



MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

2856 O'ahu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822

Return Service Requested



*He 'a'ali'i ku makani mai au;
'a'ohe makani nana e kula'i*

I am a wind-resisting 'a'ali'i;
no gale can push me over

'Ōlelo No'eau #507

A Sustaining Steward Speaks Up



Carmela with Mary Cooke when they first met in 2009. (Photo credit: Carmela Tafoya)



"I support MHC, as a living and growing historical site," explains Carmela Tafoya, a long-time docent and donor, "made possible by the closest legends living in modern times, with a connection to Hawaiian history, Sam and Mary Cooke. I can't think of another historical site that offers that and so much more. From children's tours and programs to ones for adults, everyone is included at MHC!" Carmela, like a growing band of supporters, gives a regular monthly donation to support MHC. "I figured the monthly donation was more doable than the larger lump sum." You can join Carmela by making your donation monthly or on an annual basis via mail or online through our website. Most of all she is happy that the donation "goes to help forward the mission of MHC."

Interested in becoming a docent like Carmela? Email contact@manoaheritagecenter.org for more info.

Mahalo 2023 Donors

We are deeply grateful to all the donors who supported MHC's operations, programs, and the Sam Cooke Endowed Fund during the period January 1 - December 31, 2023. View the full donor list at manoaheritagecenter.org/donors/



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MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER



2856 O'ahu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822 (808) 988-1287 contact@manoaheritagecenter.org

Aloha kākou dear readers,

I am pleased to greet you during this exciting time for us here at Mānoa Heritage Center. As I look into the rich history of Mānoa Heritage Center, a journey through time reveals fascinating insights. Did you know that in its original inception, the Center bore the name Mānoa Valley Cultural Heritage Center? The organization had its roots firmly planted on April 17, 1996, marking a significant milestone 28 years ago. However, it was on April 17, 2004, that the Center underwent a transformative phase, adopting the name Mānoa Heritage Center (MHC), signaling a shift towards a more focused vision.

Reflecting on our past, I read the elaborate former mission statement. Encompassing the preservation and interpretation of historical collections and properties, including Kūka'ō'ō Heiau, the surrounding botanical gardens, and Kūali'i, this mission laid the groundwork for our endeavors today. It is inspiring to note the foresight of Sam and Mary Cooke, whose clear vision for the property continues to guide us forward.

"...In the future, the Foundation intends to offer to the public the entire property as a museum and educational resource center, to further community knowledge of history, arts, the environment, and rich cultural heritage of Hawai'i and its people."

Presently, we find ourselves amidst a Visioning Process that commenced in February. Guided by the expertise of Facilitator Josh Levinson and fueled by the collective wisdom of over 50 community members, our journey into envisioning the future of Kūali'i and Hogan House within the broader mission of MHC has been both invigorating and insightful. We will continue to engage with members of the museums' historic preservation community and others, and prepare to unveil the initial plans for integrating these historic houses into MHC's overarching mission and vision.

Stay tuned as we continue this transformative journey together forging new pathways to honor our heritage and enrich our community.

Lisa Solomine, Executive Director

Visit us at www.manoaheritagecenter.org   

Keiki Get a Worm's Eye View

You may have seen an odd looking face in the office window last year. That would be our new friend Verma the worm, created by former Garden Educator Skye Haraga and Education Designer Lilia Lorenzo to help teach kids about vermicomposting (the use of worms and microorganisms to turn organic waste into nutrient-rich compost). She's made of paper-mâché and cardboard with a diet of kid-friendly felt and crocheted foods made by our talented staff.

The activity starts with a short introduction to Verma and our worm "hotel" (layered worm bin), after which haumāna (students) learn about worm nutrition. Then they get to feed Verma and when she's full, they learn about worm poop and



how it's full of nutrients that help plants grow. Finally, the keiki get gloves and it's back to the worm hotel where they have the opportunity to interact with real worms, holding them and adding food to their buffet.

Verma made her official debut in January with the keiki of Mānoa Valley Church Preschool and to date has been featured with other groups of keiki up to 2nd grade. A crowd favorite for sure, one of the best answers we've gotten to the question "What animal do you think Verma is?" was a shout of "Hot dog!" that elicited giggles from all. Verma's future looks bright and we are excited for it!



