

# NEWS FROM

## THE URBAN GARDEN CENTER

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## Garden Companions Make for Nutritious Harvest

Creating a demonstration companion garden at the Urban Garden Center for the School Garden Basics Workshop for Educators in 2012 was a lot of fun, per Betty Mowbray, a 2012 Intern Master Gardener.

The companion garden was created to show that a very large number of different types of plants could grow and thrive in a small area without the use of pesticides and herbicides.

When Betty first researched the topic of companion gardening to find out what it is, she discovered that little university scientific research about companion gardening had been published in Hawaii on the types of plants of interest to backyard vegetable gardeners.



Raised bed after harvest

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# The Year at The UGC off to a Start with Organizational Meetings

Volunteers are an integral part of The UGC operations and the annual 'Volunteer Meeting' was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January to update all. Steve Nagano and Jayme Grzebnik spoke and gave updates on their respective programs. A message from Ohana Pres. Roxane Fujiwara (who was unable to attend) was also read to the attendees, as well as the schedule for what promises to be another ambitious year for the Ohana. Oahu County Administrator Ray Uchida gave an update on projects at the UGC. After hearing the reports for 2013, volunteers moved

out into The UGC to work on several volunteer projects. They were treated to a luncheon after their hard work. If you were unable to attend, please contact Steve Nagano to update your Volunteer Emergency Info. and the Media Release Forms. It is important to have up-to-date information in the event of an accident/other emergency.

### OMGA Meeting

The Oahu Master Gardener Assn. ('OMGA') held a General Meeting at the end of the month of January. Acting Co-Presidents Terri Langley

and Jessie Kojiro introduced the new OMGA Board and discussed an agenda that contained items that all M.G.s are invited to consider: There is a proposed 2013 Budget but all are asked for information as the Board will revise and then put the 2013 Budget up for a vote at the next General meeting. Some of the other islands operate under an Advisory Board, rather than the current structure for Oahu. A committee has been formed to study this for Oahu. Contact Terri Langley for further info: [blisshealthyfoods@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:blisshealthyfoods@hawaii.rr.com)

## Plant Lovers are Enthusiastic after Winter Break

The initial Second Saturday at the Garden ('SSAG') for 2013 was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> Feb. Plants lovers were out in force as The UGC Ohana, Honolulu Rose Society & M.G. Amy Teves had a wide array of herbs, ornamentals, roses and grafted fruit trees for sale. The sale was very successful. Home gardeners

were especially enthusiastic about the multi-grafted fruit trees, which were generously donated to The UGC Ohana by Dr. Kenneth Takeda. The Honolulu Rose Society had planted climbing roses and worked on the planter boxes in advance of the SSAG event. They then conducted rose workshops, which were



well attended. O.M.G.s were out conducting various demonstrations around the Garden.

Mahalo to all!



## Check out New Plantings in Herb Garden

Dwarf fruit trees grown in containers make an excellent addition to gardens with limited space. They are perfect for people who live in condos or apartments because they fit nicely on a lanai or balcony. M.G. Robert Seronio has been caring for several trees that he ordered from Logee's Nursery in Connecticut, a grower that specializes in container-grown plants. The following trees can be found in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quadrant of the Herb Garden: avocado cv. 'Day', star fruit, tomato plant, (actually a fruit tree) Buddha's Hand, blood orange, Meyer lemon, sweet naranjilla, Tahitian orange, and mulberry. See the signage with photo and additional details, including botanical name, on each container.

The trees arrived bare root and were planted up into approx. 5-Gal. containers in Sept. & Oct., 2012. A blend of 1/3 potting soil, 1/3 compost, and a mix of verma-compost plus cinders for weight and drainage for the final third was used. A slow release 16-16-16 fertilizer is used every 3 weeks. The containers are watered by hand every 3rd day or so. Robert uses a

water meter to determine wetness. When the needle is half way to dry, he waters thoroughly. Robert has ordered additional plants and these and the original container plantings will be part of a 2013 M.G. Class Project.

### Propagating at The UGC

M.G. Richard Karamatsu is coordinator of the 'Grafting Hui', but he points out that this Hui also air layers and will start propagating this year from cuttings. They start the rootstock for the grafting from seed. Most of the seed (for the rootstock) for Mango, Avocado and Citrus comes from our UGC Orchard. He is not currently keeping records, but will start this year. He said it didn't matter what seed from Avocado or Mango they used for rootstock, but for citrus they use only Calamondin or Heenaran Tangerine.

