



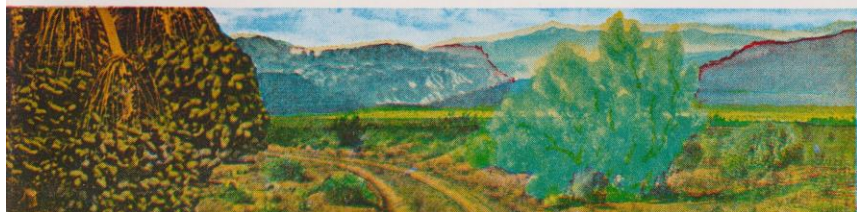
*Mr. Shields Holding Female and Male Date Blossoms*

**Coachella Valley Desert Trails**  
**The Salton Sea Saga**  
and  
**The Romance and Sex Life of the Date**

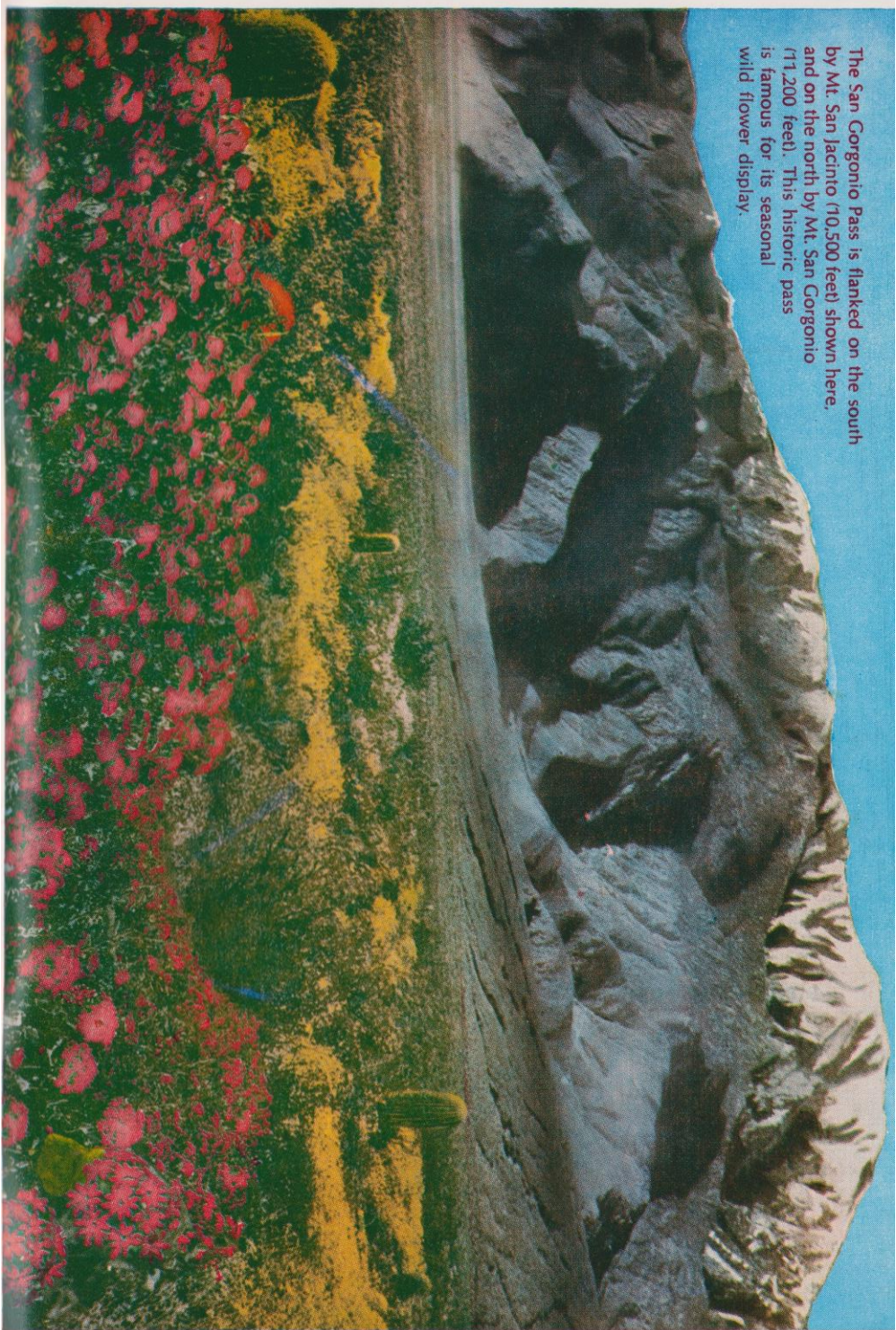
*Published by*  
**SHIELDS DATE GARDENS**  
Indio, California 92201



*Desert Trail and Smoke Tree*



The San Geronio Pass is flanked on the south by Mt. San Jacinto (10,500 feet) shown here, and on the north by Mt. San Geronio (11,200 feet). This historic pass is famous for its seasonal wild flower display.





## PART ONE

### Coachella Valley Desert Trails

Coachella Valley Desert Trails is written in response to many inquiries as to what to do and what to look for while visiting this portion of the great Colorado Desert. The list herein set down is purposely limited to places of easy and safe access. However, the inquiring mind will find all of them rewarding in scenic and scientific interest.



Mr. Shields in his  
Bit of Old Arabia  
in Modern California

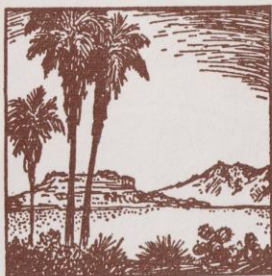
## PART TWO

### The Romance and Sex Life of the Date

The Romance and Sex Life of the Date is a treatise on date culture as shown in color and sound, continuously from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. throughout the year, in the Romance of the Date Theatre. We have had thousands of requests for this talk from visitors to our date gardens and theatre. Mr. Shields is "talking" now from the printed page in response to this demand.

Photo by Frasher

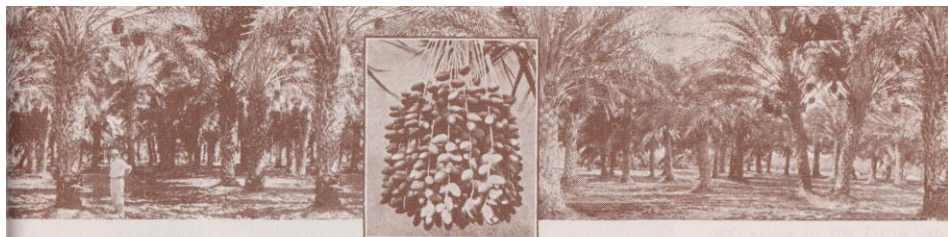




To all those free souls who  
travel the desert trails this  
book is lovingly dedicated.

16th EDITION

Copyright 1957 Shields Date Gardens  
Indio, California



119 Kinds of Dates in

Shields Famous Gardens

## A Date with Dates in Coachella Valley

The Land of Romance and Sunshine

—One of the Most Interesting Trips in the World

SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO the lure of the desert appealed to only a few botanists, artists, etc., and those hardy souls who sought the healing balm of the long silences. The pioneers who came into the Coachella Valley to lay the foundation of the date raising center of the United States had no idea millions would visit their date gardens, not only to enjoy the fruits of their labor, but to revel in the beauty and health-giving sunshine this valley so liberally affords. To the person who made the trip from Los Angeles to Indio in the old faithful 1917 Model T Ford, the progress that has been made here is positively amazing. Sometime between 1917 and 1965 the word "desert" lost its dire aspect and became as full of promise and love as "forest, stream and mountain." The desert may even be more deeply loved than any of these if the crowded highways and resorts are a true testimony. We who knew the desert "back when" are now vindicated, as the "wasteland" is rapidly being populated with "desert rats" in Mink and Cadillacs.

After the birth struggles of the date industry a few growers emerged to set the pattern. Shields Date Gardens is one of these. In fact Shields is known all over the United States as the outstanding success story in the valley. Mr. and Mrs. Shields worked for sixty years to build a prosperous business but they have not overlooked the truly romantic elements in the growing of dates. Here in their beautiful salesroom and packing house the two Shields have added a modern air-conditioned theatre seating 108 and known as the Romance of the Date Theatre—where the life of the date palm is given in colored pictures with descriptive narration—continuous showing from 8 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. every day in the year except Christmas.

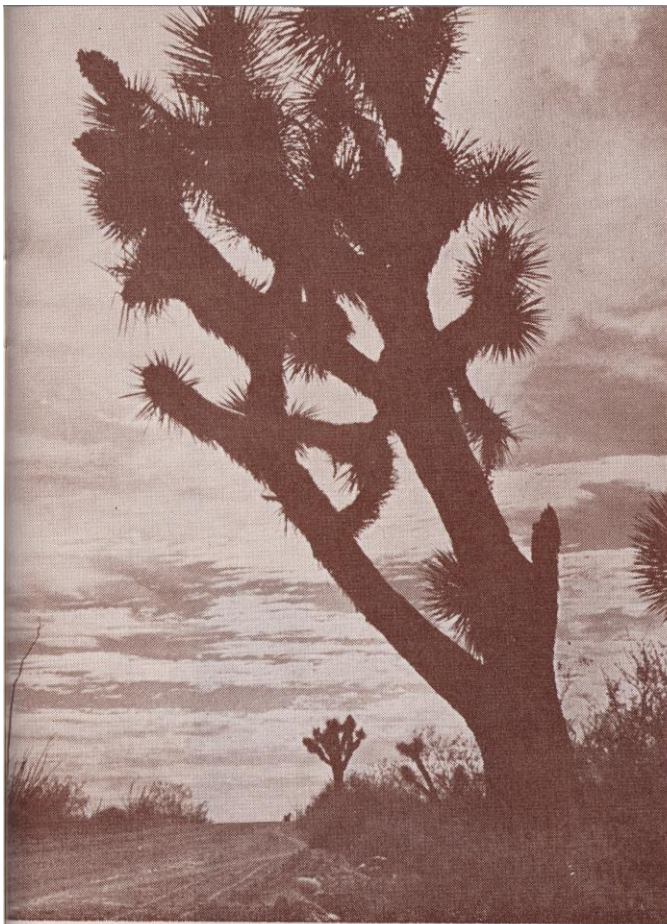
To one who "took the bumps" on an unpaved road years ago all this is a real innovation. A study of date culture **then** required weeks of nosing around to get not much more than bare facts. But at Shields one can get the full treatment in less than thirty minutes—and presented in such a colorful way as to hold the interest of everyone, from the child in kindergarten to the great-grandparents. The building itself is beautiful and fits into the landscape. In the rear of this huge building you will find a rose patio with many kinds of roses. Certainly when one is journeying to Palm Springs or into Coachella Valley the whole Shields establishment is a **must** on your visiting list.

Someone has said that the desert is like the olive—you have to get used to it before you will like it. Don't you believe that! Does one have to learn to like sunshine; golden, mauve and purple mountains; sunsets. Of course not! Thousands, nay millions go desertward every year with health, rest and beautiful surroundings their quest. If you, who read this have never gone down into the below sea level bowl called Coachella Valley, get going now. You will be amazed at the variety of scenic wonders; snow-capped mountains, Palm Canyon, where the fan palm grows in native forest (not a member of the date family); Shields Date Gardens with many kinds of dates and citrus fruits. You will travel the amazing "Date Garden Highway" (Highway 111) through a modern Arabia-in-California. Date palms in stately array line much of the highway. The Salton Sea; that low down lake on the desert—Coachella Valley's "Sea of Gallilee." Truly this whole section is a winter wonderland without the winter—literally hundreds of interesting places to visit.

