



Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens

The Bodhi Leaf

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WINTER 2015

Recollections of the Beginnings of Ho`omaluhia Botanical Garden

by Paul Weissich

*HBG Director Emeritus
FHBG Trustee Emeritus*

Rom Duran's Ho`omaluhia article is deeply appreciated. Mahalo. Someday Ho`omaluhia will be recognized for the botanical treasure it contains. With Friends' funding, seed of rare trees from the world's tropics was collected and planted. Plantings are organized geographically: the Philippines (a unique collection), American, Malaysian, African, et al. Growth has been astounding. Behind the collection is another story.

During the long construction period, which was slowed by heavy rains, 3,000 trees were grown at Foster Garden destined for Ho`omaluhia. A nursery was established in the space, then empty, mauka of the Chinese Temple. Heavy plastic bags with pukas were used in lieu of pots for there was no budget for this. Cheap red soil heavily laced with fallen leaves sufficed for the medium. Instant compost? In any event the trees thrived.

The United Public Workers Union (UPW) called a strike. Employees could not cross the picket lines. Volunteers were quickly organized to water our tree nursery daily. I took care of the regular nursery. The pickets quietly looked the other way!

After the strike ended Ho`omaluhia was ready for planting. We had a CETA (a federally funded make work program) group of 12 organized for planting plus a crew of 10-12 community service people working off DUI sentencing on weekends. Planting went on 7 days a week.

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Parkia javanica

Photo by Alex Kufel

President's Message

TECHNOLOGY: MY LOVE/HATE AFFAIR WITH IT

I am 77, and technology is dragging me into the 21st century. Basically, I want the benefits of technology without having to learn all that geeky stuff that makes it work. Actually, it's worse than that. I want some Genie to hop out of a bottle and enlighten me on all the potential benefits so that I can effortlessly choose from a smorgasbord of technological goodies that will bring Utopia to my life and the Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens. Unfortunately, my laziness and patience have not paid off and no Genie has yet appeared. So, like many in my generation, I am forced to humble myself and beg for tech support from immature game-playing youngsters who seemed to be gifted with this knowledge at birth.

It's been a painful learning experience on both a personal and professional level. On the personal side, my computer has been hacked and infected, but I have recovered some of my dignity and learned from that invasion. Recently, I upgraded to a "smartphone" with its purchase timed to the arrival of a visit by my son who coincidentally owns the exact model I acquired. He's quite a good instructor; however, my one-finger texting tried his patience and did not impress him. His evaluation was that "I text like an old man." I was hoping that I had approached the skill of a third grade girl; but alas, I was denied that compliment. On the professional level, the Friends and your president have been looking into the various forms of social media to see if we can communicate with those immature youngsters who possess those valuable skills and energy which we desperately need. Don't be surprised if you find us on Facebook. We are always looking for Friends.

Bill Follmer, President

Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens

Year-End Donations

The Board of Trustees of the Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens would like to thank the following for their generous response to our year-end appeal. Mahalo!

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From the Director's Desk

As reported in my previous newsletter article, we are pleased that the number of staff members at the Honolulu Botanical Gardens (HBG) has slowly been increasing, with vacancies steadily being filled.

Two recent additions are Tim Goldstein, Nursery Worker I at Foster Botanical Garden and Dr. George Staples, Botanist, on temporary contract for a couple of months at HBG.

Tim is originally from Chicago, but spent a lot of time traveling to places like Canada, New Zealand and Fiji. He first visited Hawaii four years ago, stopping in Honolulu and Hilo, and admits to falling in love with the islands then. Fortunately for HBG, Tim was in Hawaii to interview for a job on Kauai when he got the call to interview for the gardens. He jumped at the chance, and we gained a cheerful and hardworking new employee.

Tim spent seven years working at Springs Preserve in Las Vegas, primarily working on landscaping and propagation projects. During his spare time, he enjoys skiing, golf, brewing beer and baking pies using local ingredients. Staffs that have tasted his pecan pie with a hint of ghost pepper can attest to Tim's baking skills, as it is out of this world!

Most of you are no doubt familiar with Dr. George Staples, Botanist at Bishop Museum from 1988 to 2006. More recently, George spent the past six years as Senior Researcher at Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG). Like the migratory bird that is always "flying somewhere else," he was just making a short stop in the islands on the way to his next big project when this temporary position became available. (The position is temporary while the current Botanist is out on leave.)

George has been a staunch supporter of the HBG and frequent collaborator throughout his nearly 20 years at Bishop Museum. He was instrumental in helping us develop HBG's guiding document: our mission statement and collections policy - a process that took nearly six years!

It was while he was at SBG that George secured permission to collect pollen from the male double coconut growing at the garden, and researched the best way to send it to us. In 2011, the pollen arrived safely, and was used to pollinate Foster Botanical Garden's 75-year old female palm. Thanks to him, our double coconut fruits are still developing on the tree, 3 1/2 years after successful pollination!

George also played a highly significant role in the vouchering (collection, pressing, drying, identification and verification) of unnamed and misnamed plants in our collection. He took mystery plants and discovered their true identity! This work continues. It has led to our being able to engrave accurate plant labels, so a visitor can look at a plant, read its name on the label, and know it's correct. This work contributes to a documented plant collection of high caliber.

Welcome, Tim and George!

Winnie Singeo, Director
Honolulu Botanical Gardens



Tim Goldstein



Dr. George Staples

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Shortly after our 3,000 trees were planted along came Hurricane Iwa in 1982. 3,000 trees were blown over. The entire staff, including program people and part-timers, went to work to re-stake and guy the young trees. 5 were never found. Gone with the wind!

The next time you drive, or better, walk, through Ho`omaluhia embrace the wonderful trees and dense undergrowth. Ho`omaluhia, meaning to create peace and tranquility, richly deserves its name.



Photo by Alex Kufel