The Scions for grafting are from the UGC Orchard and also ones that people bring in because the fruit from the particular fruit is so good

they want another one. The air layering is also done at The UGC Orchard. He said Citrus does well with air layering, but there would be no protection against the Trizia virus.

There are about 7 regulars in the Hui, with sometimes 18-20 people joining the Saturday Grafting



sessions. Although they mostly concentrate on fruit trees, they sometimes propagate Hibiscus and may in the future include Roses.

Check out this activity and taste the rewards in the future! The Grafting Hui Meets monthly on the 3rd Saturday, @ 7:45a.m. -10a.m. @ the Upper Nursery. Contact Richard with questions at [karamatsr001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:karamatsr001@hawaii.rr.com)

## On The Road Again\*

On 5<sup>th</sup> January, thirty attentive residents of Arcadia Retirement Residence in Honolulu learned invaluable information presented by M.G.s Mhel and Brian Cyr on the topic of “Apartment and Lanai Gardening Tips”. They gave these interested gardeners the ABC’s of gardening in containers, from choosing a healthy and appropriate plant, right-sized container to proper potting media. Gardening indoors or on limited sized lanai also calls for special attention to details of lighting and watering requirements, use of fertilizers and pest control, all of which were discussed.

Before the class, Mhel and Brian got a chance to view Arcadia’s outdoor greenhouse that is taking shape for container gardening. They discussed sowing seeds in containers and the

planting/transplanting of seedlings or plants into containers, so the greenhouse will be put to immediate use.

Finally, the residents treated them to lunch after the class and made a generous donation to the Master Gardener Program. Mhel had displayed her succulent wreath made during a Xeriscape Hui workday, which was admired by attendees. Arcadia residents now want the Cyrs to come back in the fall to teach a succulent wreath class in preparation for the holidays.

In late February, they were on the road again, this time to present a container gardening workshop to interested gardeners at Lyon Arboretum. The attendees were “wowed” by the wealth of information presented and

the great handouts.

Enthusiastic gardeners from Arcadia & beyond can now embark on a rewarding experience of gardening in containers.

**Note:** They will be presenting a “Creative Container Gardening” workshop at Halawa Xeriscape Garden on 23rd March. Call 748-5363 to reserve a seat.

Mahalo to Mhel and Brain for their outstanding contributions to public outreach.

\* With thanks to Willie Nelson, “On the Road Again” released August, 1980.

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## Garden Companions, Cont’d.

Even mainland publications indicated that, due to so many variables, some trial and error is involved in growing a companion garden. But, the one common principle was “the greater the diversity, the greater the chance for success”.

Using the 8 ft by 3 ½ ft by 1 ½ ft raised bed/box made by M.G.s Robert Seronio and Candice Tan for an earlier project, Betty pulled all the dead plants and weeds in and near the box and left the live

plants (a Thai basil and two celery plants). She amended the existing soil with vermicast from her home worm bin and created a trellis for the cucumber plant using two 5 ft metal rebar, PVC pipe, and “Gardener Trellis Netting”.

Betty’s plan was to grow 14 different types of vegetables in the box. The remaining herbs and flowers were included as companion protectors of the vegetables to deter/confuse the “bad” insects or to attract/keep the

beneficial insects. Enhancing the vigor/flavor of the vegetables was an added bonus. The allelopathic characteristic of some plants was also taken into consideration.

The garden contained 40 different types of plants (70 plants altogether):

14 different types of vegetables, 20 different types of herbs, and 6 different types of flowers.

Dedicated gardener Betty watered the base of these plants daily with a watering can and fertilized with



## SPRUCING UP THE UGC

Nothing invites one into a garden more than a bench on which to sit and enjoy the loveliness of the garden. The UGC had a couple of benches in the garden for years, but with the ravages of time, they were less than inviting.



Enter M.G. Glenn Cordiero!

Glenn sanded down the Mahogany bench, lacquered it and reinforced it with larger bolts. Viola! An inviting and safe place to rest and contemplate the garden.

There was a second bench near 'The Boardwalk' that had completely broken apart.

Glenn replaced the wood with new Cedar boards, sanded all the metal parts, lacquered it and reinforced it with larger bolts. The UGC now has two benches that invite one to sit and enjoy the gardens.

Mahalo, Glenn!

## Garden Companions, Cont'd.

Alaska Fish Fertilizer (5-1-1) as needed.

As an example of the use of companion protectors, Betty surrounded the cucumber plant by marigolds, borages, lemon verbena, dill, and nasturtiums. She surrounded the tomato plants by cinnamon basil, Marseilles basil, Thai basil, Italian parsley, and Chinese parsley.

