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# May 2019 ROD Newsletter

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## 2019 Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

*~ Ho'ohu'a Hilo o ka lehua ~*

*Hilo produces lehua in abundance*

This is our quarterly newsletter that was designed to update the community on current Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) issues. If you wish to UNSUBSCRIBE, scroll down to the bottom to do so.

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### Research News

- Conservation X Labs, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Native Hawaiian Relations, and the National Park Service have partnered on The 'Ōhi'a Challenge to identify novel technological solutions to ROD. A \$70,000 challenge is being offered to create low-cost solutions to detect (and predict) the invasion pathways and the spread of ROD-causing fungus in the environment. The application period for the 'Ōhi'a Challenge is now closed. We received 56 applications from solvers across multiple U.S. states as well as from European and African countries. We intend to announce the winner (or winners) of the Challenge in July.
- Since Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death-causing fungus (*Ceratocystis*) was identified in 2014, our ROD team has grown. Did you know that each of Hawai'i Island, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i have Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) teams to track down and test for ROD? Hawai'i Island's EDRR team focuses on Hāmākua, Kohala, and North Kona, whereas the other teams work island-wide on their respective islands. Work with your local Invasive Species Committee to get connected with an EDRR team if you have a suspect ROD tree.

- The U.S. Forest Service ROD Squad has been collecting fenced vs. unfenced 'ōhi'a plot data from several sites on Hawai'i Island over the past several years. Preliminary data shows that unfenced (free-roaming hooved animals) areas have a higher concentration and presence of ROD in forested habitats than do fenced (little to no hooved animals present) areas.



### Management Tips

- Sanitize for inter-island travel!  
Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death disease (ROD) has been detected on Kaua'i. If you or someone you know will be traveling inter-island, please take extra care to clean your shoes and gear before and after traveling between islands to prevent the spread of ROD. First brush the dirt off, then spray with 70% rubbing alcohol. If hiking, remember to stay off of 'ōhi'a roots –walking on roots can break bark and expose the trees to ROD-causing fungi.
- What is the latest recommendation for what to do with 'ōhi'a wood? Keep wood onsite. Don't turn it into mulch as that creates more material to spread disease. If felling a tree, cut with a sharpened tool on a low-wind, drizzly day to keep infectious material from moving around. Make as few



cuts as possible. Wood can be safely burned in an imu, barbecue, smokehouse, or fireplace. Otherwise, keep it covered with a tarp to keep boring ambrosia beetles from attacking or escaping from the wood.

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## Island Updates

### Kaua'i

Outreach staff have been busy with tabling events across the island, nearly a dozen ROD documentary "Saving 'Ōhi'a, Hawai'i's Sacred Tree" screenings, and two seed banking workshops with Lyon Arboretum. ROD decontamination kits are now available to the public. The team is planning special projects with a local Girl Scout troupe, a hula hālau, Hanalei Rotary, and Anaina Hou Community Park. Trailhead signs and boot brush stations are starting to be

installed at trails across the island.

## **O'ahu**

Staff have been busy with many outreach events, presentations, workshops, and symposia. Over the last 3 months, we have participated in over 16 events and reached over 1000 people on O'ahu alone. Major activities have included legislative outreach, Earth Day, May Day, and 'Ōhi'a Lehua Day. Biosanitation kits will soon be available on O'ahu.

## **Lāna'i**

Pūlama Lāna'i hosted several Earth Week events, including a screening of the ROD documentary on 4/20/19 at the local theatre. On 4/25/19, Pūlama Lāna'i held a work day for the company's managers at the historic agricultural heiau at Hi'i. In addition to clearing weeds from the fenced site, several managers outplanted various native plants, including 'ōhi'a.

The 'ōhi'a are flowering all around Lāna'i. We are patiently waiting for their fruit to mature and will continue seed collection later this year for the #OhiaLove project. In the meantime, we continue outplanting 'ōhi'a grown from seeds collected last year.

