

Internodes

Maui Invasive Species Committee Hires 'SWAT TEAM'

The Hawaiian Islands are home of some of the world's most unique biological diversity, yet the 50th state also has the highest number of endangered species for the United States. Among the many threats to these endemic plants and animals (found nowhere else on earth!), are invasive species brought from all corners of the globe. An under-funded State Department of Agriculture has its hands full trying to limit new serious introductions and looks forward to developing technologies that will aid them in this huge task. But in the meantime, how does Hawaii prevent incipient invaders from establishing beyond control?

Help is on the way! While tackling harmful alien species on all of the islands may be overwhelming, the islands of Maui County have organized to set a precedent for others to follow. Over the

years, good relations among various conservation agencies has led to effective partnerships that identify common goals for the overall protection of Maui's natural areas. More recently, these partnerships have culminated in the formation of the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC).

MISC has interested parties from not only conservation and local government, but the private and business sector as well. The committee expanded its focus of simply preventing invasives' impact on conservation areas, to include threats to economy, health, and quality of life. Hard work from dedicated individuals resulted in funding from a large pool of stakeholders, and this formed the operating budget to execute this year's MISC Action Plan.

This Action Plan prioritizes the worst plant and animal pests that are currently at the beginning stages of becoming established in Maui County. Research has shown these target species to have severe impact in ecosys-

tems similar to Maui's; it's anticipated (through a system of scientific criteria) that they will wreak havoc if they're allowed to become established in Maui County. While eradication is a noble goal for many of these alien threats, the value of immediate containment is also recognized.

The newly hired MISC field crew will perform the real 'on the ground' work to halt the establishment of targeted species. Their duties include surveying, mapping, control, data tracking, landowner interaction, and public outreach and education. After recently taking this crew out on 'scout and control' missions for *Miconia* (Hawaii's worst incipient weed), I am happy to report that the able-bodied 'SWAT Team' will prove their determination to rid Maui of these unwanted pests. -Pat Bily, The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii, pbily@tnc.org.

The "Witch Doctor" is out to pasture

Dr. Robert E. (Bob) Eplee, dubbed the "Witch Doctor" for his many years of service to the witchweed eradication program retired from the USDA on December 31, 1999. Bob is a native of McDowell County, NC. He received a B.S. (and he's good at it) from Berea College in Kentucky, a M.S. from the University of Kentucky and Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. He was an Extension Agent in Kentucky from 1957-1962, a lead scientist and Director of the Witchweed/Whiteville Methods Development Center, USDA, ARS from 1965-1995, and has been with USDA, APHIS/PPQ since 1999.

Many of us know Bob for his long-time involvement in weed science. He served as primary liaison with the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) toward passage of the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974. In the 1970s he worked with the University of Florida and the Imperial Valley in California to develop hydrilla control methods (hiring the young rising star, Randall Stocker to develop triploid white amur in CA). In the 1980s he worked with state agencies and universities to eradicate several Federal Noxious Weeds, including crupina, goatsrue, wormleaf salsoa, broomrape,

Brewer Ad
New Ad

and itchgrass. He was named Weed Science Fellow by the WSSA in 1993. Most recently, many of us have worked with Bob or are familiar with his efforts on tropical soda apple, wetland nightshade, and redrice eradication, participation on the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds, and contributions to the OTA Report on Harmful Non-indigenous Species and the Executive Order on Invasive Species.

For Bob Eplee's ambition and accomplishments in solving invasive/noxious weed problems we owe a debt of gratitude. And although he is officially retired I don't think we've heard the last of him, as he slipped while I was talking to him on the telephone that he was "fixing up an office in the back of the lab." Keep in touch, Bob.

- Ken Langeland.

IFAS Circular 1204, "Help Protect Florida's Natural Areas From Non-Native Invasive Plants" has been updated to reflect species that were added to the DACS Noxious Weed List in 1999. Multiple copies are available free to EPPC members from the IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. If you would like to obtain copies to hand out at meetings where they can be used for public education please contact us at 352/392-9613/1799 or kpb@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu.

Mark Your Calendar

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs Blossoms and Butterflies Conference. Winter Park, FL. **March 14-16**. Contact Caron Beatty 904/241-1563.

Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council Annual Meeting. North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill. **March 16-18**. Contact: John Randall jrandall@email.unc.edu.

Association of Southeastern Biologists Annual Meeting. University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. **April 5-8**. Contact Patricia Dreyer 423/576-8123 or see <http://am.appstate.edu/top/dept/biology/asb/>.

BES/ESA 2000: A Joint Meeting of the British Ecological Society and the Ecological Society of America. Orlando, FL. **April 9-13**. Contact ESA 202/833-8773, esahq@esa.org or see <http://esa.sdsc.edu>.

Sixth International Conference on Remote Sensing for Marine and Coastal Environments. Charleston, South Carolina. **May 1-3**. (A pre-conference workshop will address the uses of GPS and geographic information systems technologies for natural resource management.) Contact: Nancy Wallman, PO Box 134008, Ann Arbor,

Michigan 48113-4008, (734) 994-1200, wallman@erim-int.com, www.erim-int.com/CONF/marine/MARINE.html.

Florida Native Plant Society Annual meeting, Miami Florida. **May 4-7**. Contact: Keith Bradley 305/644-0452, conference@fnps.org.

Ecosystems Restoration and Creation (formerly Annual Conference on Wetlands Creation). Hillsborough Community College, Tampa, FL. **May 11-12**. Contact: Frederick J Webb 813/757-2148, webb@mail.hcc.cc.fl.us.

Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 15th Annual Symposium. Westin Beach Resort, Key Largo, FL. **May 16-18**. Contact: Ken Langeland 352/392-9614, kal@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu.

Third International Weed Science Congress. Foz do Iguassu, Parana, Brazil. **June 6-11**. Contact: P. J. Eventos 55/41/372-1177, pj@datasoft.com.br, <http://www.sercomtel.com.br/ice/plantas>

International Meeting for the Society of Conservation Biology. University of Montana, Missoula. **June 9-12**. Contact Fred Allendorf 406/243-4184, darwin@selway.umt.edu, <http://conbio.rice.edu/scb/announcements/2000meeting.shtml>.

40th Annual and International Meeting, Aquatic Plant Management Society. Handery Hotel and Resort, San Diego CA. **July 16-20**. Contact Jim Schmidt 800/558-5106, jimschmidt@appliedbiochemists.com.

85th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America. Snowbird Utah. **August 6-10**. Contact ESA 202/833-8773, esahq@esa.org or see <http://esa.sdsc.edu>.

International Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration. Liverpool England. **September 4-9**. Contact: SER 608/265-8557, ser@macc.wisc.edu, <http://www.ser.org>.

Join the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council!

Annual Membership Dues Include:
Quarterly magazine, *Wildland Weeds* • Quarterly newsletter
Legislative updates regarding exotic plant control issues.

Membership:

INDIVIDUAL

Student - \$10

General - \$20

Contributing - \$50

Donor - \$51-500

INSTITUTIONAL

General - \$100

Contributing - \$500

Donor - \$501-\$10,000

Patron - \$10,000 or more

Wildland Weeds subscription - \$15/year (does not include other membership benefits)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

Membership type: _____

Mail to: **Dan Thayer, 3301 Gun Club Rd., West Palm Bch., FL 33406**