SHIELDS DATE GARDENS



INDIO ... CALIFORNIA



The Joshua Tree National Monument covers 549,000 acres in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The park was created by an Act of Congress in 1937 to preserve this beautifully strange forest forever. It is an easy 11 mile drive over good roads from 29 Palms.

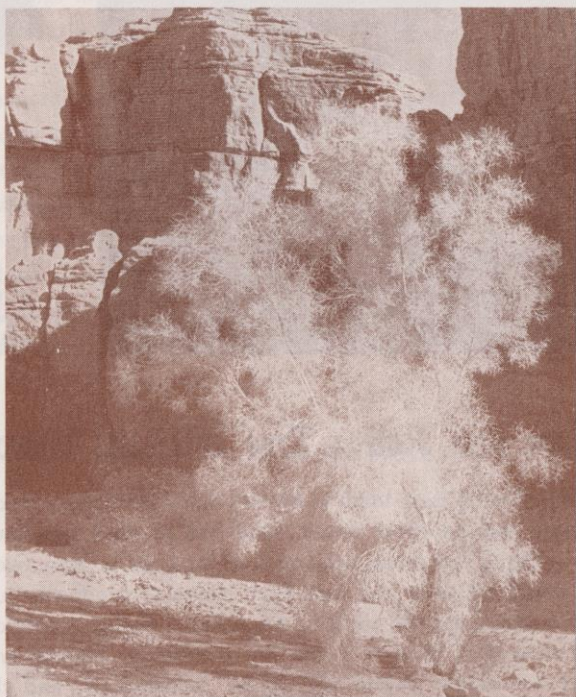


## 29 Palms and Joshua Tree National Monument

Back in 1917 the trip from Indio to Twenty-nine Palms was a trek over bad, unpaved roads and waterless desert. One had to pack gasoline, oil and water for the round trip along with enough food for at least two days. Of course one **could** get there and back from sunup to sundown, but because of the terrible jolting the old car gave the riders it was generally considered best to rest overnight. Sleeping under the grotesquely flinging arms of the joshua trees was ample reward for all the preparations; and the aching back was forgotten when the moon came up displaying a weird army of joshuas caught in the act of unworldly gesticulation.

But now! Why one can leave the Shields Date Gardens in the late morning, have an excellent lunch at Twenty-nine Palms and be back in Indio before

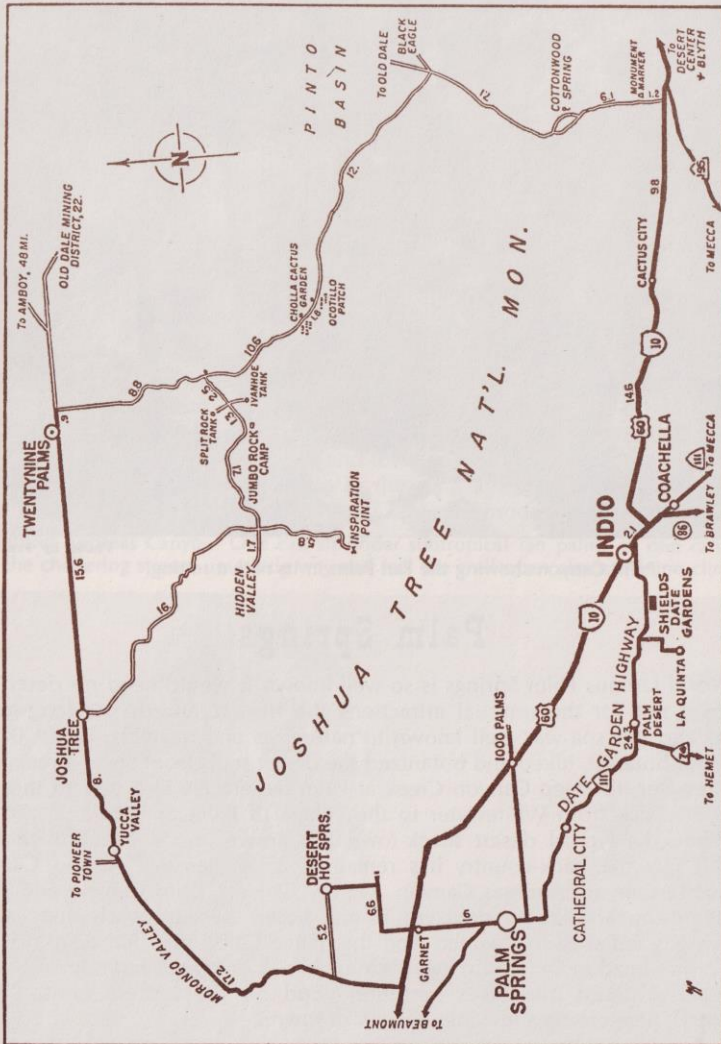
dark—and with plenty of time to enjoy the superb desert scenery (there are many guest houses for overnight visitors). Near the well known modern oasis of Twenty-nine Palms is the famed Joshua Tree National Monument—a wonderland of rocks and a forest of “lily trees” that will make one think of anything but lilies. A fine paved highway beckons the traveler and good graded dirt roads lure the “hardy pioneer” on trips of discovery. See map.



The smoke tree neither puffs nor huffs, but stands in thin forests, calm and indifferent, in nearly all desert canyon fans. In the late spring it showers deep blue petals upon the ground at its feet showing that it too can blossom.

# Joshua Tree National Monument Tour

. . . 200 miles — allow 8 hours



Courtesy Coachella Motor Tours

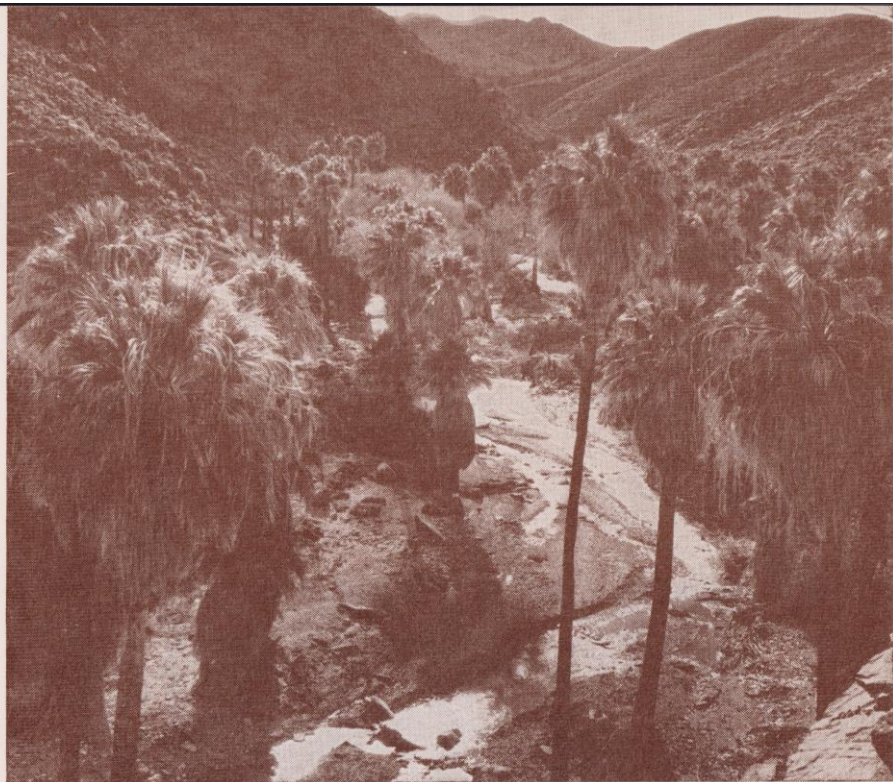


Photo by Frasher

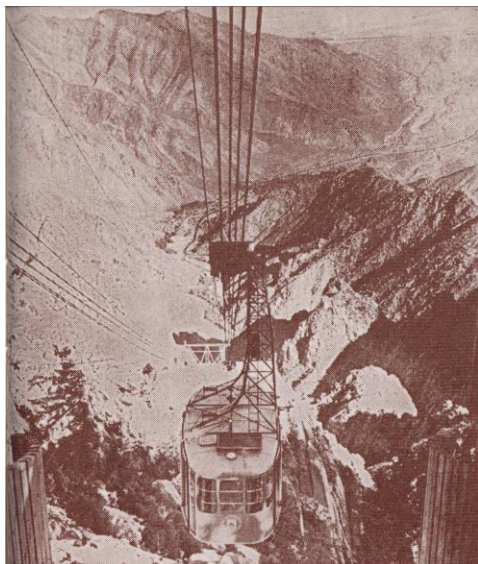
Palm Canyon showing the Fan Palm in its native setting.

## Palm Springs

World famous Palm Springs is so well known it would need no describing were it not for the unusual attractions the district affords. As long as 80 years ago this spa was well known to naturalists and travelers. Ernest Braunt, the botanist, hiked and botanized the desert trails from Snow Creek, near Whitewater, to Deep Canyon Creek at Palm Desert. He also carried the mail on horseback from Whitewater to the village of Palm Springs.

While the typical desert shack-town has grown into a beautiful modern desert city the back-country has remained a "wilderness." Chino Canyon, Tahquitz Canyon, Andreas Canyon, Murray Canyon, Palm Canyon and Deep Canyon appeal alike to denizens of the desert because each one usually shows a good stream of water. And the native Californian fan palm nods its tall proud head in and about every spring, brook or "wet." From luxury hotels to natural desert mesa is a transition good for the restless spirit. ("Back country" here means a few minutes out of town.)

The world-famous Palm Springs—Mt. San Jacinto tramway is just a few minutes out of this renowned spa. Here is perhaps the most exciting half hour anywhere. From almost sea-level to 8000 feet in a matter of minutes is even exciting to tell about. Actually you travel from a sub-tropical botany to an alpine botany... with all of its remarkable changes right before your eyes. A ride to high adventure!



All Aboard for Mt. San Jacinto

Palm Springs is the most celebrated of all desert resorts. Its hotels, motels, apartments and trailer parks are elaborate and comfortable.

The "Date Garden Highway," Palm Springs to Indio, offers accommodations to fit almost every purse. Virtually the entire route, through Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells to Indio, a distance of 24 miles, is an enticing panorama of rest and relaxation. The Shields Date Gardens are located in the very heart of this Land of Romance and Sunshine.

## Palm Desert

Palm Desert, one of the newer communities, is located on the wide graceful fan of Deep Canyon wash, one of the beauty spots of the

desert. Here looking out over the broad expanse of the valley is the home of the Desert Magazine. The visitor will find many interesting exhibits here. By jeep it is fairly easy now to penetrate Deep Canyon up to first water. After the trip over the desert sands and foot trails, the waterfalls are a thrilling sight to the hiker — a favorite trip in the long ago. When the desert siren calls its devotees, Deep Canyon should lure the modern adventurer.

Delightful Andreas Canyon! One can sit under subtropical fan palms or one can follow the chattering stream up a little way and feel the chill of an almost Alpine climate.





