

Wildflower Hotspot INDIAN WELLS CANYON



WHEN TO GO: March to May

HOW TO GET THERE: From Ridgecrest, take Inyokern Rd. (SR178) west to US Highway 395 (US395). Take the north-bound on-ramp of US395 3.3 miles to Athel St. Turn left (west) on Athel for 1.3 miles to State Highway 14 (SR14). Cross the north-bound lanes of SR14 and take the south-bound lane 0.8 mile to the top of the hill where there is a vertical sign post noting the turnoff to Indian Wells Canyon. Turn right sharply and cross a cattle guard to a well-graded dirt road, heading west. This road is BLM SE152 and is negotiable by passenger cars for the next 2.6 miles. After crossing another cattle guard adjacent to an old corral and stone water tank, enter the BLM parking area on the left (south) side of the road. From this point on, the road requires a high-clearance vehicle, a four-wheel drive vehicle is preferred. The road terminates at the BLM trailhead for the Owens Peak Wilderness Area, approx. 5 miles.

WILDFLOWERS TO SEE:

Desert Dandelion *Malacothrix glabrata*

Basal-leafed, 4-16" tall annual with one to several stems terminating in a 1.5" dandelion-shaped, bright yellow to pale yellow flower that has a maroon spot in the center when young.

Scale Bud *Anisocoma acaulis*

Very similar to Desert Dandelion except basal leaves are large, wooly, and irregular. Stems are 2-8" tall and completely leafless, and the yellow flower's mid-ribs and the droopy flower bud are striped dark purple.

Goldfields *Lasthenia californica*

Erect, 3-5" tall annual with a yellow daisy flower. They are rarely seen as single plants but can form vast, yellow fields, hence the name.

Chia *Salvia columbaria*

Square-stemmed annual 4-20" tall, topped by ascending clusters of blue flowers. Plants can have as many as 5 flower clusters or flower heads per stalk. The plant has a pungent odor when crushed.

Grape Soda Lupine *Lupinus excubitus*

2-3' tall shrub with long, prominent spikes of pea-type flowers. These are violet-to-blue with a bright yellow patch at the throat and a fragrant, grape-soda aroma.

Yellow Throats *Phacelia fremontii*

A 3-6" annual with basal, fern-like leaves. Flowers are bright blue with yellow or white throats. In years of good rainfall, these little plants will form dense carpets under and between the Creosote bushes.

Wishbone Bush *Mirabilis bigelovii*

Low growing, round sub-shrub 6-12" tall with wishbone-shaped stem branching and oval leaves. Bell-shaped flowers are white-to-pink with 5, bi-lobed petals. They open in the evening and close in the morning.

Little Blazing Star *Mentzelia albicaulis*

4-16" tall annual with white-felted stems and leaves. Leaves are strongly saw-toothed and few per branch. Flowers are 0.5" across with 5 satiny yellow petals and many stamens.

Apricot Mallow *Sphaeralcea ambigua*

Very showy, gray shrub 20-40" tall that bears multiple flower stalks with many 0.5-1" flowers. Leaves are gray and have scalloped margins. Flowers have 5 red-orange to apricot colored petals; stamens are gathered in a bundle like those of Hibiscus flowers. Leaves and stalks have star-shaped hairs that can be irritating to the touch.

Blue Dicks *Dichelostemma capitatum*

Slender, 1' stem topped by a cluster of 2-10 small, blue flowers, each with 6 petals. Basal leaf is 6-16" long, grass-like and curly, but may wither shortly after blooming.

Mojave Aster *Xylorhiza tortifolia*

Sub-shrub 8-26" tall with many branches from the base and linear, tooth-edged leaves. Leaves and stems are light gray and hairy. The flowers are 1.5-2" in diameter, daisy-like, and can vary from violet to lavender to nearly white, all with yellow centers.

White Layia *Layia glandulosa*

Slender-stemmed annual 3-14" tall with alternate, linear, hairy leaves. Flowers are white with a yellow center, 1.5" across, and are daisy-like with notched petals. Flowers have a spicy scent.

Note that flower/shrub size and abundance depends upon rainfall and temperature.

Please do not pick the flowers; leave them for others to enjoy.



This brochure was produced by the Creosote Ring Subchapter (Bristlecone Chapter), California Native Plant Society with the cooperation of the Ridgecrest Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.