Evalyn Lucille Klein Farnsworth (Continued)

every time you see it, try the Farnsworth jewel flower.”
He describes it as having spikes of bright white flowers, set against “a very unusual expanded bract of rose purple, overlaid with a strange bluish color that reflects the light.” Favoring sterile, rocky “balds” and ledges, it has grown well on Raiche’s rock outcrop. When it went to seed, Raiche “crushed [the seed] up and sprinkled [it] around to a wider area,” which resulted in good numbers of the plant the next season. Raiche goes on to say that the plant is available by mail-order from Annie’s Annuals of Richmond, CA. He credits Evalyn Farnsworth with hitting upon “one of the weirdest,” but also one of the loveliest, of California’s native jewel flowers.

When Evalyn died in 2003 at the age of 91, she left behind her daughter Sandra and son-in-law Lawrence Southard — who would like it to be known that he “thought the world of her” — two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and the ranch to which she had devoted her life. Evalyn Farnsworth’s legacy also includes a native plant bearing her name, a possibility she likely never suspected when, on 13 May 1965 on her family’s ranch near Glennville, she first spotted an unusual purple-and-white plant blooming on a steep slope of decomposed slate.

Author’s note: Many thanks go to Sandra Southard, of Porterville, for her help in providing many personal details; to Aaron Schusteff for his photograph of Streptanthus farnsworthianus; and to Lorie Barker of the Porterville College Library and Annamarie Olson of the Porterville City Library, for their assistance in obtaining photos. ✦

Native Plant Gardening
by Monica Tudor

I LOVE FALL PLANT sale time. Well, make that the time after the plant sale. This is the best (and some say the only) time of year to plant natives. Based on my own experience, I have to agree.

The cooler weather seems to be appreciated by the plants as evidenced by their growth spurt this fall. The Aster chilensis (California aster) got a few new blooms as did as the Allen Chickering sage. Even the Quercus lobata (valley oak) sprouted some twigs which grew several inches.

I had planted a new section of garden in spring this year, a full sun exposure, using the plants from the Las Pilitas field trip and the Garden Fest. They lasted through the first set of 100 degree days but that was it. I had probably overwatered at least some of them, but others certainly looked parched right before they croaked. In any case, they did not have enough time to develop a large enough root system to sustain them through Bakersfield’s extreme summer weather. The survivors: a Verbena de la mina and an Isomeris arborea (bladderpod). The verbena tolerates summer water and the bladderpod grows locally on the Panorama Vista Preserve, so it survives with NO additional summer water. Those two are good choices for the garden, too. The verbena has lilac blooms and the bladderpod has yellow blooms.

This fall, after the first rain, I followed planting directions from the Las Pilitas website as well as the hints
from Steve Kranyak, who was a speaker at a recent CNPS meeting.

Once the plant locations were determined, I dug large, deep holes and filled them with water. That accomplished two things: I found out how fast the water drained and put water deep into the ground as a reserve for the (soon to be growing) roots. The plants were taken from their pots, root balls examined and scored (if appropriate), then planted and watered one more time.

The hardest part? Not watering them daily! I check to see if they need water by digging out a little dirt about an inch away from the root ball. If the earth is damp, do not water. With this weather, the ground stays moist and plants do not need lots of additional watering. I have one exception, though, and that’s if seeds are planted. They’ll get lightly watered when the ground appears dry, about twice a week, to encourage sprouting.

Once the plants are in the ground, I’ll go check them out regularly. Are they putting out new leaves? Or are any leaves looking odd?

I had to move a recently planted Arctostaphylos Dr. Hurd that wasn’t looking too happy. Its leaves were turning black around the edges. I’m not sure why, too much water? Soil too rich? (It was planted where the bull had lived for two years- draw your own conclusions.) Anyway, once it was moved, it started growing tiny new leaves! Now, to keep it and the others alive through the next summer! ✿

Isomeris arborea, bladderpod

Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS

Thursday, January 15, 2015
6-7 pm: ANNUAL POTLUCK, (Regular informal group discussions cancelled to allow time for potluck)

7 pm: Richard Spjut, Western Australian Wildflowers. Western Austrailia has a Mediterranean climate similar to California’s and a spectacular variety of wildflowers. In th 80s and 90s Rich sampled 850 plant species for botanical research sponsored by the National Cancer Institute.

Thursday, February 19, 2015 7 pm:
Speaker: David Chipping, CNPS Fellow, Emeritus Professor of Geology, VP, Friends of the Carrizo Plain, will speak on a subject relative to the Carrizo Plain. Title to be announced.

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 informal discussion groups: Plant Identification and Native Plant Gardening
7 pm — Program presentation

CNPS is the leader for providing reliable information on California native plants and plant conservation. Comprehensive information about Californias’s flora and vegetation communities is available throughout the state for conservation and educational purposes. CNPS’s leaderships influences personal ethics and actions, as well as public policy for native plant protection.