Desert Primrose near Shields Date Gardens

Photo by Frasher

## Indian Wells

Indian Wells, where General Fremont rested his troops on their way east to join the fighting army during the Civil War, is an interesting way station on the road to Indio from Los Angeles. It was a stage stopover from 1857 to 1877. But now Desi Arnez, of T.V. fame, has created a desert country club and golf course, together with the Western Hills Hotel on this historic site. It blends into the rugged hills in the background and is luxurious and beautiful, but not gaudy. The Erawan and the El Dorado are the desert home of many celebrities who rest and play in lazy comfort at these famous spas. Beautiful homes and resorts dot the dunes here-about. Point Happy, just beyond, is famous for nothing unless one applauds the name. It is just a rather beautiful spot where the gaunt mountain abuts out into the valley and the highway cuts through it down to the La Quinta crossroads. There is nothing here to herald the fabulous La Quinta Inn. La Quinta; the farm, the restful; a jewel-like oasis tucked away in its own little valley and nestled at the foot of the lofty Santa Rosa Mountains. The road sign says turn to the right.

## Wildflowers

It is along here where the spring rains bring out the gorgeous desert wild flowers—a display of pink, flame, red, yellow, lavender and white so lavish as to leave the spectator speechless. Visiting this locality in 1917, when few ventured so far, was to be transplanted into another world. And even today when nearly everyone has heard of the desert native flora the adventure has all the excitement of discovery. Shields Date Gardens is in the center of this wildflower paradise.



Photo by Frasher

Thousand Palms Canyon, in its snug little valley, takes one "away from it all" without going too far.

## Thousand Palms Canyon

Thousand Palms Canyon was a faraway place years ago. One spoke of it yearningly; the mind pictured it lovingly; the spiritual ear could hear the crisp rattle of the palm leaves in the breeze. And the actual physical viewing was rest and balm to the tired body after the long trek over the desert. To lie at night and watch the moonshine shimmer up and down the leaf blades of these lonely and lordly palms was like a dream come true.

This "army" of palms is easily accessible now and has lost none of its charm. It is a good day's outing for the person who likes to be lured. From Indio, turn to the right at Thousand Palms Village.

Desert Hot Springs is close by. This spa is well worth visiting not only for its healthful waters but for its recreational facilities. About 20 miles from Shields Date Gardens. See map.

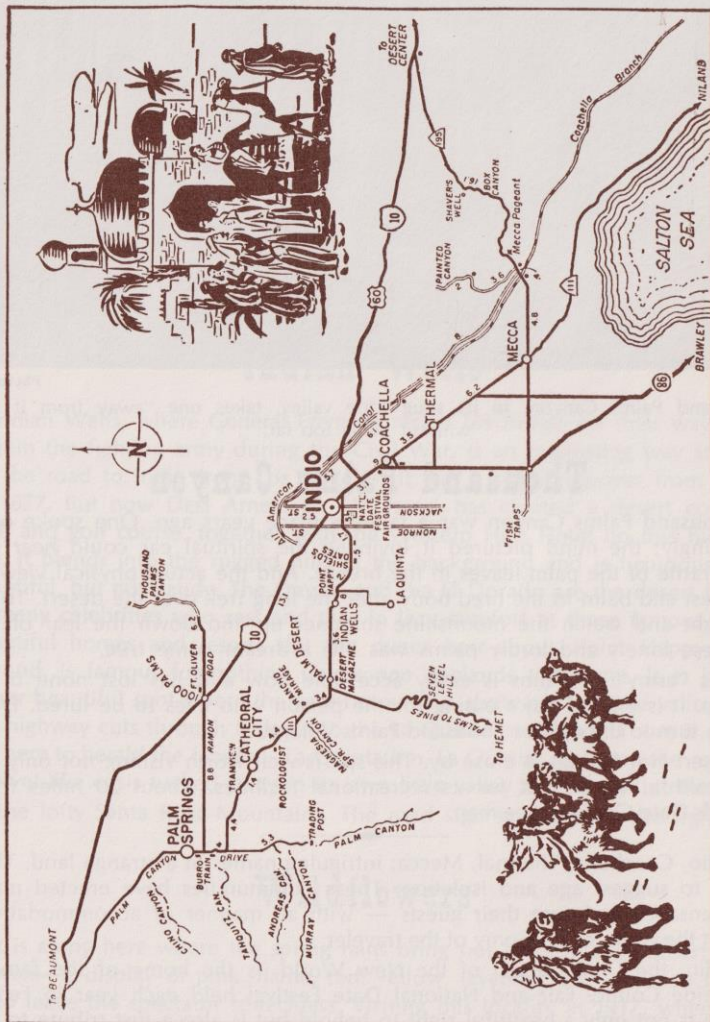
Indio, Coachella, Thermal, Mecca; intriguing names in a strange land. They seem to suggest age and isolation. These communities have erected many caravansaries to house their guests — with all manner of accommodations to suit the whim or economy of the traveler.

Indio, the Date Capital of the New World, is the home of the famous Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival held each year in February. It is not only a beautiful sight to behold but is also a just tribute to the hardy pioneer who imported the date offshoots into California from Iraq, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco. This fair and festival show how American free enterprise can prosper in a field that was so foreign to the American farmer.

Dates are only one of many farm and orchard products exhibited at the fair.

# Coachella Valley Desert Tour

... 150 miles — allow 6 hours



Courtesy Coachella Area Motor Tours



Photo by Willis

Exotic Arabian Nights Pageant presented during the Annual Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival held each year in February — free to all visitors. Stage designed by Harry Oliver ("The Desert Rat").

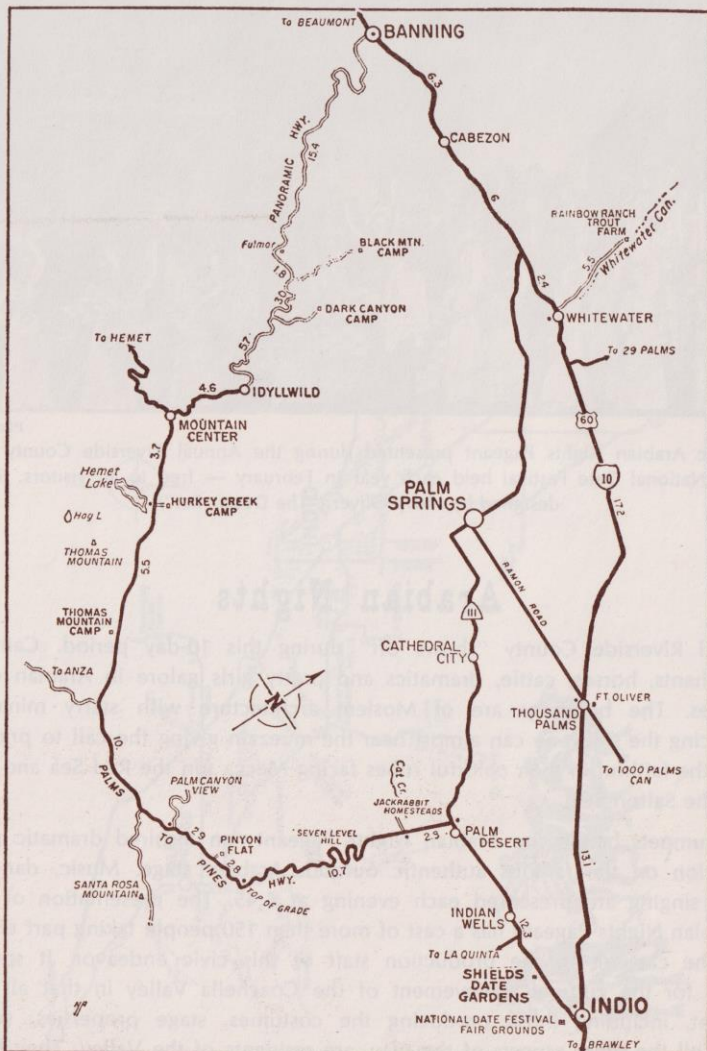
## Arabian Nights

All Riverside County "shows off" during this 10-day period. Camels, elephants, horses, cattle, dramatics and pretty girls galore in Arabian costumes. The buildings are of Moslem architecture with starry minarets piercing the sky; one can almost hear the muezzin giving the call to prayer; see the faithful in their colorful robes facing Mecca (on the Red Sea and not on the Salton Sea).

Trumpets herald the Arabian Nights Pageant—an inspired dramatic production on the famous authentic outdoor Arabian stage. Music, dancing and singing are presented each evening at 6:45. The presentation of the Arabian Nights Pageant has a cast of more than 150 people taking part either in the cast or on the production staff of this civic endeavor. It speaks well for the cultural achievement of the Coachella Valley in that all the talent, including those producing the costumes, stage properties, script and all the other aspects of the play, are residents of the Valley. They have contributed their time and talent toward the success of this production. Nowhere else will visitors be able to witness such a spectacle as this—a pageant that will thrill young and old alike with its drama and beauty.

# Palms To Pine Idyllwild Tour

. . . 130 miles — allow 5 hours



Courtesy Coachella Area Motor Tours



Photo by Frasher

Like a great snake the Palms to Pines Highway winds its way from desert sunshine to mountain snow.

A typical Coachella Valley desert scene looking towards the Santa Rosa Mountains. Views such as this change like a state of mind in the early morning and again at sunset.

Photo by Frasher



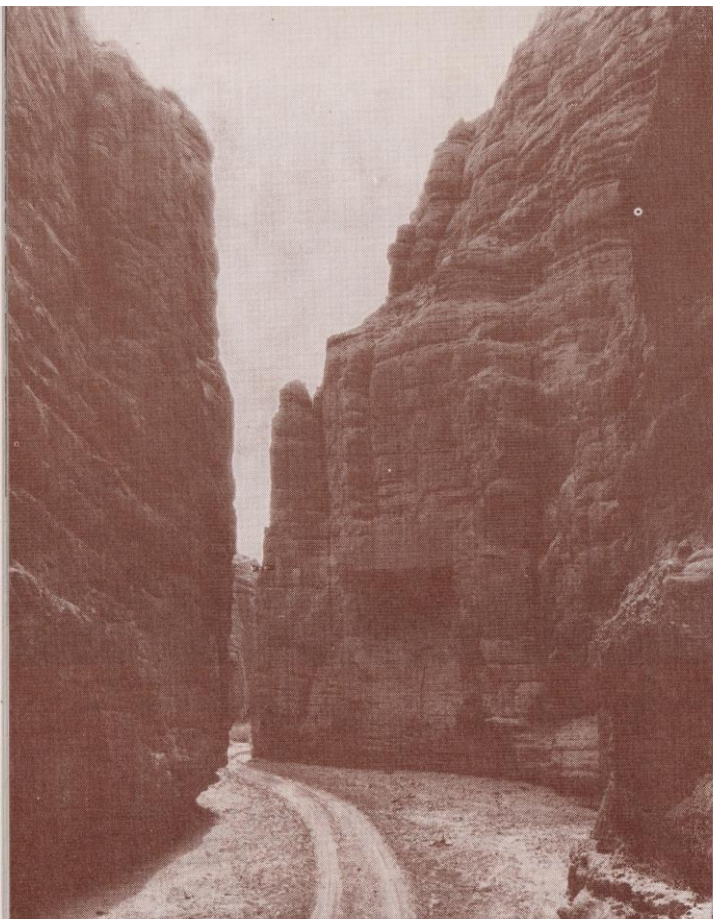


Photo by Frasher

Painted Canyon appeals to those who enjoy rugged and forbidding scenery. Here two elements, wind and cloudburst, have cut a miniature canyon for us little men to contemplate. Snap pictures as you go.

