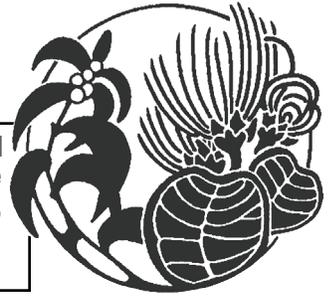


# NATURE'S NEWSFLASH 2012



October Issue

'Aloha! Nature's Newsflash is a semi-annual publication that features stories and insights of conservation activities that help preserve and protect Moloka'i's native natural resources. If you would like to contribute information to our publication, please send it to The Nature Conservancy, P. O. Box 220, Kualapuu 96757. Let's all make a difference by "Thinking globally, Acting locally!"



Sunday Hanchett and Kristina Cacpal planting a native A'ali'i at Mokio (October 16, 2010)

## Taking Steps to Restore Mokio's Red Scars

By Butch Haase, MLT Executive Director

Molokai Land Trust (MLT) has been working on finding the most efficient and cost effective techniques to restore barren hardpan using naturally and historically occurring native plants at Mokio Preserve on north-west Molokai. By restoring these barren red scars on the land, water is retained and sediment transport to nearby marine ecosystems is greatly reduced.

Denuded, dry, windy and deer infested were a few of the many harsh conditions faced by MLT staff when taking on this project. To address the biggest threat which is deer, a 2.25 acre site was fenced off in Mokio Preserve. Then, initial plantings (November 2009) were done with help from Ed Misaki's Hawaiian Field Biology class at MCC in the first test plot (400 sq. ft.). Promising results from these plantings encouraged MLT to ramp up its efforts by increasing the original 400 sq. ft. plot to nearly an acre!

In 2011, MLT partnered with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its Plant Materials Center (PMC) to implement direct seeding trials (broadcasting) with native seeds grown at PMC's facility in Ho'olehua. PMC was interested in this partnership as it allowed them to have conditions similar to Kahoolawe, where restoration efforts are also being implemented, but easier to access and monitor. Unfortunately, drought conditions for the last two winters at Mokio have yielded less than average germination

with the direct seeding trials. We are hoping this winter brings more average rainfall conditions.

Many of the native plants outplanted over the last three years have prospered in spite of the dry conditions and are reseeding areas outside of the test plots! Other several surprises have come out of these outplanting trials. Our rare Ohai (*Sesbania tomentosa*) has proven itself a winner for drought resistance and overall coverage and growth rate. We try to minimize the use of water to simulate natural conditions. Soil preparation (loosening), mulching, fertilizing, and periodic deep watering seem to contribute to successful plant establishment and survival.

MLT has had assistance from several local schools and volunteers in planting the site. We offer opportunities for service learning programs through schools, community organizations, individuals and visitors. Call us at (808)553-5626 for more information on how you can get involved.

### *Mahalo Nui Loa for Helping TNC & our Partners!*

Jennifer Ainoa, Ella Alcon, Kief Apo, George Atta, Justin Avelino, Donna Bicoy, Jon Brito, Rick Chong, George Coelho, Helen Coelho, Desiree Corpuz, Michael Corpuz, Patricia Crandall, Stephanie Dunbar, James & Albert Espaniola, Frances & Bill Feeter, Nora Furuno, Coral Gonzales, Michael Grinnell, Evelyn Haase, Sue-Ann Hasegawa, Aulani Herrod, Ama & Gannon Jacobs, Darlene & Ted Johns, Blaze Juario, Wayne Kaauwai, Nathan Kaakimaka, Kevin Kalua, Whistan Kaulili III, Joe Kitagawa, Lari Koga, Tony Ladesma, Malu Lani-Kaakimaka, Raymond "Kili" Lightfoot-Lani, Ernesto Lopez, Doug & Lil Macmillan, Bronson Manaba, Debra Mapel, Margaret Marcom, Penny Martin, Kiliwina Moses, Elene Nakama, Kamalani Pali, Diane Pike, Juanita Reyher-Colon, Jan Roney, Glenn Sakamoto, Jean Schrecencost, Vincent Soeda, Nanette & Leroy Souza, Kathleen Tachibana, Roblen Talon, Gary Taua, Kahiau Torres-Batara



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## Did You Know...

By: Wailana Moses, TNC Molokai

...there's a very tiny ant that has the potential to turn our lives into a nightmare? This is no joke! This ant is called the **Little Fire Ant (LFA)**, *Wasmannia auropunctata*, also known as the electric ant. This stinging ant is new to Hawaii and it's spreading! It is currently on the Big Island from Puna to Laupahoehoe and now in Kona. There is also at least one infestation on both Kauai and Maui. It is not on Molokai yet...thanks to the Molokai/Maui Invasive Species Committee (MoMISC) and many other watchful eyes in our community.

