

NEWS FROM

THE URBAN GARDEN CENTER

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Enthusiastic Students Attend AgDay 2014

Almost 600 5th graders from Kalihi Uka, Kalihi Kai, Kalihi Waena, Kauluwela, Kalihi, Lunalilo, Pauoa and Puuhale schools ascended on The UGC on 7th March, 2014. This year's event was co-sponsored by CTAHR and the City & County ('C&C') of Honolulu. The students were greeted by the new C&C Agriculture Liaison, Dr. Po-Yung Lai, and CTAHR's Associate Dean/Professor Charles Kinoshita.



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Stop and Smell the Roses

The April SSAG featured the grand re-opening of the Rose Garden at The UGC. Special activities included a blessing by Kahu Kanani Hanohano Okuda and an awards ceremony. The Honolulu Rose Society ('HRS') gave a special recognition award to Ikaika Kaahanui, Sr. Patrol Leader of Boy Scout Troop 147. His Troop contributed much time and effort in the

development of the most recent phase of the Rose Garden; especially the recently completed terraced rose beds.

HRS had sponsored a writing contest for students K-6. Students were asked to describe "What Peace Means to Me" and "What a Hero(s) Means to Me" in 30 words or less. The winners of the contest were recognized at

the special ceremony. Winners of the "Peace" part of the contest included students from Manana, Gustav H. Webling and Princess Victoria Kaiulani Elementary Schools. Their writings were a lovely pairing with the renovated Peace Rose Garden.

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Rain Gardens in Kailua!

Director Todd Cullison, Annie Lovell, and Kristen Nalani Mailheau of the nonprofit organization Hui o Ko'olaupoko ("HOK") recently helped M.G. Jean & Jon Benfer install a rain garden in their yard in Kailua. A rain garden is a deliberately built depression planted with vegetation that

allows storm water from impervious surfaces to collect, briefly settle, and then infiltrate into the ground. HOK's mission is "protecting ocean health by restoring the aina, mauka to makai." They participate in many public watershed management projects in addition to helping individual homeowners



construct rain gardens to reduce the amount of storm water runoff reaching streams and the ocean.

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Growing With the Bishop Museum

Oahu Master Gardeners shared the Native Fern Booth at the recent Grow Hawaii Festival at the Bishop Museum on April 5th. There were many interesting booths with Hawaiian native plants to purchase, live music and, of course, locally sourced food booths.

The keiki were encouraged to visit different educational

booths and get a stamp after completing a simple task such as identifying energy saving ideas. Although lots of kids stopped by our booth, we were not participating in this activity.

Next year we would like to also be part of this activity. An idea we had was to have people mix and match good garden insects versus bad garden insects and

learn how to protect our pollinators and predators. People came by and talked story about gardening and many packets of seeds were sold. We had a good balance of Interns and Master Gardeners answering questions.

It was a pleasant time for volunteers to chat and share information as well.

Save Those Special Seeds!

Desmond Ogata of the [Agricultural Diagnostic Service Center](#), [UH Seed Program](#), UH- Manoa gave a seed saving workshop at The UGC in April, 2014. A workshop on seed & plant sharing was held later on April SSAG.

Historically, the UH seed saving program started in the 1960's. The first success was a tomato that had been bred

for resistance to fungal diseases. UH seed packets are sold at Plant Doc booths and the Seed Lab sells & ships seeds to local & overseas customers.

The actual process of seed savings is a multi-step one. The pods/fruits must be allowed to mature fully in rain-free conditions. Allow your disease-free fruits to ferment and strain for the seeds. Desmond demonstrated with papaya

fruits. Seeds can be frozen, but recommended for long-term storage only.

Mahalo, Desmond, for this informative training!

For more on this topic see: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/UHMG/training.asp>

www.HawaiiSeedInitiative.org

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AgDay

Excitement was in the air through out the morning of their visit. The students, lead by volunteers (and their teachers), followed a route, which lead them to several presentations and through tents filled with informative exhibits. Exhibitors included agents and their specially trained beagles from U.S. Customs & Border Protection, Arborists and seed companies. Various UH/UH Extension exhibits provided interesting aspects of agriculture.

Students participated by taking the “Kama’aina Quiz”, identifying herbs and fruits, interacting with two UH piglets, conducting tests, viewing a bio-fuel demonstration and generally getting a close-up

view of science & research and what is involved with protecting our aina and waters.

Volunteers were buoyed by the enthusiasm of the students. Consider participating in AgDay 2015!

We hope that this visit has sparked an interest in agricultural awareness that will lead some of these students to a career in agriculture.

