

# FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

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## Notes From The Field

There are wildflowers at the Poppy Reserve, however, the park is temporarily closed to the public because of the COVID-19 Virus. To keep up-to-date on closures and openings go to [parks.ca.gov](https://parks.ca.gov) or [prmdia.org](https://prmdia.org). I love walking trails and somehow walking in my neighborhood wearing a mask just doesn't do it for me. Hopefully we will be out of all the restrictions soon.

## LEAFY-STEMMED COREOPSIS

*Coreopsis calliopsidea*

*Name changed May 2014 to Leptosyne calliopsidea*



Photo taken March 24, 2020—170th St. East and Avenue M—looking toward the A.V. Indian Museum/

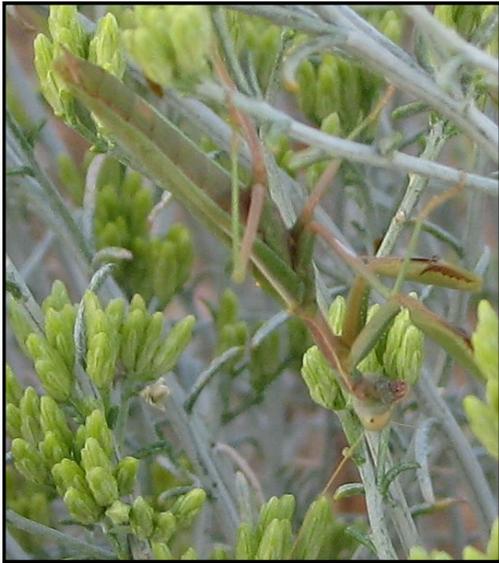
Leafy-stemmed coreopsis is a flowering plant in the daisy family and also known as leafstem tickseed or pot of gold. It is endemic to California and grows in some southern coastal mountain ranges, the Mojave Desert, and from Alameda and Inyo counties south to Riverside county. It is an annual herb, the head of the flower has a center of up to 50 tiny yellow disc florets and a fringe of around eight ray florets.



Birds will eat the seeds and butterflies love their nectar. The Desert tortoise will eat the entire plant.



It is called tickseed because of the tiny black seeds look a bit like ticks. These plants do NOT attract or have ticks.



## PRAYING MANTIS

*Mantis religiosa*

Can you find the praying mantis in the photo? Here is a clue—it is upside down—they are great at camouflage.

Praying mantis are related to grasshoppers and crickets, belonging to a family of insects called orthoptera. There are about 2,000 varieties of mantis world wide, however, the United States is home to about eighteen species of them. They came to the US by way of shipments of goods from Europe and China and arrived around the turn of the century, 1800 to 1900.

They are a carnivore and do not discriminate between beneficial or non-beneficial insects. They can live to be about one year old and can grow up to six-inches long. They were named for its prominent front legs, which are bent and held together at an angle that suggests the position of prayer.

They have triangular heads and can turn their heads 180 degrees to scan their surroundings with two large compound eyes and three other simple eyes located between its antennae so they can see in 3-D. The winged praying mantis has just one ear (in the shape of an oval) located on the underside of its belly between the last set of legs. This ear only hears loud high-pitched notes, which means it cannot discriminate the direction of a sound. It can, however, detect ultrasound, or a sound produced by echolocating bats which prey on the mantis. The bat sends out a high pitched cry and when the mantis hears that loud high pitch it will evade a bat in flight by stop, dropping, and rolling in midair, then dive bomb away from the bat.



They can be green or brown and they lie in ambush or patiently stalk their quarry. They use their front legs to snare their prey and their legs are equipped with spikes for snaring prey and pinning it in place. They eat moths, crickets, grasshoppers, flies, bees, caterpillars and just about any other insect they can catch.



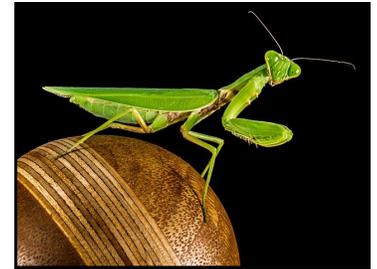
In the autumn the praying mantis will mate. The male is smaller than the female and once the mating (or during) the female often will eat the male. The female will lay hundreds of eggs which she deposits on a twig or stem in the fall and then protects them with a Styrofoam-like substance she secretes from her body. This forms a protective egg case over about 200 eggs in which her offspring will develop over the winter. Once the egg hatches an immature praying mantis called a nymph is born and looks almost exactly like its parents except it is smaller and does not yet have wings.

There will be three changes which the mantis will go through starting with the egg, nymph, and then adult. The nymph will grow larger and as it does it will outgrow its exoskeleton (skeleton that is on the outside of its body). The exoskeleton is flexible and will allow some growth, however, when the nymph's body becomes too large for the exoskeleton, it will shed it and form a new one. This is called molting and they will do this

up to 10 times. Once the last molting occurs the nymph will emerge with wings that will be wet and look like wrinkled fabric. After several hours they will dry and begin to stretch.

Their predators, other than the bats, are frogs, snakes, lizards, spiders, and birds.

The word **mantis** comes from the Greek *mantikos*, for **soothsayer** or **prophet**. Early civilizations of Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt and Assyria considered the mantis to have supernatural powers. It is considered a god in southern Africa for its praying posture and there are two martial arts developed in China that have movements and fighting strategies based on the praying mantis. It is also considered a spirit animal that symbolizes peace, truth and calmness.



### **WHAT DOES THE EASTER BUNNY HAVE TO DO WITH EASTER?**

Easter is the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. The Easter Bunny is not mentioned in the bible, a rabbit or hare does not lay eggs, so how did the bunny get involved with delivering eggs on Easter Sunday?

Exact origins of the Easter Bunny are pretty much a mystery. One theory is that the symbol of the rabbit stems from pagan tradition, specifically the festival of Eostre—the goddess of fertility and springtime and her earthly animal symbol was the rabbit. Rabbits, known for their energetic breeding have traditionally symbolized fertility and new life. Eggs are also representative of new life and it is believed that decorating eggs for Easter dates back to the 13th century. Hundreds of years ago, churches had their congregations abstain from eggs during Lent and allowed them to eat them again on Easter.

Another origin comes from the Easter hare, or Osterhase, as an Easter symbol in Germany and was first mentioned in German writings in the 1500s. The legend holds that a poor woman living in Germany decorated colorful eggs for her children to find in the garden. As soon as the hidden eggs were found by the children, a large hare was seen hopping away. The children thought the hare left the eggs. After that the children would make nests for the Easter hare and sometimes put out carrots for it to eat.

According to some sources, the Easter Bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called “Osterhase”. Their children made nests on the ground in which the bunny could lay its colored eggs. Eventually the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit’s Easter morning delivers expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts in an Easter basket.