

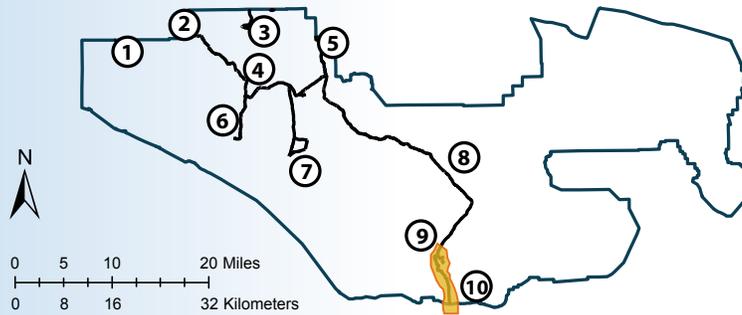
# Joshua Tree

## Wildflower Report

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



March 24, 2016



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## 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

Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) and sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*) are blooming or about to bloom throughout the park. Datura can be found in disturbed or sandy areas, such as the sides of roads. Beavertail cactus is primarily blooming at lower elevations, but will begin to bloom throughout the park in the coming weeks.



Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*)



Sacred datura (*Datura wrightii*)

## 1 Black Rock Area

Spring annuals and perennial shrubs have joined the show of the Joshua trees at Black Rock.



**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.



**Desert fiddleneck**  
(*Amsinckia tessellata*)  
The small yellow flowers of this plant are arranged on an inflorescence that resembles a scroll. Its foliage is spiny.



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



**Chilicothe**  
(*Marah macrocarpa*)  
This climbing vine is a relative of the cucumber, and of the coyote melon, whose gourds can be seen rolling around the desert.



**Redstem filaree**  
(*Erodium cicutarium*)  
This annual flower is a non-native species, and has spread across much of California.



**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).

## 4 Wonderland of Rocks

The Barker Dam area is a good place to see riparian shrubs that are not easily found elsewhere in the park. Many of these shrubs are in bloom or fruiting, attracting birds and butterflies. Below, from left to right: **mule-fat** (*Baccharis salicifolia*), with a pen for scale; **bigberry manzanita** (*Arctostaphylos glauca*); and **fragrant sumac** (*Rhus aromatica*).



Keep an eye on the Joshua trees in this area—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.



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



**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.



**Fremont's phacelia**  
(*Phacelia fremontii*)  
This phacelia is notable for the yellow centers of its flowers, which can be quite distinctive.

## 6 Keys View Area/ Lost Horse Mine



**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.



**Yellow blazingstar**  
(*Mentzelia affinis*)  
The shimmer on the petals of blazingstars is a good identifying characteristic, as well as the many stamens at the center of the flower.



**Beautiful rockcress**  
(*Boechera pulchra*)  
These delicate inflorescences of bright magenta flowers are appearing across this area.



**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.

## 8 Pinto Basin

Creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*) is in vivid bloom in the Pinto Basin. Also in bloom are bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), desert senna (*Senna armata*), and desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*).



**Bladderpod**  
(NPS/Hannawacker)



**Desert senna**  
(NPS/Ingersoll)



**Creosotebush**  
(NPS/Ingersoll)



**Desert lavender**

The ocotillos in the Pinto Basin are going into bloom! The Ocotillo Patch plants are not yet blooming, but with a keen eye, you can spot the telltale flash of red blossoms on other ocotillos throughout the Pinto Basin and south toward Cottonwood Spring and beyond.



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

## 9 10 Cottonwood Spring and Bajada



The Joshua Tree poppy is best identified by the dark spots at the base of the filaments (stalks which support the anthers). Look closely at the photo at left to see these dark spots at the very center of the flower.

The Joshua Tree poppy bloom continues south of the Cottonwood Visitor Center, just inside the park. The Joshua Tree poppy is a new species described to science in 2014. It is listed as endangered due to its distribution, which is limited almost entirely to Joshua Tree National Park and nearby areas.



Desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), Esteve's pincushion (*Chaenactis stevioides*), browneyes (*Chylismia claviformis*), and Arizona lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*) cover the ground on the flats and washes around Cottonwood Canyon.

## 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.

## Annual Plants and Cacti



### Desert fivespot

(*Eremalche rotundifolia*)  
Named for the markings at the base of its petals, this flower can appear as a pink globe in the afternoon light.



### Ghostflower

(*Mohavea confertifolia*)

This plant is in the snapdragon family. Look closely for its bilateral symmetry.



### Barrel cactus

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



### Hedgehog cactus

(*Echinocereus engelmannii*)

This is not a prickly pear cactus, though the flowers are a similar color. The hedgehog cactus has longer, tricolored spines and a cylindrical shape.

## Let Them Grow

Collecting vegetation is prohibited in the park. Leave wildflowers for all to enjoy!