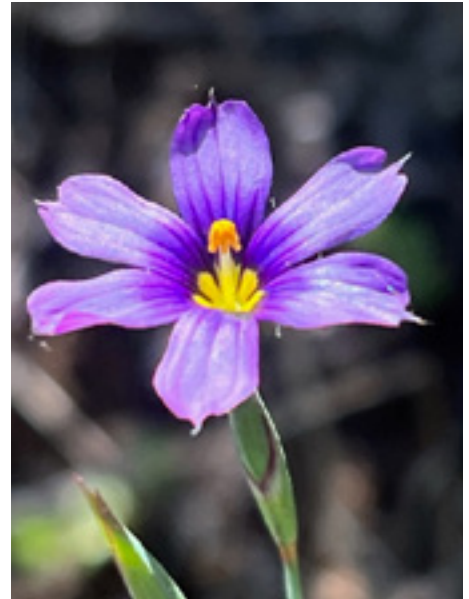
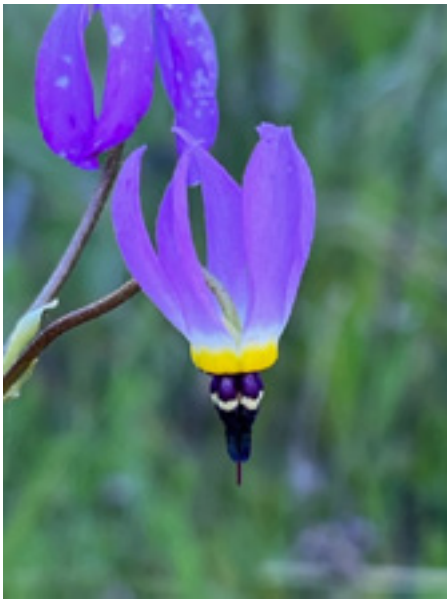
(*Quercus douglasii*) in this woodland will leaf out, throwing shade and stealing the wildflowers' vital sunlight. Nature definitely gives us awesome things to ponder. The white blossoms of popcorn flowers are only about 1/2 inch in size. In order to blanket so much area as to make it look like a light snowfall, imagine the number of single flowers needed to put on such a show. Wait, there's more to this dramatic scenery! The silver leaf bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) with their tall spikes of blue flowers can be found occasionally interrupting this domination of white popcorn flowers and gold fiddlenecks. Just coming into bloom, and soon will replace the white and gold colors along this trail, is hot pink bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and shades of blue provided by wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and spider lupines (*Lupinus benthamii*), all accompanied by swathes of yellow foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*). Rocks and boulders are crusted with lime green, orange, golden and copper-colored lichens. Pretty little bird's foot ferns (*Pellaea mucronata*) are tucked in rock crevices. The skinny plants with tall stems of maroon and butter yellow flowers—Coulter's jewel flower (*Caulanthus coulteri*) love the soils around these rocky areas too. Finally, the majestic white leaf manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) are in full bloom with clusters of pink urn shaped flowers. In the background of all this beauty you can gaze upon the cascading Falls of Salt Creek.



Bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), white leaf manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos viscida*), Coulter's jewel flower (*Caulanthus coulteri*), bird's foot fern (*Pellaea mucronata*) with wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Rusty haired popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) and Eastwood's fiddleneck (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) in oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland. Photos by Mike Wall.

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

There are many lovely trails in the Santa Monica Mountains, but this week, Nicholas Flat via Decker School Road near Malibu is full of wildflowers. Along this loop trail you experience spectacular mountain and ocean vistas. At some spots along the trail, you can see the Channel Islands off the coast. The flora includes a diversity of flowering plants almost year-round. There is a large pond along the trail as well. This week you can enjoy seeing chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*), Padre's shooting stars (*Primula clevelandii*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*), and fields of fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) and blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*). Pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*) is climbing up on taller shrubs to show off its pretty pink flowers.



Padre's shooting star (*Primula clevelandii*), chocolate lilies (*Fritillaria biflora*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*). Photos by Joseph Brooks.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

The Hillside Trail at [Placerita Canyon Nature Center](#) is the best to walk on this week until the creek subsides on the Ecology Trail and storm related damage is repaired on the Canyon Trail. Staff and volunteers report that the seasonal flowering cycle of spring plants seems to be about 1 month later than usual. White flowering hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and

blue flowering cousin hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) don't seem to mind that Pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*) and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) are crawling up on them to get out of the mud and into the sunshine. Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia* var. *agrifolia*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) are enjoying their respite from the drought. Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia* sp.), popcorn flowers (*Plagiobothrys* sp) and lacepod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*) are avoiding getting pelted by raindrops by tucking themselves under shrubs and trees. Go see these and more at Placerita Canyon.



Pacific pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*). Photo by Joseph Brooks.

This week at the [California Botanic Garden](#) in Claremont, its everything, everywhere, all at once in regarding native wildflowers! In sunny places along the Mesa pathways, look for patches of cheerful blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and its cousin fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*). Some new arrivals include the Island morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia*) and desert globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*). So many flowers, so little time. Visit often to catch the magical spring bloom. There is a splendid mix of colors too from shades of purple, orange, pinks, reds, and blues. Overall, a beautiful sight.



