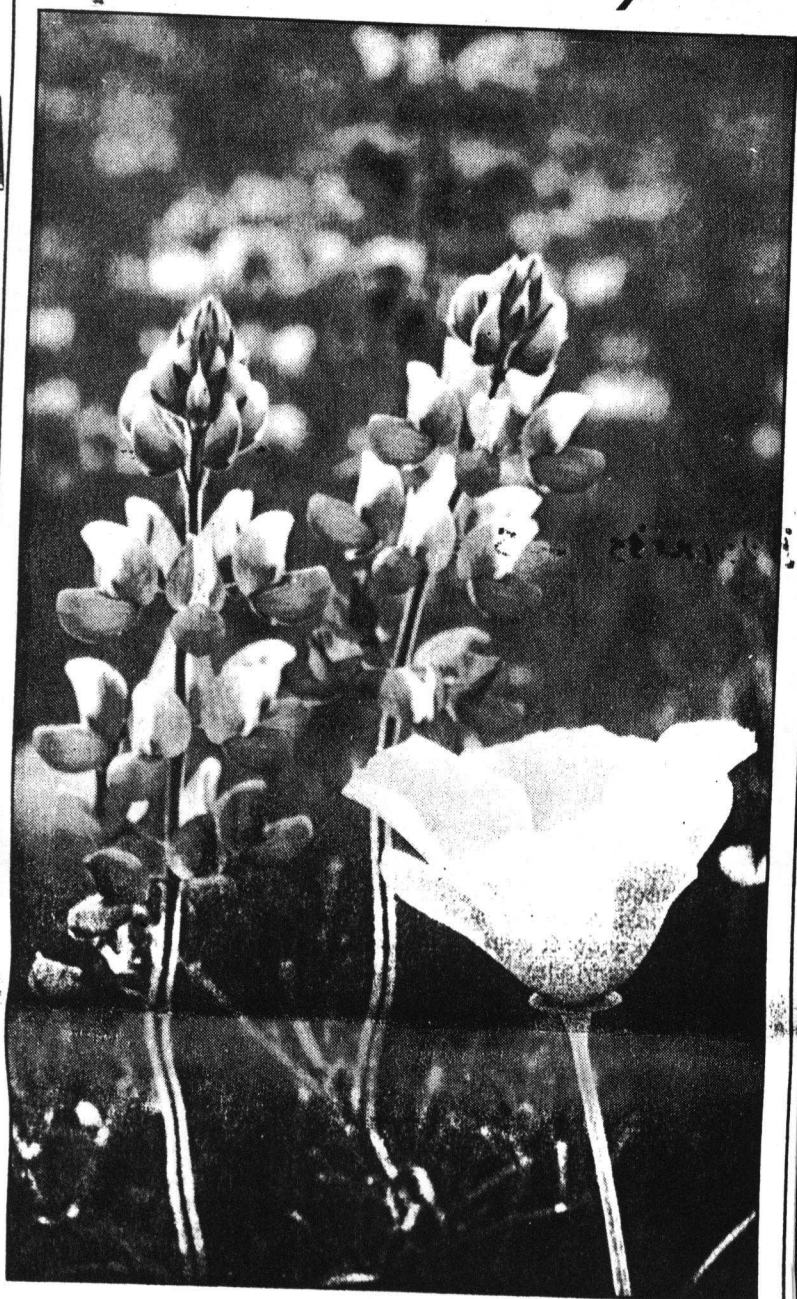


V.C.F. Flowers R.P. p.1

# *This bud's for you*



APR 21 1993

Kurt Ellison

Sky lupin, left, and California poppies fill an acre meadow on Highway 152 near the fairgrounds.

## **Rainy winter bonus: super wildflower shows**

STAFF AND BUREAU REPORTS

Wildflowers may never be more beautiful than they are — and will be — this spring.

With the heavy rains of winter, some are predicting the state's finest wildflower season in decades.

Athena Heartfire of San Anselmo and Amanda Byer of Palo Alto are traveling the state south to north taking in the wildflower views, and the other day stopped over at Pinnacles National Monument.

The western side of the Pinnacles are flush with shooting stars and johnny-jump-ups.

"We just came up from Joshua Tree National Monument," said Heartfire, "They're predicting the best wildflowers in 100 years. Even Death Valley had flowers."

Apparently wildflowers are blooming in the south earlier than they are in the north.

Nikki Nedeff, Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District naturalist, said the display on the Carrizo Plain east of Atascadero in San Luis Obispo County is "absolutely breathtaking, with incredible carpets of wildflowers."

