



University of Hawai'i Master Gardener Program

West Hawai'i Master Gardeners

by Celeste Makrevis, West Hawai'i Master Gardener

West Hawaii Master Gardeners are continuing their support of efforts to control invasive species on the Island of Hawai'i.

A little fire ant (LFA,) coqui frog and invasive fountain grass outreach was organized by newly certified Master Gardeners Linda, June and Dave with Master Gardener Gary for their community in Ocean View. Many home gardener questions were answered and free literature was distributed. Of the nearly 100 home gardeners reached, most did not realize that plants and material should be tested for LFA nor how to properly test for them. The group displayed a vial of preserved ants, a sample of how to test for LFA and distributed test kits.



Also demonstrated was the use of a coqui frog lure. Information and assistance in coqui frog removal was identified to the community members.

A follow-up educational outreach is planned for September. Coqui frog infestation appears more dense in the lower part of the subdivision and in isolated pockets, so the group aims to eliminate their progression through education and action.

The importance of taking action regarding invasive plants was brought home to all of us on the Big Island in the wake of Tropical Storm Iselle. According to Springer Kaye, Manager of the Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC) and quoted in West Hawaii Today on 8/13/14, well over 90 percent of the trees that did damage in the storm were invasive albizia (*Falcataria moluccana*). Blocked roads, damaged crops and threatened homes were the result of many downed albizia trees, which are brittle and unstable in high winds. West Hawaii Master Gardeners continue their collaboration with BIISC in surveying West Hawaii nurseries for invasive plants, insects and coqui frogs.

Jen Lawson, Project Manager of the Waikoloa Dry Forest Initiative, showed West Hawaii Master Gardeners during our June education session another reason to support projects that are working to control invasive species. There were only about 100 Wiliwili trees (*Erythrina sandwicensis*) left in the 275 acres of dry forest when they started their preservation and restoration project near Waikoloa Village on Hawai'i Island in 2011. Ungulates were grazing off Wiliwili keikis and the critically endangered uhiuhi (*Mezoneuron kawaiensis*), so that the forest could no longer renew itself. The Initiative fenced in the 275 acres to exclude the ungulates and now with the rain this year, they are having tree seedlings appear and grow. They have also introduced the predator wasp to control the Erythrina gall wasp, which has

been responsible for the poor health and death of many Wiliwili. The Initiative, with the help of many volunteers, is restoring the area by planting 600 native plants/acre every year. West Hawaii Master Gardeners are once again planning an outreach in September at the annual Wiliwili Festival, which is hosted by the Waikoloa Dry Forest Initiative.