

Table Mountain Wildflowers Near Oroville

— Carol Leigh

WHEN TO GO

Late March through mid-May

WHAT TO BRING

Close-up lens
Telephoto lens (200mm+)
Polarizing filter
Tripod

PHOTO POSSIBILITIES

Wildflowers, landscapes,
cemetery, Gold Rush town

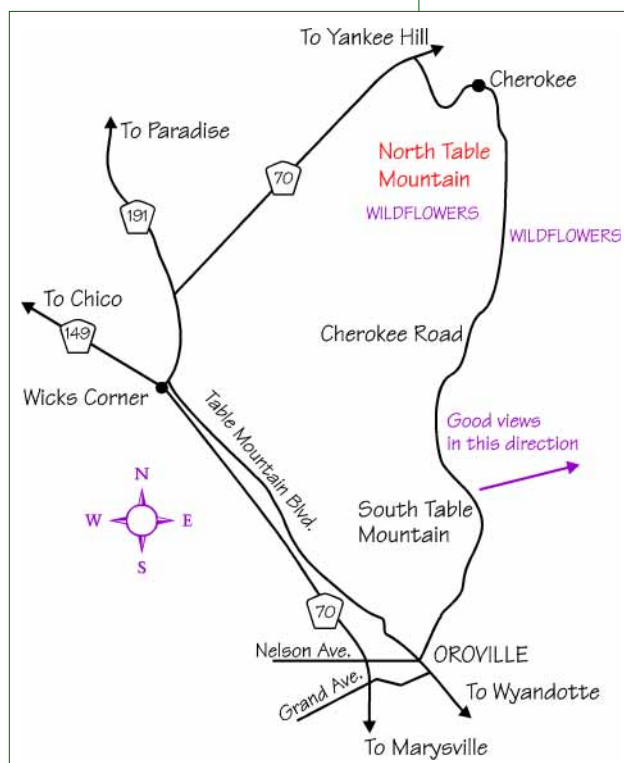
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Oroville Chamber of
Commerce
1789 Montgomery St.
Oroville, CA 95965
(916) 533-2542 or
(800) 655-4653



© Carol Leigh

I love this tree! Little yellow flowers lead your eye out to its dramatic shape.



Poppies and lupine are the star attractions of the wildflower display on Table Mountain, just north of Oroville. Comprised of a lava cap that's several hundred feet thick and several miles wide, the Table Mountain wildflower area consists of South Table Mountain and North Table Mountain — the northern area being much better than the southern. Why? Because you can get out and walk among the wildflowers in the northern area; there's barely room to pull over and get out of your car in the southern section.

I've visited this area twice now, and both times I've not been disappointed. If you're coming south from Cherokee, look for the cattle chutes on your right where there's a big parking lot. You can park and wander out over the fields, checking out the flowers. On the other side of the road, there are more



© Carol Leigh

Although a barbed wire fence keeps you out of these fields, you can use a long lens to fill your frame with color.

flower-filled fields, but you're kept away from them by a barbed wire fence.

As you continue south on Cherokee Road toward Oroville, you'll see views off to your left of flat, table-like mountains. If you can find a place to pull over, this might be worth your while. Please be cautious. The road is winding, narrow, and people tend to drive too fast on it.

When to go

Depending on the weather, the wildflower bloom generally begins in late March and

continues through mid-May.

For additional information

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My wildflower report from April 22, 2001

It's the journey, not the destination . . . I thought it might be a good idea to drive up to Table Mountain near Oroville (about 1.5 hours away) and check out the wildflowers today. I've got a goofy map program by DeLorme that will plot a route from point A to point B, and the route that it plotted from our house to Table Mountain was the most convoluted, weird way of

going that it was laughable. So, laughing, we decided to follow it and it was thoroughly delightful! Instead of taking major roads to Oroville, we took all sorts of back country roads where a variety of flowers were in bloom. Still covered in dew from yesterday's rains, the flowers were lovely.

For those of you specifically interested in the Table Mountain area, here's what you can expect to see right now, heading down Cherokee Road from north to south.



© Carol Leigh

Stone ruins, a few houses and a railroad car are all that's left in the town of Cherokee.



© Carol Leigh
Still wet from the previous night's rain, clover blooms next to a rock foundation in Cherokee.

