Theodore Payne Foundation, a non-profit plant nursery, seed source, book store, and education center dedicated to the preservation of wild flowers and California native plants. This a report for **March 16th, 2018**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May. This is the 35th year of the Wildflower Hotline!

Seedlings have popped up in our favorite viewing spots from Carrizo Plain to Anza Borrego. The tiny plants however, are very hesitant to grow more and bloom; probably sensing the weather is up to yet another devious trick like a heat wave in April!

**Descanso Gardens** in La Canada-Flintridge is showing lots of spring color starting with the fabulous, fragrant lilac verbena (*Verbena* cultivars). Woolly-blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), the large, golden flowers of flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* cultivars), and the apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) are just beginning their spring parade of color as well. The subtle beauty and fragrance of Island currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*) scents the air around the Redwood rest area. The fluffy pink/red flowered fairy dusters (*Calliandra* spp.) are in full flower in the Desert Garden. Just follow the hummingbirds. They know exactly where the fairydusters are! **Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden** in Claremont is bursting blue with a multitude of ceanothus.

*Baja fairyduster* (*Calliandra californica*). Photo by George Nanoski
Enjoy the lovely combination of sea breezes, salt air and fragrant blooms at the The Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach. The nature center has many different habitat areas, each showing off their own collection of natives. Nevin’s barberry (Berberis nevinii) anchors the Coastal Sage Scrub area with it’s clusters of yellow flowers loved by hummingbirds. The Western redbud (Cercis occidentalis) is an elegant pink lady in the shady Oak Woodland, and the Island mallow (Lavatera assurgentiflora) has large purple flowers dancing on its outstretched branches. Sugarbush (Rhus ovata) in the Chaparral Garden is displaying it’s tiny clusters of sticky pink flowers bursting forth from rain-washed foliage. The encelia sisters, California encelia (Encelia californica), and desert encelia (Encelia farinosa) show off their bright yellow sunflowers along with patches of blue-eyed grass (Sisyrinchium bellum) on the nature center’s pathways.

Spring has been slow to emerge at Placerita Canyon, but along the Ecology Trail, the perennials are heralding the coming of annual wildflowers. The bright red fuchsia flowering gooseberry (Ribes speciosum) is in bloom in the Hummingbird Garden where the tiny jeweled birds are feasting on the sweet nectar. Its botanical cousin, the chaparral currant (Ribes malvaceum), is covered with flowers in various shades of pink. The always-reliable white flowers of the wild cucumber (Marah macrocarpa) are abundant along the trail as the vine climbs over and under the trees and shrubs. The California Sagebrush (Artemisia californica) plants are flush with fresh foliage and the rose-colored buds of sugar bush (Rhus ovata) are awaiting the warmer weather of late spring to bloom. Hoary-leaf ceanothus (Rhamnus crassifolius) is cloaked in tiny creamy white flowers and fill the air with the sweet, familiar scent of ceanothus. The shy California peony (Paeonia californica) hiding among protective shrubs, will be opening its burgundy flowers very soon.

Hoary leaf ceanothus (Ceanothus crassifolius). Photo by RuihAnne Murthy
At the Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve SRA, poppy plants (*Eschscholzia californica*) are still small with a few buds, but the recent rain will give them a better chance of surviving to flower. Currently, the perennial grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) is in bloom at the top of Tehachapi Vista Point trail. Although it won’t be a “super bloom” this year, it is definitely looking better for the coming weeks.

Elizabeth Learning Center in the city of Cudahy has flowers blooming in all three of its Habitat Gardens. The Desert Garden includes showy perennials like catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*) brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), as well as some pretty annuals, Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). Blooming in the rain refreshed Vernal Pool Garden is Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Some additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), torhleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), channel island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), and Orcutt’s hazardia (*Hazardia orcutti*). 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.
That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, March 23rd 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**

**Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale**  
*Saturday, March 24, 8:30 am-4:30 pm*
An annual celebration of our State flower and huge native plant sale, offering the region’s largest and most interesting selection of California native plants.

**15th Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour**  
*Saturday & Sunday, April 14 & 15, 2018  10:00 am – 5:00 pm*
Tickets On Sale Now  
Full details at [http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/](http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/)

**Native Plant Symposium, Wildflower Show & Plant Sale**  
*Saturday, April 7, 2018 - 9am-4pm*
Sepulveda Garden Center

The Symposium features speakers, wild flower displays, and plant sales throughout the day. This is an annual event of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains chapter of CNPS with the Theodore Payne Foundation.

Full details at: [https://www.lasmmcnps.org/](https://www.lasmmcnps.org/)

**Los Angeles County Natural History Museum**

**SATURDAY STROLLS IN THE NATURE GARDENS**  
*Sat. April 14 (second Saturdays, Feb.-July, 2018)  9:30-11 am*

The theme will be plant selection and appreciation with an emphasis on attracting garden wildlife. Free with Museum entrance. Register via 213-763-3499 Nature Gardens Director, Carol Bornstein, will lead walks with a view to plant selection and wildlife attraction.