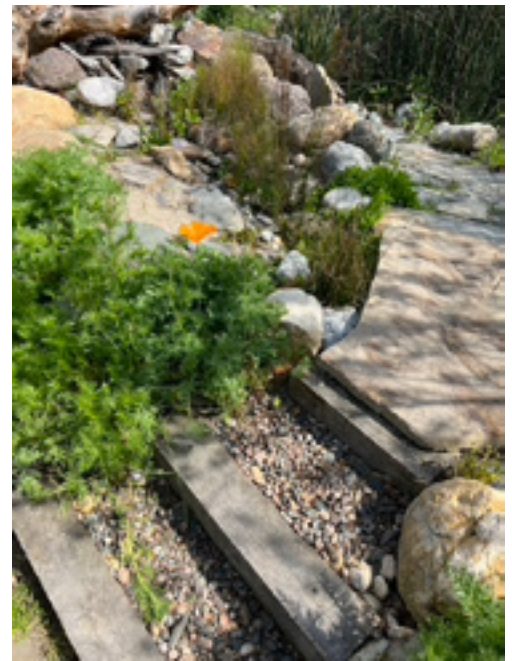
Desert globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) with blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), Island morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia*). Photos by Mahima Dixit.

Poppies at the [Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve](#) are waiting for warmer temperatures to assemble their spectacular show of color but you can monitor the progress via the live [PoppyCam](#). The regional desert neighborhoods around the Reserve are fields of wildflowers

URBAN LONG BEACH & LOS ANGELES

Sunday, April 2nd is the annual Open House for Prisk Native Plant Garden. Prisk is a weedy-empty-lot-to-a-rich-native-plant-garden story played out over 28 years. The author of the story is Mike Letteriello, Director/Steward of the garden. He said rain and cool temperatures have delayed the bloom somewhat, but on Sunday, after a few days of sunshine, plants will be popping with the fresh colors of spring for new and recurring visitors. Yes, I said recurring visitors! Returning again and again, they have watched the remarkable evolution of the garden from the planting of a small, now mature Island Oak (*Quercus tomentella*) to the installation of the newest feature—a waterfall, stream and pond system that anchors the Garden’s riparian habitat. Walkways weave through the garden allowing visitors to experience plants of California’s rock-strewn desert washes, iconic chaparral, oak woodlands, and wildflower-rich meadows. Some of the plants are also from California’s Channel Islands. The “backbone” plants include trees, shrubs and perennials representing the habitats from which they come. California ceanothus species (*Ceanothus spinosus*) and cultivars (C. ‘Ray Hartman’, C. ‘Joyce Coulter’, C. ‘Concha’), flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum* ‘Butano Ridge’), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Island mallow hybrid (*Lavatera* ‘Purissima’) are just a few of the backbone plants. Perennials include various species of monkeyflower (*Diplacus auriantiacus*) and monkeyflower cultivars (*Diplacus* ‘Jelly Bean’ forms), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*), sage cultivars (*Salvia* ‘Dara’s Choice’), and (*Salvia* ‘Bee’s Bliss’), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), Gooding’s verbena (*Verbena goodingii*), canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) and pitcher sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*).

Annual wildflowers are bountiful. In addition to the “usual suspects” of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), there are meadow foam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), five spot (*Nemophila maculata*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), tansy-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), Mojave bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), desert fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata*), and several others. Mike says, “Ignore the occasional lush weed not yet yanked”! For further information and directions, see the Wild Flower Events listing at the end of this report.



Exploring our “lupine patch” with a Girl Scout “docent” at the Garden. California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*). Thoughtful use of stone and reclaimed wood materials (*Juniperus californica*) in garden pathways; Streambed and pond rockwork with plantings of various rushes, sedges and other water loving plants. Photos by David Berman.

New wildflowers at [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) continue to join the visual cacophony of the spring 2023 bloom! Desert Garden plants include catclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*) blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pools area contains truncate-leaf lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), owl’s clover (*Castilleja exserta*), otay mountain lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia* var. *otayensis*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), fringe-pod (*Thysanocarpus curvipes*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), yellow-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). **All the vernal pools are full and teeming with fairy shrimp and other ephemeral creatures!** Additional species in their Chaparral Garden include matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), woolly paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevini*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematociton*), 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. For a more immersive visit Tuesday - Friday, contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via [email: gtn5586@lausd.net](mailto:gtn5586@lausd.net). His conference period is 10:30am - 12:20pm. Or a visit can be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.



The Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) are back! Photo by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 7** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern California wildflower regions to visit.

NATIVE PLANT AND WILD FLOWER EVENTS

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

POPPY DAYS SPRING SALE | MARCH 31-APRIL 1 | 8:30AM-4:30PM

Create an at-home superbloom! We'll have a great selection of colorful annuals and other beautiful spring wildflowers.

Members receive a 15% discount and nonmembers receive a 10% discount on all plants, seeds, and TPF gear.

RSVP for parking: poppydays.eventbrite.com

PRISK NATIVE GARDEN OPEN HOUSE | APRIL 2 | 1 - 4 PM | FREE ADMISSION

Prisk Native Garden Open House is April 2, from 1 to 4 p.m. Admission free. Donations gladly accepted. The garden is on the grounds of William F. Prisk Elementary School, 2375 Fanwood Ave. in Long Beach. The garden is behind the school proper, at the corner of East Los Arcos Street and Albury Avenue. Look for the large Prisk Native Garden banner high on the fence. No restrooms. For guests, especially "overflow" guests, games and refreshments available at the playground and in the Learning Arbor adjacent to the Garden. Take the Palo Verde exit south off the 405 in Long Beach.

Details at: [Prisk Native Garden](#)

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR | APRIL 15-16 | 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Experience the superbloom in the city! Buy your tickets today for exclusive access to 37 exemplary gardens across LA County, including 18 gardens new to the tour, as well as our favorite returning gardens, new videos, and a podcast.

Details at: nativeplantgardentour.org

LA TIMES FESTIVAL OF BOOKS | APRIL 22-23

Theodore Payne Foundation is honored to join latimesplants at the LA Times Festival of Books.

Stop by our booth for info and inspiration!

Details at: events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks