



San Diego hikes to see spring flowers

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People walk past wildflowers in bloom near Borrego Springs.

(Gregory Bull / AP)

Laurie Delk

In case you've been living under a rock, wildflowers have exploded in SoCal, sparking hashtags like #superbloom and causing traffic jams and [Instagram](#) mania. While Walker Canyon and its poppy fields in Riverside County have drawn the most national attention, San Diego County has been having its own colorful eruptions.

Wondering where to see all of this eye-popping flora? Check out some of these top spots for wildflower wonder this spring.

Anza Borrego Desert State Park

This is desert country so while some of the flowers here are different from those you see in other parts of the county, they are no less stunning. Head to the Visitors Center for maps, exhibits, and advice on where to see the blooms from the rangers. (They can also point you in the direction of bighorn sheep if they've been spotted that day.) Look out for suncups, phacelia, desert chicory, desert dandelion, and many more in this arid wonderland.

200 Palm Canyon Dr., Borrego Springs, parks.ca.gov/anzaborrego



Bright purple flowers are among those that can be seen along the Borrego Palm Canyon Trail in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.
(Howard Lipin / The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

Already one of the most beautiful hiking areas in all of San Diego County, this set of trails just got more beautiful with the bursting of coastal blooms. Hike up the hill to the Visitors Center, where you'll find a huge flower chart on the porch, complete with all of the varieties found in the park. (Also check out the signs near the beach trail for both flora and fauna to spot.) The volunteers here are top-notch, so don't be shy about asking questions after exploring the taxidermy animal exhibit and adorable gift shop. Some of the biggies to look for include the sand verbena, wild heliotrope, popcorn flower, sea dahlia, and San Diego jewel flower.

12600 N. Torrey Pines Rd., La Jolla, torreypine.org

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

This undulating landscape of trails hosts a variety of eye catching blooms and hillside grasses. Whether starting from the Black Mountain or Sorrento Valley side, keep your eyes peeled for lupine, vetch, poppies, and nightshade. Reward your eyes and muscles with a tranquil rest at the waterfall nestled in the middle of the park.

12020 Black Mountain Rd., San Diego, penasquitos.org

Lake Hodges

No matter which trail you select in this hiking area, you'll be rewarded with an eye full of bursting wildflower blooms along the trail sides. Recently spotted varieties include redmaids, lupine, purple nightshade, and fiddleneck. While the trails closest to Interstate 15 have plenty of flowers, they are a bit noisy, so take the trail that wraps around the lake for peaceful moments with the blooms. (Note: Be cautious of the mountain bikers.)

Lake Drive, Escondido, alltrails.com/trail/us/california/lake-hodges-trail

Word of caution for wildflower enjoyment: Please, for the love of Instagram, don't step on or pick wildflowers just to get likes on social media. It's harmful to the environment, the growth of the flowers, and to countless insects that depend on these ecosystems. The rangers and signs at Torrey Pines say it best: "A flower picked at Torrey Pines can't feed insects, feed animals, produce seeds, or help next year's flowers! And it's against the law. Don't pick the flowers."



A honeybee worked on a sprig of Popcorn Flower in Borrego Springs.
(John Gibbins / San Diego Union-Tribune)

Insider tip: The app [iNaturalist](#) is the bee's knees for discovering and logging in your wildflower scavenger hunts. Just snap a photo of the flowers (up close is best) and through AI, the app will give you a variety of choices that closely match your entry. Not only will you up your flower game, if you log in details, you'll be helping scientists better understand the flora in our environment.

Last word: Don't forget to enjoy the wildflower blooms along the highways too. When heading north up Interstate 15, for example, drivers are basking in

the yellow glows of hillside daisies among the green grasses. Just don't get into an accident gawking, okay?

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