

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Pahrump, Nevada.

Once again, we have set up camp at Preferred RV Resort right behind Terrible's Downtown Casino. This park is right downtown and only a half block from Terrible's Casino and the Nugget Casino. We are up to our tails in good quality food at very low prices. We expect to be here until May 21. At the moment, the weather is fantastic. With hindsight, we should have left the Palm Springs, California, area about two weeks earlier. As always, we invite our friends to come for a visit. We are one hour west of Las Vegas and one hour east of Death Valley. It's an interesting and attractive drive any way you go from here.

We will do our first financial retirement seminar here in the park on Thursday, April 29 at 10:30 a.m. If you'd like to come, let us know so we can register you for a free lunch.

The big news in this letter is the flower bloom in Death Valley. This is a fabulous year for wildflowers and it's at its peak right now. It might last another week, maybe two. As soon as the weather turns very hot, it's all over. If you can get away, come now! If you would like to know more, the Las Vegas Review-Journal has an excellent article about this year's bloom. <http://www.lvrj.com/news/national-park-teeming-with-wildflowers-91184709.html>



Desert Gold, Death Valley, CA

On Sunday, April 18, we drove through Death Valley and took the pictures you see here. The above shot was taken on the valley floor at the south end of the park very near Badwater, which is 282 feet below sea level.

Death Valley is the hottest spot in North America. It is also the lowest elevation, but it is surrounded by mountains. Telescope Peak is over 11,000 feet. The combination of a low valley floor and high surrounding mountains keeps the hot air trapped. In the summer, Death Valley can easily see temperatures over 120 degrees. Right now the mornings are in the 60's with the late afternoons creeping up to just under 100.



Desert Five Spot

The lavender blossom above is called the Desert Five Spot. It is also known as Chinese Lantern since it resembles the papery globes of Chinese lanterns. Each blossom has exactly 5 spots in the bottom. This plant is usually rare in Death Valley, but is very abundant this year.



Globemallow

This yellowish-gray plant is generally found in washes and canyons and the blooms are reddish-orange and the buds quite red. We found a large number of these on the way out of the park at around 1,300 feet on Jubilee Pass.



Beavertail Cactus

The Beavertail Cactus was also quite prominent at Jubilee Pass.



Mojave Aster

The leaves of the Mojave Aster are contorted and this makes the plant look like it's dying. The blooms, however, are quite beautiful. This was another flower we found on Jubilee Pass.



Desert Gold

Above is a close up of Desert Gold. Notice how it is surviving in real crummy looking soil. This photo also has some pretty white blooms, but we were not able to identify them.



Toothed Dodder

Above is a good example of the Toothed Dodder which is actually a parasitic flowering plant whose vines cover host shrubs.

Overall, Death Valley has more than a 1,000 plant species. Although individual desert plants tend to be spaced widely apart, plant cover can become thick when annual wildflowers fill the gaps. The brief

lives of desert annuals are a mad rush to grow and reproduce before drying up in the hot summer sun. In most years, the blooms are almost nonexistent. In other years like this one, the display can be spectacular.



We leave you with a picture from the cactus garden here in Preferred RV Resort. This Prichacereus (spelling in doubt) went absolutely spectacular for a few days last week. The cactus had 20 huge and gorgeous blooms all at one time.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

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