See BLOOM / back of section ►

## **Where the blossoms are**

From Carmel Valley to Davenport, from Natural Bridges State Park to the San Lorenzo Valley, wildflowers are in evidence.

Wildflowers can be anywhere, from the small meadows of Lighthouse Field off West Cliff Drive to a backyard in Freedom.

A longtime member of the California Native Plant Society, Register Pajaronian photographer Kurt Ellison, said that because of development, grazing and agriculture, we just don't have huge displays of native wildflowers in Santa Cruz County (especially in South County).

"There are fields of blooming weeds imported from Europe, but those don't count as wildflowers in my book," Ellison says.

But there are patches here and there in the Santa Cruz area. And this spring it may be worth the trouble to search them out. And whether you find them on a hillside behind your house or on a drive down the

coast, the reward is in the view. Following are some likely locations to find flowers in bloom.

**Some parks:**

- Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. Meadows, especially on either side of the entrance road from Highway 9 in Felton. Check at visitor's center for other areas in the park.

- Point Lobos State Reserve, south of Carmel. Bird Island trail is promising.

- Pinnacles National Monument. Johnny-jump-ups and shooting stars are among the species blooming on both sides of the park, with twisted rock formations providing an intriguing backdrop.

**On the road:**

- Coastal bluffs and canyons north of Santa Cruz.

- Skyline from Summit Road north.

- Nacimiento Road through Los Padres National Forest.

- Arroyo Seco Road west of Greenfield and then onto Carmel Valley Road.

✓ CF FLOWERS RP p. 10

## BLOOM

► From Page 1 APR 21 1993

In Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, there is a less discernible pattern. The rains, experts say, may produce abundant wildflowers, but they may be slower in making their appearance as fields and hillsides dry out.

In short, if an area has a history of wildflowers, and they haven't pushed up yet, they probably will shortly. With that in mind, some reports from around the Central Coast.

Relatively untrekked areas like Pogonip and perimeter meadows at UC-Santa Cruz have yet to peak, but are beginning to show a lot of color.

Lupine and California poppies are making an appearance along highways and hillsides in San Lorenzo Valley and even

Highway 17.

The Parkfield-Coalinga Grade, much of it unpaved, "is absolutely gorgeous, a lot of yellow," Barbara Varian, of Parkfield, said. "And you'll see a lot on the road (Vineyard Canyon) into Parkfield from San Miguel."

Jerry Loomis, Point Lobos State Reserve ranger, said, "I drove Nacimiento Road (in South Monterey County) the other day. It hasn't peaked yet, but it's good — nice fields of lupine and owl's clover and some poppies."

Favorite hiking trails and nature walks are also a good bet, but many will have a later blooming season.

A drive on Highway 1 north of Santa Cruz will provide a show of lupine and the occasional poppy, among others.

Terry Davis, marketing director for the Monterey County Parks Department, said wild-

flowers around Lake San Antonio "reach right down to the water's edge — it's as beautiful as I've ever seen it down there.

"From Jolon down to the lake, there are tons of wildflowers."

LaDonna Maria Curto of Mission San Antonio agrees — "It's beautiful here — lupines, owl's clover and buttercups."

Susan Ragsdale of Gonzales reports vistas of wildflowers in Johnson Canyon east of Gonzales and along Gloria Road, and Nedess said Los Laureles Grade on the Carmel Valley side is resplendent.

At Toro Park, rangers Bryan Williams and Liz Reta point out there are miles of trails for those wishing to search for wildflowers off the beaten path. "Ol-lason Trail is the easiest one to walk," said Reta.

At Point Lobos, Loomis said, "We are seeing Douglas iris, lupine, fiddleneck, blue-eyed

grass, seaside daisies and Indian paintbrush ... South Shore is particularly good and the Bird Island Trail can be really nice."

At Garland Ranch Regional Park in Carmel Valley, Nedeff said, "It's starting to look nicer and nicer on the lower levels. The Cottonwood Trail is one of the nicest. You'll see lupine and larkspur and poppies and tiny gillias.

"On the upper levels, you'll find very early Mariposa lilies, globe-lilies. And fairy lanterns should be coming out by next week."

*If you want to get started on your own wildflower patch, the merchants of Aptos Center, 7500 Soquel Drive, are offering complimentary packets of wildflower seeds tomorrow in celebration of Earth Day. Quantities are limited, so if you're interested, show up early.*