



# NEWS FROM

## THE URBAN GARDEN CENTER

VOL 19



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SSAG

## 25 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013, guests at The UGC were given a “Peek at the Past” slide show of the last 25 years of history at The UGC. Dale Sato shared the history of The UGC with all. The site we now know at The Urban Garden Center has had varied uses over the years. We’d like to share that history with those who were unable to attend this special event.

In the 1800-1900s, the site was used by farmers growing rice and taro, was the site of a Hawaiian church, had been a rubbish dump, saw use as a pumping station site and during WW II was used for ammunitions storage. In 1965 the UH College of Tropical Ag. acquired the site with the understanding with the military that it was to be used for educational purposes. In 1967 the “Pearl City Instructional Facility” began classes for the public. While the military Quonset huts remained on-site, other buildings were added in 1970-71.

Other uses of the site included community gardens as well as a State of HI D.O.E. program that allocated plots to several local high schools for their students to develop/plant. There was also a community program to ‘strike against hunger’.



Above Picture, Dale Sato & Ohana Pres. Roxane Fujiwara. Photo to the left, waiting for ono luncheon, provided by the Ohana.

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## BUSY BEES @ THE UGC

Scott Nikaido, UH Manoa PEPS technician for the Honeybee Project, is training Oahu M.G.s on beekeeping techniques. The training: “UH M.G. INTRO. TO BEEKEEPING PROGRAM, started 1 July 2013 and will run until Jan 2014. The training is conducted the last Friday and Saturday of every month, from 9-11. There are 12 M.G.s signed up to participate in this program.

The following subjects will be covered: 2 classes on Hive

Assessment, 2 classes on Hive Disease/Health part I & II, Honey Harvest & bee products, Review and at the last class an “on-hands” test.

The class participants eagerly suit-up and walk out to The UGC Orchard, where Scott and volunteers currently maintain the hives. This is definitely a ‘gloved-hands-on’ class. Participants are actually involved in each aspect of monitoring/maintaining beehives. Fortunately, as Scott mentioned to the class, the

UGC Orchard bees are more ‘docile’ than the Waimanalo bees, so it’s a pleasant, non-stinging experience.

Additionally, there will be a beekeeping workday for the students every second Friday of the month from 9-11. The goal of the program will be to hand over the maintenance of 3 bee colonies to the M.G.s. An added benefit of the class may be that some of our M.G.s set up their own beehives at home. Sweet!

## DID YOU HEAR ABOUT IT?

### 日本語

Now, non-English speaking Japanese visitors can get a guided or self-guided Docent tour of our Urban Garden.

An abbreviated version of the garden tour was recently translated into

Japanese so that our Japanese-speaking friends can experience and enjoy all the beauty our garden has to offer. Guided tours in Japanese can be arranged on a limited basis. Please contact M.G. Trainee Todd La Vine

through The UGC Office for details.

A big Mahalo to Ms. Minako Oka of Tokyo, Japan for supervisory translation assistance and to Todd La Vine for spearheading this project.

# MANGOES at MANOA



The 5th Annual Mangoes at the Manoa event was held on 13<sup>th</sup> July. It featured local crafters and vendors, mango food demonstrations (including one on preserving by M.G. Terri Langley), and mango seminars/workshops (including one on grafting by M.G. Wally Kaniaupio, using a scion from The UGC). Local celebrity chefs took part in a friendly cooking competition. Guests sampled their unique creations with mango as the main ingredient. The Cocktail Mix Down featured local mixologists in a friendly competition featuring Ketel One Vodka and mango.

UH M.G.s harvested approximately 25 lbs. of mangoes from The UGC orchard to include in the Best Mango and Tasting Contest. Varieties included Pope, Gouveia, Pirie, Excel, Haden, Manzanillo, and a few others. Also, UH

personnel from the Komohana Research and Extension Center in Hilo enjoyed viewing the mango collection at The UGC before the event.

The purpose of the event was to learn about the different varieties of mango. UH Master Gardeners, local farmers, growers and arborist share best practices in pruning techniques, production, the care and maintenance of mango trees and information on mango growing.

Several M.G.s were in attendance at the Plant Doc Booth. They answered many questions from the public as well as sampled prepared mango dishes/drinks. They also distributed handouts, M.G. Helpline cards, shared resources, sold seeds and sold grafting & fruit fly control DVDs.

The Booth was set up in the conference room with the

speakers; downside: answering questions interfered with the speakers but upside: the M.G.s got to hear the speakers when it was quiet at their booth. Some information gleaned: The last speaker from Hilo (an Ag. Agent) showed pictures of very low bearing mango trees, which were pruned very early to get that way. He also said that anthracnose can be mitigated by removing the left over panicles since they can contain the fungus.

