



PRESS RELEASE

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Lyon Arboretum Signs up to Protect Hawai‘i

The Harold L. Lyon Arboretum is the first botanical garden in Hawai‘i to adopt the “Codes of Conduct,” a list of voluntary actions to help protect Hawai‘i from invasive ornamental plants. New actions Lyon Arboretum plans include:

- ◆ Examine its vision, mission, policies and practices to ensure clear guidance to stem the spread of invasive plants.
- ◆ Use the Hawai‘i Weed Risk Assessment, a screening tool that predicts a plant’s potential to become invasive if planted here. The Hawai‘i Weed Risk Assessment is like a “background check” on a plant.
- ◆ Review its entire collection using the Hawai‘i Weed Risk Assessment, and work with the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee to identify potentially harmful species that should be controlled before they spread.

“Having organizations like the Lyon Arboretum voluntarily take these proactive measures is extremely important—most people don’t realize that it is perfectly legal to import almost any of the world’s 200,000+ plant species into Hawai‘i, without any sort of review process, even if they are known to be harmfully invasive elsewhere,” said Christy Martin, Public Information Officer, Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species, said. “The Codes of Conduct go beyond what’s mandated by law to protect Hawai‘i’s environment.”

Dr. Christopher Dunn, the new director of Lyon Arboretum, was surprised that they were the first garden to sign the Codes of Conduct, but believes that more will agree to help once word gets out. “Although botanic gardens exist primarily to showcase the richness of the plant world, we must be mindful of the actual and potential impacts of non-native plants on our natural habitats. Signing the Voluntary Codes is just one way that Lyon Arboretum can malama ‘aina,” explained Dr. Dunn.

Lyon Arboretum is the only university botanical garden located in a tropical rainforest in the U.S. and covers almost 200 acres atop the Manoa Valley watershed. Its tropical plant collection focuses on native Hawaiian species, tropical palms, aroids, ti, taro, heliconia and ginger. Established in 1918 by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association, Lyon Arboretum demonstrates the value of water restoration, reforestation and plant collection. Today, it is a branch of the University of Hawai‘i and coordinates and conducts research, instruction and service activities using its collections and resources. Lyon Arboretum serves approximately 34,000 visitors a year.

More information on the Codes of Conduct can be found at www.lichawaii.com (click on invasive species).

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