



Mālama Mānoa

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 33, No. 2 / Fall / Winter 2025

The Magoon Wormery: Mānoa's Composting Powerhouse

By Brenda Lam



UH Garden Club students pooled their food waste to start and maintain a worm colony, with excellent results. The original 4 ounces of worms expanded to over three pounds, and 9 gallons of vermicast was harvested to nourish garden plots!

Nestled behind Mānoa Marketplace, just across from the Mānoa Public Library, the Magoon Wormery hums with life, and not just from the hundreds of pounds of red worms at work. As the largest vermicomposting facility in Hawai'i, it's transforming how our community sees and handles food waste.

The Wormery is a project of the Hui Ko'e 'Āina, Earthworm Group under UH's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR). In its very first year, it processed over 18 tons of food scraps, turning what would have been waste into rich, nutrient-dense vermicast, known to gardeners as "Gardeners' Gold." Nearly all the feedstock comes from Noelani Elementary School, whose students' uneaten fruits, vegetables, and baked goods provide the perfect diet for the Wormery's thriving worm population. All other food waste goes into hot compost piles. The facility features green-waste pods, hot compost piles, and worm bins housing up to 500 pounds of red wiggler compost worms.

Operations Manager Mindy Jaffe brings 20 years of composting experience to the project, guided by wisdom passed down from Mānoa artist and gardener Evelyn Giddings: "Inside the word

EARTH is the word ART." Evelyn taught that tending soil and compost requires the same care and creativity as making art, an approach that now defines the Wormery's work.

For residents, the Wormery offers monthly Learn to Worm Workshops every 4th Saturday. Participants get instruction, materials, and the knowledge to start composting at home with a working worm bin, reducing waste, improving soil health, and reconnecting with the natural cycles of the 'āina.

To explore programs, buy vermicast, or sign up for a workshop, visit wormohana.org. In Mānoa, composting isn't just about waste, it's about community, resilience, and the art of working with the earth.



MĀNOA OUTDOOR CIRCLE &
MĀLAMA MĀNOA PRESENT



The 21st
Anniversary

**1000 PLANT
GIVEAWAY**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH 2025

8:00AM - 12:00PM

Rain or Shine!

2234 KAMEHAMEHA AVE

College Hill, Mānoa 96822

1000+ FREE plants and trees

30+ varieties

Large plants and merchandise for sale

MISSION STATEMENT

*Our Mission is to promote community; celebrate our cultural diversity and heritage;
and preserve, protect and enhance the special qualities of historic Mānoa Valley.*

President's Corner, Fall 2025

By Thom Benedict

Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in Mānoa just know: we are lucky to live here. Not only is Mānoa beautiful and lush, it has a strong and special sense of community.

That sense of community is reflected in how we care for our homes and yards, raise our families here and pass on homes to the next generations, smile at and talk with our neighbors, dedicate our time to local organizations, and battle to preserve what is special about our neighborhood. When you care about where you live, you take pride in it and stand up for it when needed.



For decades, Mālama Mānoa has been dedicated to celebrating and preserving Mānoa. Mālama Mānoa's mission statement is to promote community; celebrate our cultural diversity and heritage; and preserve, protect, and enhance the special qualities of historic Mānoa Valley.

This fall Mālama Mānoa will be part of several events that do just that. On November 9th, we'll hold our **1000 Plant Giveaway** with The Mānoa Outdoor Circle for the twenty-first time, continuing a tradition rooted in sustainability and community generosity. In December, Mālama Mānoa will participate in Mānoa's annual **Christmas Parade**.

But what I'm most excited about is the **Mānoa Fall Fest**, which will bring us together to celebrate our community and have fun. Mālama Mānoa will partner with Alexander & Baldwin for a day of activities on Saturday, October 25th. This is the first year of a community event that I personally hope will grow and become a signature community event for Mānoa. During the day, families can enjoy activities at Mānoa Marketplace and visit our booth for

fun activities for kids from 11:00 AM - 1:00PM. And in the evening, Mālama Mānoa will sponsor a **panel discussion** titled "*Striking a Balance: A Sense of Place vs Affordable Housing*." Hosted in Noelani Elementary School's cafeteria from 6-7:30 PM, the panel discussion will touch on the competing interests of creating more affordable housing while preserving our special sense of community.