Feedback from the volunteering M.G.s was positive and we hope to see you at next year's event.



**Cont'd from page 1**

In 1987, after UH-CTAHR declined to develop the site, Federal funds were obtained to develop an "Urban Garden Center". The mission was to: provide information for home gardeners and to have a site for germ plasma.

The development of the site was a daunting task. By this time there were @ 200 community garden plots, whose leases had to be terminated. The site also included an unbelievable amount of debris that had to be removed including: hazardous waste and @ 105 abandoned vehicles. This task was accomplished through the hard work of many volunteers and took almost two years to complete. In addition to individual volunteers, another partner over the years was George Kobashigawa, whose Ideal Construction Co. lent heavy equipment and materials to the development effort.

The clean up presented various challenges. An old U.S.A.F. buried fuel line that was eventually removed, along with the contaminated soil presented one such challenge. The site was also a flood plain and various solutions were found to improve the on-site drainage; not a small task.

Addressing these challenges, volunteers first planted the beginnings of what is now the Plumeria Grove. While 16 varieties of Bananas were

planted, these eventually succumbed to the Bunchy Top Virus.

For a time, The UGC included an Archery Range which when removed was replaced by a Hibiscus Grove. Changes continue, and that site is now home to the beautiful Rose Garden; maintained by the dedicated members of the Honolulu Rose Society and other volunteers.

By the 1980s, there was a fledgling group of @ a dozen Oahu Master Gardeners. Many field trials were conducted at The UGC. And the development of new garden areas continued:

~ UH's Steve Nagano developed the Hawaiian Ecosystem.

~ Mainland M.G. and volunteer, Shirley Mitsko, developed the Hedge Maze and designed the Sensory Garden. She was truly a pioneer in the development of The UGC.

~ The Herb Garden was first developed in 1989.

~ Palms were donated by The City & County Park & Rec. Dept. and planted in the Amphitheatre area.

~ The Rainbow Arch was constructed and installed in 2005.

~ In 2008 the gazebo was built. This structure serves as an ideal outdoor classroom and meeting place.

~ UH's Jayme Grzebik obtained grant funds to develop the All-American Garden.

For those of you who explore The UGC, you are familiar with the many other gardens developed ie; Alphabet Garden, The Boardwalk, et al.

Several of these development projects were made possible with funding by The Ohana and funding obtained by UH's Ray Uchida.

The guiding force through the years through 2005, when he retired from UH, and in subsequent years, acting as a volunteer, has been Dale Sato. We are indebted to his dedicated service to The UGC and the realization of The UGC development by the many volunteers and UH staff through these past 25 years. The Ohana presented a hand-carved wooden box (carved by M.G. Glenn Codeiro) to Dale Sato in appreciation for his many years of guidance and service.

Many of these dedicated volunteers attended the anniversary event. All guests were treated to an ono luncheon hosted by the Ohana. And everyone also enjoyed the pupu and desserts brought to the event by the guests.

Mahalo nui loa to all those whose efforts have given us The UGC we know today!

## By Alton S. Arakaki, Extension Agent

Have you ever heard of peaches grown on Molokai? Until recently, such a thing didn't exist. But research trial at the Molokai Applied Research and Demonstration Farm has shown that harvesting sweet, juicy, locally grown peaches is possible.

Problems of high chill hour requirements of peach varieties and our warm temperature are major stumbling blocks for peach production in Hawaii, according to a report by the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resource (CTAHR) in 1973. However, in the 1980s, researchers in Florida and Texas began breeding quality peach varieties that required low numbers -- about 200 hours -- of chill to break leaf and flower dormancy.

One of the varieties used extensively in developing low-chill peaches in the U.S. is a white flesh peach variety called "Hawaiian," a variety brought to Hawaii from California in 1913 and grown in backyards of Hawaii homes. It is the variety many local families use to make pickled peach. Peach variety "Hawaiian" is described in USDA publication on peach varieties as low yielding, unattractive and poor quality.



But it had the low-chill genes that researchers were looking for. Today, there are low-chill peach varieties that require less than 100 chill hours.

In 2009 and 2010, we were able to screen and select low chill peach varieties to evaluate on Molokai and other parts in Hawaii, with help from Dr. Dave Byrne, Peach Breeder at Texas A&M and Mr. Tim Gerdts of Burchell Nursery in Fowler, CA. With the help of other Extension Agents in the state, the peach varieties Tropic Sweet, Tropic Beauty, Tropic Snow and Tropic Prince will be evaluated at 50 locations with different temperature zones and climatic conditions. One of those sites on Oahu is The UGC orchard.

