

NEWS FROM

THE URBAN GARDEN CENTER

VOL 17



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BUSY HANDS IN THE ORCHARD

March and April were busy months for the UGC Fruit Hui. Three harvesting sessions yielded over 400 pounds of fruits that were donated to the Hawaii Food Bank. This included coconuts that were 'harvested' by UGC Ag Techs in preparing for an event at The UGC (coconuts eaten are better than those falling on garden visitors!) This worthwhile organization's staff is always happy to see Fruit Hui Coordinator, Susie Ota, drive up to unload this much appreciated donation.

In another harvesting session in March, the Hui picked a variety of fruits to send to the 2013 Western Regional 4-H Leaders' Forum held in Waikiki on the 18th March. We are sure the forum participants were dazzled by the variety (& taste!) of this harvest of breadfruit, tangerine, lemon, avocado, oranges, mangos, canito, guava, figs, sapodilla, Wi and surinam cherry.



Fruit provided to the Western Regional 4-H leaders' Forum

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ANNUAL AG DAY EVENT A SUCCESS

The annual Agriculture Awareness and Environmental Day event was held at The Urban Garden Center in March. Approximately 600 fifth grade students and their teachers attended and viewed exhibits and heard presenters address local agriculture and environmental issues. The 15 exhibitors included local, state and federal agencies such as UH, LCC, BWS, HI DOT, USDA, USFWS, as well as local businesses. The 17 presenters ranged from UH-CTAHR faculty talking about cacao as a new crop for Hawaii

and sustainable & organic farming, to the crowd pleasing invasive-sniffing beagles of the U.S. Customs & Border Protection. The UGC volunteers acted as guides leading groups of students through their scheduled presentations. The Elementary schools represented were Waipahu, Nanakuli, Mauka Lani, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Waianae, Pearl Ridge and Aiea.

This event has a two-fold purpose: To create a greater awareness and understanding of agriculture and the environment among today's students, teachers, and the general

public; and to introduce students to career opportunities in agriculture and environmental studies throughout the state. With an awareness of these issues, we hope that Oahu will see some of these young people flower into the next generation of stewards of the aina.

Many people contributed to the success of this event, including our UGC Ag Techs Richard Fisher and Lito Cacho, who were joined by Ag Techs from Waimanalo Farm and Waialeale Farm. Many presenters returned the next day for SSAG. Mahalo to you all!

TREES FROM THE GROUND DOWN @ MARCH SSAG

In addition to the returning Ag Day presenters sharing information with the general public, Master Gardeners and The UGC Ohana conducted on-going events at the March SSAG. There was a plant sale to satisfy the gardening public's desire for plants that do well here. M.G.s conducted several field

demonstrations, which help local gardeners in making their gardens 'the best they can be'.

For those with concerns about their trees, Aloha Arborist conducted a workshop "Trees from the Ground Down".



Mahalo to all who contributed to yet another successful SSAG.



GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES

The Oahu Resource Conservation & Development Council (“ORC&D”) exists to “improve the quality of life of the people of Oahu by encouraging activities that conserve and sustain our natural, human, cultural and economic resources”, per its Mission Statement. It has been conducting a series of workshops: “Grow Your Own Groceries.” Kunia Backyard Gardening Workshops at Pioneer Hi-Bred’s Kunia Research Station.

Certified O.M.G.s Mhel and Brian Cyr provided a 2 1/2 hour class/demo on building healthy garden soil & creating a raised bed on 6 April as part of this workshop series. Informative handouts created by the Cyrs were given to the 27 attendees from across Oahu and feedback was almost universally positive. There was a clear demand

from attendees for more hands on activity.

Mhel and Brian will be conducting two more sessions as part of the “Grow Your Own Groceries series:” Vegetable Gardening on 18 May and Organic Pest Control & Pest ID on 1 June. For more information, go to ORC&D's website at <http://www.oahurcd.org/>.

Mahalo to Mhel and Brian!

AS THE WORM TURNS!

Those working the worm bins and garden visitors learning about worm bins now have new signage to provide information. John Mowbray, husband of Intern Betty Mowbray, made the signage.

Last May during the Master Gardener class of 2012 graduation presentation, Betty showed PowerPoint slides of worm signs to be

constructed and placed near The UGC worm bins. This year, when her husband asked what she would like for her birthday, she asked if he would make The UGC a worm sign. With the proviso that Betty draw and paint the worm, he agreed. Love that worm!

Nestor Dela Cruz & Ernesto Ortal installed John’s gift next to the large worm bins across from the children’s gardens.

Mahalo all!



Busy Hands ,cont'd

Another project that the Hui has been working on for several months is now nearing completion. The Hui undertook an updating of the Orchard inventory and database. All interested in the extent and diversity of The UGC Orchard can now view the updated inventory map. A hard copy of the map can be found on a clipboard hanging on the wall to the right of the Helpline Office door in the Field Office and also on MG Yahoo Groups Site. For help locating fruits, the orchard has been divided into Makai and Mauka sides. Check it out!

