



Monthly News & Updates

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August, 2019



PMKCA Vice President Ruth Bennet

Vice President's Message

Testing for Rapid 'Ohi'a Death - A Homeowner's Experience

Part 1

It's a horrible experience watching a tree die! A few months ago, the leaves on a few of my 'ohi'a trees on my farm in Pa'auilo Mauka turned brown. I had my fears and suspicions



First, the team used a sterilized hatchet to clear away an area of bark on an affected part of the trunk and reach the tree's internal wood. They were looking for signs of "striping" (dark & light patterns in the wood) which are associated with ROD.

Then the team used a sterilized drill to make holes in the tree and collect sawdust samples. The sawdust and a few chips from the cut were bagged and labelled to be sent back to the lab for analysis.

And finally, the team sprayed a sealant on the spot that they had just damaged with hatchet and drill, and marked the tree with a labelled orange ribbon.

I don't yet know what is causing my trees in this pasture to die, whether by goat damage or ROD, but I know that I have been helped by friendly,

– did my goats chew off enough bark to “girdle” the trees and cause them to die, or am I seeing the terrible effects of Rapid ‘Ohi’a Death (ROD) up close? I wrapped the trees in chicken wire and plastic fencing and removed the goats, but the trees didn’t recover.

A team from the “Big Island Invasive Species Committee”, (www.biisc.org) came to my farm this morning. I’d like to pass on what I learned about ROD and their methods in testing a suspect tree. You may find yourselves in a similar heart-breaking situation. My experience may give you confidence that there is practical help and compassionate care out there.

The team followed a protocol to collect samples from the five “sick” trees in my pasture.



knowledgeable people, and that I will hear the results in about a week.

My advice to my neighbors: The spores of ROD drift with the wind from an infected tree to others nearby. To keep your ‘ohi’a trees healthy, avoid damaging them, by pruning, whacking or livestock. And if you see a sudden browning of a tree, give the experts at BIISC a call at 808 933-3340. They are looking for ways to save our beautiful native ‘ohi’as. I’ll write again to tell you the fate of my trees.

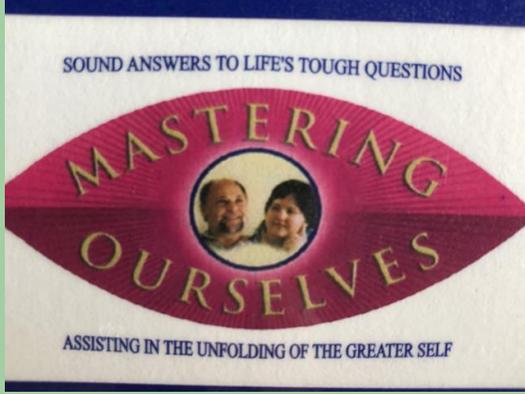
[Next PMKCA Meetings](#)

Our next meeting will be a Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, October 10th at the [Hawaiian Vanilla Factory Co., 43-2007 Pa’auilo Mauka Road.](#) All members are welcome to attend any of our quarterly Board meetings.

After that, our annual General Membership meeting will be held at Pa’auilo School in January, 2020 exact date to be determined. All PMKCA members and their guests are encouraged to attend.



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