I hope to see you all at these great events. Show up for this valley that we love. Share your aloha for your neighbors and pride in Mānoa. Have fun and be grateful for the fact that you live in one of the best and most beautiful neighborhoods in the world.

With aloha,

Thom Benedict

President, Mālama Mānoa

Aloha!

Due to rising costs, we're no longer including donation envelopes in our mailed newsletter.



Please consider donating Online at malamamanoa.org/donate, or if you prefer to send a check simply fill out the form on that page. Mahalo for your generous support!

Please visit our Mālama Mānoa page at
malamamanoa.org



facebook.com/malamamanoa



Our newsletter is published two times per year.

Newsletter Committee –

Thalya DeMott, Linda Legrande, Hieu Nguyen,
Veneeta Acson

Database & Internet Technology Manager –
Tyler Dang

Newsletter Design –
Charles Taketa Graphic Design, Inc.

Mālama Mānoa
2025 All Rights Reserved
P.O. Box 283046 • Honolulu, HI 96828
www.malamamanoa.org



Educational guide Kanoa shares historic photographs with Walkabout participants.

A Walkabout at Mānoa Heritage Center

Community members explore history, nature, and stewardship together By Tyler Dang

On Sunday, April 28, Mālama Mānoa, in partnership with the Mānoa Heritage Center, hosted two morning Walkabout sessions that blended community connection, historic learning, and nature appreciation.

Attendees explored the beautiful grounds of the Mānoa Heritage Center, once the home of Sam and Mary Cooke. Mary, a co-founder of Mālama Mānoa, was instrumental in shaping our organization's early vision. Participants were guided through the gardens, where they learned about the cultural significance of native plants, the layered history of the valley, and the magnificently preserved Kūka'ō'ō Heiau. Historic photographs on display further connected past and present, sparking conversations about preservation and stewardship.

Kanoa Nakamura, an educational guide with the Mānoa Heritage Center, led the tours and encouraged thoughtful questions about how community members can integrate native plants into their own properties.

For Iven Sugai, a Hawai'i-born resident who recently moved back to Mānoa with his family, the event provided both inspiration and a sense of belonging. "One of the biggest takeaways for me was realizing how much history is still alive in Mānoa if you know where to look," he shared. "The walkabout really connected the landscape, the stories, and the plants in a way that made me appreciate our valley even more."

Iven explained that the insights from Kanoa's tour had a direct impact at home. "They even inspired my son's Eagle Scout project, which we're starting this weekend. The project involves leading Scouts in planting seedlings of two species of native trees that will eventually be transferred across the island — a small way we can help carry forward what we learned."

Mālama Mānoa is grateful to the Mānoa Heritage Center, our dedicated volunteers, and neighbors like Iven who remind us how living history continues to inspire stewardship in our valley.

A Kama'āina Professional for your next Real Estate move.



Sharon Au, Partner, VP (R)
(808) 554-8787 | au@popaloha.com

Real Estate Professional Since 1985
1031 Exchange support
(License RB-14292)

Properties of the Pacific Team
LUXURY HOMES
INTERNATIONAL



**VINTAGE
HOME
AND
GREEN
SPECIALIST**

Love
Referrals

Hawai'i Exceptional Tree Program Marks its 50th Year

By Editing Staff

Fifty years ago, the Hawai'i State Legislature recognized that rapid development had led to the destruction of many of the state's exceptional trees. In 1975, with the active encouragement and educational efforts by community groups including The Outdoor Circle and the Mokihana Club of Kaua'i, The Exceptional Tree Act was passed. The act recognizes that trees are not only valuable for their beauty and perform crucial ecological functions but also that exceptional trees are worthy of preservation.