## **Maui**

Through community events - East Maui Taro Festival, Maui Earth Day, and the Haiku Ho'olaulea—Maui Invasive Species Committee reached approximately 270 people with information about Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death. On March 28th, we worked with Akaku, the local public access station, to host a screening of the "Saving 'Ōhi'a" documentary followed by a question and answer.

MISC presented information to three classes of 1st graders on the structure and function of a rainforest and the threat of ROD.

## **Hawai'i Island**

Major events for Hawai'i Island Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death outreach in the last few months have included the ROD Symposia in Hilo and Kona in March (<https://vimeo.com/album/5882632>), Merrie Monarch Festival outreach (April), and Earth Day/Conservation Career Day at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. We continue with community presentations, providing free ROD decontamination kits to the public, sowing 'ōhi'a seeds with school groups, and will be gearing up for our 2nd round of statewide Biosanitation Trainings for Tour Operators (May/June) and 3rd Annual 'Ōhi'a Love Fest in Hilo (August).



3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

# 'Ōhi'a Love Fest

AUG  
25<sup>TH</sup>  
SUNDAY 9AM-4PM

A Festival Celebrating  
'Ōhi'a Trees!

Held at  
**'IMILOA ASTRONOMY CENTER**  
*FREE ADMISSION TO MUSEUM  
AND SHOWS ALL DAY!*

## EVENTS

LIVE MUSIC • GAMES  
HULA • Face Painting  
FOOD AND DRINK • KEIKI CRAFTS  
Entertainment • PHOTO BOOTH  
TALKS • Demonstrations  
Educational Displays • ADULT CRAFTS  
RAPID 'ŌHI'A DEATH INFO • prizes

**A ZERO WASTE EVENT**  
Water re-fill stations available



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
PLEASE VISIT:  
[rapidohiadeath.org](http://rapidohiadeath.org)

## Upcoming Events

**August 25, 2019**  
**‘Ōhi‘a Love Fest**  
**‘Imiloa Astronomy Center**

The goal of this FREE public event is to celebrate ‘ōhi‘a and promote awareness about this important tree. Bring your keiki and make fun ‘ōhi‘a crowns. Take a 3D tour through ‘ōhi‘a forests. All these fun activities and more will promote ways we can help to prevent the spread of Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death. In addition, we will have games, prizes, a photo booth, live music, hula, food vendors, and there will be free access to ‘Imiloa Center and the planetarium.

## Biosanitation Trainings

Do you manage or work for a company that leads visitors on land-based tours in Hawai‘i? Do you want to stand out as an active protector of Hawai‘i’s natural resources? If so, then you won’t want to miss out on a

FREE TRAINING for terrestrial tour operators being offered this fall! This team-taught training brings expertise together from your local Invasive Species Committees and the Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death Response Team. The course covers best sanitation practices for your tour operation so that your guides and guests can feel confident about minimizing impact to our unique native landscapes. Each participating business will receive a FREE LARGE SANITATION KIT to kick-start or complement your tour operations while supplies last. Choose from various training dates offered on Hawai‘i Island, Maui, O‘ahu, and Kaua‘i.

Register today at [rapidohiadeath.org](http://rapidohiadeath.org)! Questions may be directed to [ohialove@hawaii.edu](mailto:ohialove@hawaii.edu).

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## Staff Bio

### **Ambyr Mokiao-Lee** **Statewide ROD Outreach Coordinator**

Ambyr was born and raised on O'ahu. She attended UH Mānoa and received her B.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Management in 2005. She later moved to Hawai'i Island to work with anchialine ponds and completed her M.S. in Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Sciences from UH Hilo in 2012. Since then she has worked as an outreach specialist for DOFAW on Kaua'i and now works for the ROD project through UH Mānoa.

As the ROD Statewide Outreach Coordinator, Ambyr travels throughout the state to raise awareness about this important issue. She cares deeply about our natural resources and wants to do all she can to protect what is remaining for future generations.



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**Our mailing address is:**

University of Hawaii Komohana Research and Extension Center  
[875 Komohana St.](#)  
Hilo, HI 96720

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