## Painted Canyon

Painted Canyon, down Mecca way, beckoned its crooked gnarled finger to the adventurous and eager desert "explorer" 76 years ago even as it does today. Then as now one had a feeling of being adrift in the unknown after entering the gash at the entrance to the canyon. Here, painted over the centuries by nature's mighty hand, one sees the result of wind and water scouring away to bring forth all the glorious colors in rock and earth. The visitor should plan to leave the canyon near sunset when all the colors are accentuated and the distant gleam of the Salton Sea lies far below like a great mirage. As Old Sol goes down behind the jagged mountains the time-worn adage comes to mind: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

The hazards of this trip have been largely overcome. Rescues are rare now, but water should be carried—and a few grapefruit. You will never know how good they can be until you have quenched your thirst with their sweet juice. A comfortable day's trip from Shields Date Gardens. See map.

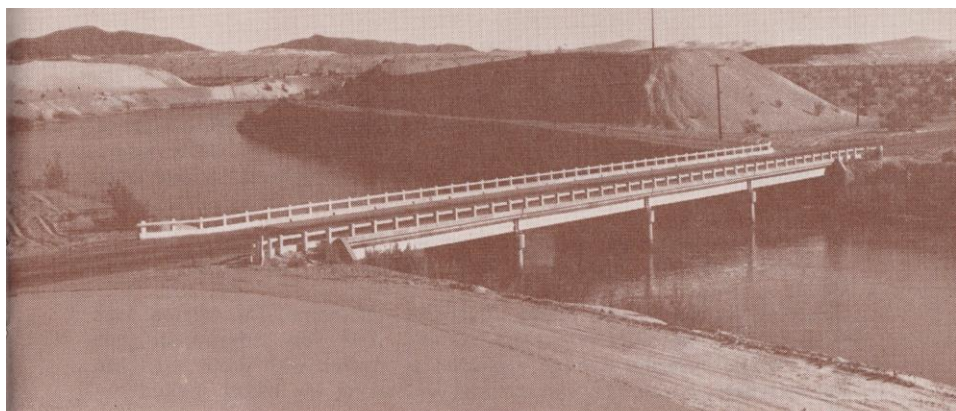


Photo by Frasher

The waters of life are flowing in the big ditch. A view of the All American Canal bringing a share of the Colorado River to the Colorado Desert. The Coachella branch is 124 miles long and will irrigate 80,000 acres in the Coachella Valley.

## The All-American Canal

The All-American Canal on the eastern shoreline is the old-timer's dream come true. The service road follows the big ditch for miles offering breath-taking desert vistas. On the east the Chocolate and Orocopia Mountains, while on the west a wide expanse leading up to the purple Santa Rosas with majestic snow-capped San Jacinto and San Gorgonio Peaks always standing guard at the head of the valley. These two mountains are the highest in Southern California. In the "draws" or canyon-fans one will find small forests of the smoke tree and where springs wet the ground a little the fan palm rears its sentinel green. Ancient beaches are easily seen along the route.

The upper road should be negotiated slowly—and, yes, the lower road is safer. A comfortable day's outing. Again carry grapefruit. Round trip about 60 miles from Shields Date Gardens. See map.

## Travertine Rock and the Old Waterline

A natural phenomenon of this colorful Colorado Desert is the old waterline rimming the base of the western mountains. One wonders what Capt. Juan Bautista de Anza, that intelligent and intrepid soldier, thought of this strange evidence of a vanquished sea, or lake, on his first expedition through the bowl in 1774. Could he have known he was traveling about 200 feet below sea level and looking up to the line where water lapped the rock for centuries before receding? That that black mark was not an Indian trail but the water deposits of a thousand years?

Visiting this ancient shore was rather tough going years ago, as the modern explorer can easily understand. Coral Reef is still a bit rough as is the Indian Fish Traps.

Travertine Rock is just off the highway to the right, a few miles below Oasis. For many years it has been Coachella Valley's traditional site for Easter Sunrise Services. Here the faithful of all denominations gather in the morning

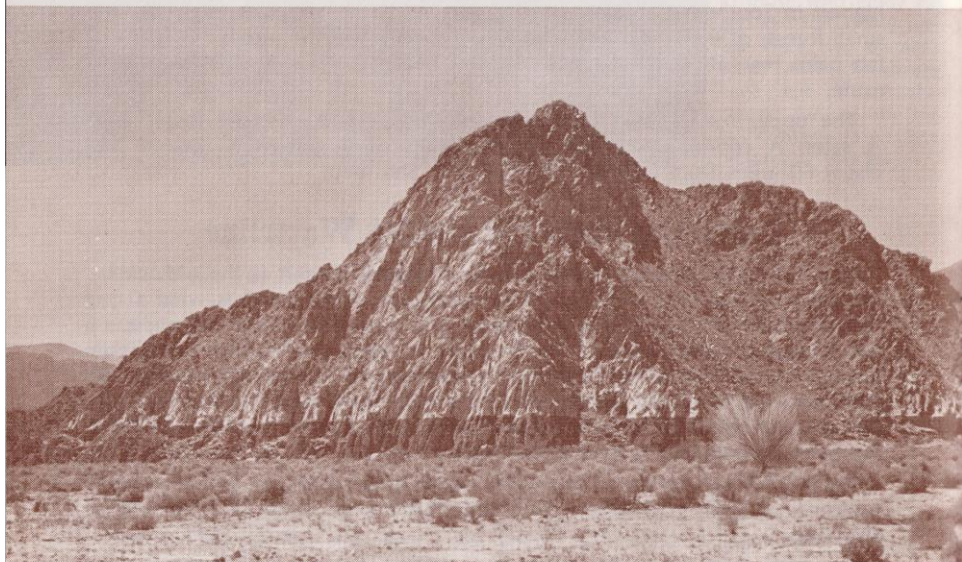
hush and face the desert's Sea of Gallilee to the strains of soft organ music and the reverent voices of the choir. The present Sea spreads its blue expanse before one and Fish Springs dots the desert with a green exclamation point. About 30 miles southeast of Shields Date Gardens on Highway 86. See map.

## Coachella Valley—A Spot of History

Something should be said about Coachella—the name. The original was Conchillas, meaning little shells in Spanish. And very appropriate this name is too, because the floor of the valley is covered with shells left there by the receding waters. The cartographer in making the maps, spelled out Coachella—and it remained that way. Too bad!

Millions of years ago the Gulf of California extended up to the base of Mt. San Jacinto and the San Gorgonio Pass. The Colorado River in scouring out the Grand Canyon laid down the silt which formed the delta bar that finally cut off this arm of the Pacific Ocean. The inland salt water lake thus formed eventually evaporated leaving a heavy deposit of salt. The river continued to break through during very high water, consequently it has been refilled with fresh water at various levels many times before 1905-07. This fresh water lake also eventually evaporated.

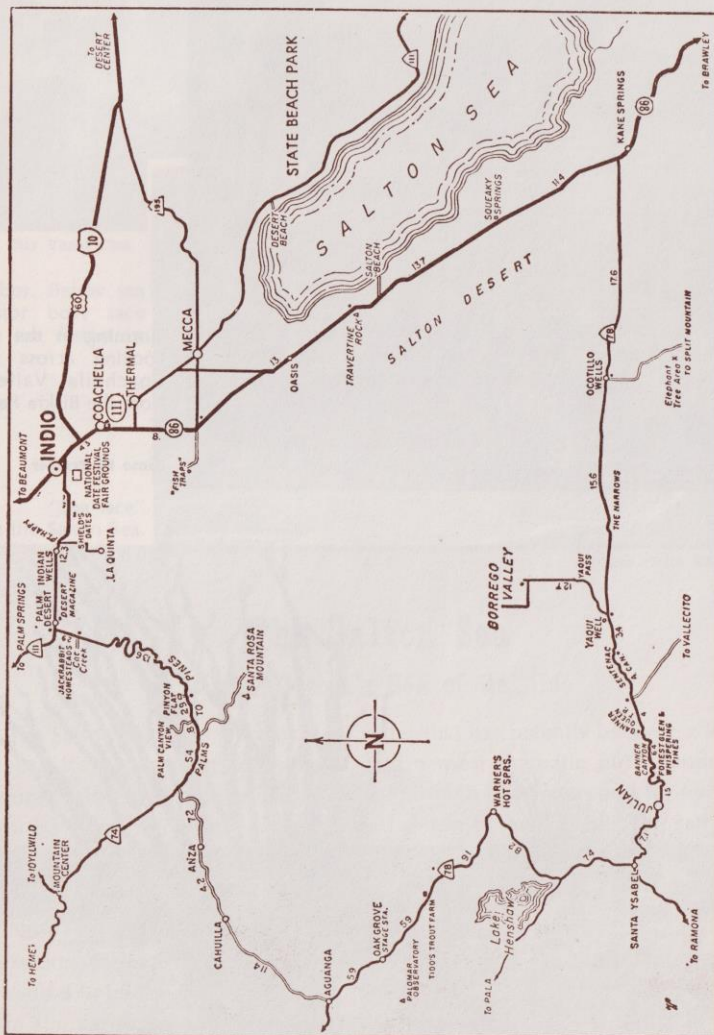
The water-line seen from the highway is above sea level and was put there by a secondary fresh water lake of long duration and again disappearing by the slow process of evaporation.



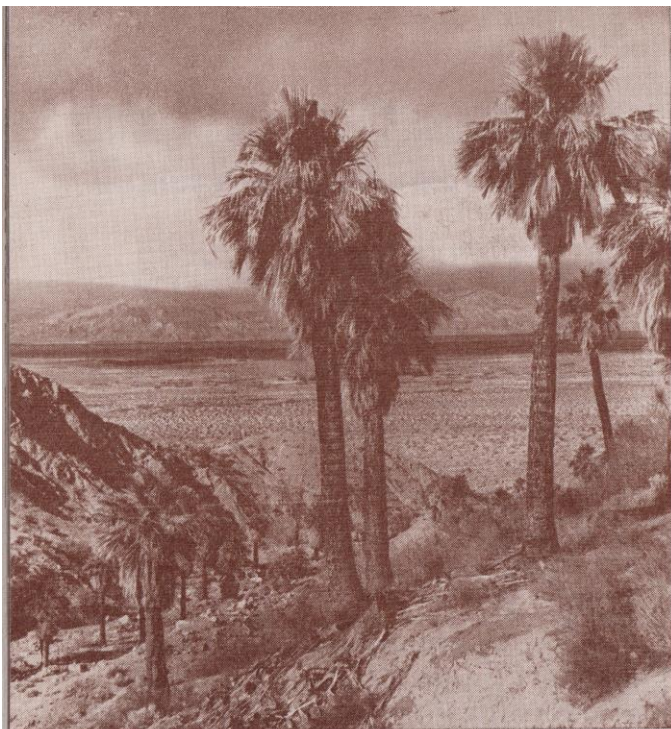
Lake Cahuilla's prehistoric waterline as seen near Travertine Rock. The lake receded and left its mark several thousand years ago. Very interesting.