This law protects designated trees, both public and private, from improper trimming and unnecessary removal. The law also encourages private owners to properly maintain such exceptional trees by offering a tax credit of up to \$3,000 per tree, once in a three-year period, to offset the costs associated with maintaining them. Each county has its own program, set of rules, and operating guidelines. To be considered for exceptional tree status on O'ahu, the tree or grove of trees must meet one or more of the following criteria: historic or cultural value, age, rarity, location, size, aesthetic quality, or endemic status. There is an application, review, and approval process. Trees thus designated also require a permit prior to trimming or other work being done. There are hundreds of designated Exceptional Trees throughout Hawai'i. Not surprisingly, many are in Mānoa, not only at the Harold L. Lyon Arboretum and the University of Hawai'i, but on private property throughout the valley.



Kukui Nut Tree, courtesy B.Inouye

The Outdoor Circle currently has an Exceptional Tree Initiative to identify such trees, develop a database of currently recognized and nominated Exceptional Trees, and add more trees to the registry. This initiative is currently led by Data Collection Director, Myles Ritchie.

To access the text of the City and County of Honolulu Exceptional Tree Ordinance (Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Chapter 41, Article 13- Protective Regulations for Exceptional Trees), including the Register of Exceptional Trees on O'ahu, go to [Exceptional Tree Program](#) | [Department of Parks and Recreation](#) or The Outdoor Circle's website at [Exceptional Trees - THE OUTDOOR CIRCLE](#).



MĀNOA LAUNDRY
NOW UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

LAUNDROMAT OPEN 24/7
LOCATED IN MĀNOA MARKETPLACE

Celebrating Hawaii's Artists with you since 1990
Now at Kahala Mall, Panda Wing
Mahalo nui for sharing the beauty for 35 years & going!



Nohea
GALLERY

On Instagram @noheagallery
or find events and sales
at Noheagallery.com
808-762-7407

The Carnivorous Web Master

Excerpt from an interview with entomology professor Dan Rubinoff, UH Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR)

By Thalya DeMott & Janyce Mitchell

One of the most restricted species in Hawai'i and specific to O'ahu, the endemic bone collector caterpillar of the moth genus *Hyposmocoma* is found in only 15 square km in the Wai'anae range, where it was first identified. *Hyposmocoma* has hundreds of species, and many were little known until recently when the advanced molecular research tools were developed.

Mānoa resident and UH entomologist Daniel Rubinoff and some of his graduate students were surveying native forest in the Wai'anae mountains in 2008 when they first observed and began to study these quirky bone collectors. With only 60 live specimens documented, the population may be in decline. The bone collector caterpillar lineage arose about 6-8 million years ago in the Northwest Hawaiian islands when they were larger and more hospitable, and there may have been another species of bone collector on Kaua'i but the group might be extinct there.

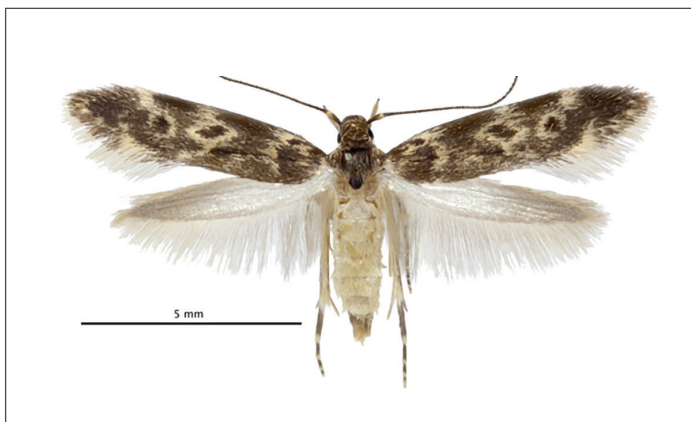
During the larval stage before morphing into a small moth, bone collector caterpillars are exclusively found living in spider webs, where they decorate their cases with woven-on insect body parts and other castoffs discarded from spiders and their meals. The bone collector's unique camouflaging disguises it, preventing detection as spider fodder, effectively deceiving the spider host as the clever larva navigates the web threads in incognito mode while eating spider leftovers. The ruthless larvae are cannibalistic and will chomp down on any competition from their own kind which may attempt to access the web. Any way you wrap it, this caterpillar rules its domain.