Soon, we will be able to learn more about the fruiting range of these low-chill peach varieties. Extension team members in the low chill peach evaluation are Russell Nagata-Hawaii, Robin Shimabuku-Maui, Alton Arakaki-Moloka'i and Lana'i, Jari Sugano and Jensen Uyeda-Oahu and Richard Ebesu-Kauai. Dr. Robert Paull will be evaluating

fruit quality.

In May of this year, we began learning that some of the varieties potentially will fruit at zero chill hours. The peach varieties planted in 2010 at the Molokai Applied Research and Demonstration Farm dropped their leaves in early December, blossomed in January and February, and produce mature tree-ripened fruits in May. However, unlike some of our tropical fruits like mango that has prolonged fruiting season, fruiting season for the peaches ended as quickly as they came in June. Whether this year was a peach anomaly or a low-chill genetic achievement and signature that we can expect every year, we will definitely learn more about their growing habits, pests they host, nutritional and irrigation requirements and degrees of fruit productivity in years to come.

I'm happy to report that I was able to harvest tree-ripened peaches that were juicy, sweet and with full body of peach flavors on Molokai without being exposed to temps below 58 degrees F. Watch for tasty peaches on Oahu in the future.

## INQUISITIVE GARDENERS AT ANNUAL FARM FAIR



M.G.s Mary Takeshita, Robert Seronio and Joyce Lee staffed the Master Gardener Plant Doc. Booth at the Hawaii Farm Bureau Fair held at Kualoa Ranch on 14<sup>th</sup> July. They were quite busy answering many gardening questions as well as selling many UH seeds.

The Fair was well attended and the public was presented with many informative displays. Fair-goers enjoyed the 4-H livestock. The M.G.s enjoyed themselves. Consider volunteering at this event next year!

## A TINY STINGING ANT IS A PROBLEM IN HAWAII

Little fire ants ('LFA'), *Wasmannia auropunctata*, were first noticed in Hawaii in 1999. These are tiny, stinging ants that are now spreading in the state. The ant has been spread unknowingly from infected plant nurseries and infestations have been found on Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i and Maui. Humans, as well as pets, livestock and wild animals are at risk for LFA stings. While eradication is being attempted in the state, it is important for all of us to be vigilant.

Aaron Works, Invasive Species Biologist, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee, conducted surveys in 2012 and 2013 at The UGC, looking for the LFA. The May 2012 Survey was focused on the Orchard and the Boardwalk Garden areas. The good news is that no LFA were found. Interestingly, of the total of 160 baited vials that Aaron placed In The UGC, 135 came back with approximately 14 different species of ants. He used peanut butter as bait, so the 14 species of ants likely did not include ants attracted to sweet baits (i.e.; honey) or protein baits (i.e.; spam). The ants that were found are "widespread, commonly found and are not considered high-priority invasive species for eradication on O'ahu.

In June 2013, Aaron placed vials in the Main Nursery, Upper Nursery, Herb Garden and the Vegetable Garden. Of 55 vials set out, 25 came back with ants inside. Again, fortunately, none were the LFA. There were 7 different species of ants identified. All of these were "ordinary" ants, which are not cause for concern.

Mahalo Aaron for conducting these surveys. For those wanting to learn more of the LFA, please see: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/IP-LFA.pdf>

To learn more about general ant ID, check out: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/>



## CHILDREN THE FOCUS OF AUGUST SSAG

By Carolyn Naun

This August, Carolyn Naun, 2013 M.G. Trainee, attended her first Second Saturday event. The theme was: "Children's Gardening Series: The Life of Plants" (Learn about how plants grow and how to think like a plant!). Carolyn shares her day with us:

Despite the prediction for rain and a resulting light turnout, it was a pleasantly comfortable day in the garden, and a small mob was gathered around the Plant Doctor Booth. I had my own young children along, so I volunteered to help watch the keiki as their parents attended a workshop and Master Gardener Pauline

Jacroux read stories to the children in the gazebo. The best part of this experience for me was watching the kids interact with the extensive Children's Garden. As a Trainee and a school garden coordinator, I have walked through this part of The UGC many times, but this was the first time I had seen it used by the intended audience. It was truly a magical playground for the keiki, and my own son, who is getting old enough to be jaded by many children's activities, kept thanking me for bringing him and asked if we would return sometime.

In general, it was very rewarding to see families

strolling around, reading signs and asking questions. It really brought home the fact that The UGC and the Master Gardener program are providing a valuable service to gardeners on Oahu.



**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](mailto:ba@ladybuglan.com)

**Catherine Ano** [kthy\\_sahli@yahoo.com](mailto:kthy_sahli@yahoo.com)

**NOTE: PLEASE SEND ARTICLES/PHOTOS/INFORMATION FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO THE ABOVE INDIVIDUALS BY OCT. 18<sup>th</sup>.**