

## The floral moral of the story

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist  
Friday, 02 June 2023 04:44

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As spring turns to summer, I love taking leisurely laps around my house to see what's in bloom. Nearly every day, I find a new flower opening its doors for business to bees and butterflies.

Whether it's the brilliant orange monarch butterfly larval host plant butterfly weed or the hummingbird magnet, rich ruby red royal catchfly, I can't help but find my mouth agape at nature's color wheel revealing itself day by day. I'm currently in awe of the pulchritudinous purple blooms of my current favorite native plant, wild lupine; they provide nectar and vital nutrients for bees, insects and hummingbirds alike.

Sorry to get so gushy about flowers, but native perennials are kind of my thing. I get excited to the point of using flowery language about flowers.

Flowery language is characterized by the abundant use of lengthy, occasionally outdated vocabulary and the inclusion of figurative expressions. In general, the jury is in on flowery language; it says, "Don't use it!" I'll be the judge of that.

Let's see some examples. "As Judith languished in her cotton-mouthed state, she laboriously approached the silver oasis that promised aqueous vitality. As she painstakingly summoned the spirit to press her dainty thumb against the fountain's operative button, water flowed like a rushing river into her eagerly awaiting mouth."

Whew. Glad you made it, Judith. A straightforward way of writing the above paragraph is: Judith was thirsty, so she got a drink of water from the water fountain. Depending on where you grew up, you could also say Judith got a drink from the drinking fountain or the bubbler.

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How about this one: "Rik raced faster than a cheetah on the hunt toward the falling, hurtling white sphere. As the ball neared the blades of grass at a rapid clip, Rik sprawled out to secure it in the safety of his leather mitt."

Simply stated, Rik made an exceptional diving baseball catch. Whether the play ended up on SportsCenter's top plays or not, perhaps we'll never know.

In my opinion, using a blend of direct and flowery words is the secret sauce to make writing interesting and easy to understand. Writers should aim to inform their readers but also keep them entertained. If you go all-out with flowery language, it's easy for the message to get lost in translation. But if it's too plain and boring, reading can turn into a snooze-fest.

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