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Roses

Winners of the “Heroes” part of the contest included students from Momilani, Gustav H. Webling and Kaneohe Elementary Schools. Their writings were a fitting tribute to heroes everywhere and nicely complemented the new Heroes’ Rose Garden.

Roses planted in these two special gardens included roses named in honor of heroes, as well as the ubiquitous “Peace” rose.

The Rose Garden at The UGC is the culmination of the efforts of the HRS, Oahu Master Gardeners, The UGC Ohana, Pearlridge Rotary, Hawaii National Guard Youth Challenge Academy and Boy Scout Troops # 147 and 153 (Aiea). This garden is truly a fine example of growing together. Take a walk through the Rose Garden and enjoy the visual and fragrant delights.

Worm Workshop

In Feb. 2014, Mindy Jaffe of the Waikiki Worm Co. presented very informative vermicomposting training to many interested gardeners at The UGC.

Vermicomposting is one of the safe and natural technologies for biological waste management. The

UGC has renovated worm bins that provide for hands-on learning of this important tool to controlling waste.

Check them out and consider volunteering with the Worm Hui to learn more.



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Rain Gardens



Don't Bug Me!

UH's Dr. Ted Radovich & team have put together an informative and easy to use guide: "Predators and Parasitoids". The information on several such is on small-sized, laminated cards, which hang on a ring. There is a set in the M.G. Helpline Office and there are sets in the Community Outreach supplies, which the public can view at Plant Doc Booths. This is a great learning tool, so check it out.

The Benfers are now using the rainwater from their roof to water a beautiful 8' by 12' garden of native Hawaiian plants. Preparations included measuring the amount of roof space collecting rain water, determining the infiltration rate of the soil, and calling the utility company "before you dig" number. Once the Benfers gathered Menehune Magic compost, bagged mulch, plants, and tools; and with the help of fellow M.G. Pauline Jacroux, the project took one day. HOK continues to cooperate with private homeowners primarily on the Windward side of Oahu, but even if it is not practical to get HOK on site, the HOK website has a practical Rain Garden Manual that provides step-by-step installation and care instructions: <http://www.huihawaii.org/rain-gardens.html>

Initially, a homeowner usually waters their new rain garden to get the plants established, but since the Benfers planted their garden on 28 February, we have experienced plenty of rain and they didn't need to water it much at all. The garden has done very well and performed as advertised during recent heavy rains. It fills with water from the downspout each rain and that water seeps into the ground

there at the garden. There is an area for overflow, but the Benfers have not seen the water flow out of there yet.

Some of the plants in the garden include carex, kipukai, pauohiaka, and ohai. Most of the plants are doing well. A couple of the kipukai did not make it so they were replaced, but they are high on the berm of the garden so they may not be getting enough water. Some bugs are after the ohai so M.G. Jean will address that! So far, the garden has not required much weeding or work. The most difficult part of the installation was removing the grass sod, and Jean thinks keeping the lawn from encroaching into the garden will continue to be a challenge.

Jean would encourage homeowners to try putting in a rain garden on their property. It would be a nice project to involve children, and it is rewarding to think you might be helping the ocean a bit while enjoying a garden. Rain garden projects are also a fun way to bring neighbors together. A few neighbors helped dig the Benfer's garden, and they have since helped install a rain garden across the street.

New Residents in the Alika Rabbit Garden



Two bowl plantings representing the honu and shark 'aumakua took up residence in the Alika Rabbit Garden in March. These were created by the Xeriscape Hui, using HAWORTHIA sp. plants.

The pattern for the 'aumakua was drafted by Charles Ano, son of M.G. Catherine Ano, and the wooden forms were then made by M.G. Glenn Cordeiro.

They were given a warm greeting by the students visiting on AgDay. A gecko-planting bowl will soon join them.

As you stroll through this garden, look for these new residents as you come to the yellow bridge.

Thanks to all who submitted photos, articles & information. We appreciate all who contribute to sharing their volunteer activities with other volunteers at The UGC.

Barbara Alexander ba@ladybuglan.com & Catherine Ano kthy_sahli@yahoo.com

Newsletter Coordinators

We would like your help!

When you participate in an activity at The UGC or volunteer for one of the off-site events, please share your experiences and photos.

Some of these events are held annually and hearing about your experience will, hopefully, generate interest for future volunteers to participate.

With DETAILS from you, we can put together an article for the "News From The UGC" newsletter.

Please contact Barbara: ba@ladybuglan.com or call 744-8547. Or Catherine Ano @ 888-6307