# Ocotillos and Borrego Valley Tour

... 200 miles — allow 8 hours

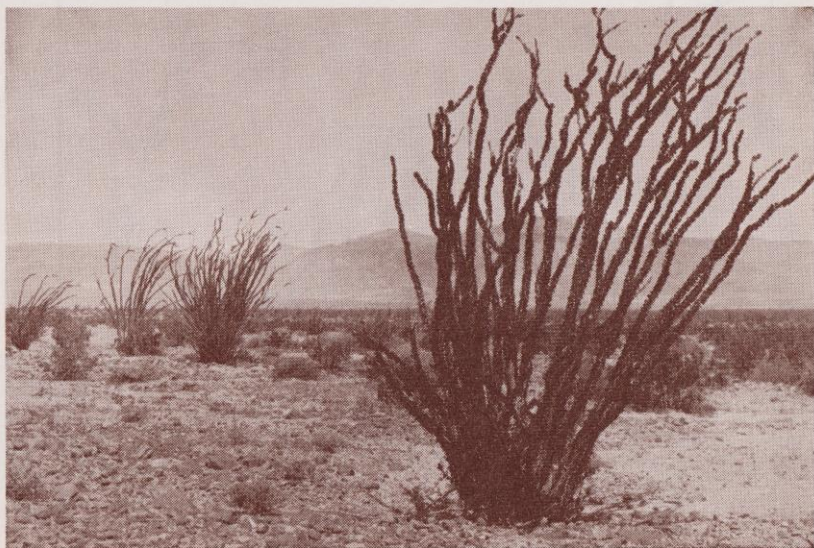


Courtesy Coachella Area Motor Tours



Storming in the mountains.  
Looking across the sunny  
Coachella Valley Desert  
from the Biskra Palms.

Photo by Frasher



Ocotillos on the Road to Borrego Valley

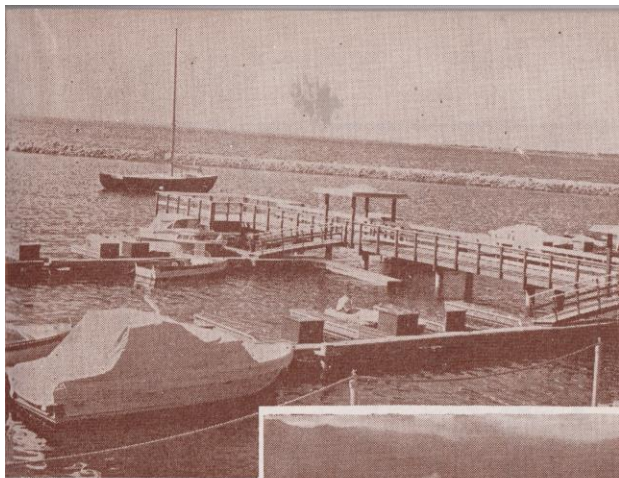


Photo Salton City Yacht Club



Snug Harbor. Below sea level motor boat race course — the fastest in the world.



"Sea lace"  
on the Salton Sea.

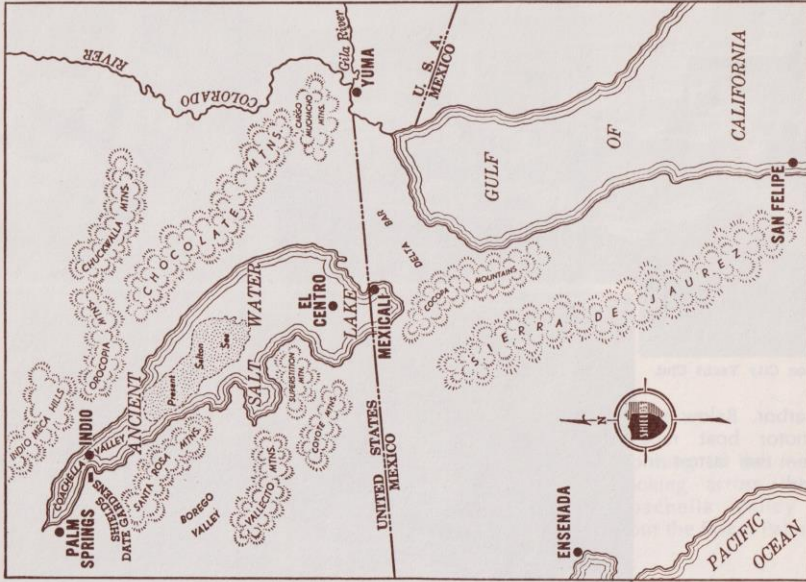
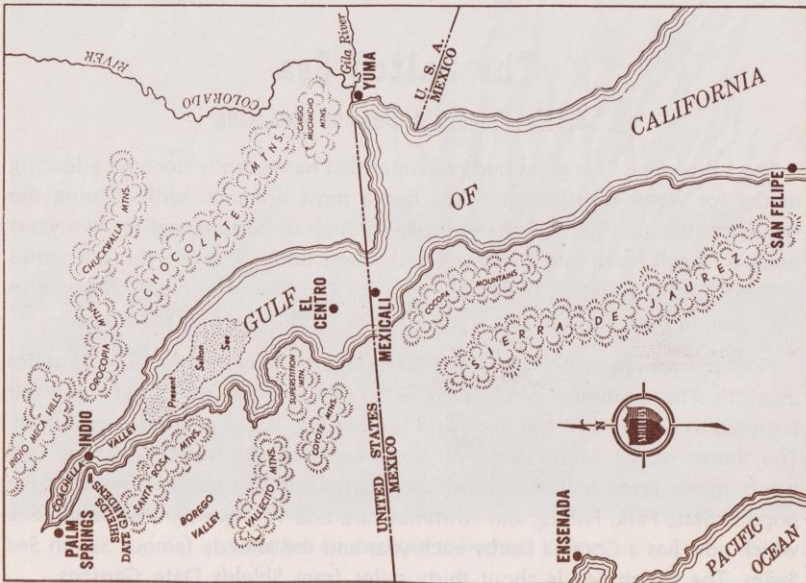
Photo North Shore Yacht Club

## The Salton Sea —the Desert's Sea of Gallilee

The Salton Sea! This great body of water that has recently become a leading mecca for water sports enthusiasts, had a most dramatic birth. During the floods of 1905 the Colorado River broke through its barriers and for two years poured its full force into the depressed desert basin covering the salt works and the Southern Pacific tracks in that area. The flow was finally checked in 1907 but the sea remains, in fact, increases a little in size each year.

Now the sea is approximately 42 miles long and ranges from 10 to 15 miles in width. The maximum depth is about 50 feet and the surface of the water (reputed to be the fastest in the world for boating) is 234 feet below sea level. The shores of the Salton Sea now boast some of the finest launching and water sports areas in this country plus two luxurious yacht clubs and the popular State Park. Fishing and swimming are also very good in the Salton Sea which now has a Corvina Derby each year and the already famous Salton Sea Swim. The Salton Sea is about thirty miles from Shields Date Gardens.

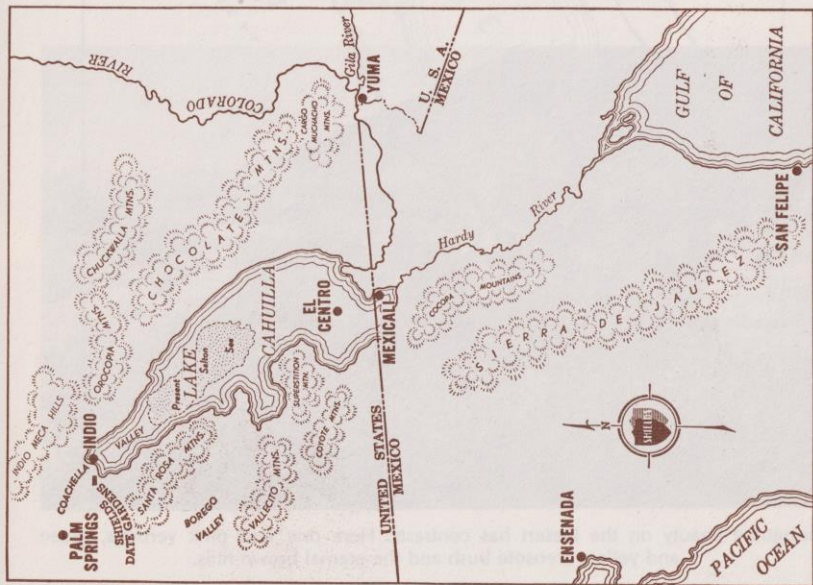
These Four Maps show the History of Salton Sea and Upper Gulf of California



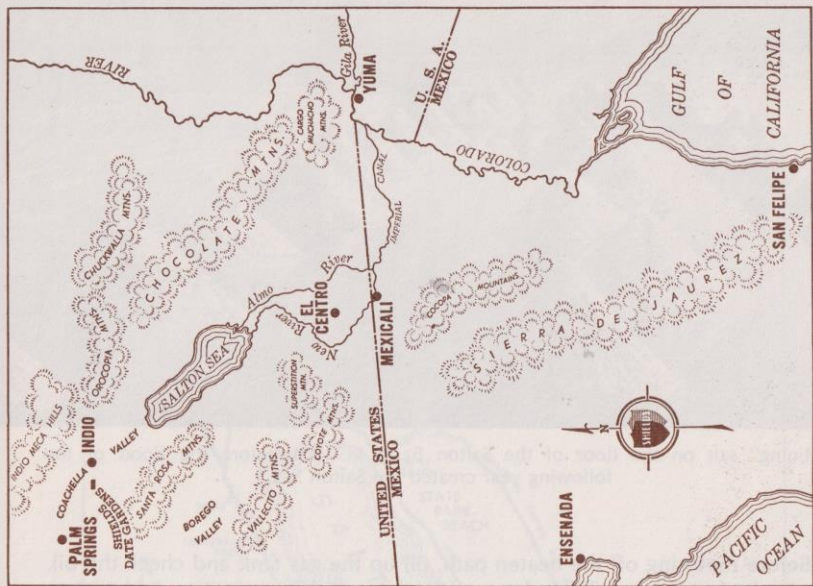
(Copyrighted Shields Date Gardens, 1957)

The Gulf of California extended beyond Palm Springs several million years ago.

At a later prehistoric age the Colorado River built a delta bar creating a salt water lake which eventually evaporated.



Lake Cahuilla was made by the flooding of the Colorado River centuries ago. This fresh water lake also eventually evaporated.



The Salton Sea as we know it today was formed by the flood of 1905-1907. The salt content approximates that of the ocean.



"Mining" salt on the floor of the Salton Basin in 1904 before the flood of the following year created the Salton Sea.

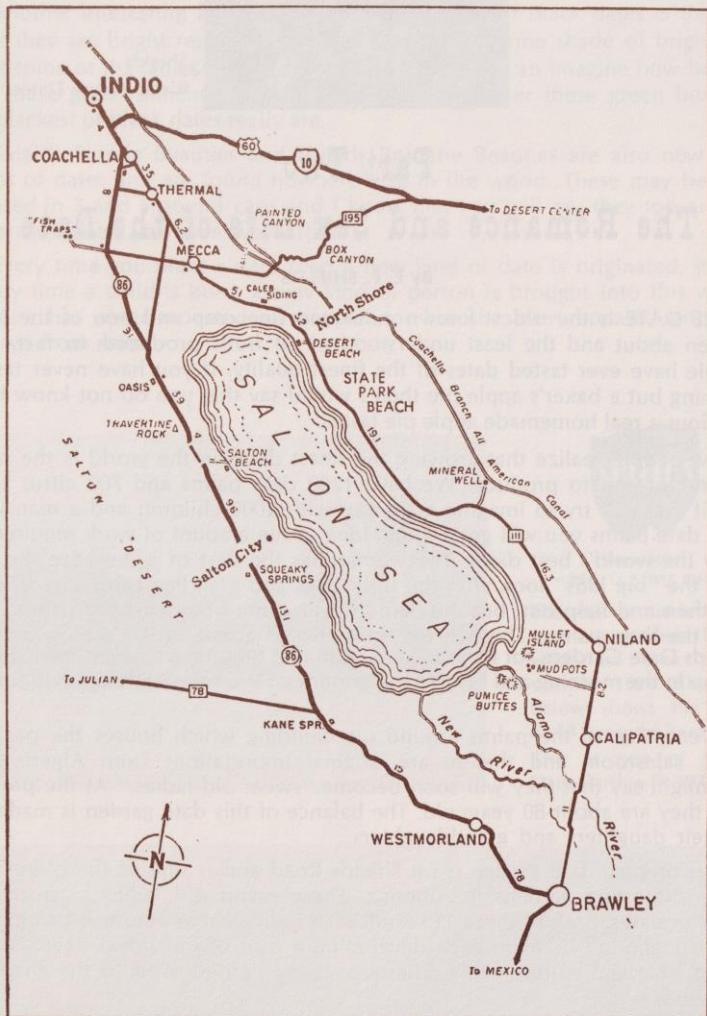
Before motoring off the beaten path, fill up the gas tank and check the oil. Carry plenty of water. Take along a few dates and grapefruit to add zest to your lunch. If uncertain as to directions, get positive information at the last outpost. Avoid roads where sand is too deep for easy driving.