The town of Cherokee itself was interesting to shoot — an old house has been painted bright yellow and has been turned into a museum (closed) and right next to it was an old rusty railroad car. Across the street, the stone remains of what looks like an old bank sit crumbling in an oh-so-photogenic manner. Clover covered with dew bloomed against a backdrop of weathered rocks and stones. Purple winter vetch was also in bloom.

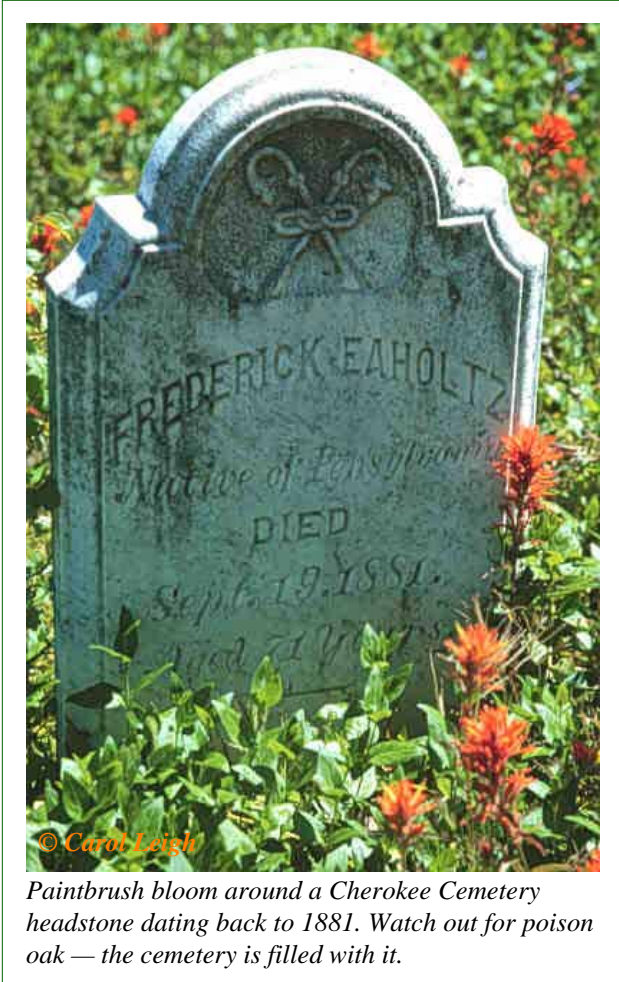
Continuing south on Cherokee Road, lupine, vetch and paintbrush bloomed alongside the road. We stopped at the Cherokee Pioneer Cemetery, where Indian paintbrush was blooming all over the place (usually lovingly intertwined with poison oak). A few iris and a few yellow star tulips added touches of soft yellow and bright yellow. Lupine looks about ten days away. Kingbirds flitted around in the oaks.

Still continuing south on Cherokee Road, we turned left to photograph the red-painted covered bridge. Continuing south along Cherokee Road we saw butter-and-eggs, buttercups, and fringe-pods.

Our next stop was the “table” part of Table Mountain. We parked near the cattle chutes and wandered about. The entire area was covered with lupines and, since the main focal point was a huge, beautiful oak tree, I took the same shots from the same vantage point that I did two years ago when the ground was covered with goldfields, not lupine. It’ll be interesting to compare and contrast the two sets of images . . . Also in bloom were popcorn flowers, some fiddlenecks, a small poppy, and allium.

Across the street we stopped to photograph Monet-like scenes of alternating horizontal layers of purplish-blue lupines and bright yellow goldfields. Quite pretty. Watch out for cow paddies . . .

Cherokee Road continues south, becomes quite winding and narrow, and is flanked with brodiaea, fairy lanterns, sweetpea, clover, paintbrush, white lupine, and dudleya. Very few turn-outs to stop and shoot.



Paintbrush bloom around a Cherokee Cemetery headstone dating back to 1881. Watch out for poison oak — the cemetery is filled with it.

On our way home (via a more direct way), we made a detour onto a narrow little road to photograph fairy lanterns and then stopped at yet another Pioneer Cemetery near Smartsville, where moss covered headstones dating back to the 1870s.

Had we not made it to the top of Table Mountain, the trip would have been wonderful anyway. So keep in mind: It's the journey, not the destination!