**Why should we be worried about LFA?** Unlike most ants, LFA do not compete between colonies, instead they cooperate, forming networks of colonies with multiple queens that blanket the ground and trees and outcompete other ant species as well as other animals (birds, pigs, deer, insects, turtles, etc.) for food and resources. LFA has the benefits of both asexual and sexual reproduction...meaning, the queens don't need a male to reproduce! How scary is that?!? This advantage makes LFA extremely difficult to get rid of. LFA has reduced species diversity, reducing overall abundance of flying and tree-dwelling insects, and eliminating *Arachnid* populations in other parts of the world where it has taken over. On the Galapagos, it eats the hatchlings of tortoises! In areas of the Big Island where LFA is now established, animals are going blind, children are not allowed to play on the grass or sleep on the floor of their home, and picking fruit, vegetables or flowers is now a hazardous activity. Hundreds of acres of farm land now lay vacant throughout the world because of LFA. The bites from these tiny ants initially hurt and burn then may cause welts followed by intense itching for two or more weeks. LFA is being considered to be perhaps the greatest ant species threat in the Pacific region!

**How did this nightmarish ant get to Hawaii and where did it come from?** LFA is native to Central and South America. It is unintentionally transported in potted plants or on plant materials, green waste, rubbish and possibly storage containers or vehicles moving interisland or from other parts of the world. For this reason, we need to all be vigilant and wary when bringing items to Molokai. Please make a strong effort not to bring anything to Molokai from an area that has LFA. If you are bringing in items from an area that has or could possibly have LFA, please make sure you inspect and treat it before sending it to Molokai then do another inspection and treatment upon arrival. Please call MoMISC about the shipment and they will be more than happy to help you inspect and treat your shipment for LFA, Coqui frogs and many other invasive species that is not on Molokai. Call MoMISC at (808)553-5236 extension 204 or 215.

**How can you tell the difference between LFA and the Red Ant we have already?** Many of you are familiar with another stinging ant that we grew up calling the "Red Ant" (*Solenopsis geminata*) and it has been on Molokai for a long time now. The Red Ant is 2-3 times bigger than LFA (see "Size Comparison" photo). LFA is about 1/16 of an inch long (about the size of this letter "a" in ant) while the Red Ant is about 1/8-1/4 of an inch long. Although LFA is smaller, its bite is worse than any experience we've had with the Red Ant. LFA are light to golden brown in color while the Red Ant is a dark reddish-brown. LFA workers are all the same size while the Red Ant will have a few larger workers with large, square-shaped heads. LFA is slow-moving until disturbed.

For more information online about the Little Fire Ant visit **The Hawaii Ant Lab** at <http://www.littlefireants.com/> or **Stopping the Silent Invasion** at <http://www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/pests/littlefireant.html>. You can also Google "Little Fire Ant in Hawaii" to get a list of great information. Lets all make an effort to keep Molokai free of this nightmarish ant! Remember to call MoMISC if you think you might have LFA at (808)553-5236 extension 204 or 215. Mahalo.

### Size Comparison

Little Fire Ant



1/16 Inch

Red Ant

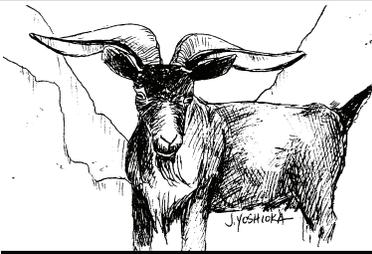


1/8 Inch

Most of my time spent at the office is to maintain our kennel dogs, hence my topic **"The Welfare of Your Hunting Dog"**. Caring for more than one dog takes time and patience as most of you Local Boys know. Man's best friend needs all the human care and attention we can give them to ensure they are healthy, happy and at the top of their game when hunting. **How can I do that you say?** Our mentor, Steve Broughton, emphasizes handlers keep updated records for each dog which is essential to having a healthy happy dog. Vaccinations for all dogs will ensure they will not be susceptible to diseases when they come in contact with other dogs. First vaccination shot for a pup would be when they are eight to twelve weeks of age, followed by two more shots, four weeks apart and then once every year.

Monthly treatments for parasites, internally (worms) and externally (fleas and ticks), is a must to keep them in prime condition. Pups should be wormed from two weeks of age, every two weeks, until twelve weeks of age. They can be treated for fleas and ticks with the appropriate medication until they are old enough to handle the spot treatments. I mark a specific date of the month, way easier to remember, to administer once a month flea and worm treatments to the dogs. Spot on flea treatment by hand and flavored worm pills makes life much easier for the handler.

