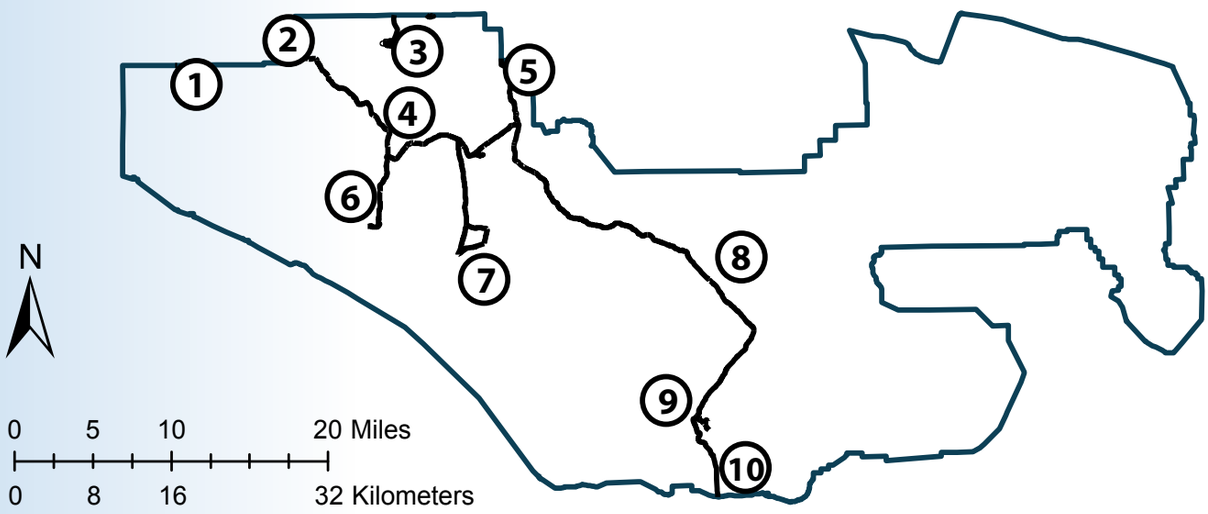
Joshua Tree
Wildflower Report

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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

Where are the wildflowers blooming?

This report offers weekly updates 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. Particularly vibrant or large areas of bloom are indicated on the map when present.

Black Rock area

Joshua Trees are blooming!

Buds have appeared on Joshua trees *(Yucca brevifolia)* in the Black Rock area, and some are beginning to bloom! Look for these spectacular blossoms at the ends of branches.

Joshua trees only bloom after they have been exposed to freezing temperatures— a key reason why they are no longer found at lower elevation locations, such as the Pinto Basin. Black Rock is an ideal location to view Joshua trees in bloom.

Wonderland of Rocks

Keep an eye on the Joshua trees in this area b many are about to bloom- A few annuals are starting to pop up, so watch for color on the ground.

Turpentine broom
(Thamnosma montana)
A medium-sized, glandular shrub with dark purple flowers. This plant is in the lemon family and smells strongly of citrus.

Western tansy mustard
(Descurainia pinnata)
This vigorous annual is widespread this year. Look for its bunches of small yellow flowers at the tops of its wavering stalks.

Scarlet milkvetch
(Astragalus coccineus)
It may resemble chuparosa, but this plant is an annual, and in a different familiy. 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.

Geology Tour Rd,

Desert lavender
(Hyptis emoryi)
The sweet, minty scent of desert lavender may reach you before you spot its purple flowers. Follow your nose! This shrub looks as nice as it smells.

Desert starvine
(Brandegea bigelovii)
This climbing vine has star-shaped white flowers and one defining characteristic of the cucumber family: twining tendrils at the ends of its stalks.

Desert tobacco
(Nicotiana obtusifolia)
The aromatic leaves of this plant reveal its shared ancestry with commercial tobacco. Spot the similarities to the flowers of ground-cherry: the two are in the same family!

Ground-cherry
(Physalis crassifolia)
This plant is a close relative of the tomatillo. When in fruit, it looks strikingly similar, producing a berry surrounded by a papery envelope.

Pinto Basin

A widespread bloom of perennial shrubs has begun 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

Pinto Basin

Annual Plants

Yellow cups
(Chylismia brevipes)
This plant has dark green leaves with speckles, arranged in a low rosette. Look for it in washes.

Notch-leaf phacelia
(Phacelia crenulata)
This phacelia has dark, fleshy leaves and flowers with pale centers.

Arizona lupine
(Lupinus arizonicus)
The lupines are here! Arizona lupine is distinguished by its warm, fuschia-purple color of blossom. Look for it in disturbed areas such as washes and roadsides.

Cottonwood Spring and Bajada

The Bajada area encompasses the southernmost portion of the park, and some of the lowest elevations as well. The shrubs mentioned for the Pinto Basin have also begun to bloom here (see prior pages). Ocotillos are beginning to bloom south of Cottonwood Visitor Center, and they may bloom to the north soon as well! The ocotillo is a charismatic plant of the Colorado Desert, known for its unique form and striking red flowers.

Ocotillo *(Fouquieria splendens)* full plant (left); detail of ocotillo buds (bottom left); and detail of ocotillo in bloom (bottom right).

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

Annual Plants

Browneyes *(Chylismia claviformis)*
This cheerful annual is popping up across the lower elevations. It is named for the brown receptacle at the center of its snow-white petals.

Arizona lupine *(Lupinus arizonicus)*
The lupines are here! Arizona lupine is distinguished by its warm purple color of blossom. Look for it near roadsides and washes.

Parish's poppy
(Eschscholzia parishii)
This poppy can be distinguished from the California poppy by its smaller size, lemon-yellow color and usual lack of an orange center.

Cryptantha *(Cryptantha spp.)*
These annuals, known variously as catseye or popcorn-flower, are notoriously difficult to identify without their nutlets (seeds) present.

NPS/Keith Flood

Desert dandelion
(Malacothrix glabrata)
The neon yellow of these flowers can sometimes carpet swathes of ground in the desert. Even when solitary, they are a treat!

NPS/Keith Flood

Canterbury bells
(Phacelia campanularia)
This phacelia's flowers are large, bell-shaped, and distinctively cobalt blue to violet in color. Look for the lush rosette of fleshy leaves.