She tucked a bloody sorrel (a shade plant) between a tomato plant and the eggplant. The eggplant needed lots of water – the tomato not so much. So, the sorrel (which acts like a swamp plant) soaked up the excess water before it got to the tomato.

The perennial spinach (a shade plant) was used as a successor plant to the lettuce and was tucked under and between the Thai basil and tomato plants.

Beets, onions, and carrots (with their differing root depths) were planted on the southern side of the garden where the soil was not quite as "rich". Chives, garlic, rosemary, sage, catnip, and mint were planted along the edges. Oregano, tarragon, and thyme were planted as groundcover – along with the pretty petunias. Borage and lemon verbena were for the bees and the heliotrope and cosmos for the butterflies. The nasturtiums were slow to germinate.

An important factor in how well the cucumber turned out was that the cucumber seedling that was donated by Amy for this project came from a really good seed stock. And Betty thinks an important reason for the success of the garden was due to the

additional vermicast she added to it and to the wonderful soil that remained in the raised bed from Robert's and Candice's previous project.

When we plan our backyard gardens we ought to consider what the result will look like aesthetically – per M.G. Anna Yorba. So besides the usual planting principals, Betty kept that in mind, too, when it came to selection of more than one plant in a particular position in the garden.

Betty enjoyed watching the honeybees' daily visits to mostly the Thai basil, borage, and lemon verbena plants. A few times she spotted a carpenter bee making the same rounds. The Cosmos plants were visited by a couple of butterflies.

At different times she saw a hoverfly, a lacewing, small parasitic wasps, a few spiders, lots of ladybugs, and a few ladybug larvae. On most days Betty would watch some white cabbage moths zigzag over the garden but never land. Overtime, Betty harvested over 20 cucumbers, 5 black beauty eggplants, lots and lots of little tomatoes, 9 beets, 7 carrots (some still growing), and lots of green Koba onions, huge Luculius and Rhubarb Swiss Chards, a huge Kale, lots of spinach, red and mixed lettuces, radishes, bloody sorrel, and lots of herbs.

As Betty worked on this project she was very grateful for all the generous advice and help received from many veterans at the garden center, especially Amy, Joe, and Nori. She learned a lot!

Mahalo, Betty

## Walking through the Xeriscape Plantings @ LCC

On 1<sup>st</sup> Feb., the Xeriscape Hui toured the shade house and surrounding campus plantings at Leeward Community College with Frani Okamoto, Shade House and Native Plant Collection Manager. The Hui was shown plants that Frani is propagating with various groups for community projects. She then led the Hui on a walking tour of Hawaiian native plantings around the campus. The microclimate on the campus is rather(!) dry, so the Hui saw great in-ground examples of xeriscape plantings that were thriving in the heat and sun there. Frani shared invaluable knowledge of native plants, which the Hui appreciated.

As a follow up to this field trip, three members of the Hui returned to LCC to help Frani. While they weeded a designated area, Frani imparted much information about the plantings, e.g., both a male and female acacia plant are needed to produce berries and how to identify them and the most opportune time to harvest the seeds of the lehua blossoms. After weeding they spent an enjoyable hour seeding uki uki berries and also gathering more tips from Frani about propagating, fertilizing and caring for native plants.



## O.M.G.s go to a Garden Party

The sun was shining on the group that met on the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb. to tour several home gardens that fellow M.G.s developed and the Diamond Head Community Gardens where several M.G.s have garden plots. The group visited a garden of mostly HI natives, which efficiently used rain barrel catchments and had a fantastic worm bin and potting area. Next up was a garden of medicinal & culinary plants, where they were also asked for advice and input. The visit to the Diamond Head Community Gardens gave them lots of ideas about planting various edibles in confined spaces.

The final stop on the tour were several gardens that displayed the handiwork of David Morihara. He created a garden get-away for his auntie, among numerous other garden projects. One of the other projects was a pergola that provides a delightful entertaining area for his auntie, her family and guest.

After oohing and aahing and clipping (!) their way through the gardens, the group enjoyed resting in the shade of this pergola and scrumptious pupu put together by David and his auntie's talented family.

Mahalo nui loa to O.M.G.s Margaret Mortz, Susanna Reid and David Morihara as well as to the Matsuki family for an enjoyable and

Thank you to the following for submitting info/photos:  
Betty Mowbray, Robert Seronio, Candice Tan, Brian & Mhel Cyr and Richard Karamatsu.