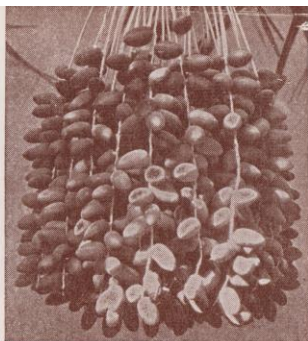
Springtime beauty on the Desert has contrasts. Here one sees pink verbena, green and yellow creosote bush and the eternal brown hills.

# Around The Salton Sea Tour

. . . 150 miles — allow 6 hours



Courtesy Coachella Area Motor Tours



Shields  
Black Beauty Dates

## Part Two

# The Romance and Sex Life of the Date

By E. F. SHIELDS

THE DATE is the oldest known cultivated tree crop and one of the least written about and the least understood of all fruits produced. In fact, few people have ever tasted dates of the finest quality. If you have never tasted anything but a baker's apple pie then I would say that you do not know how delicious a real homemade apple pie tastes.

Few people realize that growing the finest dates in the world is the most expensive crop to produce. We have 1200 date palms and 700 citrus trees and if you will try to imagine a woman with 1000 children and a man with 1000 date palms you will get a rough idea of the amount of work required to grow the world's best dates. The woman has the best of it, because she can have the "big kids" look after the little ones and grandma can come in now and then and help out, but the date grower cannot have the big palms look after the little palms. They all require personal attention. I have owned the Shields Date Gardens for 66 years and in all that time I have never been able to get up in the morning and say "Thank goodness! We have nothing to do today!"

Twenty-five of the palms around our building which houses the packing plant, salesroom and theatre are original importations from Algeria and you might say that they will soon become "sweet old ladies." At the present time they are about 80 years old. The balance of this date garden is made up of their daughters and granddaughters.

Our original date garden is on Shields Road and is one of the oldest and most interesting gardens in America. These grand old ladies produce 119 kinds of dates. Each of these 119 kinds is as individual as a human being, with a personality all its own, each developing a fruit of individual flavor, color, shape, size and texture—this difference being carried even to the shape of the seeds.

One of our new varieties is Shields Black Beauty. This date sells for 10 cents each. The sale of Shields Black Beauty is limited to one date only to each customer visiting our gardens—it is never shipped. It is the only date of its kind in the world and possesses a most delicious flavor all its own. It took us 23 years to bring our third Shields Black Beauty date palm into bearing and it will be many years more before we will have another one in production.

There are many other kinds of black dates in our desert but none are like Shields Black Beauty. We have 25 kinds of black dates in our own date gardens—no two alike—we even use several kinds of black bread dates in the Date Crystals, in our delicious Black Date Ice Cream and in our Famous Date Crystals Milk Shakes.

Another interesting feature about these blackest of black dates is the fact that they are bright red when they are green. The same shade of bright red that some of the ladies use on their finger nails. You can imagine how beautiful these green bunches of bright red dates or rather these green bunches of blackest of black dates really are.

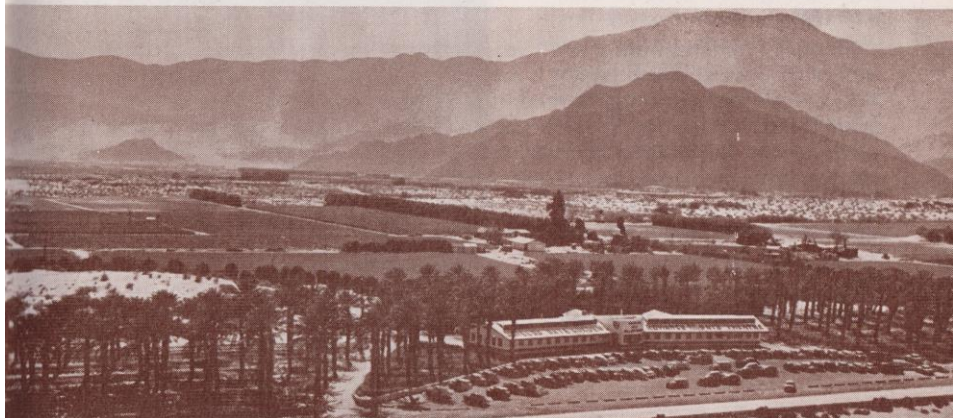
Shields Blonde Beauties and Shields Brunette Beauties are also new varieties of dates and are found nowhere else in the world. These may be purchased in 3 and 5 pound cans and I know that you will say they too are the finest soft dates you have ever tasted.

Every time you plant a date seed a new kind of date is originated, just as every time a child is born, a new kind of person is brought into this world. Nature has never repeated on people nor has she ever repeated on dates grown from seeds.



Since 1924  
REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

The view at the left is the way our gardens looked when we took possession in 1924. The view below shows the result of 53 years of hard work. This is one of Shields Date Garden in 1977.

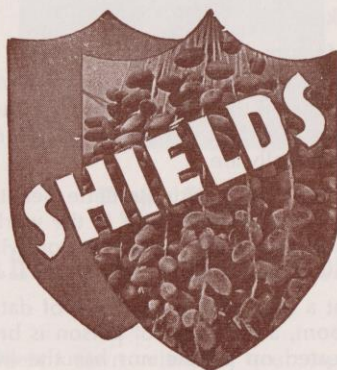




E. Floyd Shields

The two shields stand for  
Mr. and Mrs. Shields  
the founders of these Famous Gardens

EST. 1924



Bess M. Shields

Reg. U.S. Pat Off.

The only way to perpetuate a variety is to propagate its offshoots. A date palm produces at or near its base, 5 to 25 offshoots or suckers during the first 10 to 15 years of its life. Date palms are like people—they too have their families during their younger years. (See page 35.)

## Ma and Pa and the Little Ones

The parent, both male and female, produces children of its own sex and these children will always be identical to their ancestors. These offshoots are cut from the parent palm when they have developed a root system of their own and are planted 48 females and one male palm per acre. It has been suggested that this is where King Solomon got his idea.

The palm shown in the illustration on page 29 is another of the original importations from Algeria, imported when it was a small offshoot. She is now 78 years old and you will note that she is a great-grandmother and she is still supporting her offspring and their families. It is not the general practice to leave the offshoots on the parent palm until they attain this size and age.

It usually requires from 5 to 10 years for an offshoot to develop a root system of its own, at which time it is safe to remove it from its parent and plant it in the garden. After it is planted, it requires an additional 8 to 15 years to bring it into full bearing. It costs from \$4,000.00 to \$6,000.00 to bring an acre of dates into full bearing and very few date gardens have ever paid interest on the investment because of the terrific cost necessary to produce dates that will demand a good price. I wouldn't expect any returns from the little great-great-grand-daughter under 20 years.

Many of the date growers are digging out their beautiful date gardens in spite of the fact that the palms are right in their prime, because they are not receiving enough for their dates to pay the cost of production.

The root system of the date palm is similar to that of an onion and regardless of the age of a palm, none of its thousands of roots ever get any larger than the diameter of your little finger. These roots have been known to go from 20 to 40 feet deep.

It costs as much to produce and market dates as it does to make and sell chocolate creams. You have been educated to pay as much as \$8.00 a pound for the best chocolates but you can buy chocolate creams and dates too for \$3.00 a pound. You turn up your nose at cheap chocolates but really think you are getting a bargain when you buy cheap dates. I would rather have one piece of good candy than a pound of poor quality and the same applies to dates. Our fruit is not to be compared to the cheaper grades found elsewhere.

We never sell to stores. As a farmer once said, "It doesn't pay to sell through the stores—they deduct for this and deduct for that and when a feller gets his check there ain't nothing left—de ducks took it all."

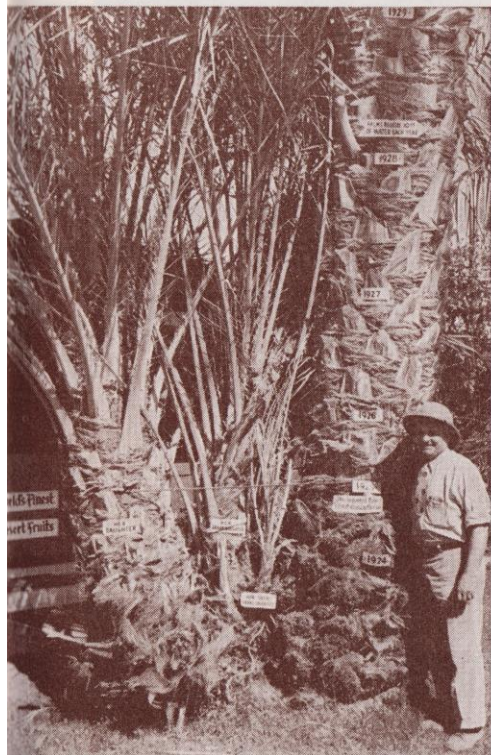
Another interesting feature about the date palm is the fact that nature made no adequate provision to pollinate the female date blooms. The large good looking flower that I am holding (page 34) is the male flower from the male palm and the other one is the female bloom on the female palm. The bees and insects go to the male flower but never go to the female bloom until after it has been pollinated with the male pollen. I want you to know that it is a sweet daddy and not a sweet mamma.

Back as far as we have any record of dates, man has cut the male flowers

from the male palm and placed them in the tops of the female palms, thus a percentage of the male pollen was blown around over the female blooms yielding about a 50 to 75 per cent crop in that way. This system is too crude. A large male flower will produce about half a teacup of pollen. Throughout the pollinating season we visit each male palm the first thing every morning and cut off the flowers that have opened during the night and shake out the pollen and collect it in small cotton powder puffs about half the size of English walnuts and use these powder puffs to pollinate the female blooms.

Four generations of Date Palms — Shields Date Gardens, Indio, California. The great-great grandmother Palm was imported from Algeria. She was 20 years old in 1924 when she produced her first commercial crop of dates.

Photo by Frasher



On each of the little berries on the female bloom there are three tiny tentacles which are moist with sap when the bloom opens. One must get the pollen from the male flower in contact with this sap during the first 3 or 4 days that the female bloom is open or before it dries. Otherwise the dates do not develop seeds and without the seed they do not sugar up and mature properly. We visit each female palm twice a week during February, March and April and when we find a bloom open we climb up into the palm, remove the spathe or outside covering and cut off the end of the bloom which reduces the potential crop of dates about 25 per cent. Then we take the powder puff and dust the pollen from the male flower onto each one of these little drops of sap—just like you powder your nose. (See page 32.)

