

## DESERT DELIGHT

It's happening. Do you hear the faint rumble? Put your ear to the ground. You'll hear it.

What is that rumbling? It's the desert about to burst forth! All those millions of tiny, even microscopic seeds are bursting their little shells and sending out roots and shoots, up and down and every which way.

OK, so I don't know that for sure, but I think so. I HOPE so. Our normally brown desert is turning green as the rains and snows we've been blessed with have watered our desert garden, to bring forth a showing of color and fragrance such as we haven't seen in years. That touch of green contains millions of plants that will soon bloom in purple, yellow, blue, white, and red profusion, decorating roadsides and hillsides, ravines and canyons.

Am I sticking my neck out by saying this? Yes. Is there real hope for it to happen this year?

Yes! I don't remember the ground being so damp for so long at this time of the

year, and already on our property, I see the beautiful Goldfields that cover the ground, turning it bright yellow. Wait until the acres and acres of Goldfields in Apple Valley wake up! They bloom even in dry years, so think of what this year's blossom might bring!

We also see the delicate, tiny light-lavender Fremont Phacelia and darker purple Filary creating purple carpets here and there. Soon the Lacy Phacelia will surround the creosote bushes between here and Barstow, mixed in with mallow (orange-cov-ered bushes), and other whites, purples, and pinks. (Sir William can name them. I can't remember from year to year.)

I keep hearing a song in my head as I hope for the wildflowers. It's from a little-remembered Broadway show called "On a Clear

Day You Can See Forever", a story about a clairvoyant girl who can make flowers grow by talking (singing) to them. Here are some of the words:

*Hey buds below ... up is where to grow  
Up with which below can't compare with.  
Hurry - it's lovely up here...  
Life down a hole takes an awful toll,  
What with not a soul there to share with  
Hurry - it's lovely up here!  
Wake up, bestir yourself,  
It's time that you disinter yourself  
You've got a spot to fill - a pot to fill  
And what a gift package of shower, sun and love  
You'll be met above everywhere with,  
Fondled and sniffed by millions who drift by,  
Life here is rosy - if you're a posy  
Hurry it's lovely here!*

Another of the desert delights about to blossom are the Joshua Trees, which bloom in March (that's now, folks). Many already have buds on them but are too green to be noticed yet. And then maybe they won't bloom so much. Who knows when and why they bloom? The desert keeps its secrets well-protected even as so many "experts" offer their theories and prognostications. (Update: on our Saturday walk with our dogs, we saw many Joshua Tree buds



and even full blossoms, so look now, because they disappear quickly!)

The rarest and most beautiful blossom is that of the Mojave Yucca, a plant that resembles the Joshua Tree but is shorter and with longer leaf-spines. The blossom is an amazing cream color sometimes edged in dark purple. There are a number of them also on the highway to Barstow, hopefully our future Scenic Highway 247, ready to please when conditions are right.

And then there are our beloved Roadrunners, who we now see busily running around and building nests, making ready for a family. During the fall and winter, we've

had at best only one daily visit for a meatball, but now we are getting multiple visits by presumably multiple Roadrunners. We've put in a request with the National Brotherhood of Roadrunners, that they issue name tags so we know who's who, and whether Harry is coming five times a day but Mabel only gets to visit once. There has to be fairness and sharing, you know!

We are so lucky to live here, and it's no wonder we fight so hard to keep industrial-ization out of our desert. Many of



our fellow fighters have knowledge and expertise in environmental, ecological, biological, and other-logical issues to use in arguments defending our desert. They sound amazing and talk 'way above my head, and I bet it's way above the County folks' heads, too, but they can't admit it for fear of revealing their ignorance. At least I want to think so, since I need the company in my U.S.S. Ignoramus rowboat.

People like me, on the other hand, defend with the only thing we have: our hearts, our love of this beautiful place, our homes, and our fierce protectiveness of the Desert Delights. Leave us alone, we shout, and

let our wildflowers, Joshua Trees, Roadrunners, Coyotes, tortoises, Creosote bushes, spectacular sunrises and dramatic sunsets, and long distance scenic views accompanied by profound silence alone!

*Linda Gammel*

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## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

*From the Web.*

### RICH MAN

There was once a rich man who was near death. He was very grieved because he had worked so hard for his money, and he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So, he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him.

An angel hears his plea and appears to him, "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you."

The man implores the angel to speak to God to see if He might bend the rules.

The man continued to pray that his wealth could follow him. The angel reappears and informs the man that God has decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man gathers his largest suitcase and fills it with pure gold bars and places it beside his bed.

Soon afterward, the man dies and shows up at the Gates of Heaven to greet St. Peter. Seeing the suitcase, Peter says, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here!"

But the man explains to him that he has permission and asks him to verify his story with the Lord. Sure enough, St. Peter checks and comes back saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through."

Peter opens the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that the man found too precious to leave behind and exclaims, "You brought pavement?!!!"

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Thursday, March 14, starts at 5:30PM. At the Alternative Education Center, 8560 Aliento Rd up Highway 18.

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### AT THE STORE

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