Kula Persimmon Farmer Finds Success
L. Fujitani

Shirley and Hugo Buetler are happy with the HAW-FLY-PM program in Kula. After retiring from the restaurant business, the Buetlers started growing a variety of fruit trees on their six acre farm. The overpopulation of fruit flies made it difficult for Shirley to harvest enough fruits for her jam and jelly business. The Buetlers signed on as community cooperators in February of this year and right away, Grant McQuate of USDA-ARS implemented a mass trapping medfly program on their farm.

When loquat season was at its peak, peaches were still immature, and persimmon was in its flowering stage. Quick action by the fruit fly gang resulted in a 60% improvement over last year’s peach production, according to Shirley Buetler.

In addition to the biolure traps, the Buetlers follow other HAW-FLY pest management tactics including picking up fruits from the ground and feeding them to their pig, as well as spraying GF-120 on their border plants. Shirley and Hugo were cautiously optimistic as persimmon season approached and the fruits turned from green to orange. In a recent interview, Shirley said this year’s production is “80% better than last year.” “Our success is due to the help we recieve from the University of Hawaii and Ron Mau, and from the monitoring and data collecting from Earl [Fujitani], Troy [Kawahara], and Grant,” says Shirley.

The Buetler’s persimmons are sold fresh or made into persimmon chutney and jam. Shirley also makes loquat, guava, poha, jaboticaba, mango, and passion fruit jam and jellies. Look for the Buetler’s “Maui Upcountry” jams and jellies throughout the State of Hawaii.
Maui Med Fly Suppression Update
R. Mau

Med Fly. This article is a bit late for Halloween, but if you want a scare, view the Medfly monitoring data shown in Figure 1. Yikes, scary for everyone -- growers and project personnel alike. This will be the acid test for the mass-trapping program. Adult populations are as much as 3-times greater than in the comparative period in 2001. At this point there are believers and those in doubt. Count me as one of the believers. Mass-trapping is helpful.

Compare the difference in fly numbers among farms with and without coffee plantings. (Note that the orange-bars show flies per trap-day for persimmon farms without coffee plantings nearby.) Yes, coffee cherries are good hosts for Medfly, but Grant McQuate and the Haradas might have a solution. They collaborated on a study with GF-120. Look for an article about this in the December newsletter.

On another note, early season Cercospora leaf blight problems seemed to have diminished now that growers know that an effective fungicide is available.
‘Best in Show’
Winners at the Maui County Fair
L. Fujitani

Giant pumpkins drew large crowds to the horticulture building at the annual Maui County Fair held in early October. Youth and senior fairgoers looked in awe at the enormous orange giants, which weighed over a hundred pounds each. Growing giant pumpkins has become a tradition for the Watanabe family of Kula. Richard Watanabe’s giant pumpkin won Best in Show in the Junior division. Richard’s dad, Dick Watanabe, has been incorporating HAW-FLYPM fruit fly suppression tactics such as male annihilation and GF-120 application on his Kula vegetable farm.

In the senior division, Jerry Burkert’s giant pumpkin and watermelon both won Best in Show ribbons. Three years ago, Jerry, an independent contractor, started planting a variety of fruit trees and vegetables on his two acre lot in Pukalani. Today, Burkert has mango, banana, avocado, citrus, loquat, lychee, starfruit, guava, papaya, surinam cherry, and coffee trees growing in his backyard, as well as a native Hawaiian garden, which he is most proud of:

Although farming is just his hobby, Jerry takes it very seriously. Before planting pumpkin seeds in May, he and son Aaron surfed the internet and read books on growing giant pumpkins. In July, anxious to learn more about disease prevention and pest management, he contacted University of Hawaii Extension Agent Robin Shimabuku who introduced him to various fruit fly suppression tactics including GF-120 application. Jerry immediately went to United Horticulture Supply and bought GF-120 and started spraying the castor plants along his farm borders. Burkert says GF-120 is “good stuff” and plans to continue using it to protect the other fruits and vegetables on his farm. Jerry Burkert eagerly looks forward to next year’s Maui County Fair and hopes one day to be a Senior Grand Champion.

Another Best in Show winner was Koa Hashimoto for his persimmons. Koa is the grandson of HAW-FLYPM cooperators Clark and Jackie Hashimoto of Kula.

Keep Up the Good Work:
Maui Melon Fly Suppression Update
E. Fujitani

With the recent rainfall in mid October, there is more vegetation in and around the farmlands. Growers notice that there are more melon fruit flies roosting in the castor bean plants. The increase is easily seen in the melon fly map of the Maui Zone, Figure 3. The blue dots were orange two weeks earlier.

Past data indicate that the Winter and Spring months usually exhibit increases in the fruit fly population when crops are not managed properly. The combination of the 3 tactics: 1) sanitation, 2) male annihilation, and 3) GF-120 protein bait spray will be the key to melon fruit fly suppression during the coming months. Area wide workers have noticed how well growers are disposing of culls, tilling the field after the last harvest, and spraying GF-120 on a weekly schedule.