When the fruit reaches the size of small olives it is time to thin. After the bunches are thinned they are tied to the leaves to prevent the stem breaking from the weight of the fruit bunch as the dates mature. We keep an efficiency record on our palms and we find that one palm will produce 50 pounds of dates, the one next to it 150, etc., and we thin accordingly by cutting out the center of the fruit bunch—leaving only the amount of fruit on each palm that we know from experience that individual palm is able to mature. This thinning gives us better dates. If we overwork a date palm one year the following year it will either produce dates of poor quality or take a rest and produce no dates. Nature looks after her and forces her to rest after she has been overworked.

Back before the time of Adam—before man took a hand in the pollination of the date flowers the wind blew enough of the pollen from the male flowers to the female blooms so that there were enough seeds developed to carry on, but not enough to make a worthwhile crop of dates. I doubt if there have been any wild date gardens in the world for thousands of years—they probably all belong to someone and are cared for after a fashion.

We have always found that high quality fruit means repeat business and after over half a century in the date business we now have over 170,000 mail order customers. Yes, we do ship all over the world!

Pollinating. Dusting the pollen of the male flower onto the female flower.

Photo by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture



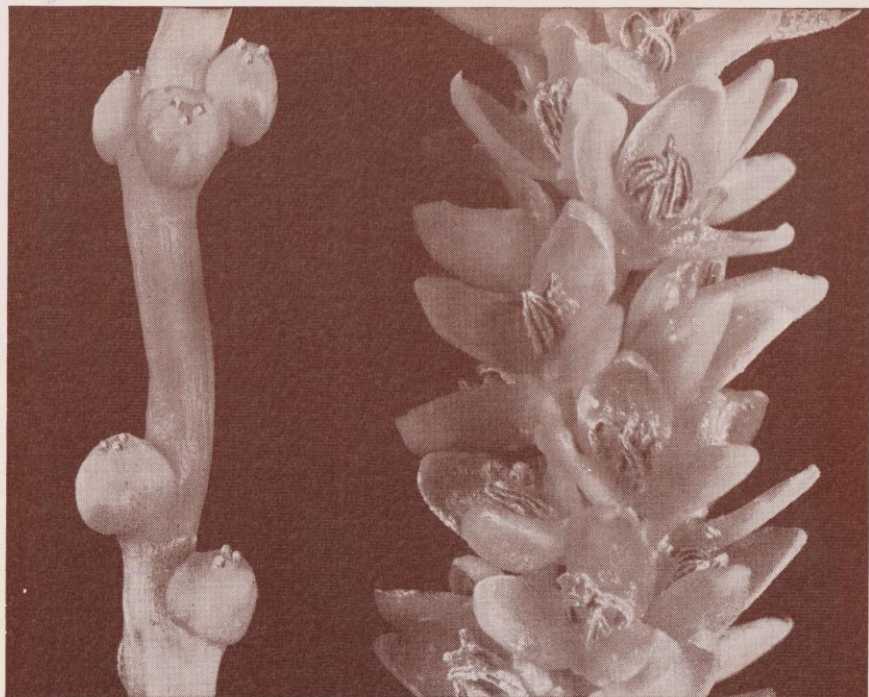


Photo by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

Date Palms get thirsty about every week or ten days. Here the palms are drinking their fill. Irrigation requirements amount to about 10 ft. of water a year, which is equivalent to 120 in. of rainfall. Covers protect the dates from possible rain damage.

In spite of the fact that the date palm is a desert plant, it requires as much water as a willow. We use 10 acre feet of water a year which is the equivalent of 120 inches of rainfall. This water comes from a deep well and also the All American Canal. This canal brings the water 209 miles from the Colorado River through an open ditch. We flood our date gardens every week or 10 days. In the Old World they grow in the desert oases, their native habitat, where their root system is in the water for their entire lifetime.

The natives of the Old World say: "A date palm must have its feet in the water and its head in the fires of heaven." I have lived on the Shields Date Gardens many winters and a thousand summers and I have seen the temperature hit 135 in the shade and 169 in the sun. In spite of this high tem-



Sap buds on the  
female bloom

Photo by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture  
Pollen on the  
male flower

perature it might interest you to hear that we never perspire—but we do sweat like the devil—there is nothing fancy about it—it is just plain sweat!

While we have to keep our date gardens wringing wet, at least 10 feet deep at all times—rain is our worst enemy. In order to protect the fruit as much as possible from this damage we cover each bunch of dates with waterproofed covers. These covers are put on the last week of August when the fruit starts to color and left there until the fruit is all picked.

Some years we have heavy rains during the fall and winter months and the desert responds by becoming a garden of colorful wildflowers. While these beautiful flowers are greatly enjoyed by everyone who sees them, the rains which made it possible for them to bloom bring great loss to the date growers by damaging a large percentage of their date crop.

The dates begin to ripen about the first of September and from then on until Christmas fruit is picked once a week. Inasmuch as all the dates on a cluster do not ripen at the same time they must be picked individually. A cluster cannot be cut like a bunch of bananas. (See page 35.)

After the dates are picked we cut off the empty fruit stems and the old leaves that have ceased to function. A palm feeds through its roots and breathes through its leaves and when the end of the leaf dies, it is time to cut it off. After the date gardens are cleaned up it is time to dethorn all the new leaves that the palm has put out during the past year. These thorns,

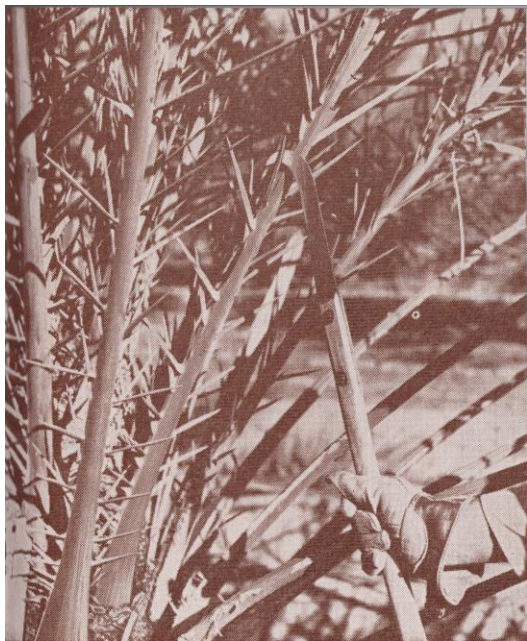


Photo by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture



Dethorning the leaves so that pickers and pollinators can do their work in safety. These spears are very sharp.

which grow along the edges of the leaf stems, must be removed so they will not injure the men when they pollinate the new blossoms which always come out in the very top of the palm.

When a female palm is about 20 years old she will have raised her family of offshoots and will have had them removed and planted in the date gardens. So now, with the proper care, she can grow rapidly and produce dates of good quality.

We have to go from 1 to 2½ feet higher each year to harvest our crop. There are date palms in the Old World that are over 100 years old and over 100 feet tall. We will never allow our palms to reach that height because we have to make from 10 to 20 trips into each palm every year and the amount of fruit produced by these old ladies would not pay the enormous expense involved. The only solution will be to replant our date gardens when the palms become too tall. We have put permanent ladders on all of our palms to make it easier for the men to climb them. These ladders are moved up every 2 or 3 years and additional sections are hung below as the palms grow taller. (See back cover.)

In the rose patio back of our salesroom the visitor will find one of the largest rose gardens in Southern California where we grow many kinds of roses and page 39 of this booklet there is also a photo of a date palm showing the date bunches from first bearing to last. As the fruit always grows in the top of the palm, the single bunches show just where the top was during



Photo by Frasher

Male and Female Date Blossoms. The good-looking one is the male flower.

the years indicated. The Shields Date Gardens is the only place in the world where you can see and hear "The Romance and Sex Life of the Date" and see the fruit on the palm at all times. Are you beginning to realize just what I mean when I say that the date grower is like the imaginary woman with a thousand children? "The Poor Man's work is never done!"

For years we had a combination tree of eight varieties. It had 2 kinds of oranges, 3 kinds of grapefruit, lemons, limes and tangerines. This tree has succumbed to old age, but the photo on page 37 shows the result of the grafting art. During the winter months we pack a Combination Gift Pack made up of our various citrus fruits and a 3 pound Gift Pack of dates. We also ship grapefruit and tangerines in their season. (See page 37.)

## Clean, Delicious Natural Fruit

After the dates are picked they are thoroughly cleaned, graded and packed under the most sanitary conditions; a great contrast to the sticky imported dates sold in bulk and in "pasteurized" packages and also to the cheap grades of California hydrated dates which have been steam-treated to soften the low grade fruit. I hope you realize that when the dates are labeled "Pasteurized" it does not necessarily mean they are clean.

Shields Dates are always fresh, delicious, clean and attractive. They are grown organically and are rich in natural minerals and vitamins. Never steamed, hydrated or processed, they are just as nature intended them to be. I do not know of a single date grower who will eat his own hydrated or processed dates—**why should you?**

You know that mother's home-made apple pies have no rivals. Likewise Shields Dates have no rivals in quality, flavor and texture and must not be compared with the ordinary grades of California and imported dates found elsewhere. **Our prices are in keeping with our quality.** We do the preliminary grading on a moving conveyor belt but the final grading is always done on tables. We find this to be the only way accurate grades can be maintained.



Photo by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

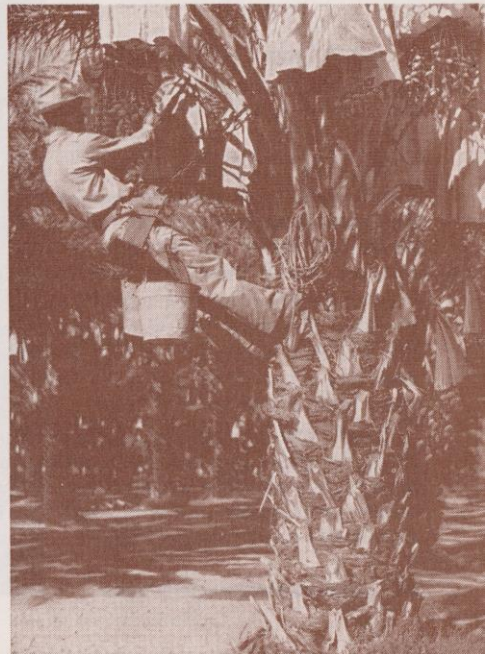
The baby offshoot is cut away from the parent palm after it has developed a root system. It will now have a life all its own.

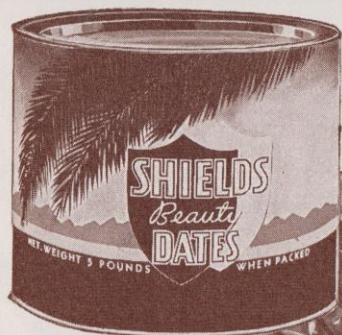
When you visit our salesroom you will see that the prices vary. This difference is in the texture of the date and not in the size—in fact it is possible for a palm to produce all of these grades and it is a matter of grading and selection to see that each date is placed in its proper grade.

You will get a better idea of just what I mean by texture and quality if you will compare our \$5.00 per pound dates with \$5.00 per pound chocolate creams; the \$1.20 dates with the \$1.20 chocolates. These are the grades that have been our leaders for the past 60 years.

