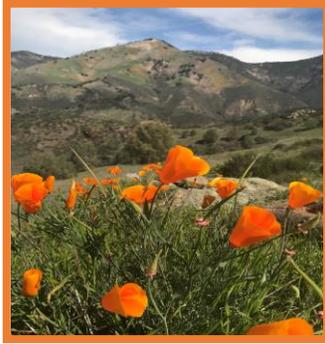


Los Padres National Forest



Figueroa Mountain First Wildflower Update for 2018 April 6, 2018

Happy spring everyone!

Due to the very dry winter, it seemed rather doubtful for wildflowers this year, then March came along, filled with rain and hope and finally, blooms are beginning to show. It's uncertain what the extent or duration of the wildflowers will be this season, since they are so late, but I have no doubt that we'll be happy with whatever beauties come along...don't you agree?

Let's get started!

Starting at the first cattle guard and continuing to the canopy area, shiny buttercups, blue dicks, beautiful fiesta flowers, milk maids, fiddlenecks, Johnny jump-ups, fillaree, lomatium and miner's lettuce are in bloom. Right before the canopy area, look to your right and find a charming little field of shooting stars, popcorn flower, lomatium and Johnny jump-ups. The canopy area is also hosting beautiful Johnny jump-ups, blue dicks, milk maids, buttercups, fiesta flowers, fillaree, popcorn flowers and fiddleneck.

As you continue to climb up the hill, beautiful California poppies are beginning to bloom along the road and on the rocky hillsides. If you look to your left, notice that Grass Mountain is starting to get patches of poppies, giving the appearance of a patchwork quilt with the orange from the poppies, green from the grasses and the browns/yellows from the bare soil. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look on the ground to the right and find adorable, tiny cream cups blooming, along with fillaree and some poppies.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill drive include, buttercups, poppies, miner's lettuce, some mustard, fiddleneck, fillaree, blue dicks, a single prickly phlox (at least for now), buckwheat, popcorn flowers, buttercups, shooting stars, goldfields, coreopsis, fading Ceanothus, lomatium, and graceful mariposa lilies popping up among the grassy fields. Stopping at the serpentine turnout, located to the left as you go up the hill, provides a wonderful picture taking opportunity, as Grass Mountain is directly in front and poppies, gold fields, popcorn flowers and shooting stars are in the grassy fields next to the serpentine. Make sure the day you chose to visit is sunny, as poppies do not like to open and show off their beauty if it is cold and cloudy.

At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), the wildflowers are very slow at starting to bloom this year, if they do so at all. There are some shooting stars and one lonely blue-eyed grass, a few lomatium and the beginning of goldfields. I looked for chocolate lilies, but found only the plants with no stalks. Last week, I found one chocolate lily, with a very small stalk. This week it was gone, with no others in sight. Maybe there will be more by the next update. Across the road from Vista Point and up to the station, the only flowers currently blooming include poppies, lomatium, coreopsis and blue dicks.

As you pass the station, fields of shooting stars can still be seen to your left, ranging in color from deep magenta to purple to the occasional white blooms.

About a half mile further, the infamous poppy hillside, has lost its “infamous status”, at least for this year. While there are a few small poppies blooming in scattered locations, the hillside is mostly bare soil. As you continue along this stretch past the campground to the Davy Brown trailhead, the only flowers visible are scattered poppies and an occasional bush lupine.

About one half mile beyond the Davy Brown trailhead, beautiful shooting stars, lomatium and buttercups are in bloom. About ¼ mile further, in the fields adjacent to the large dirt turnout on the left, lovely chocolate lilies can be found, along with shooting stars and lomatium. Other wildflowers that can be found up to the entrance of Ranger Peak, include buttercups, lomatium, poppies, shooting stars and ceanothus.

While nothing is really happening at Ranger Peak at this point, the road from Ranger Peak to Cachuma is beginning to come alive with the brilliant yellow flowers of bush poppies. Other flowers that were spotted along this stretch include, a few bush lupine, a purple nightshade and striking orange poppies along the road.

Sunset Valley is not doing much at this time. Aside of quite of few bush poppies, the start of prickly phlox and a couple of small hillside housing the small yellow variety of California poppies, nothing else is really in bloom yet. Maybe by the next update???

Happy Canyon is in the same boat as Sunset Valley. Nothing is really happening yet.

A reminder to all wildflower viewers.....when stopping to take pictures or to take a hike, please do not block the road at any time nor double park. As you all know, this is a hazard and makes it impossible for an emergency vehicle to get through if their assistance were required.

That’s all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update in two weeks. Until then, happy viewing! If you would like to be added to the Figueroa Wildflower Update email list, please contact Helen Tarbet by e-mail at htarbet@fs.fed.us.



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