

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for October

Born to be wild

By Cynthia Brian

"All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware." ~ Martin Buber



The raging Gullfoss Waterfall blanketed by wildflowers.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Volcanoes, glaciers, highlands, prairies, lava flows, fire, ice. Nature untouched and untamed. Iceland.

Resting on the boundary where the North American and Eurasian Tectonic plates meet, Iceland is a country of intense volcanic eruptions, boiling hot springs, rushing rivers, venting steam, spouting geysers, powerful waterfalls, ice caves, aqua

blue lagoons, northern lights, and minimal sunshine. Most people live in Reykjavik, the capital, which has a population of only 338,378 and a median age of 38. Iceland, a country of fierce contrasts, is geared for the rugged and the youthful.

I visited this wild, wild country recently during the season of "the midnight sun" when darkness never comes and sleep is elusive. Twilight reigned supreme allowing for plenty of exploring and hiking adventures. Summer in Iceland was freezing cold with unpredictable blustery North Atlantic weather, gray skies, menacing clouds, bone-chilling rain, and gusty winds. Sunshine in any minimal amount was not on the agenda. My daily wardrobe included gloves, faux fur hat, layers of clothing, double mufflers, boots and a warm raincoat. Naturally, a bathing suit was always packed in my bag for that daily dip in a "secret" hot springs lagoon where the natives and visitors come to warm up.

As a traveler who dives into the culture of a nation, I wanted to indulge in the Icelandic cuisine. To supply fresh vegetables, hothouses operate year round using geothermal energy providing tasty and nutritious veggies to augment a diet of fish and meat. Dining out is expensive. The average price for a green salad was \$30. Everything I ordered at authentic local restaurants was unique and delicious with the exception of fermented shark which was the most disgusting, foul smelling, horrid tasting item I've ever experienced. I spent a full day sick to my stomach after just a few nauseating bites, yet this is considered an Icelandic winter staple.

... continued on page D16



The tallest dandelions ever.

