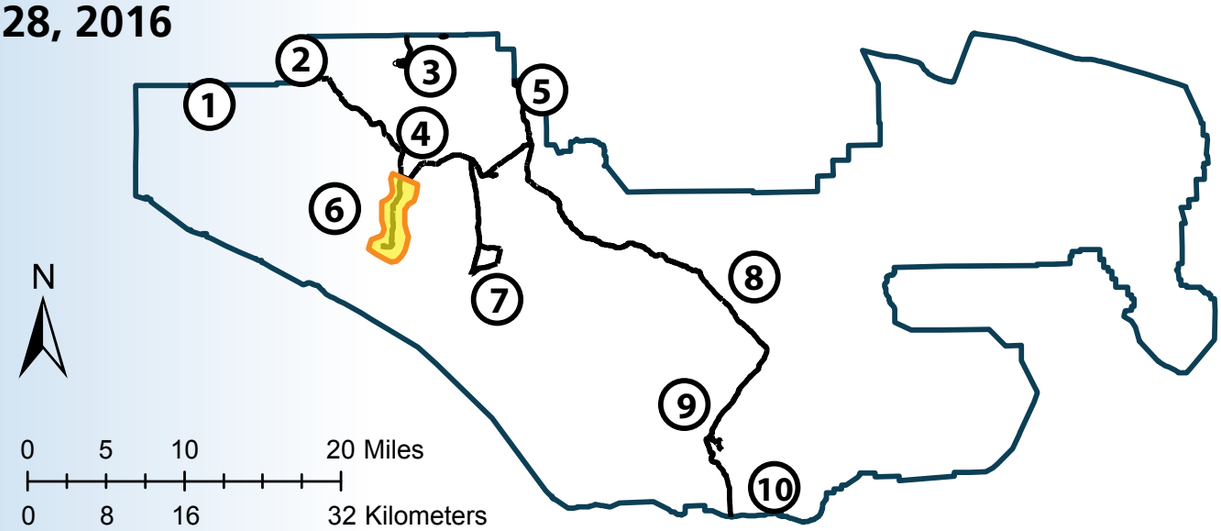
Joshua Tree
Wildflower Report

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

April 28, 2016



① Black Rock area ② West Entrance ③ Indian Cove ④ Wonderland of Rocks ⑤ North Entrance ⑥ Keys View ⑦ Geology Tour Rd ⑧ Pinto Basin ⑨ Cottonwood Spring ⑩ Bajada

Where are the wildflowers blooming?

This report offers weekly highlights on wildflower conditions for seven general regions within Joshua Tree National Park. For each region, we list the most charismatic blooms with pictures to aid in identification. Blooms listed for one region may be present in other regions as well—particularly the annual flowers.

This Week in the Park

Lost Horse Valley is filled with a riot of blooms. Take Keys View Road south and enjoy the gold and purple colors of annual flowers covering the ground, and keep an eye out for apricot globemallow— parts of the valley are covered in its orange flowers.

Golden linanthus *(Leptosiphon aureus)*, purple mat *(Nama demissa)*, desert dandelion *(Malacothrix glabrata)*, and common phacelia *(Phacelia distans)* cover the ground of Lost Horse Valley.

Black Rock Area

The spring annuals continue to bloom at Black Rock, joined in the last few weeks by a strong bloom of perennial shrubs.

Notch-leaf Phacelia
(Phacelia crenulata)
This plant has reddish stalks, deeply divided green leaves, and a curl of lilac-blue flowers. It is usually about one foot tall.

Chaparral beardtongue
(Keckiella antirrhinoides)
The pitcher-like flowers of this bush are blooming at higher elevations, attracting native bees.

Narrowleaf goldenbush
(Ericameria linearifolia)
The bright gold blooms of this perennial shrub have started in Black Rock!

Parish's larkspur
(Delphinium parishii)
Parish's larkspur has a tall inflorescence of beautiful purple flowers with spurs that contain nectar-producing petals.

Black Rock Area

Paper-bag bush
(Scutellaria mexicana)
The calyx of this shrub's flower inflates at maturity, forming translucent, pale pink globes that catch the late afternoon sunlight.

Scale-bud
(Anisocoma acaulis)
This flower can be differentiated from desert dandelion and chicory by its smooth, scale-like phyllaries (bracts below the flowering head).

Indian Cove

Annual plants and perennial shrubs are in bloom at Indian Cove. Widespread scale-bud and desert dandelion form most of the ground cover.

Parish's poppy
(Eschscholzia parishii)
This poppy is larger than the little gold poppy, and lacks the dark central pigmentation of the Joshua Tree poppy.

