

KA'AHAHUI 'O KA NĀHELEHELE

*a non-profit affiliate
of the Dryland Forest Working Group*



*Dedicated to
Revitalizing Dryland
Native Plant Communities*

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For Immediate Release

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2009 Nāhelehele Dry Forest Symposium on Big Island

KAMUELA, Hawai'i—January 9, 2009—The dry forests of Hawai'i are fragile habitats that are home to many of the rarest plants in the world. In North Kona, now only remnant patches of the habitat remain, reminding us of the highly diverse community of plants and animals that once dominated the landscape of West Hawai'i.

The Nāhelehele Dry Forest Symposium brings together researchers and conservationists to share their ideas on how to keep dry forest habitats healthy and how to restore them where possible. The primary audience for the symposium is conservation professionals, but there will be many presentations and discussions of interest to the general public as well. This year the conference will emphasize the human impact on Hawaiian dry forests.

Dr. David Burney, Director of Conservation at the National Tropical Botanical Garden will talk about Hawai'i before Humans. Dr. Burney has used paleoecological methods to study the history of tropical dry forests in Africa, Madagascar, the West Indies, and Hawai'i. His research at over a dozen sites in the Hawaiian Islands has helped scientists and conservationists to visualize prehuman Hawaiian environments and their subsequent changes after human arrival. Sabra Kauka, a Hawaiian-studies teacher and ethnobotanist on Kaua'i, will talk about Hawai'i with Humans. She will highlight a nature conservation and cultural preservation project at Nu'alolo Kai on the Na Pali coast of Kaua'i. Bill Garnett is an Endangered Plant Horticulturalist on Moloka'i who assists Kalaupapa National Historic Park with their rare plant stabilization efforts. For the last 24 years Garnett has worked to prevent the extinction of some of Hawai'i's most endangered plants and reintroduce them into protected habitat. His talk on Growing a Native Forest will explore the role of gardening and landscaping in native forest restoration.

National Tropical Botanical Garden Director and CEO Chipper Wichman will discuss NTBG's role in restoring native Hawaiian forests. Kaho'olawe Island restoration manager Paul Higashino will share planting techniques and lessons learned on this arid and severely eroded island. The native plants on Kaho'olawe were decimated by overgrazing and bombing during and after WWII. The island is now being revegetated with native plant species. A panel of restoration experts from the US Army's Pohakuloa Training Area will present details of PTA's endangered species restoration program and work ongoing at their nursery. Many native Hawaiian plants are found within PTA, including eight endangered species. US Department of Agriculture soils expert David Clausnitzer will talk about the characteristics of soils associated with Hawaiian dry forests and insect specialists will discuss the role of native and introduced insects in Hawaiian dry forests.

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For the first time in 2009, there will be three hands-on workshops preceding the symposium. Jill Wagner, coordinator of the Hawai'i Island Native Seed Bank Cooperative, will discuss and show participants how to handle and preserve native seeds. Scot Nelson and J. B. Friday of CTAHR and others will discuss native plant pests and diseases and have plenty of examples of affected plants for participants to examine. Moloka'i conservationist Bill Garnett, Pu'u Wa'awa'a Coordinator Mike Donoho, and Kaho'olawe Restoration Manager Paul Higashino will conduct the planting techniques workshop.

Workshops will be held February 26. The Dry Forest Symposium will take place on February 27 from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Hotel. For registration and information, call The Kohala Center at 808-887-6411 or go to www.kohalacenter.org. Registration for the workshops is \$25 each (\$15 for the seed workshop). Workshop participation is limited and no registrations will be accepted after February 13th. Conference registration, including lunch, is \$50. After February 13th, symposium registration increases to \$65.

The symposium is a project of Ka'Ahahui 'O ka Nāhelehele, a nonprofit organization dedicated to dry forest conservation. Partners in sponsoring this conference are Bishop Museum's Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden, National Tropical Botanical Garden, The Kohala Center, the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Hotel, and Kamehameha Schools-LAD.