

FLOWER POWER

Do you remember that old phrase: "flower power"? Be careful, now, because if you admit that you remember it, you would be admitting that you are OLD, like me. That phrase dates back to the 1960's, during the Hippy era, when hippies wore flowers in their hair to signify their opposition to war and to most things their parents stood for and their belief in peace, love, other "ideals". They threw off many cultural conventions and engaged in free sex, lots of drugs, and rebellion just for the sake of it. (You can bet that I was NOT a hippy, but just a conventional, boring vanilla-type person.)



As you might guess, I'm not talking of that kind of flower power. Rather, the title refers to God's flower power, which is on profuse display in some areas of the desert, most particularly Goat Mountain Pass and the surrounding area. Treat yourself to a drive up there and once over the summit, take the gas line road (the first dirt road you come to) either to the right into the hills, or to the left over to Sawtooth campground. The wildflowers abound in either direction.

Yes, we went on a tootle just to see the show before they fade and die. As we drove over the pass, the dominant color was purple (Phacelia, one of my favorites): purple fields, purple lining the creases and washes up the hillsides, purple everywhere. Much less dominant were the yellows, oranges, and whites, which gives me hope for an extended wildflower season, since it's only March, and some varieties have just started growing.

Turning left into Sawtooth, we stopped at one of the covered picnic areas for lunch and played on the dinosaur bones and with the dinosaur baby just begin-

ning to hatch from its egg. Well, ok, not really, but there is a nice display of fake dinosaur stuff for kids to play on.

(Have you noticed, everything is "fake" these days, and the odd thing is that so much really IS fake!)

Sawtooth itself is an amazing collection of rock formations in beautiful browns and bronzes, painted on by desert varnish, an oxide that forms on rocks in arid areas like ours.

(Yes, I looked it up on Wikipedia.) Add to that the decorations

of purple and yellow, plus the pure green desert floor, and there is color like you rarely see.

After lunch we crossed the highway

to the other side to follow that road. We have been in that area two or three times before, as described in this space, so since you've obviously read every single sentence and remember it all vividly, I don't need to go into it, right? OK, I forgive you for forgetting. The road leads to the Ord Mountain Route Network - it's official name, I found out. You can make various types of loops around and into the Ord Mountains, preferably with a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

The wildflowers were on full display for several miles in this direction, and I saw two of my favorite plants in blossom. The Mojave Yucca, that looks like a dwarf Joshua Tree,



blooms much more rarely, so to find some in blossom is a treat.

Actually these were in bud, and I'll have to go back very soon to get to see the creamy blossoms, many edged in crimson or dark brown. And a favorite cactus, echinocactus polycephorus (don't I sound educated?) aka cotton top, had "blossomed", and when you see the picture of it, you can see why it's called that.

If you want the names of the other flowers we saw, you will have to make an appointment with Sir William, who seems to know everything about everything, or so he says. Just ask him. He was most excited when at one of the early stops, at a well and cattle watering trough, a group of



off-roaders had stopped and were interested in these things they had never seen before. Sir William was able to share his knowledge with these people, pure delight to this desert explorer.

After passing through the green-desert-and-colorful-wildflower zone, Sir William took us home the LOOOOOONG way, around hills and mountains, down and up a hundred ravines, bumping on millions of rocks (good for chiropractic therapy), across a smooth dry lake, bumping on more millions of rocks,



until we reached a long, smooth sandy road down the slope of the north side of our valley. We finally reached Camp Rock Road and returned home, grateful for the peace and quiet.

I could spend more space describing to you the

flowers in their beautiful settings, but it's probably much more enjoyable to leave space for more pictures and let the flowers speak for themselves. And don't despair, keep a sharp eye out for more flowers this year. If God sees fit to bless us with a little more rain, it could be that we ain't seen nuthin' yet.

Linda Gimmel

MORE ON FLOWERS

From the Web.

"Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the mind."

— Luther Burbank

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

TUES. APRIL 5, 5 PM.
at the Senior Center

- What does the community want for the future of the Leader Newspaper.
- Cal Poly Students to present status of their work on our proposed senior housing project.
- LVEDA's Adopt a Highway Program (who wants to participate in highway clean-ups).
- Plus updates on the solar moratorium - Hwy 247 Scenic Designation - hauled water legislation - "Sunshot Initiative" - local crime stats - etc.

L.V. School Board Meeting

Thursday, April 13, starts at 5:30PM.
At the Alternative Education Center,
8560 Aliento Rd up Highway 18.

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