

Traverse Creek: Jim and Shirley's Secret Spot #7

Apr 18 Posted by [Jim White](#) in [Jim & Shirley's Secret Places](#)

Jim and Shirley's Secret Spot #7: Traverse Creek

A few years ago, Judy Hooper led us out over the rocky serpentine covered hillside near Georgetown, El Dorado County, and there they were. The most beautiful lavender colored wild flowers, growing right out of the rocks. They are the state flower of Montana, called the Bitterroot and can be found in California, not too far from Georgetown. It is called the "Traverse Creek Botanical Special Interest Area. " There are many other wildflowers and plants to be seen and photographed there too. There are at least 7 flowering plants found here that thrive on ground that is poison to most plants. To find out how these plants thrive, to see and photograph them just follow these directions.

Drive from Auburn to Georgetown. At the first stop sign in town, after stopping, go straight. You will now be heading towards Placerville. Drive about 1.6 miles and turn left on the Bear Creek Rd. Follow this road past the houses down into a valley. You will see on your left, a park like place with a picnic table and a display board with pictures and a narrative written account posted telling you the story of this unique place. Here is a picture of Shirley sitting at the table. To find the Bitterroot flowers (you should start looking in the month of May), go back to the road you came in on and drive across the creek and up the hill about .2 of a mile. You will see a line of big rocks along the right side of the road that curves to the left. Pull off and park (some of your vehicle will be on the roadway) and walk across the field to where the land starts to slope down toward the creek. If you do not want to park on the roadway you could drive up farther and park along a gravel road that goes to the right. Walk back to the big rocks curve and hike out towards the creek, looking closely at the grey rock outcroppings for the Bitterroot flowers.

The hillside on the opposite side of the road is often covered with other flower species. We like to go there when the forecast calls for thunder clouds. The terrain here slopes off to the west and photographing the flowery hillside with the clouds in the background is easy. Just use your strobe to light up the flowers in the foreground.

For a short hike, of one hour or so, and maybe find some Tiger Lilies, go back to the picnic area and follow the trail up the creek. Keeping an eye on the creek for the "emeralds" that were mined here back in the 1920's & '30's and sold in New York. This trail will cross the creek go up the mountain where you should go to the right and come to a creek where we often find the beautiful Tiger Lilies. Stay on this trail, keeping to your right, which will take you back to the road and the picnic area.

Take a lunch, some cold drinks and have some fun, photographing these rare and beautiful plants.



Shirley at the picnic area





Bitterroot flowers

