A Warm Welcome on Maui for M.G. State-wide Conference
by Barbara Alexander, O'ahu Master Gardener

The Maui Master Gardeners hosted the 3rd Biennial UH Master Gardener Conference. What a warm welcome the Oahu Master Gardeners (“M.G.s”) received upon their arrival on Maui. Several Oahu Intern M.G.s, as well as Certified M.G.s attended the Conference; about 20 in total.

The Maui Conference planners did an excellent job of coordinating, which was especially appreciated by the off-island folks. There were shuttle rides from the hotel to the Friday night “Welcome & Registration” event. Otherwise, participants staying at the hotel could walk to meeting sites.

The Friday evening event had lots of food (!) and was a great way to bring folks together. Participants from the various island M.G. programs met and discussed their island programs. Part of the ‘entertainment’ was playing Bingo!...when is the last time we played that? Prizes included local products such as Haleakala Creamy Goat Milk Caramel. So the Maui M.G. planners also did a nice job of P.R. for their island’s entrepreneurs.

The highlight of the Conference for many O'ahu participants was the Saturday bus tour of Upcountry Maui. Many of the sites visited are normally not open to the public, so participants were given a ‘behind-the-scenes’ look at several Maui garden sites/operations.

Oahu M.G.s especially liked the following sites and made the following observations:
Maui Farms gave out a list of questions and broke up the large group into smaller units that M.G.s found helpful to learning about their operations. It was a nice blend of a self-guided/discovery and a directed tour. In addition to the garden aspect of the operations, the M.G.s learned some interesting facts about animals, too! The mission of this site is to provide a respite for mothers and their children. How better to refresh one’s battered soul than with gardening and animals?

Informative tour of Maui Farms where we learned about many of the farms projects.

Greenleaf Farms provided a good view to practical/sustainable gardening. Their information on what to do with your harvest was also appreciated by O‘ahu M.G.s.

The owner of Kula Bean Coffee went through the M.G. program. It was interesting to see how she applied her knowledge. Sharing the ‘fruits of their labor’ was a special treat.

O‘ahu M.G.s found the operations at the Maui Native Nursery very informative. The staff takes care to operate a “clean” site so as to not risk introducing something unwanted when their plants are used in conservation/restoration lands.

Comfrey is planted under fruit trees at Greenleaf Farms.

Kula Beans, Maui estate grown coffee

Maui Native Nursery: ‘ōhia growing in dibble tubes.
This is definitely something to keep in mind as we grow various plants.

Only two people maintain Kula Botanical Garden! The site is beautiful and quite inspirational. What could we accomplish with a site if we were to focus on our project(s)?

The hosts of these tour sites were so well prepared and participants were happy to receive the details of the operations. It seemed that each site had something special to offer. To the Maui M.G. planners and the site hosts, mahalo nui loa!

Participants noticed the planning touches and want their Maui hosts to know they were appreciated. The lunch stop site on tour day was especially beautiful and the pop-ups w blankets and chairs were positioned to take advantage of the lovely views. This stop also gave participants from the various islands another chance to meet and chat together.

Of course, there was a morning full of informative Advanced Training sessions. When folks thought beyond their impressions of the tour, several mentioned the “Honeybees” session. What was particularly interesting to participants was the actual viewing of a comb and its internal workings. In a honey tasting, the Kane’ohe honey was a favorite.

O’ahu M.G.s were happy to have made the trip to Maui. A most grateful group of travelers want the Maui M.G. hosts to know their hard work yielded such a beneficial result. Mahalo!

*Photos by Linda Inouye & Laura Mizumoto, O’ahu MGs*