

## Los Padres National Forest



### Figueroa Mountain Wildflower Update - First of April

Hello again. It's early April and the wildflowers at Figueroa Mountain are quite different this year. While this year is proving to be extraordinary for the California poppies, some of the other wildflowers aren't doing quite as well. For instance, the lupine are few and small compared to other years. They may merely be late in blooming or perhaps were hindered by the rather odd weather which we have experienced this year. Regardless, the poppies are exquisite with the most prolific displays that I have seen in years. Don't forget your cameras!

Let's begin our tour at the bottom of the hill, just as we cross the cattle guard. On the hillside to your left, beautiful purple fiesta flowers are in bloom along with buttercups, hummingbird sage, miner's lettuce, wild onions, Johnny jump-ups, blue dicks, miniature lupine, fiddlenecks and Chinese houses. Around the second bend, owls' clover is beginning to appear along with filleri on the left-hand curve. Stunning Red Indian paintbrush continues to bloom on the rocky area to the right, as do Johnny jump-ups, wild canyon peas, hummingbird sage, lomatium, and fiddlenecks. As you approach the canopy area, look for sky lupine, blue dicks, filleri, buttercups, Johnny jump-ups, miner's lettuce and Chinese houses.

As you continue up the mountain, the poppies become more and more visible. Just as one gets to the rusty metal poles, look to the left of the road, and you'll find a few lovely cream cups. Along the serpentine rocky areas to the right, prickly phlox and wall flowers can be found. On the right, look at Grass Mountain and find that it's rapidly being covered with a rich orange blanket of California poppies. This beautiful display is so vibrant and so magnificent, that it can be seen all the way from Highway 154. As we continue our tour up the mountain, look for blue dicks, wild onions, fiddlenecks, buttercups, golden yarrow, chias, goldfields, wallflowers, coreopsis, lomatium and a few shooting stars.

At Vista Point, the beautiful brown bell shapes of the chocolate lilies are turning to seed very quickly, but don't worry if you've missed seeing them in this location as further up the mountain are even larger displays. In this location, goldfields, filleri, blue-eyed grass, buttercups and shooting stars are still out, but rapidly going away. Again, they can still be seen further up the mountain. As you head towards the Ranger Station, look for bright yellow coreopsis, golden yarrow, poppies, blue dicks and one lonely wall flower.

As you pass the Ranger Station, a few lupines are visible. On the rocky hillside, right before Tunnell Ranch Road, buttercups, wallflowers, and filleri continue to bloom. The beautiful orange wallflowers are extremely impressive in this area. If you look across the road, find a lovely bush lupine as it is beginning to bloom.

Less than one half mile further, the hillsides to the left are carpeted in beautiful orange California poppies. While you can see a few lupine peeking out from the breathtaking poppy display, it looks as though the poppies have taken over, perhaps as a result of the Figueroa Fire that burned through this area last November, or maybe on account of the abundant rain and snow that fell on the area over the last two years. In any case, this corridor is simply outstanding, whether you look to the right on the hillsides or to the left and down the slopes.

Lookout Road has very little to show as of yet. California poppies and a few lupine can be seen for about 1/8 of a mile up the hill, but the large displays are about 3 weeks out. Remember, this area is at a much higher elevation; therefore, the wildflowers take longer coming in.

Along the corridor, between the Figueroa Campground and the Davy Brown trailhead, yellow and orange poppies can be found, along with bush lupine as they begin to bloom. Just beyond the Davy Brown trailhead, look for

shooting stars, goldfields, buttercups and lupine. Continue a tenth of a mile further to the large dirt turnout on the left, look in that field and find a plethora of strikingly beautiful chocolate lilies, as earlier promised.

Continuing your tour, look for more buttercups, lupine, lomatium, poppies, goldfields and tidy tips.

Within the pipe fenced area on the left and across the road, in the raised area, near the end of the pipe fence, you'll find more chocolate lilies, filleri, lomatium and buttercups.

Right after the gate at Ranger Peak, look to the left and find beautiful baby blue-eyes as they watch you pass by. More can be seen halfway up Ranger Peak on the right, along with fiddlenecks and popcorn flower.

Between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle, look for poppies, bush poppies, fiddlenecks and Indian paintbrush.

Towards Sunset Valley, not much is blooming yet. Popcorn flower, buttercups and common phacelias can be seen. From Davy Brown Campground to Nira Campground, Coulter's lupine, blue dicks, baby blue eyes, Nuttles Larkspur and wild cucumber are beginning to bloom. Bush poppies and Prickly Phlox are becoming more visible along this stretch on the rocky hillsides.

Heading down Happy Canyon from Cachuma Saddle to Cachuma Campground, look for poppies, common phacelias, clematis, vetch, bush poppies, bush lupine, Indian paintbrush, fiesta flowers and blue dicks. Before arriving at the campground, in the shaded area on the left, find a lovely display of stunning purple fiesta flowers. As one leaves the campground, beyond the yellow gate, look to the rocky slopes on left, and find wild canyon peas, royal lupine, Mexican elderberry, fiesta flowers, prickly phlox and Indian paintbrush.

Along the stretch, from Cachuma Campground to Chicken Springs shooting area, mariposa lilies are beginning to make a presence. Other flowers in bloom along this area include poppies, coreopsis, miner's lettuce and shooting stars. Right before the Chicken Springs shooting area, look to the right and discover a field covered in blue-eyed grass.

Past the Chicken Springs Shooting area, you'll notice lovely yellow cactus flowers are beginning to bloom. As one makes the descent down the hill, look for blue dicks, Johnny jump-ups, shooting stars, fiesta flowers, buttercups, wild canyon peas, Mexican elderberry, California poppies, mustard, royal lupine, lomatium, fiddlenecks, and wild cucumber.

As you travel on Figueroa Mountain Road, please drive safely, slowly, and stay on your side of the road. We get many visitors this time of year and weekends can be very busy. Also, remember that you will need an Adventure Pass while recreating on Figueroa Mountain.

That's all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update during mid-April. Until then, happy viewing!

For more information, please contact Helen Tarbet at 805-925-9538, ext. 246, or by e-mail at [htarbet@fs.fed.us](mailto: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.