Alice Eastwood: Heroine of Botany (Continued)

After her degree’s retirement, Alice became the sole curator.

During the five years it took to rebuild the Academy’s facilities in San Francisco, Alice studied at herbaria in Europe and the United States. In order to replace the Academy’s lost collections, she made expeditions to Alaska, Arizona, Baja California, British Columbia, and Utah, being particularly interested in Western U.S. Liliaceae and the genera Lupinus, Arctostaphylos, and Castilleja. She also did extensive field work within California, and named 125 species of California plants. By the time she retired in 1949 at age 90, the Academy’s herbarium contained over 350,000 specimens—almost three times the number lost in 1906—and Alice had published many books and more than 300 articles, edited the journals Zoe and Erythea, and co-founded the journal Leaflets of Western Botany.

Like her mentor Katharine Brandegee, Alice Eastwood was a woman ahead of her time. Broad-minded, she promoted the interests of women, plants, the outdoors, and natural resources. In 1903 only a few women were recognized in American Men of Science, and Alice was one of the two listed with a star to indicate their being among the top 25% of scientists in their field. She was an energetic, robust woman who could cover twenty miles a day on foot, and who was allowed to join a men’s hiking group when she showed that her hiking ability rivaled that of the men. She explored difficult Western terrain in long skirts, but also designed a skirt that buttoned to make pants. Though Alice was conventional enough to apparently have married, both her suitors died before that could happen.

Alice Eastwood’s name lives on in the plants named for her, which include seventeen species and the genera Eastwoodia and Aliciella. In 1950, she presided over the International Botanical Congress in Sweden from a chair once used by Linnaeus. A tribute written in 1942 by F. M. MacFarland, commemorating Alice Eastwood’s fifty years of service to the Academy, mentions the “frank, direct approach to every problem and [the] modest, kindly spirit” of the woman who risked her life to save valuable specimens in 1906 and would dedicate her long life to the study of native plants of California and the Western U.S.—a true heroine of botany.

Author’s note: For historical and personal details, I am indebted in large part to Larry Blakely’s well-researched website on California botanists, “Who’s in a Name?”

Natives go “Commercial”

by Monica Tudor

At the Bakersfield College Garden Fest this year, a person came by and commented that their homeowner’s association was not in favor of native/drought-tolerant plantings. I had recently read of legislation that allowed the homeowner to use native plantings in spite of the HOA’s rules. This and a suggestion from a CNPS member got me thinking about the use of native plants in Bakersfield’s commercial locations.

There are other locations where native plants are featured, — CALM, for example — but what about commercial developments? I’ve seen deer grass in street medians, but even better are the newer developments on Stockdale highway from California Pizza Kitchen all the way to Riverlakes Park. These are planted with several varieties of native plants. They are mixed with typical landscape plants (roses) and other drought-tolerant plants (Texas ranger, for example). Thank you to the planners and designers!

Starting at the parking lot at Riverlakes Park, I noticed Salvia, penstemon, and manzanita. The manzanita looks great and I’m jealous because it is the plant I’ve had the most difficulty with, trying to get it to grow in my own California garden. In front of Target are some nice desert willows. At first I didn’t notice the bushes in the islands, but they are toyons. The toyon is clipped to look like a boxwood, but nevertheless it’s cool to see it planted.

In front of Chipotle is a mallow of some kind and just over is (what might be) an Encelia actonii. Heeding east along the bike path just behind California Pizza Kitchen and the Elephant Bar is deer grass, Cleveland sage, white sage, and redbud. These two establishments also use natives in the landscaping facing the street. Their style is to use...
natives like regular commercial plants, so you’ll find their plants clipped and in orderly rows. Just goes to show that natives can be used in a more formal style landscape as well as a natural-looking landscape.

I have to confess that when I discover natives in parks and commercial landscapes, it brings me joy. What’s not to love? The plants are beautiful, they provide habitat and they are drought-tolerant, an important consideration for our valley.

*The Davis-Sterling Act, Civil Code §1353.8. Low Water-Using Plants* specifically states: “...a provision of any of the governing documents of a common interest development shall be void and unenforceable if it ... prohibits, or includes conditions that have the effect of prohibiting, the use of low water-using plants as a group...”

Germinating Ideas...

If you or someone you know has a garden featuring at least some native plants, contact Dorie Giragosian (dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com). A resource listing of such gardens will be invaluable in the spring for planning possible garden tours.

Anyone with interest in and or knowledge of fabric-dying with plants — especially natives — contact Sasha Honig (andym5@bak.rr.com) for sharing knowledge and resources.

Rare Plant Treasure Hunt

Enjoy a day of botanizing in the Mount Pinos/Los Padres National Forest area on Saturday, June 28. Help us search for several historically-documented populations in the area. Hiking will be easy, but at some altitude. Be sure to bring water for the day, a lunch, and plenty of sun protection. Ticks could be encountered but no poison oak (yay!). Meet at 9:30 am at the Chuchupate Ranger Station’s large parking lot, 1 mile west of Lake of the Woods, about 8 miles from Highway 5.

For Info and to RSVP contact: Melinda Elster (melster@charter.net) or Danny Slakey (dslakey@cnps.org).

When: Saturday, June 28, 2014, 9:30am – 5pm

Where: Chuchupate Ranger Station
34580 Lockwood Valley Rd, Frazier Park

Thank you to:
Mike White, of the Tejon Conservancy, and docents John and Teresa Barrios for the field trip to the desert portion of Tejon Ranch.
Don and Yvonne Turkal for the enjoyable walk through CALM (the California Living Museum) and the work they have done to identify and label the plants.
Monica Tudor and Dorie Giragosian and others for their public outreach at the plant sale at the annual Bakersfield College Garden Fest.
Richard Spjut for his interesting presentation at our meeting in March on rare plant associations.
Maria Ulloa-Cruz for a journey to southern Chile in her talk on the wildflowers and agriculture there at our meeting in April.
Susan Krzywicki, the Horticulture Program Director for CNPS, for her presentation at our meeting in May.

Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS

Thursday, June 19, 2014 - 7 pm:
Trevor Meadows, Central Valley Biologist - River Partners,
Revegetation and Seed Propagation.

Thursday, September 18, 2014 - 7 pm:
Steve Kranyak
Growing Natives in Bakersfield.

Thursday, October 16, 2014 - 7 pm:
Randi McCormick
Natural Land Revegetation.

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St), Bakersfield, CA.
Meeting times:
6 pm — Two discussion groups:
Identifying Plants and Growing Natives
7 pm — Program presentation