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 10, 2017. New reports will be posted each Friday through the end of May.

Now finally, the weather is warming and the little germinated wild flower seedlings, anticipating visits from their insect pollinators, are starting to flower. I always urge you to visit the websites just before you take a trip to any of these places to ensure conditions are favorable for visitors.

Carrizo Plain National Monument is a very special place to visit for spectacular views of incredible landscape and great carpets of wildflowers in good years. No “carpets” of flowers yet, but good reports of blooms along Soda Lake Road around the KCL Campground, and in the valley floor. Look for goldfields (Lasthenia sp.), baby-blue-eyes (Nemophila menziesii) at Soda Lake Overlook, and small patches of common hillside daisies (Monolopia lanceolata) at Selby Campground. Milkvetch (Astragalus lentiginosus var. nigricalycis), is beginning to flower throughout the region. In the Great Valley, valley phacelia (Phacelia ciliata) can be found in spotty locations, and in Cuyama Valley a few evening snow (Linanthus dichotomus)–a very pretty small flower–and lots of red maids (Calandrinia ciliata) are visible, but do get out of the car to explore for more!
Charmlee Wilderness Park in the Santa Monica Mountains has very nice flower displays along the Botany Trail all the way to the East Meadow Trail. There are hundreds of shooting stars (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*) in full bloom above the Nature Center. Patches of wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) appear on the entrance road. Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) with, of course, lots of hummingbirds close by, are seen in the in oak groves. Milk maids (*Cardamine californica*) and canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) hang out in the filtered shade while stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), Danny’s skullcap (*Scutellaria tuberosa*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), wild peony (*Paeonia californica*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis*), hairy-leaf ceonothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus*) and purple nightshade (*Solanum xantii*) preferring sunnier locations.

Enjoy a fresh, green, spring landscape and a swift running creek at Placerita Canyon Natural Area. On the Ecology Trail loop, look for the California peony (*Paeonia californica*), with its lush foliage and nodding burgundy flowers. The white flowering hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) is in full bloom and covering whole hillsides – very pretty. Several more small flowering plants are popping up and filling the sunny spaces. They include fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) and white popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha muricata*). Along the trails too, look for the wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) with their little white star-shaped flowers twinning over trees and shrubs. On the Heritage Trail, the golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) is showy still, and the black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) is in bud, bursting into fragrant bloom soon. Purple nightshade (*Solanum xantii*) can be seen in flower throughout the Park. Bring the family for a pleasant hike.

The heat is on at the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve and the California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) are popping! In some locations within the reserve the bushy blue grape soda lupines (*Lupinus excubitus*) stand out bright among all the
gold of the poppies. North and northwest of the reserve around the edges of the Tehachapi Mountains up to Arvin and Bakersfield, there are many good wildflower viewing locations along the roads as well.

California poppies (Eschscholzia californica). Photo by Barbara Eisenstein

Last week, a friend visited the northeastern border of the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness Area (the turnoff from N. Amboy Rd., north of 29 Palms). If going off pavement, 4WD is recommended. It was a little too early and cool for great swathes of flowers, but she said it had a lot of potential and will visit again soon. With the warm weather this week, now may be the time. Starting to bloom was chicory (Rafenesquia neomexicana), chia (Salvia columbariae), Wallace’s woolly sunflower (Eriophyllum wallacei), lupine (Lupinus sp.), and shrub associates – creosote (Larrea tridentata), desert lavender (Condea emoryi) and brandegea (Brandegea bigelovii) along with several other seedlings ready to pop.

Desert chicory (Rafenesquia neomexicana) and Wallace’s woolly daisy (Eriophyllum wallacei). Photos by Barbara Eisenstein

In Joshua Tree National Park, the most spectacular bloom can be seen in Cottonwood Canyon and along the Bajada Trail. Among the showiest species include the blue spikes of Arizona lupine (Lupinus arizonicus), the prolific little
brown eyes (*Chylismia claviformis*), and two poppy species, Parish’s poppy and small-flower poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii* and *E. minutiflora*). The fire-red flowers of ocotillos (*Fouquieria splendens*) and chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) provide a red contrast to the yellow and white flowers. The teddy bear “don’t-hug-me” cholla (*Cylindropuntia bigelovii*), is also beginning to bloom along the Cholla Cactus Garden Nature Trail. There’s lots more coming into bloom as the weather warms. Be aware that Caltrans will be working on the Cottonwood Springs on/off ramp along Interstate 10. The highway may be closed intermittently during this time. Call Caltrans at 1-800-427-7623 for current closure information.