This magnetic attractor of morbid discards has wormed its way into fame among the featured creatures at the University of Hawai'i Insect Museum, where staff may volunteer to conduct limited school class tours by reservation. Contact

The [University of Hawai'i Insect Museum](#) for more information, and add the museum's Darwin Day event to your calendar, held on Darwin's Birthday, February 12th, 2026.



Examples of various bone collector caterpillars.



Moth stage of the bone collector caterpillar.

Real Estate is local.

You need a local expert.

Specializing in historic homes.
Please reach out for personalized insight.



JOVANNA
GIANNASIO-FERN

RS-83081 REALTOR
M: 808-469-2289
JovannaHawaii.com

COMPASS



The Educational Endowment Grant Program Project Report

By Pi'ikea Miller

Each year Mālama Mānoa provides funding for non-profits, schools, and community groups through its Educational Endowment Grant Program. The program supports the mission of Mālama Mānoa, which is to promote community; celebrate our cultural diversity and heritage; and preserve, protect, and enhance the special qualities of historic Mānoa Valley.

In 2024 Mālama Mānoa funded four projects: (1) tools and equipment needed to open new kalo lo'i (taro patches) and maintain seven existing lo'i by the students of Hālau Kū

Māna Charter School, (2) supplies needed to teach and perform hula about Mānoa in elementary schools and senior care homes in Mānoa by Hālau Hula o Mānoa, (3) tools and equipment for forest restoration in the Mānoa watershed by the Living Life Source Foundation, and (4) the installation of an aquaponic system at the Harold K.L. Lyon Arboretum's Children's Garden to support hands-on learning about the nutrient cycle between plants and animals.

If your organization or group is interested in more information about the program and application process, please visit our website: www.malamamanoa.org/endowment-program.



Lyon Arboretum's new aquaponic system will be used in its education programs that serve 3,000 students annually. The system showcases how to grow vegetables and fish in a compact space using less water than conventional methods."

In Memory of Ramona Noelani Akiona Teves, 1928-2025

A Cherished Mānoa Kupuna By Editing Staff

Ramona Noelani Akiona was born at home in Mānoa in 1928 and attended Mānoa Elementary School at its original location of East Mānoa Road and Huapala Street. Her family home of many years on

East Mānoa Road was hand-built by her father.

After continuing her early education at Washington Intermediate and graduating from McKinley High in 1946, she married Antone Teves. In high school she worked at the theaters in Waikīkī and, in the mid-1940s, began dancing at the Kodak Hula Show as well as participating as a pā'ū rider in the

Kamehameha Day and Aloha Week parades. Joining in with her talented 'ohana made her childhood rich with Hawaiian music and culture, which she shared with her children and further generations as a loving matriarch.

In 1963 Ramona began her 50 years with the Leo Nahenahe Singers. She loved her job in the credit department of Sears Roebuck until her retirement after 28 years in 1992, after which she devoted more time to volunteering at St. Pius X Church on Lowrey Ave. In 2019, at the age of 91, Ramona provided her oral history for publication on the Mālama Mānoa website. We invite you to learn more about her life, in her words at: www.malamamanoa.org/oral-histories.



Ramona Noelani Akiona Teves, 1928-2025

WAYS TO GIVE

Please complete this form and return with your gift or membership update
You may also donate directly online via by visiting www.malamamanoa.org/donate

☐ I've enclosed a check payable to Mālama Mānoa

Please charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

Amount: \$ _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date (MM/YY): _____ CVV: _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address: _____

Optional Updates

☐ I'd like to receive the Mālama Mānoa newsletter by email instead of mail

☐ My address has changed (new address below)

☐ The recipient is no longer at this address or is deceased (please update your records)

Email address: _____

New mailing address (if applicable): _____



Welcoming the World to Hawai'i: The Friends of the East-West Center 'Ohana Program

By Maura Okamoto

The purpose of the Friends of the East-West Center (FEWC) 'Ohana program is to help the students of the East-West Center (EWC) to get to know Hawai'i and our people. They are primarily graduate students and are very friendly, intelligent, and resourceful. They are representative of the "best and brightest" of their countries and communities.

We are looking for families and individuals who are eager to demonstrate the Aloha spirit and to show the best side of America to these remarkable women and men. A host family is not responsible for housing or feeding the students.

