Love wildflowers?
Learn more about how you can support California’s native plants at cnps.org!

What’s blooming where?
Get the latest from these helpful sources.
• DesertUSA wildflowers (https://www.desertusa.com/wildflora/wildupdates.html).
• Theodore Payne Foundation Wildflower Hotline (http://theodorepayne.org/learn/wildflower-hotline/).
• Websites of parks and preserves. Land managers often post updates.
• CNPS Facebook pages. See updates on our official and chapter pages.

Activities for Wildflower Visitors
Photography Capture California’s splendid wildflower shows and share your photos with CNPSsuperbloom.

Plant identification Discover which wildflowers you’re seeing using the resources listed below.

Hiking A great way to experience the blooming close.

Scenic drives Many large parks and nature preserves lend themselves to long, eye-popping drives.

Citizen science Document what you see using iNaturalist or join a CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt.

Art Sketching or painting is a great way to observe flowers and landscapes in a new way.

Get involved and make a difference Connect with local CNPS chapters to pull invasive plants competing with wildflowers.

Flower ID Resources
CNPS Public Facebook Group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/384172099729757/)
This savvy group can help you ID almost any wildflower you find.

Calflora (https://www.calflora.org/)
A comprehensive plant ID resource, including “What grows here?” where users can search for plants using an online map.

iNaturalist (https://www.inaturalist.org/)
Post observations from the field with your smartphone. The online community will identify unknowns and verify your IDs.

Calphotos (https://calphotos.berkeley.edu/)
An enormous, searchable photo database of California’s flora and fauna.

CNPS webstore (https://store.cnps.org/)
your go-to for botanical books and guides.

Do the right thing
Remember that wildflowers are for all visitors to enjoy. Be respectful of others while reveling in one of California’s finest natural treasures.

Do:
• Follow signs, trail closures, and recommendations of land managers.
• Drive safely while traveling to and viewing wildflowers (don’t block roads).
• Be prepared. Plan accordingly, and make sure you are prepared with food, water, and safety gear during road trips and hikes.
• Join CNPS! Being a member is the best way to support California’s wildflowers.

Don’t:
• Walk off trails or step on flowers.
• Drive off roads unless you are in an area where this is taking pictures.
• Pick or collect plants unless you have the proper permits and permission from the landowner.

Two years ago, you could see California’s epic blooms from space. The good news is that most of us have a chance to see them up close, and this year is already a special one. California offers diverse and beautiful places to view spring wildflowers, from the Mojave Desert to coastal dunes. These shows of beauty are a great excuse to get outdoors and discover the natural wonders of the state.

1. Carrizo Plain National Monument
Location: San Luis Obispo County
When: Mid-March–early May
Highlights: One of the premier locations for wildflowers in California, the Tule Valley range features massive displays of common monolopia (Monolopia lanceolata), phacelia (Phacelia spp.), and California poppies (Eschscholzia californica). Watch for rare plants like California’s tulip (Caulanthus californicus) and Munz’s tidytips (Layia munzii).

2. Santa Monica Mountains
Location: Los Angeles County
When: April–June
Highlights: Most of this mountain range burned in 2018 making this a great place to view fire-following annuals in the coming years.

3. Anza Borrego Desert State Park
Location: San Diego County
When: February–May
Highlights: Unbeatable in a year with good precipitation. Visitors can enjoy the sight of ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens) towering over an expanse of desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata).

4. Table Mountain
Location: Butte County
When: March–May
Highlights: One of the more reliable locations for displays of lupines (Lupinus spp.) and purple owl’s clover (Castilleja exserta). Look out for the rare, endemic, yellow-flowered Jokerst’s clover (Trifolium jokerstii).

5. Jepson Prairie
Location: Riverside County
When: March–May
Highlights: A great place to learn about vernal pool habitats and what the Central Valley would have looked like before development and agriculture. The Solano Land Trust hosts excellent docent-led tours.

6. Joshua Tree National Park
Location: Riverside County
When: March–May
Highlights: It is hard to beat the majestic, boulder-strewn landscape of Joshua Tree, studied with poppies, phacelia, and desert dandelion. The Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia) themselves are a treat.

