

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Organic Agriculture Update, September 2008



<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/organic/>

Well, Summer is ending and that means another quarterly update from the CTAHR organic working group. In this update, we highlight new resources available from the College on covercrops, diseases and other topics relevant to organic growers. The CTAHR Organic Working group consists of over 30 researchers with interests in organic agriculture. For more information on the working group and resources available to growers, please see: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/organic/>.

Sunn hemp and Perennial Peanut

Sunn hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) is a common short-cycle, nitrogen fixing cover crop that has been the focus of recent research at CTAHR. Benefits of sunnhemp include good biomass production (especially in the summer), good nitrogen contribution and an ability to suppress plant pathogenic nematodes. Drawbacks include reduced biomass production in the winter months and woodiness as the plant gets older that results in difficulty to incorporate into the soil. A new video, "Sunn hemp for Soil Health and Nematode Management" is available for viewing on-line at <http://www.youtube.com/user/HIsustainAg>. Dr. Koon Hui Wang will be hosting a field day highlighting her work with sunnhemp at the Poamoho Agricultural Research Station on Oahu October 8, 2-3p.m. For more information, contact Dr. Wang at koonhui@hawaii.edu or 956-2429.

Perennial Peanut is a nitrogen fixing, long-term cover that is increasingly being used as a living mulch in fruit tree orchards. Once established, perennial peanut tolerates foot traffic and adverse climate conditions, and has the potential to improve soil quality. Drawbacks to perennial peanut is its intolerance of heavy shade under tree canopies and a potential to compete for nutrients with young, establishing and shallow rooted trees. CTAHR research on perennial peanut was highlighted at recent field days on O'ahu. These research highlights are available at: http://www2.hawaii.edu/~theodore/Perennial_peanut. For more information on this work, Contact Dr. Ted Radovich at theodore@hawaii.edu, 956-7909.

General Soil Fertility

CTAHR is fortunate to have strong research programs in soils. Several downloads on Hawaiian soils, nutrient management for organic production and other relevant topics are available at Dr. Jonathan Deenik's site: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/DeenikJ/downloads.asp>.

Disease of the Week

Dr. Scot Nelson publishes weekly updates on important plant diseases and physiological disorders in his "Disease of the Week" publications. Recent diseases and disorders covered include lemongrass rust, shot hole of 'awa and soft rots in sweet potato. To subscribe to plant disease of the week and access other downloads, go to: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/nelsons/>, or contact Dr. Scot Nelson at snelson@hawaii.edu, 981-5207.

Other new CTAHR resources

Many of the publications mentioned above and numerous others are now available for downloading from the CTAHR free publications webpage, <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/freepubs>. CTAHR publications most relevant to organic agriculture are also linked on the resources page of the Organic Working Group website

As always, the CTAHR Organic Working Group encourages those interested in ecological agriculture to contact us with your ideas, suggestions and insights. Keep on growing, and we'll see you at the HOFA annual meeting in November!

For more information contact: Ted Radovich, email: theodore@hawaii.edu, 956-7909

Field day participants evaluate perennial peanut varieties at the Waimanalo experiment station on Oahu.



Shot hole of 'awa is one of the many diseases that have been featured in Dr. Scot Nelson's Disease of the Week.