The frequency of contact and the type of activities is entirely up to the student and the host family to arrange.

Hiking, going to the beach, a picnic, a visit to a museum or sporting event or a meal at home are all things that help students learn more about Hawai'i, you as the host and vice versa.

Local residents who have participated in the 'Ohana program have said that it is one of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences they have ever had.



Duane, So, Maura & Ikena

We welcome you to join this unique program to share the experience of life in Hawai'i. If you are interested in becoming part of the 'Ohana program, please follow this link for more information and to sign-up as a Host Family (please note that this includes individuals who may wish to sign up): <https://friendsofewc.org/programs/>



Mālama Mānoa
P.O. Box 283046
Honolulu HI 96828

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Honolulu, Hawaii
Permit No. 9267

Return Service Requested



Mānoa Merchandise

Mālama Mānoa merchandise is available for purchase at Lyon Arboretum Gift Shop, M-F 9am – 3pm, (808) 988-0456 or malamamanoa.org/merchandise. Please consider purchasing our tote bags, hats and shirts as all funds directly support Mālama Mānoa community activities. They make beautiful gifts as well!

Mālama Mānoa Officers

President – Thom Benedict
Vice President – Pi’ikea Miller
Recording Secty. – Jan Mitchell
Treasurer – James Hasselman

Board of Directors

Bill Dendle	Brenda Lam
Cathy Cooke	Hieu Nguyen
Dave Nagaji	JC Watson
Kyle Tokuda	Linda Legrande
Lowell Angell	Scott Morita
Scott Snider	Veneeta Acson

Board of Advisors

Audrey Tanaka	Barbara Lowe
Beryl Blaich	Gail Baron
Helen Nakano	Helen Taufa’asau
John Whalen	Joseph Ferraro
Joyce Arizumi	Kim Ku’ulei Birnie
Kimie Hirabayashi	Leslie Uptain
Scott Wilson	Thalya DeMott
Tom Heinrich	

Founding President: Mary M. Cooke, 1936 - 2022

Calendar of Events 2025

• November Mānoa Walkabouts – At Lyon Arboretum

Session 1: November 12th (2:00 - 2:45 PM) Bring the keiki Wednesday after school for a family-friendly special guided tour at Lyon Arboretum. Explore plants, trails, & stories of Mānoa Valley.

Session 2: November 17th (9:15 – 10:30 AM) Our expert guides will share Lyon Arboretum’s collections, history, and cultural stories, giving you a deeper view of Mānoa’s ecology and conservation efforts. The tour concludes at 10:30 AM, but attendees are welcome to continue exploring the gardens and trails on their own.

To register for either Walkabout session, visit our website to get the Eventbrite link / QR code sign up, or call Brenda at (808) 937-5908 for questions.

• Mānoa Valley Fall Festival

October 25th, Saturday, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM at Mānoa Marketplace, Evening Panel Discussion hosted at Noelani Elementary School from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM - please visit our website for more details.

• 1000 Plant Giveaway

November 9th, Sunday, (8:00 AM - 12:00 PM) Hosted at 2234 Kamehameha Avenue, Mānoa 96822

Community Calendar

Bluegrass Hawai’i “Mānoa Jam”: 1-5PM, third Sunday of every month, Mānoa Valley District Park, Kahaloa Dr. side. Family and pet friendly. <https://www.bluegrasshawaii.com/community-jams>

Mānoa Neighborhood Board No. 7: Meetings are held 6:30-8:30 PM on the first Wednesday of every month at Noelani Elementary School Cafeteria and can also be attended online. <https://cchnl.webex.com/cchnl/j.php?MTID=m0703b535a40c894de5b9cd9e2a50ae05>
Meeting Number/ Access Code: 2483 095 1817, Password: NB07

Mānoa Lions Club Annual Christmas Parade: Sunday December 7th starting at Noelani Elementary School at 4pm. A community event for all to enjoy!

Christmas Lane: The 4th annual Christmas Lane will take place right after the Mānoa Lions Christmas parade on Sunday Dec 7, 2025 from 4:45-7:45pm in the old gym at Mānoa Valley District Park. This is a fabulous family activity!