



## **Figueroa Mountain First Wildflower Update for 2019 March 21, 2019**

Happy 2019 wildflower season and happy spring everyone!

Due to the much needed rain, the Figueroa wildflowers are back on a normal schedule. The biggest question this season... "Is Grass Mountain going to have a Super Bloom"? The answer has been "It's hard to tell." Normally on heavy rain years, the poppies have to compete with the grasses and the grasses usually win. It was actually looking that way until last week. The sun was out all week and the poppies are really starting to make a presence on Grass Mountain. Lupine are not holding back this year and purple patches are beginning to appear on Grass Mountain as well.

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, miniature lupine 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. As one enters the canopy area, the hillside on the left has sky lupine starting to bloom. The canopy area is also hosting beautiful Johnny jump-ups, blue dicks, lomatium, buttercups, fiesta flowers and fillaree.

As you continue to climb the mountain, stunning orange California poppies are beginning to bloom along the road and along the rocky hillsides. Beautiful Ceanothus is blooming in this location and throughout Figueroa Mountain, providing a lovely snow-like appearance. Right before you get to the rusty gate, look on the ground to the right and find adorable, tiny cream cups in bloom along with fillaree. If you look to your left, you will see that Grass Mountain is coming alive with large carpets of bright orange poppies as they open up on warm sunny days. Lupine are joining the poppies this year and patches of purple are also beginning to paint the hillside. Just a reminder...if the weather is cloudy, rainy and/or cold, the poppies wrap themselves up and do not open until it is sunny and warm, so pick a sunny day for your visit so that the poppies can put on a show for you.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill drive include, buttercups, poppies, miner's lettuce, coreopsis, fillaree, lomatium, shooting stars, and star camas. If you wish to take pictures of Grass Mountain, look for the serpentine turnout on the left. This is a great vantage point as most of the south facing slope of Grass Mountain can be seen from this location.

When you get to Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), take this opportunity to stretch a bit by taking a short stroll along this area and while doing so, you will find carpets of elegant goldfields, beautiful chocolate lilies, buttercups, fillaree, lomatium and whimsical shooting stars as they start to make a presence.

In the area across Vista Point and along the side of part of the road, look for the beautiful combination of orange poppies and yellow coreopsis.

As you pass the station, the next blooms you will find will be in the field on the right hand side, before getting to Tunnell Ranch Road. Shiny buttercups and blue dicks are blooming in this area.

About a half mile further, the famous poppy hillside, is rapidly starting to come alive with stunning orange California poppies and gorgeous sky lupine. From one week to the next, this colorless hillside has decided that it is time to show off. As in Grass Mountain, sky lupine have joined the poppies this year and appear to be getting ready to put on a lovely display. The aromatic lupine scent is not filling the air yet, but I have a feeling that it will soon. Poppies and sky lupine can be seen in various areas leading to the Figueroa Campground. Beyond the campground, a few poppies can still be spotted. As one passes the Davy Brown trailhead, look for some more poppies, buttercups, shooting stars and lomatium. There aren't very many wildflowers in this area yet, as you are reaching the highest elevation of your drive.

Nothing is happening from Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle at this point, but wait until you get to Sunset Valley.

Sunset Valley is normally slow in blossoming, but this year it's quite different. Gorgeous tufted yellow California poppies are carpeting the hillsides and slopes with these collarless poppies. Their bright yellow/light orange petals are quite delightful to see and photograph. Popcorn flowers and blue dicks can also be seen in this area.

Happy Canyon is just getting started. One can start to see the magnificent large orange California poppies along with coreopsis, sky lupine, blue dicks and fiddlenecks.

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 emergency vehicles 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 email at [htarbet@fs.fed.us](mailto:htarbet@fs.fed.us).



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