

Aloha Arborist Association
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2012

Members Present: Steve Connolly, Steve Nimz, Carol Kwan, Sergio Vasquez, Andrew Kendall, Jamilee Kempton, Daniel Severino, Dudley Hulbert, Amy Nichols

Guests: Mann Ko, Gary Weller

I. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF THE MAY 16, 2012, MEETING MINUTES

- A) President Steve Connolly called the meeting to order at 6.54 p.m. The May 16, 2012, meeting minutes were approved as is.

II. GUEST SPEAKER: MANN KO, HDOA – LAUREL WILT DISEASE (PEST ALERT)

- A) Laurel Wilt Disease was first discovered in the U.S. in Florida. It's well-established in the southeastern U.S. now. The disease is caused by a fungus that is vectored by an ambrosia beetle. The beetles are tiny. Mann passed around specimens to show their size. If the beetles carry the fungus, laurel wilt will affect the trees that the beetles have visited. The fungi live in the xylem of the tree. The tree can't get water anymore and dies. When a tree is lightly stressed by things like lightning or drought, the ambrosia beetles move in. To control all of this cycle, the best thing is to have a healthy tree with proper nutrition and water. The association of the beetle and fungus is interesting. The fungus needs the beetle to carry it around to inoculate trees. The beetle depends on the fungus for its food. It's raising the fungus to eat like we raise chickens. If you see borer holes on the trunk, you need to watch out. That means the tree is stressed.
- B) At this time, Laurel Wilt Disease is not in Hawaii. Of the trees that we have here, cinnamon, bay, and avocado would be the ones affected. Fortunately we don't have a lot of Lauraceae trees in our landscaping. However, Laurel Wilt Disease is in California now, so we need to be on increased alert for it. The USDA has asked the beetle's country of origin for help in identifying a biological control. Most of the spread of the beetles in the Mainland has been through infested firewood. There are now quarantines that ban the movement of firewood from state-to-state, even county-to-county in some areas, but the bans are difficult to enforce.
- C) Symptoms: wilting branches on trees if the leaves are still attached, borer holes with something that looks like a toothpick sticking out. If these symptoms are found, cut through the bark, collect a sample, and get it to HDOA right away.
- D) There is also another Fusarium dieback of avocado and other trees in California. It causes similar symptoms, but at the borer hole, there is white powder around the hole instead of a toothpick sticking out. If you see that, also take a sample and get it to HDOA. It's a different beetle, but it also carries the fungus. It causes discoloration of the xylem and there are insect galleries.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A) Training Workshops

- i) HIOSH/AAA Basic Tree Care Safety Workshop
 - (a) The Safety Workshop netted \$92 overall. Carol will prepare thank you letters for KLIC, MALP, and HILA with summary level budget sheets enclosed.
- ii) TCIA EHAP Workshop June 2012
 - (a) There were 25 people at the EHAP workshop including Kevin Eckert, the speaker. We had six no-shows, with five of those from Molokai.
- iii) WCISA Regional Meeting – Palms Workshop 8/29/2012
 - (a) Carol submitted an article to *Landscape Hawaii* about this workshop and applied for pesticide applicator credits. The workshop will be at McCoy Pavilion.
- iv) Trees and Law Workshop
 - (a) Tabled
- v) LICH Conference 2012
 - (a) Tabled
- B) Public Outreach
 - i) Trees from the Ground Down
 - (a) It looks like March 9, 2013, will work best for the Urban Garden Center and AAA. Carol will let Jayme know.
 - ii) Pruning Young Trees and Shrubs, November 17, 2012
 - (a) This will be a public workshop for Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens at Ho‘omaluhia. We can use the facilities, but not their plants. Sergio and Jamilee may be able to help with containerized young trees and shrubs to prune.
- C) Research Committee
 - i) Literature Review
 - (a) We got an official rejection letter from the Britton Fund, but they did make some useful suggestions for improvement and other possible funding sources.
 - ii) DOT Grant
 - (a) The project is ongoing but we may be able to expand it further. John Montoya, Jr. is a grad student working on the project. He’s going for his Ph.D. He needs information from AAA on what research we need. If he’s there and can publish a

paper covering the research topic, the project would just keep rolling. It could be subjects beyond what the DOT grant specified for research.