Kāhuli: The Hawaiian Super Decomposer

When or how earthworms arrived in Hawai'i has not been determined but they were first collected in 1896 and have since had noticeably adverse effects on our native land. Research shows they alter nutrient cycling, creating conditions that favor invasive plants—plus they attract feral pigs who destroy native plants to get to them. So, while cute and productive, Verma and her kin are not kind to our native forests that evolved without them for millions of years.

Meet Hawai'i's krawling, krunching, keystone Kāhuli, keepers of our land. These tiny, native, ground-dwelling snails were once Hawai'i's main decomposers, tirelessly munching and transforming dead leaves, twigs, and other organic debris into nutrients for our islands' iron-rich volcanic soil long before earthworms arrived. They played a crucial role in sustaining Hawai'i's native ecosystems and watersheds.

Learn more about kāhuli online from the experts at the Snail Extinction Prevention Program (SEPP) at [bit.ly/dofawsepp](https://mauiinvasive.org/2021/03/24/earthworms-an-invasive-species-underfoot-in-hawaii/) and Bishop Museum Malacology at bit.ly/bishopmal.

"From Strohecker, Lissa. "Earthworms, an invasive species underfoot in Hawai'i." *Maui Invasive Species Committee*, 24 March 2021. <https://mauiinvasive.org/2021/03/24/earthworms-an-invasive-species-underfoot-in-hawaii/>. Accessed 28 February 2024.



Amastra intermedia



Amastra micans

Photos courtesy DOFAW - SEPP

Beating Around the Bushes with Kanoa

Although it may sound obvious, there are a lot of flora that call Mānoa Heritage Center home. In a valley that can only be described as verdant, MHC boasts botanical gardens that house plants native to Hawai'i, such as ko'oloa'ula, as well as plants brought over by ancient Polynesian voyagers like kalo (taro). There are also unique and interesting plants around MHC that may be hidden, but you can find them for yourself as long as you know where to look. Here are a couple of favorites from MHC's botanical educator Kanoa Nakamura.



As you walk to Kūka'ōō Heiau, look for a wooden bench covered by a kukui tree and you'll be near one of the oldest non-tree plants on the property. Hō'awa (Pittosporaceae) is endemic to Hawai'i and you'll likely first notice how coarse its leaves feel. Its wood is buoyant, rot-resistant, and classified in the cheesewood family of plants since it is full of holes—much like a slice of Swiss cheese. This particular specimen is around 30 years old, and although all of its relatives have perished over the years, there's still hope for this last hō'awa. Last year Kanoa put a tent up around the plant and cleaned off all of the mold on its leaves, allowing the plant to flower and hopefully in the future, pollinate and create seeds.

The second off-the-beaten-path plant you'll want to find is the lama—no, not llama, just lama—which will be on your left if you've just entered the gate past the visitor center. A Hawaiian persimmon, lama is considered a tree of enlightenment in Hawaiian culture, much like the kukui, and its ebony wood is associated with Laka, the goddess of hula, often found on hula altars as decoration and offerings. The wood also boasts an interesting natural buoyancy that allows it to just barely sink under fresh water but float above salt water. Like the hō'awa, the lama has recently been cleaned by Kanoa and has begun flowering once more—and if you find it during the spring season, you may even be able to enjoy one of its persimmons right off the branch.

If you're having trouble finding the lama or hō'awa, or want to learn about more secret flora that can be found at MHC, you can always ask an on-site educator like Kanoa to help you beat around the bushes for these cool plants.



Upcoming Events

Check our website and social media for more information



An endemic 'ōma'o (Hawaiian Thrush) singing.
Photo credit: Dr. Patrick Hart, UH Hilo

Thurs. April 18 Kahaukani Conversations "Acoustic Ecology & Conservation of Hawaiian Forest Birds"

Join us to celebrate Ka Makahiki o Nā Manu Nahele (The Year of the Forest Birds) with UH Hilo Biology Professor Dr. Patrick Hart, who will highlight the incredible diversity of song in our Hawaiian birds and discuss some of the impacts of habitat fragmentation and population decline on song learning and repertoire.

6pm - 7:15pm | Free on Zoom

Sat. April 27 Paper Club: Marathon

Pull as many sheets as you can in advance of an indigo dyeing workshop in May. Must have taken Introduction to Papermaking.

9am - 12pm | \$45 (includes \$15 materials fee) Limited to 6 participants

Sat. May 11 Aloha Māmā

Celebrate mom with flowers! Create an arrangement for the special mom or mother figure in your life.

9am - 12pm | Free

Sat. May 25 'Ohana Day

Spend time together as a family getting hands-on with nature and having fun! Details TBD