Most of you know about the quality of chocolate creams and I also want you to know as much about the different grades of dates. This is why I have drawn this comparison.

Picking Dates means going up into the Palm for Ripened Dates once a week during the entire 4 month picking season.





Dates are packed in airtight containers where they keep fresh and perfect for months, but must be refrigerated.



## “Bread Dates”

We have 75 kinds of dates that we leave on the palms for an additional 6 to 8 weeks until the palm has given the fruit everything that it has to give. The natural sugars and the food contents then become crystalized in the dates. The Arabs call this type of date “bread dates” and these dry palm-ripened chewy dates are their main food supply.

Most people think that a date is not good to eat unless it is as soft as a but-tercream chocolate. However, the dry date has its boosters and many people, like the date eaters of the Old World, prefer these delightfully chewy car-amel-like dates. They are really like caramels in texture and the more you chew them the better they taste.

Bread dates are very popular with sportsmen and children. They can carry these dry dates loose in their pockets and eat them like candy. Because of their high food value 6 or 8 will make a good meal. I am the only one in this country who really makes it a business to raise this type of date. The bread date is also one of my favorites.

## Shields Date Crystals—"A Great Discovery"

Some years ago we discovered we could blend all the different flavors of our own. The result was Shields Date Crystals and Shields Date "Sugar." These two foods are date products (100% pure) and not by-products any more than the finest creamery butter is a by-product of milk, and they should not be confused or compared to other date by-products. They are both wonderful foods and are not luxuries in any sense of the word

We feel Date Crystals are newsworthy and their use a valuable addition to a balanced diet—so taste Shields Date Crystals and see how wonderfully crunchy-crisp they are — just like maple sugar candy — then notice how quickly they become soft when the moisture hits them. Two-thirds grape-nuts and one-third Shields Date Crystals make a wonderful breakfast. They can also be used dry on any kind of cereal, salads, ice cream, etc.

The reader will find a few of Mrs. Shields Date Crystals recipes on the following page taken from her 20 page recipe folder. These will illustrate the versatility of this product and its appeal to the modern housewife.

Photo by Frasher



### Shields Date "Sugar"—a Natural

Date "Sugar" differs from Date Crystals only in that it is cut as fine as ordinary sugar. It is ideal for those who must stay away from fruit skins and coarse foods. It is a natural sweet that can be used in many different ways.

### Shields Date "Sugar" Butter

To make a perfect date butter — just mix enough of any kind of liquid with the Date "Sugar" to make it the consistency of applebutter and allow it to stand over night. It's as simple to make as putting sugar in your coffee and very economical too—one pound of Shields Date "Sugar" will make two pounds of Date Butter.

Ask or write for Mrs. Shields' 20 page Date Crystals Recipe Folder—we will be happy to send it anywhere—Free.

### Combination Citrus Tree

Eight kinds on one tree. Count them: 2 kinds of oranges, 3 kinds of grapefruit, lemons, limes and tangerines. (We thought this tree might interest the reader even though it has died of old age.)



# RECIPES

... by ...

## Mrs. E. F. Shields

### USING

# SHIELDS

# DATE

# CRYSTALS

Registered  
U. S. Patent Office  
Nature's Greatest Food  
100% Pure  
Organically Grown



Mrs. Shields

## USE

Shields Date Crystals or Date "Sugar" — Natural Sweets — on Cooked and Prepared Cereals, Fruits, Berries, etc., in place of Acid-forming White Sugar.

### DATE CRYSTALS BROILED OR BAKED GRAPEFRUIT

Cut grapefruit in half, remove core and separate segments with sharp knife. Sprinkle each half with two teaspoons of Shields Date Crystals. Place in broiler five inches below a low flame, broil about 10 minutes or until browned. Delicious as an appetizer, a dessert or for breakfast. May be baked 375 degrees for 10 minutes.

### BETTER THAN CHOPPED DATES

We never think of recommending chopped dates in a recipe calling for dates. Date Crystals are not only better but more economical and convenient to use. You are not paying for seeds and excess moisture. Just measure and stir them in. They are vigorously crisp but soften quickly as soon as moisture hits them. An excellent substitute for acid-forming white sugar on cereals, fruit, etc.

### EASY AS FALLING OFF A LOG — ECONOMICAL TOO

Just mix them in! On your cereals instead of sugar; fruit cocktails; carrot or fruit salads; sandwich spreads; cake frostings; add them to your favorite recipes for cinnamon rolls, cup cakes, doughnuts, muffins, biscuits, cornbread, waffles, hot cakes, custard, charlotte russe, fudge or divinity, plain ice cream, jello and in all other recipes calling for dates.

### A SIMPLE DESSERT

- 1 cup Shields Date Crystals
- ½ cup milk, fruit juice, sherry wine or brandy

Mix in bowl and set in cold place 8 hours or longer. Serve with cream, plain or whipped. Nuts and marshmallows may be added if desired. Serves four.

The above recipe may be used as a filler between graham crackers or cookies for luncheons—a delightful combination.

### YUM, YUM—"Lazy Gal Recipe"

### DATE CRYSTALS

### MINUTE DESSERT — TRY IT!

- 1 cup crushed pineapple
- ½ cup Shields Date Crystals
- ½ Cup miniature marshmallows

Combine all ingredients. Chill for several hours. Serve plain or with whipped cream.

### DROP COOKIES

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup shortening
- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup Shields Date Crystals
- ½ cup hot water
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

Pour hot water over the Date Crystals. Cream shortening and sugar, then add well-beaten eggs. Add the Date Crystals mixture, then the dry ingredients and nuts. Drop from spoon onto baking sheet, allowing room for the cookies to spread. Bake 15 minutes at 375 degrees F.

### HUNGRY CHILDREN'S SANDWICH

As an after school snack for the children Shields Date Crystals moistened with milk and chilled for several hours will make a delicious and healthful sandwich — suggest using graham crackers.

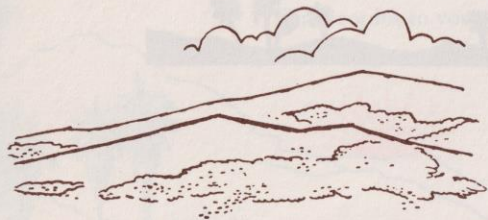


**Sold Only Direct . . . Never Sold in Stores. Write for Price List and Mrs. Shields' 20 Page Date Crystal Recipe Folder**

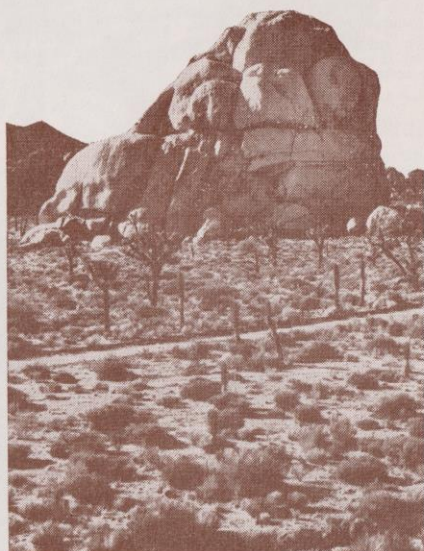
**SHIELDS DATE GARDENS, INDIO, CALIFORNIA 92201**



Rose Garden and date palm showing single bunches where the top of the palm was each year. The Rose Garden is one of the largest in Southern California.



Water and Sunshine  
Make the Desert  
Bloom — and Roses  
Are No Exception.



The Desert and the Long Trail is a permanent picture in the minds of those caught up in its fascination.



Sold Only Direct... Never Sold in Stores. Write for Price List

200 Mrs. Shields' 20 Page Date Crystal Recipe Folder

SHIELDS DATE GARDENS, INOUI, CALIFORNIA 92701



# Shields Date Crystals

REG. U.S. PAT. OFFICE

**The Date Is a Whole Food  
and May Be Used Freely**

**Shields Date Crystals  
100% Pure; contain:  
Essential Vitamins  
Valuable Minerals  
Including Iron  
Generous Roughage  
80% Fruit Sugar (ener-  
gizing, but not fattening)**

## **More Than a Substitute for Sugar**

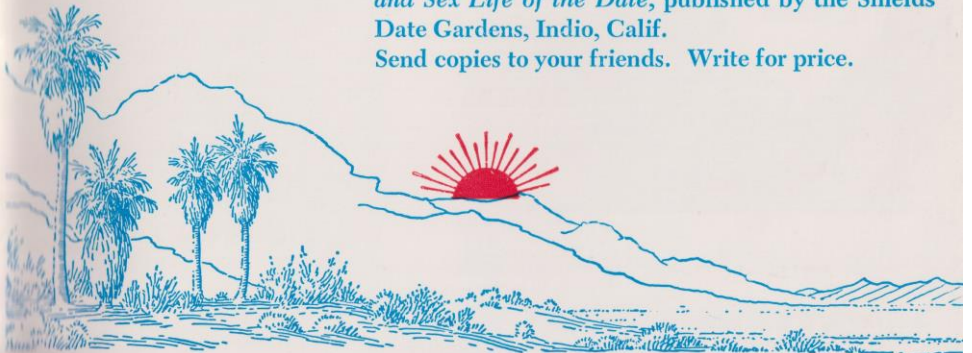
"Cane Sugar differs from natural sugar found in DATES in several important particulars," says Dr. John Harvey Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan.

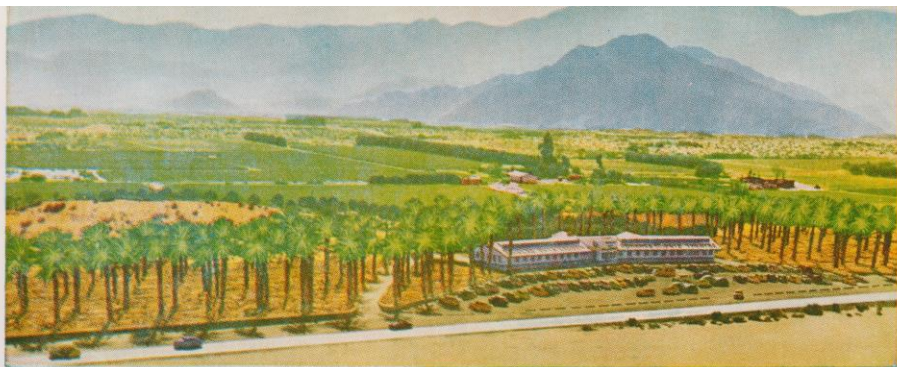
"In the date, sugar is associated with all the other essential food constituents. There is protein, the necessary tissue builder; iron, so essential to blood; lime, which is essential for the bones; and vitamins, those highly important food constituents; all these are in the date, but none are in cane sugar."



*Coachella Valley Desert Trails and The Romance  
and Sex Life of the Date*, published by the Shields  
Date Gardens, Indio, Calif.

Send copies to your friends. Write for price.





*Shields Bit of Old Arabia in Modern California*

A stylized blue line drawing of an armored knight. The knight is shown from the waist up, wearing a helmet with a visor and a surcoat. He holds a shield in his left hand and a sword in his right. His right arm is extended, pointing towards the right. The shield is divided into blue and red sections with the word 'SHIELDS' written across it. The knight's armor is detailed with various plates and joints.

Quality

**SHIELDS**

Dates  
and  
Citrus

The Armored Knight  
—Guardian of Quality



*A young Date Palm in full bearing. See the baby palm at its mother's feet.*