7. Bear Valley
Location: Colusa and Lake counties
When: March–May
Highlights: Unbeatable in a year with good precipitation. Visitors can enjoy the sight of ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens) towering over an expanse of desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata).

8. North Coast Dunes
Location: Humboldt County
When: April–June
Highlights: Home to some of California’s finest sand dune habit, Larchmont-Christensen Dunes in Humboldt County is accessible via guided tours only. Look for gems like sand verbena (Abronia sp.) and beach morning glory (Calystegia soldanella).

9. Red Hills
Location: Tuolumne, Sierra Nevada
When: March–April
Highlights: This is one of the finest places in California to appreciate serpentine habitats. Serpentine, our state rock, host a unique array of plants endemic to California and the soil type. Look for rare plants like Rawhide Hill onion (Allium tuolumnense) and carpets of goldfields (Lasthenia gracilis).

10. Punta Mazo Nature Reserve
Location: Baja
When: October to March
Highlights: For the true adventurer, this hotspot is about a 5-hour drive south of San Diego near San Quintin, Mexico. The incredible landscape boasts volcanoes home to rock daisy (Pentle emoryi) and the rare, Anthony’s live-forever (Dudleya anthonyi).
Most Common California Wildflower Families

Asteraceae
Common name: Sunflower
Representative species: Goldfields (Lasthenia gracilis); common monolopia (Monolopia lanceolata)
ID know-how: Sunflowers can be recognized easily by their composite inflorescences (aka heads), tight clusters of many small flowers with a series of bracts below. With more than 1,000 taxa, the sunflower family is the most diverse plant family in California.

Boraginaceae
Common name: Borage
Representative species: Rusty popcorn flower (Plagiobothrys rothfussii); common fiddle-neck (Amsinckia intermedia)
ID know-how: The borage family is closely related to the waterleaf family. Borages typically have fruits with four nutlets. Look for popcorn flowers (Cryptantha spp. and Plagiobothrys spp.) with white flowers, and fiddleneck (Amsinckia spp.) with yellow flowers.

Papaveraceae
Common name: Poppy
Representative species: California poppy (Eschscholzia californica); cream cups (Platyctena californica)
ID know-how: This family includes our state flower, the California poppy, which creates relatively inconspicuous individual flowers, but colorful leaflike bracts below each flower. All plants in this family tap into the roots of host plants for nutrients.

Orchidaceae
Common name: Orchids
Representative species: White fairy-lantern (Calochortus albiflorus); butter and eggs (Calochortus venustus)
ID know-how: In California, this showy family includes about 100 species. Look for large flowers with parts arranged in groups of three or six (e.g., Calochortus have three sepals and three petals that are often very similar in appearance).

Monolopia
Common name: Lily
Representative species: Lasthenia
ID know-how: Plants in this family can be identified easily by their coiled inflorescences, called scorpion cymes. Flowers are often purple or blue (especially in Phacelia). Fruits are many-seeded capsules.

Cryptantha
Common name: Polemoniaceae
Representative species: Elegant clarkia (Clarkia unguiculata); Mojave suncup (Camissonia campetrella)
ID know-how: Characteristically, plants in this family have four petals and four sepals. "Evening primroses" (Oenothera spp.) attract hawkmoths with their sweet-smelling flowers. Farewell-to-springs (Clarkia spp.) are a showy addition to the late-spring flora.

Oenothera
Common name: Evening primrose
Representative species: Thistle sage (Salvia columbariae); butterfly mariposa lily (Calochortus venustus)
ID know-how: Many species in the mint family are perennials or shrubs, but in a good rain year chia (Salvia columbariae) makes a showy display. Distinctive characteristics include square stems, opposite leaves, and bilaterally symmetrical flowers arranged in clusters along the stem. Look for the gem, thistle sage (Salvia columbariae), in Southern California.

Salvia
Common name: Mint
Representative species: Rose buckwheat (Eriogonum roseum); pink spinyflower (Chorizanthe membranacea)
ID know-how: Buckwheats often create spectacular displays of color in the summer and fall; long after the blooms of spring flowers have faded. The numerous small flowers of wild buckwheats (Eriogonum spp.) and close relatives are borne together above cuplike structures called involucres.