

Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest Hosts Volunteers

Volunteer Coordinator Linda Duling has continued to host volunteers and youth groups at the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest. So far this year, 100 volunteers have helped with site weeding, outplanting, and harvesting sweet potato, sugar cane, taro, and banana for animals at the zoo.

The Hawai'i Forest Institute (HFI) recently produced a [Docent Workbook Interpretive Guide](#) and [Forest Friends Coloring Book](#) featuring native animals and their habitat, funded by a City & County of Honolulu Grant-in-Aid. The interpretive guide and coloring book were created by Paul Arinaga, Linda Duling, HFI President Travis Idol and artist Diana Tusher. The coloring book offers art activities and fun facts about various animals, including the Pueo (Hawaiian Short Eared Owl), 'Ōpe'ape'a (Hawaiian Hoary Bat), Pulelehua (Kamehameha Butterfly), Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose), and many more.

Another new addition to the project is [Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest New Plant ID Pages](#).



▲ Volunteers weeding at the Discovery Forest. 10/23/2021.

HFI Awarded Steve and Gloria Gainsley Fund of the HCF Grant For "Go Native: Growing a Native Hawaiian Urban Forest"

The Hawai'i Forest Institute (HFI) has been awarded a \$5,000 grant for its *Go Native: Growing a Native Hawaiian Urban Forest* project, which encourages Hawaii's residents and businesses to grow native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced ("canoe") plants. *Go Native*, also seeks to increase public awareness of the value and benefits of planting trees. The grant is funded by the Steve and Gloria Gainsley Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation.

The project was launched in 2020 with a grant of \$8,979 from the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program of the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife; and State and Private Forestry, branch of the USDA Forest Service, Region 5. HFI was also awarded a \$10,000 Atherton Family Foundation grant for the project in August.

The *Go Native* project will promote the growing of Native Hawaiian and "canoe" plants by creating a series of videos and a quick reference guide. The videos will target a non-technical audience and will walk the viewer through the stages of creating or converting their landscape to native and/or Polynesian-introduced plants. The guide will teach readers to identify the native plants that are most suitable to their climate zone.

"Our long-term goal is to create a series of *kīpuka* or micro-forests within the urban and suburban core," says HFI's President, Dr. Travis Idol. "Once we convince enough homeowners, renters, businesses and landscape architects to use more native Hawaiian and canoe plants in their landscaping, these Hawaiian gardens can collectively become a human-made surrogate for the natural forests that once existed in abundance, particularly in dryland and mesic areas." Dr. Idol is Professor of Tropical Forestry and Agroforestry at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management.

The grant funding is supporting ongoing work including the quick reference guide, tentatively called the *#GoNativeHawaii Growing Guide*. The guide will allow users to look up their growing zone to find recommended combinations of plants that they can grow in their zone and are more likely to flourish. It will also recommend plants based on other considerations such as the type of space and landscape function, and it will provide sample garden plans.



▲ Indigenous Pōhinahina (*Vitex rotundifolia*) grows well in full sun. Its bell-shaped flowers are used for lei.

“We think of it as providing ‘cookie cutter recipes’ yet enabling people to substitute some ingredients (plants) in case they want more or less of a particular ‘taste,’” says Paul Arinaga, Go Native Project Manager.

To augment the guide and to show people what can be done, HFI has started a sub-project to document sites around the state where people are growing native Hawaiian plants, sometimes in combination with canoe plants. In addition, HFI has plans to launch a contest so homeowners can show off their native Hawaiian landscaping and inspire others.

The Native Hawaiian Urban Forest Network will offer innumerable benefits to Hawaii’s people and to the ‘āina such as providing a refuge for native animals; wildlife corridors for native invertebrates, birds and bats; preserving genetic variation within plant and animal species; and enhancing cultural and spiritual links with the past. Creating the Native Hawaiian Urban Forest Network could also help to increase the representation and resiliency of existing natural forests. In addition, native trees have an important role to play in a world impacted by climate change.

“Contrary to common perception, there are native Hawaiian plants – particularly coastal and dryland plants – that can survive in harsh and urban conditions,” says Dr. Idol.

Restoring native Hawaiian plants also has economic implications. Numerous experts interviewed by HFI have noted that the version of tropical or sub-tropical landscaping presented to tourists is often a generic one. A tourist can travel all over the world and see the same homogenized version of “tropical paradise” that uses non-native plants. At a time when Hawai‘i is searching for a unique model of tourism – and visitors are looking for authentic experiences – native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced plants have an important role to play.

We have found that Hawai‘i residents and visitors are interested in learning about plants that can be found nowhere else in the world. Our native flora and fauna help to make Hawai‘i a truly unique place.

Links:

[“Go Native Hawai‘i: Restoring Nature from Mauka to Makai” article.](#)

[Go Native Leaflet](#)

[Let's Create An Urban Forest Network Of Native Plants - Honolulu Civil Beat](#)

[Paul Arinaga and Travis Idol were interview on HPR, Go Native HPR Interview](#)

[Go Native webpage](#)



▲ Project Manager Paul Arinaga (right) and volunteer Tom Foye (left) present a “Go Native” display at Hawai‘i Agriculture Research Center (HARC) 2021 Arbor Day event.