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 23rd, 2018**. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May. This is the 35th year of the Wildflower Hotline!

At this time last year, the “super bloom” had peaked and was fast fading. This year, we are still waiting for any kind of bloom. Reports are hopeful for at least a moderate bloom in April and May. Timing is everything when it comes to our California wildflowers.

**Pinnacles National Park** has finally received some regular rainfall, but the usual things you would see this time of year will be tardy to flower. However, many lovely things that usually bloom a little earlier are making a show now. Look for a sure harbinger of Spring, the Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*) in the Oak Woodland areas of the Park. The lace parsnip (*Lomatium dasycarpum ssp. dasycarpum*), Fremont’s star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) are showing up with baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*) and shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii var. patulum*). The buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) with its white to lavender flowers and silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons var. albifrons*) scent the air with a lovely fragrance. Probably the best find will be the checker lily (*Fritillaria affinis*). Look for it along the Old Pinnacles Trail on shaded north-facing slopes.

**Buckbrush (Ceanothus cuneatus) and lace parsnip (Lomatium dasycarpum ssp. dasycarpum). Photos by Michael Charters.**

Probably shouldn’t give up yet on **Anza Borrego Desert State Park**. There has been no rain in the low elevations, but in some of the higher elevation canyons,
there has been some rain recorded. Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) and desert encelia (*Encelia farinosa*) are pretty true bloomers with a little moisture, but annuals are small this year and tucked away where the soil can hold water for a time. Flowers can be seen here and there in Coyote Canyon, Box Canyon and the washes running west from Collins Valley (Salvador Canyon, Sheep’s Canyon). They popped up after the January rain and are fading now, but may be given an extended life from recent moisture. There is also good germination at the end of Di Giorgio Rd. so maybe a small bloom of various flowers will appear in April. You'll have to work for it by hiking up the washes to search. No pretty pics of flower fields from the car!

Report from the [Carrizo Plain National Monument](https://www.nps.gov/capr/index.htm) is a hopeful “it’s greening up and there is water in Soda Lake” after 1.7 inches of rain this week. It’s too early for much bloom, but if you can't wait to go, be wary of impassable muddy and slick roads. Soda Lake Road is the best, but still has some slick areas on the unpaved roadway.

The folks at [Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve SRA](https://www.nps.gov/avpp/index.htm), are guardedly predicting a “moderate” poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) bloom. Plants are still small but the recent rain will encourage flowering soon. Currently, the perennial grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) is in bloom at the top of Tehachapi Vista Point trail. Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) and wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) have also appeared along the Tehachapi and Vista Point trails.

![Grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*). Photo by Michael Charters](https://example.com/lupinus-excubitus.jpg)

Along the Ecology Trail at [Placerita Canyon](https://www.nps.gov/plca/index.htm), you will see an array of hardy flowering natives. The bright red fuchsia flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), the chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*), and the interesting
climbing vine of wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) are abundant along the trail. Feast your eyes as well on the rose-colored buds and flowers of sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*). Hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Rhamnus crassifolius*) is cloaked in tiny creamy white flowers and the California peony (*Paeonia californica*) is opening its lovely burgundy flowers. Many of the purple nightshade (*Solanum* sp.) have also recently come in to bloom. A guide will take you on a walk this Saturday to help you identify these natives.

The *Environmental Nature Center* in Newport Beach has many trails leading to flowering natives. Among the most showy is the Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) with pink-red flowers cloaking the branches throughout. The sugarbush (*Rhus ovata*) makes a handsome partner to that lady in pink. Also blooming nicely in that pink-red hue is the Baja desert rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and the fuchsia-flowering gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*). Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) and red monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus var. puniceus*), add their warm yellows, oranges and reds to the color rainbow; with wild lilac (*Ceanothus* spp. and cultivars), Munz’s sage (*Salvia munzii*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) contributing shades of blue.

Elizabeth Learning Center benefited from copious rains this week that have the flowers blooming in all three of their Habitat Gardens. The Desert Garden includes catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot
mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha sp.*), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), skeleton milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), five-needle pricklyleaf (*Thymophylla pentachaeta*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pool Garden contains Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), spinescrub (*Adolphia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*), Orcutt’s quillwort (*Isoetes orcutti*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Some additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolaria*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), torhleaf goldeneye (*Viguiera lacinia*), 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 30th** 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.

**Fire-wise Garden Tour, co-hosted by Mountains Restoration Trust & Theodore Payne Foundation**  
*Saturday, April 7, 10:00am-4:00pm*  
A self-driven journey to three fire-wise homes and native plant landscapes in Calabasas. Tickets: $5 [www.mountainstrust.org](http://www.mountainstrust.org)

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

**Placerita Canyon Natural Area**  
*Blooms of the Season hike.*  
*Saturday, March 24 at 9:30 am. Meet at the Nature Center.*

**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.