Remember, dogs come in different sizes so it's best to follow up on Dr. Stewart Morgan's recommendations and once a year checkups with the Doc. This ensures that you are on track in keeping your dog happy and healthy. In fact, it's much cheaper and less of a headache to get the once a year vaccination shots from Dr. Morgan who is the Molokai Humane Society's veterinarian. The worm treatment and weigh-in is included. Going this route helps you by-pass the



**"The Welfare of Your Hunting Dog"**  
By: Brian Naeole,  
Animal Control Coordinator

hassles of shipping costs and the process of ordering the vaccination shots online.

Keeping track of the dogs' weight is also key to keeping them healthy and to determine how much meds and vitamins to give each dog (i.e. wormer, flea treatments, vaccinations, etc.). I weigh our dogs once a month and update their records.

Another key component to having a happy healthy dog is letting them get daily exercise. Within our office perimeter fence there is another smaller fenced unit that surrounds the dog kennels, which is known as a "Dog Run". A Dog Run gives the dogs the opportunity to get exercise when they aren't in the field working. No one wants to be cooped up in a kennel all day long, I know I wouldn't, so they get to play around for about two hours a day. The Dog Run has to be secured enough so the dogs can't get out. High fencing and holes under the fence need to be plugged because once they get familiar with the entire run area they start thinking of a new word, escape! We have a dog that I swear is a reincarnated rock climber!

Lastly, sanitation plays a big part in your dog's life. A cemented kennel floor is ideal and makes it much easier to clean. The floors are water pressured down every morning and afternoon to clean out their feces. This takes away the odor and also ensures your dogs don't play in their mess which may be contaminated, especially after they've been wormed. This is just a small part in taking care of a healthy dog. I may have missed other topics (shade, heat stroke, water bowl cleanliness, septic tanks, etc.), but I hope the information above gives you a head start to keeping a healthy, better conditioned canine for hunting. Remember, patience and time spent with them are the key words to having a friend for life. Until the next Flash, Bow-loha!

## Revisiting Mo`omomi!

By: Wailana Moses, TNC Molokai

Baby wedge-tailed shearwater birds (Ua`u kani) also called “**Aku Birds**” by our local fishermen, are going to be leaving their nests at Mo`omomi soon! It’s that special time of the year when the little puff balls get ready to head out to sea for up to 7 years before setting foot on land again to find a mate and lay eggs. Our fishing friends nest from April through November inside burrows in the ground so please **no pets especially dogs** in or around Mo`omomi Preserve as they’ve contributed to the deaths of over 200 birds already.



Left to right: Wailana Moses, Malu Lani-Kaakimaka, and Roblen Talon monitoring the bird nests at Mo`omomi. **Photo by:** Blaze Juario

Staff along with partners and volunteers band the adult birds when they return to nest in April and then, band the babies before they leave in October. Besides tracking the whereabouts of these birds, we also track the size of the bird colony at Mo`omomi by identifying and counting the active nests annually. The activity level also help us determine if the colony is doing well or not. Last month, Kupu Intern Roblen Talon and volunteers, Blaze Juario, Malu Lani-Kaakimaka and Bronson Manaba helped with our annual bird nest monitoring. We looked for feathers, foot-prints, egg shells, bird poop and of course, the “puff balls” to determine if the nest was active or not. Over 650 active nests were identified last month! Compared to last year’s annual nest count of 555, I’d say that the Mo`omomi Bird Colony is still going strong and healthy which is mostly due to new bird recruitment and the hard work of staff, the Molokai Land Trust, and volunteers. **Thank you Blaze Juario, Roblen Talon, Malu Lani-Kaakimaka and Bronson Manaba for helping to complete our Annual Nest Monitoring!**

Aku birds aren’t the only ones that are attracted to the sand dunes of Mo`omomi. Green sea turtles nest there every year too and their babies are also heading out to sea. The sea birds and turtles along with many other marine creatures have to overcome huge obstacles to survive. Lets help raise survival rates by picking up whatever rubbish we see lying around...at the beach, along the road, even in your own yards. Baby turtles and sea birds get tangled in ocean debris or die from eating it. I know many of you have seen the dreaded floating debris from Japan that has been showing up on Molokai especially along our north shore. As this debris comes to shore, TNC will be organizing beach clean-ups at Mo`omomi. If you would like to help out please call (808)553-5236 extension 211. Mahalo.

**The Nature Conservancy**  
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