Desert calico
(Loeseliastrum matthewsii)
Desert calico's spotted flowers and spiky vegetation can be spotted on the ground near Rattlesnake Canyon.

Beavertail cactus
(Opuntia basilaris)
These bright fuschia flowers jump out against the muted tones of the desert.

Apricot mallow
(Sphaeralcea ambigua)
Mallows are blooming across the park. Take caution with their foliage—it can irritate the skin.

Wonderland of Rocks

Mojave aster
(Xylorhiza tortifolia)
This lilac to purple daisy can be found most easily on banks and sheltered slopes. It is a favorite of bees.

Shrubby deervetch
(Acmispon rigidus)
These golden flowers are not missing petals— they are bilaterally symmetric. The lower petals form a keel which opens under the weight of pollinators, exposing the pistil.

Woolly desert marigold
(Baileya pleniradiata)
This golden flower can be distinguished from the encelias by its densely wooly foliage and narrower, lobed leaves.

Mojave mound cactus
(Echinocereus mojavensis)
Bright red flowers are often bird-pollinated, as is the case for this cactus. It is the only hummingbird-pollinated cactus in the region.

Wonderland of Rocks

Keep an eye on the Joshua trees in this area—many are blooming. Annuals and shrubs are now blooming in earnest throughout the area.

Desert Mariposa Lily
(Calochortus kennedyi)
The deep and vibrant red-orange of the desert mariposa lily is a treat: these bulbs only flower when rainfall is perfect.

Desert liveforever
(Dudleya saxosa)
The only true succulent found commonly in the park. This plant can sprout from fine gravel or cracks between rocks alike.

Scarlet milkvetch
(Astragalus coccineus)
It may resemble chuparosa, but this plant is an annual, and in a different family. The bright red flowers attract birds for pollination.

Spotted Locoweed
(Astragalus lentiginosus)
Locoweed has a similar structure to a lupine, but the leaves differ: the leaflets sprout from a linear axis, whereas a lupine's sprout from a single point.

Keys View Area/ Lost Horse Mine

The Lost Horse Valley is experiencing a spectacular bloom. Annuals and perennials alike are blossoming, and carpets of pincushion *(Chaenactis spp.)* cover the ground between the Joshua trees.

Golden linanthus
(Leptosiphon aureus)
The delicate, spike-like leaves of the golden linanthus distinguish it from the yellow shooting star, whose flowers at first look similar.

Wallace's woolly daisy
(Eriophyllum wallacei)
This small daisy often sprouts from sandy or gravelly areas, forming a domed tuft on the ground.

Keys View Area/ Lost Horse Mine

Desert woollystar
(Eriastrum eremicum)
These flowers tend to show up near the tail end of a bloom. If the woollystar is flowering, the bloom in that area will likely begin to fade in the next few weeks.

Parish's larkspur
(Delphinium parishii)
Parish's larkspur can be found in this area, but a discerning eye is needed: it can easily blend into the bushes of common phacelia.

Longspine cottonthorn
(Tetradymia axillaris)
You may catch a whiff of a musky, tangy mint scent in this area. Follow your nose to this bush, but beware of the spines.

Fremont's phacelia
(Phacelia fremontii)
Fremont's phacelia has also sprung up in the Lost Horse Mine area.

Pinto Basin

A widespread bloom of perennial shrubs continues in the Pinto Basin, including bladderpod *(Peritoma arborea)*, desert senna *(Senna armata)*, creosotebush *(Larrea tridentata)*, and desert lavender *(Hyptis emoryi)*.

Bladderpod
(NPS/Hannawacker)

Desert senna
(NPS/Ingersoll)

Creosote bush
(NPS/Ingersoll)

Desert lavender

Cottonwood Spring and Bajada

Perennial Shrubs

Brittlebush
(Encelia farinosa)
The leaves of this shrub are fair in color and feel fuzzy due to protective hairs on their surface. Before it flowers, brittlebush can have a domed appearance.

Chuparosa
(Justicia californica)
This shrub's tube-shaped red flowers are adapted for pollination by birds. It is much shorter and more densely branched than the ocotillo.

Bladderpod
(Peritoma arborea)
These bushes are in full bloom across the lower elevations. Look for anthers that extend far past the petals to positively identify bladderpod.

Cottonwood Spring and Bajada

Cacti

Barrel cactus
(Ferocactus cylindraceus)
When in bloom, this cactus can appear to be wearing a crown of yellow blossoms.

Hedgehog cactus
(Echinocereus engelmannii)
The hedgehog cactus, when compared to the prickly pear cactus, has longer, tricolored spines and a cylindric shape.