The database has been updated but is still in the process of being expanded. Stay tuned. In the meantime, 'Plant Information Sheets' are being produced for each type of fruit to be found in the orchard. The informational

sheets provide nutritional data, harvest and uses. Also a guide -book with this information will be available in the future for Volunteer use.

The Hui has created new labels and has attached them to all the trees. Mahalo to Connie Yoshioka and Wally Watanabe for creating the embossed signs for the banana plants in the orchard. There are two metal labels on each tree (apart from the bananas): one corresponds to the row and plant numbers to be found on the orchard map and the second label has the common name of the tree. Depending on the size of the tree, the labels are found on the SE side of the trunk.

The Hui was assisted in this endeavor by the knowledge and support of Dale Sato. Mahalo, Dale!

Maintaining The UGC orchard is a huge undertaking. General maintenance is performed by The UGC Ag Techs and Volunteers Carlton & Linda Luka do ongoing pruning. Since the Fruit Hui scrambles around the trees in order to harvest, Carlton has recently given a basic pruning workshop to some of the Hui members. Now the Hui can remove water sprouts and other unwanted small limbs of the trees as they harvest. This will not only make the trees healthier and happier, but also provide an unobstructed view to the fruits for the harvesters!

Mahalo to all Fruit Hui members and their supporters at The UGC.

LUNCH & LEARN

Xeriscape Hui member Shirley Zukeran conducted a planting lunch-n-learn event in honor of Earth Day last month with her co-workers at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. Using surplus jade plants propagated by the Hui along with other water-saving plants donated by fellow Hui member Diane Moses (also with the Board of Water

Supply) and recycled pots, all attendees went home with a beautiful container garden.

Attendees also learned about conserving water in their gardens by following xeriscaping techniques. Each was given a BWS brochure that speaks to xeriscaping and informed about the Halawa Xeriscape Garden and its plant sale and classes. Shirley



also shared information about The UGC and LCC.

Mahalo, Shirley, for being an advocate for water-wise gardening.



New Kitchen

The UGC classroom has now been renovated and includes a new kitchen. Numerous volunteers contributed many hours to this project. Please see the last few months "Short Takes" for further detail of the expertise contributed by specific volunteers.

Mahalo to All!



New side walk

HCC Carpentry students under instructor George Bowman made forms, graded and leveled the ground and hauled & compacted the gravel base for the 65 ft. new side walk extension. They also put up three wall cabinets for the new kitchen. HCC instructor Darryl Correa had 6 mason finisher apprentices complete the concrete pour for the new side walks extension. This work was done as a learning project and we thank all the students and their instructors.

GRAPE CRUSH IN THE FUTURE

M.G. Robert Seronio planted grapes, which can be found next to the cacao plot in The UGC Orchard, in Summer, 2012. He received these as cuttings via Ken Love from the USDA germplasm repository in Davis, CA. Ken Love is President of the Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers and is working on a WSARE Project: 'Grapes for Tropical Hawaii' that will test some 50 varieties of grapes. See:

<http://www.hawaiiifruit.net/index-grapes.html>

The varieties planted here include: Isabella (2) and one each of Orlando Seedless, Muscat Hybrid and Southern Home. The So. Home plant was cut back severely in January due to insect and fungal infestation. The Chinese Rose Beetle is also attacking the vines. Robert had been using soapy water to control the problems but has also begun using Bayer's Tree & Shrub Insect Treatment. He broadcasts the latter around the crown of the plant.

Robert fertilizes with a slow release 16-16-16 fertilizer every 3 months. When planted, he amended the soil with verma-compost and regular compost. The vines are irrigated with spray heads that go off every morning for

approx. ten (10) minutes or so.

Robert anticipates fruiting soon since the vines were planted from cuttings. We look forward to hearing more about this project. Mahalo, Robert and Ken!

JUST PEACHY!

If you have walked through The UGC Orchard this year, your eyes were not deceiving you. Yes, those were peach blossoms you were seeing here on Oahu!

Alton Arakaki, County Extension Agent on Molokai is working on a project to see if these cultivars, which require low chill requirements, will do well here in Hawaii. The cultivars planted are named: 'Tropic Prince', 'Tropic Snow', 'Tropic Sweet' and 'Tropic Beauty'.

We look forward to the juicy results of this study.



ROSES, AND MORE ROSES!

The Honolulu Rose Society ('HRS'), assisted by various volunteers from The UGC, have been very busy this late winter/spring. March was a productive month with several weekend work parties planting climbing roses on the new pergola and about nine varieties of roses throughout the Rose Garden. The HRS has now planted five new beds of roses for a total of 24 varieties in the garden. There are also four varieties of roses in the newly established Peace Garden.

In late April, the HRS and Rotarian volunteers, totally approximately sixty people, met for a service project to build a retaining wall on the mauka side of the Rose Garden. The efforts of these dedicated volunteers can be viewed, amidst the fragrance of the beautiful, blooming roses when you are next at The UGC.

