

## DWL Tour 2018 Essay 2<sup>nd</sup> prize

**Lisa Lafferty**

“Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.”-A.A. Milne

Who knew such beauty could be found in the local flora and fauna of the Mojave Desert? I have been needlessly fighting against what I thought were weeds in my yard, only to discover that if I let nature prevail, those “weeds” would add unique and interesting dimensions to my garden. By recognizing and utilizing the benefits that native plants offer, I can conserve water, invite pollinators, and prevent soil erosion from those unexpected rain showers and wind storms. I will also alleviate a lot of my frustration, because these specimens have a will to live and repopulate on their own every spring in my yard. No longer will I feel the need to launch a full-scale attack with my hula hoe. The Desert-Wise Landscape Tour helped to educate me on the value and importance of these native gems. By participating in the tour, I was able to finally put names to those things I had been categorizing as weeds, e.g. Brittlebush, Desert Mallow, Sand Verbena, Desert Willow, Mojave Aster, Jimson Weed, Coyote Melon and Bladderpods. By allowing these indigenous plants to survive, I can peacefully partner up with Mother Nature to create my own garden masterpiece.

I am thankful to all of those gardeners who opened up their homes and so generously imparted their knowledge and expertise to us. Seeing the many creative and artistic ways they made use of their spaces was inspiring. I walked away from the tour with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for my own yard. I am determined to figure out a way to capture and use gray-water. I am ready to commit to solar energy. I am going to welcome back those “weeds” with open arms.