

Los Padres National Forest



Figueroa Mountain Wildflower Update - First Update of the 2016 Season March 22, 2016

Greetings and happy spring! Welcome to the 2016 wildflower season! Unlike the past few drought stricken years, the wildflowers started blooming later, which is normal for them on a year where they have received sufficient rain. Once they started blooming, they are certainly going strong. Let's start our update, shall we?

Starting at the first cattle guard, buttercups, milk maids, blue dicks, fiesta flowers, fiddlenecks, Johnny jump-ups and popcorn flowers are actively in bloom. Chinese houses and hummingbird sage are just now getting started. As one makes the turn along the second bend, on the left, a few small pink owl's clovers can be seen among the tall grass. Along the rock formation on the right, look for blue dicks and about twenty yards further, still on the right, one will find some shooting stars, starting to go to seed, along with, Johnny jump-ups, fiddlenecks and lomatium. Another 25 yards down the road will bring you to a slope on the left where some miniature lupine, sky lupine and buttercups are beginning to bloom. As one continues under the tree canopy, one will find sky lupine, Johnny jump-ups, fillaree, buttercups, lomatium, popcorn flowers, fiesta flowers and blue dicks showing off their lovely hues of yellows and purples.

As you continue up the hill, California poppies are blooming throughout the mountain. In fact, look to your left and see the stunning orange patch work on Grass Mountain. Grass Mountain has not put on such a show in quite a few years. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look on the ground to the right and find tiny cream cups in bloom, along with some fillaree.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill climb include, buttercups, goldfields, coreopsis, shooting stars, ceanothus, California poppies, Mexican elderberry, blue dicks, fillaree, royal lupine, lomatium, fiddlenecks, beautiful pink prickly phlox on the serpentine rock formation on the right and lovely orange wall flowers just beyond that. Also, you will see strikingly beautiful Catalina mariposa lilies in the open grassy fields and wild canyon peas in some shaded areas.

At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), exquisite chocolate lilies are in bloom, be careful not to step on them, as they are not that tall this year and the grass tends to cover them. Also look for shooting stars, goldfields and fillaree. In the serpentine area across the road, you'll see California poppies, buttercups, blue dicks, goldfields, coreopsis, popcorn flowers, lomatium, globe gillias and golden yarrow.

In the field to the right, before Tunnell Ranch Road, look for shooting stars, bush lupine, sky lupine, buttercups, lomatium, blue dicks, and lovely wallflowers.

About a quarter mile beyond, on the infamous poppy hillside, magnificent California poppies are showing off. It doesn't look as though they are peaking yet, as there is still quite a bit of new growth and a multitude of buds that have yet to open. While the fabulous, deep orange is breathtaking, the entire hillside is not covered as in years past. It is still gorgeous and very worth visiting, be prepared to see a number of bare areas. The bush lupine, on the other hand, are absolutely incredible this year. Their sweet, lovely aroma fills the air as these beauties are found in great abundance throughout this entire area. Phacelia is also in bloom here. Sky lupine are blooming as well, however, there are few in comparison to other years.

As we continue on Figueroa Mountain Road, between Figueroa campground and the Davy Brown trailhead, look on the right and find California poppies, bush lupine, fiddlenecks, sky lupine, globe gillias, phacelia, and popcorn. Beyond the Davy Brown trailhead, look for lovely displays of shooting stars, ceanothus, lomatium, fillaree, California poppies and buttercups. Just a little ways further, where you see a big dirt turnout on the left, look in the adjacent field and discover a multitude of beautiful chocolate lilies.

Just as you pass the gate going up to Ranger Peak, look to your right and see whimsical baby blue eyes peeking through the lush green grass. From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, bush poppies and bush lupine are splendidly abundant. Other flowers to look for within this stretch include, California poppies, phacaelia, red Indian paintbrush, sticky leaf monkey flowers, purple nightshade, ceanothus, fiddleneck, golden yarrow, clematis, globe gillias, wild canyon peas, wild cucumber and Mexican elderberry. Approximately halfway through this stretch, on the far right, notice a very impressive hillside carpeted in beautiful California poppies.

Sunset Valley is really starting to put on a show! Bush poppies and prickly phlox are certainly beginning to make their presence known throughout this area. Other beauties to look for include, the smaller yellow/orange variety of California poppies, popcorn flowers, Nuttles Larkspur, scarlet buglers, wild canyon peas, milk thistle, chia, Mexican elderberry, purple nightshade, morning glories, blue dicks, miners lettuce, golden yarrow, globe gillias, phacaelias, blue dicks Chinese houses, clematis, wild canyon peas and fillaree. If you look high on the hillsides, along Sunset Valley, heading towards, Davy Brown and Nira, look at the gorgeous patches of yellow, courtesy of the small yellow variety of California poppies.

Happy Canyon is also beautiful. As one turns onto Happy Canyon, look for yellow California poppies, purple nightshade, wild canyon peas, golden yarrow, clematis, wild cucumber, bush poppies, royal lupine, blue dicks, vetch, morning glories, bush lupine, fiesta flowers, prickly phlox, blue dicks, fiddleneck, bush poppies, coreopsis and charming Catalina mariposa lilies. Continuing down the hill, prickly phlox, lomatium, mustard, cactus flowers, morning glories, Mexican elderberry, Johnny jump-ups, popcorn flowers and fillaree can also be seen along with some royal lupine, bush lupine and bush poppies.

That's all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update in two weeks. Until then, happy viewing! For more information, please contact Helen Tarbet by e-mail at htarbet@fs.fed.us.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.