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 9th, 2018. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May. This is the 35th year of the Wildflower Hotline!

Not the “March Miracle” we hoped for, but still it’s moisture falling from the sky. Our hope is that the high elevations in mountain foothills will respond in kind to the late season rain/snow and warmer temperatures. Remember that the hunt is often more fun than the find!

At Pinnacles National Park in our Coast Ranges, some perennial natives are still showy. The big berry manzanita (Arctostaphylos glauca) is fading in bloom, but the large berries are as impressive to see as the clusters of flowers. Hillside gooseberry (Ribes californicum) is also fruiting instead of flowering, something the berry-eating bird population has been anticipating! The bush poppy (Dendromecon rigida) is still in good bloom, as is the woolly paintbrush (Castilleja foliolarosa). The blue colors you see belong to the baby-blue-eyes (Nemophila memziesii var. menziesii) and blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum). You may also see some pockets of shooting stars (Dodecatheon clevelandii ssp. patulum) along the high peak trails.
In our Southern desert parks like Anza Borrego, south portion of Joshua Tree and areas in the Coachella Valley, it may be a case of too little rain, too late. Some good moisture in the coming weeks may bring on the bloom in the High Desert regions—Death Valley, the Mojave Preserve and environs. Fingers crossed, everyone.

**Anza Borrego Desert State Park** has a dry desert floor, with only a few scattered perennials like the desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), desert encelia (*Encelia farinosa*) flowering sparsely. If you are willing to hike and scramble up some of the canyon washes to around 3000 ft., you may get a glimpse of some flowers benefitting from moisture around boulders and rocks; but don’t go with high expectations of great (or any!) blooms.

News from the **Carrizo Plain National Monument** is that the received about 0.5 inches of rain with more in the forecast for this weekend. Let’s hope some magic happens in the next few weeks!

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.

**Placerita Nature Center** visitors are enjoying a few of the first-of-season flowers along their Ecology trail. Look for gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) and currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). They won’t be around for too long. Also find hoary-leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) in full bloom. Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.) black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*), California Peony (*Paenoia californica*) and Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*) are also flowering now.

![Chaparrla currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). Photo by RuthAnne Murthy](image)
To satisfy your wildflower fix, you probably want to visit our popular Southern California botanical gardens: Descanso Gardens, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, South Coast Botanic Garden, and the Theodore Payne Foundation! Descanso has a Native Plant and Oak Woodland area. South Coast has natives throughout the gardens but can be seen specifically in the Mediterranean Garden and in the El Rincon Garden. I know that Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont has some seasonal beauties along their trails. I have been told that bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), sugarbush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Catalina Island currant (*Ribes virburnifolium*) and other currants and gooseberries (*Ribes* spp.) are flowering along with ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) plus a few manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.). Of course you will see (and buy!) plenty of flowers at the Theodore Payne Foundation annual plant sale in a couple of weeks. (See more info below.)

Still too cool to go to the beach, but perfect weather to enjoy The Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach. The nature center is welcoming you with some colorful blooms. Some along the trails this week include: Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), fuchsia flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), and lovely patches of blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).

At the Elizabeth Learning Center, the Habitat Gardens are re-wilding the city of Cudahy with their chaparral, desert, and vernal pool ecosystems; and despite the dry winter many species are beginning to flower! Desert species include catsclaw (*Senegalia greggii*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird’s eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter’s lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). Their vernal pool area contains Menzies’ fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), wart stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), boxthorn (*Lycium californicum*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), and vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*). 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*), threaleaf 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 15th 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](http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/)

Full details at [http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/](http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/)

**California Native Plant Society Hikes & Events**

Always read the trip outlines for meeting/gathering places, parking/entrance fees or pass requirements and be sure the trips fit your physical abilities. **Trips change. Always check the web page for current information.**

**Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter**

*Saturday, March 17, 2017, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm – Elizabeth Learning Center, Cudahy. Field Trip*- Take this special opportunity to explore
these beautiful Habitat Gardens. Lots of variety of natives from all over Southern California. Many rare species as well. Please RSVP at raefuentes@gmail.com

**Orange County Chapter**

Casper's Wilderness Park, Sunday, March 11, 8:00 – 11:00 am

**Los Angeles County Natural History Museum**

**SATURDAY STROLLS IN THE NATURE GARDENS**

Sat. March 10 & 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.