

Bloom watch

By [Shirin McArthur](#)

June 22, 2016

As the weather has warmed to summer heat here in the desert, I've begun taking a morning walk that starts somewhere around 5:15–5:30 a.m. It's best to get outdoors before the sun clears the mountaintops, or at least soon thereafter. I see a number of people as I wind my way through the neighborhood and along the walking trails which surround it. I also see [birds, rabbits, and a colorful array of flowering and fruiting plants](#).

A couple of days ago, I returned from my walk and discovered a beauty in my own front yard. I swear that the buds appeared overnight, that there had been no sign of them the day before. One day the plant looked normal, then suddenly three inch-long buds had appeared. It bloomed later the same day. For some reason, many desert plants are like that. Flowers are here today, gone tomorrow. There's even something called a [bloom watch](#) here because of the night-blooming cereus, or *Peniocereus greggii*.

As the common name indicates, it only blooms at night, and only blooms once a year. Furthermore, the plants are in some sort of synchronicity with each other, and that one bloom night happens for many adjacent plants. Tohono Chul Park makes a festival out of the occasion, and I'm hoping for the chance to experience it sometime soon.

But that sudden appearance of blossoms is deceiving. The cactus in my front yard has been preparing for this day for a while. Slow, inexorable internal changes wrought this sudden miracle.

The spiritual life is like that, too. It can often appear that nothing is happening—in our own lives or in the lives of others. It can appear that we are living the same old routine, day after day. We walk, we work, we play, we pray, we eat, we sleep, we get up and do it all again.

Yet everything we do changes us. Work stimulates our brains and engages us with our communities. Play increases endorphins, food nourishes our bodies, sleep

rejuvenates us, and prayer enriches our relationships with God and each other. The body that took a walk last week is not exactly the same body that's reading this blog post. It may look the same, but it's not. And neither are our souls.

This is why our spiritual lives matter. This is why it's important to have a relationship with our Creator. We either nourish our spirits or we starve them. If we nourish them—even if it appears that nothing is happening—we will one day wake up to find ourselves in bloom, in one way or another. If you want to bloom, you will need to be patient, follow a spiritual discipline (or two), and keep watch.

Originally posted at [McArthur's blog](#)