Get on your flower fix on at Anza Borrego Desert State Park. North of Borrego Springs is Coyote Mountain and right out of the car, you can find blooming plants left and right. There is a nice hike up to a small outcrop on Coyote Mountain with good flowering along the way, and at the peak of the mountain, wafting up is the smell of flowers—brown-eyed primrose, (*Chylismia claviformis var. peirsonii*) and desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*). Back along the hill side, around some boulders, are threadplants (*Nemacladus* sp.) in good number. While down on the ground looking at the nearly invisible threadplants, you will find more and more interesting stuff.
and over to the "Yaqui Meadows - Glorieta Wash" there are absolutely staggering fields (maybe tens of thousands!) of Bigelow's monkey flower, (*Mimulus bigelovii* var. *bigelovii*), ghost flower (*Mohavea confertiflora*) and Parish's poppy (*Eschscholzia parishii*). It will take your breath away!

From the desert, head west until you hit the ocean and visit Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. Some trails are closed due to recent water erosion, but the popular Guy Flemming Loop is sweet with wild flowers and ocean views. Doesn’t get any better than that! Look for sand verbena (*Abronia* sp.), bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.), phacelia (*Phacelia* sp.) and lots of poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*).

Up along the coast to Orange County, the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach is a beautiful stop in the urban beach city. The nature center has several nice pathways that guide you through the different plant habitats of Southern California including the Channel Islands and Baja California. Throughout the nature center, the California wild lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.) are covered with beautiful blue blossoms and in contrast to the lovely pink Western redbud tree (*Cercis occidentalis*). The flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*) and fragrant mock orange (*Philadelphus lewsii*) are show stoppers as well. In the coastal sage scrub section, look for the bright yellow flowers of Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*) and California encelia (*Encelia californica*). From the Channel Islands, enjoy the Island mallow (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*) and Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). The ubiquitous but “Stately” California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) is everywhere!

Speaking of poppies, plenty are on magnificent display and an easy drive for a short hike at Chino Hills State Park and in Walker Canyon north of Lake Elsinore.

It’s great to see desert wildflowers, rare Vernal Pool plants and Channel Island plants all in one incredible flowering urban school garden! Elizabeth Learning Center is “Lord of The Vernal Pool Rings” this week! With the extended sunlight and heat, the waters have begun to recede, causing goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*) to spring up and bloom around the water’s edge. Other species
decorating the ephemeral scene include woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), otay mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), thread-leaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), dense-flowered spike primrose (*Epilobium densiflorum*) and vernal popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys undulatus*).


Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), woolly indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliosa*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy-
tips (*Layia platyglossa*), poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), Nevin’s barberry (*Berberis nevinii*) and pink fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*) round out the Chaparral garden offerings. These wonderful educational gardens are located at Elizabeth Learning Center on Elizabeth Street in Cudahy between Atlantic Ave and Wilcox Ave. They are open to the public during school hours by checking in at the Main Office and getting a visitor’s pass.

That’s it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, March 17th** 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 by Wednesday of each week when blooms of note occur.

**NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:**

**Theodore Payne Foundation**

**Poppy Day Spring Plant Sale**
[http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/](http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/)

*Saturday, March 18, 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.
[http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/](http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/poppy-days/)

**2017 Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour**

*Saturday & Sunday, April 1 & 2, 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**

**Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter**

*Saturday, March 25, 2017, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm – Horsetheif Canyon Preserve Field Trip* - Take this special opportunity to explore this beautiful preserve with CNPS. There are many species in flower and diverse vegetation including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, and rich riparian plant communities. For more information go to [http://riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org](http://riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org)

**Orange County Chapter**

Silverado Canyon & Maple Springs Truck Trail – **March 12, 2017**.
Go to occnps.org for information and directions.