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Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
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Twentynine Palms, Calif. - The 2009 wildflower season at Joshua Tree National Park is just beginning.

Cindy Von Halle, supervisory park ranger at Joshua Tree National Park, said verbena is starting to bloom in the lowest elevations of the park.

“They start there because it’s warmer,” she said. More flowers could start blooming “as early as a week from now. Right now we’re waiting on the weather,” she said.

Linda Slater, chief of resource interpretation at Mojave National Preserve, said bladder pod is starting on Kelbaker Road, but the majority of wildflowers are “still a couple weeks out. We just need to have some warm weather.”

Brown-eyed primrose, sand verbena, creosote and Spanish needle are blooming at the base of Amboy Crater, said Leslie Thornburg, operations manager at Cadiz Inc.

Von Halle said as the weather warms up, annuals such as desert dandelions, blue Canterbury bells, purple chia, and Desert mallow will start the “rolling bloom” in the lower elevations. Ocotillo, brittle bush and desert lavender will continue the rolling bloom in the middle elevations through March. Cacti are last to bloom and usually do so in April and May, Von Halle said.

Joshua trees don’t bloom every year and Von Halle was unsure if they would this year.

She said 49 Palms Oasis and the Cholla Cactus Garden are usually good places to see wildflowers in Joshua Tree National Park, but the best way for park visitors to find out where blooms are and what’s blooming is to ask at the Visitor’s Center.

She said it’s hard to predict what is going to bloom when, but that the park is expecting a good blooming season due to timely winter rains and snow.

“(Visitors) can expect blooms somewhere from late February to the middle of May,” she said.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors flock to Joshua Tree National Park each wildflower season, said Joe Zarki, Chief of Interpretation at Joshua Tree National Park. In March 2008 alone, the park drew 261,323 visitors.

The park staff members are being trained to lead wildflower walks during the height of blooming season, Von Halle said. Visitors should call the park at (760) 367-5500 for dates and times of wildflower walks.

Joshua Tree National Park is located at 74485 National Park Drive in Twentynine Palms, CA. Visitors can also get more information at [www.nps.gov/jotr](http://www.nps.gov/jotr) .