Mahalo to the HRS, all volunteers for their efforts and to Ray Uchida for funding materials for the new retaining wall. Take a walk up to the Rose Garden and enjoy!

SPRUCING UP THE GARDEN

In addition to the work done by The UGC Ag. Techs. many volunteers help to maintain the various areas of The UGC. While many of these volunteers have regularly scheduled days they work in specific areas of The UGC, a work party can normally be found the First Saturday of each month in the Herb Garden.

The March First Saturday was spent sprucing up the Herb Garden in preparation of the Ag. Awareness Day event and general maintenance.

Lunch is provided and in the past, M.G. David Morihara has been the chief BBQer in preparing lunch for all the hardworking volunteers.

David has passed on the BBQ fork, and in March, the HRS & volunteers provided a light lunch for all volunteers working that First Saturday.

The April First Saturday again saw M.G.s working in the Herb Garden. On 13th April a Planet Day Work Day was held and volunteers received pruning instruction from Carlton and Linda Luka. All the newly trained pruners then worked on pruning in the Plumeria Grove.

The Ohana provided lunch and drinks to all the volunteers. Crew chiefs Aileen Omori and Roger Olegario had the pleasure of working in the newly installed kitchen in the recently remodeled Classroom building. By the way, many volunteers contributed to that

remodel and we send them 'mahalo nui loa'!

In addition to helping maintain the Herb Garden, the volunteers come away with new knowledge each workday. Veteran M.G.s have expressed that the best way to apply what has been learned in the classroom is to come out to help on the First Saturday in the Herb Garden or to adopt a specific area of The UGC to help maintain. As M.G. Brian Cyr recently noted: "You can actually learn a lot by weeding. What types of weeds are common? Why do certain weeds grow in some areas and not in others? What pests or beneficial insects are attracted to a particular weed? Which

weeds are edible? Which weeds poke through weed matt and which ones don't? What are the best weeding tools for hand weeding? How do certain weeds spread? Maybe folks take a few weeds home in plastic baggies and search online to ID them so they can learn more. You can spend a lifetime learning about weeds alone!"

Join in on-going learning on First Saturday and other work parties at The UGC!

M.G. HUI LEARNING AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY

Oahu M.G.s who are members of the Organic Hui meet after working in the Herb Garden the First Saturday of each month. Check out their activities. Their sessions include some informal education. In March, M.G. Amy Teves spoke about New Zealand spinach and everyone received some to take home to propagate. Learning will continue in their home gardens!

Xeriscape Hui member, Susie Ota, has a social worker friend who wanted her Hospice Patients to enjoy living plants. The Hui contributed excess jade and other plants it had propagated to the St. Francis Hospice for this worthwhile endeavor.

Jade plants propagated by the Xeriscape Hui are also used in a Children's Garden activity. Self-guided tours of young

children come to The UGC. The Hui has bins set out with soil, clay pots and the jade plants. Instructions are provided and each child pots up a plant to take home. Future gardeners are being nurtured at The UGC.

The Xeriscape Hui visited Pang's Nursery in Kaneohe. The Pang family has run this nursery for decades and the Hui enjoyed an informative tour, conducted by current owner, Keri Pang. The Hui members were delighted to see the variety of succulents grown in rainy Kaneohe! Those plants were grown in the protection of a shade house. We are sure that the plants purchased will enjoy the dry microclimate of The UGC!

APRIL SSAG

The April SSAG saw the first of the Children's Garden Series provided to the gardening public. M.G. Lydi Bernal conducted a workshop drawn from the School Garden Basics Workshop. There will be other topics covered in future SSAG workshops in this series. The gardening public could also view on-goings demonstrations in the garden, such as worm composting.

The Ohana conducted the ever-popular plant sale. And the Family and Community Education Ladies from South and Windward Oahu provided hands on children activities.

There is indeed something for both the young and the less young at the SSAG events!

WASTEWATER TREATMENT ALCHEMY

Jayne Grzebik, one UH Grad Student in Urban Planning Department, three M.G. Veterans and four members of the 2013 Training Class toured the Sand Island Waste Water Treatment Plant on Tuesday, April 15th to learn more about our local waste water treatment process. Athan Adachi led the tour.

There are new wastewater treatment technologies being used; including Ultraviolet disinfection and Pelletization. UV disinfection kills bacteria and viruses with short exposure times. Wastewater is treated with UV radiation before it is discharged into the ocean.

Since 2006, the City and County of Honolulu has contracted with Synagro to turn solids waste into a commercial grade Class A organic fertilizer product. Up to 11,000 dry tons of biosolids that were once delivered to the landfill annually is now used by local nurseries, landscapers and golf courses as nutrient rich pellets safe for gardening and landscape use. Other cities that conduct Pelletization include Boston, Tampa, Houston, New York City and Sacramento.

For more information on being knowledgeable about wastewater see:

<http://www1.honolulu.gov/env/wwm/envquality/eqpubliceducation.htm>