D) 2012 Hawaii TCC

- i) J.P. Damon at Moanalua Gardens is very supportive. Steve Connolly sent him an email. The dates have been set for October 6th and 7th. AAA will be doing some work trade with him, but it doesn't seem like he has anything pressing. Dudley called Abner to let him know and Abner's OK with it. Trees of Hawaii usually does the tree work for Moanalua Gardens. It's an exciting venue and J.P. is interested in making this a good event for everyone, including park visitors. We need to coordinate closely with the Gardens and get the publicity synchronized. Steve has talked to a couple of different people about sponsoring the event. Mike at Aloha Power is interested and there may be a couple of other companies. We could have booths for them there. One suggestion was to have older guys compete but only for the work climb at the end. Dudley and Steve need to meet with J.P. again soon to pick the specific trees. We'll stay away from the Hitachi tree.
- ii) Dan reported that Ashlen Aquila was saying that Jared Abrojena wants to come down and maybe Jared's dad as well. Will any of the guys who competed last year from the Mainland be there? Steve Connolly will contact them.
- iii) We should have a cool flyer or program with explanations of what's going on. Amy would be happy to help put that together. Steve Connolly will get Amy the exact schedule of events. J.P. wants to make it something that the Gardens promote. This should be a win-win situation.

E) Landscape and Forestry Pest Identification Cards

- i) Carol reported that we lost the \$6K grant money from HISC because the State won't be able to obligate the funds before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. Scot has done his part. It was the CTAHR publishing people who didn't respond in a timely manner. This means that fewer card sets will be printed.

F) AAA Website

- i) We're transitioning to a new AAA website with the same domain name. Carol will be able to update the new website directly.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A) Pest of the Month – Laurel Wilt (Pest Alert) – caused by a fungus (*Raffaelea* sp.) – see discussion above

- i) Hosts: avocado, camphor (Lauraceae family)
- ii) Distribution: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, California

- iii) Symptoms: Infects the sapwood, restricting the flow of water and causing the leaves to wilt. Wilted trees may exhibit small dowels or “toothpicks” of sawdust protruding from the stem produced by the ambrosia beetles as they bore into the wood
- iv) Vector: Redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*)

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A) Welcome to Gary Weller who helps out Sergio.
- B) ISA Conference *Trees: A Global Necessity* August 11-15, 2012, Portland, OR. Steve Connolly, Dudley, and Steve Nimz are going.
- C) Tree worker Reid Barcelona died on June 11, 2012, while pruning a coconut at Hilton Hawaiian Village. Boyd Ready spoke to Reid’s dad. Apparently Reid wasn’t tied in good to the bucket and he fell. Wesley Jay, his boss, was nearby when it happened.
 - a. Gary Weller reported that he contacted HIOSH about the accident on Sergio’s behalf. The lady on the phone said that they didn’t have the results of the investigation yet. HIOSH administers the OSHA program in Hawaii. Because of the hiring freezes during the past 2 administrations, there has been a reduction in the number of inspectors. The lady that Gary spoke to said that HIOSH wants to pass a new ruling in Hawaii that trees can’t be climbed anymore and all tree work must be done from bucket trucks. Gary told her that HIOSH shouldn’t do a knee jerk rule like that. There is a lot of scrutiny nationwide on Hawaii because apparently we’re the worst state per capita in the nation for tree care fatalities.
 - b. Sergio added that what worries him with accidents, particularly fatalities like this, is that the insurance premiums go up and everyone in the industry ends up paying. We need to figure out how to do more training and get more people to attend.
 - c. Steve Nimz said it’s like herding cats, trying to get workers to go to training. What needs to happen is for the contractors to lose out on work – hit them hard in their pocketbooks. To do a City job, a contractor has to have a Certified Arborist and a Certified Tree Worker doing the work. If the contractor doesn’t have certified people on staff, they don’t get the City contract. DOT has started doing the same thing. Hotels and condominiums need to know about certification too and start requiring it. If they required contractors to designate who on staff would be doing the work and require copies of their certifications, then everyone would be knocking on AAA’s door, asking when is the next Certified Tree Worker or Certified Arborist exam. Everyone would be pushing to get certified. The ultimate goal is to keep everybody alive! On the accidents that Steve has been involved in investigating, it’s not equipment failures that are causing the accidents, it’s untrained people.
 - d. Sergio talked about Pablo who had helped out on Sergio’s jobs. His guys saw Pablo pushing coconuts through the chipper with his foot but they didn’t say anything until Pablo got his foot injured in a chipper with another company. Then they told Sergio

what they had seen. If the guys had said something before to Pablo or even told Sergio so he could tell Pablo, maybe Pablo would still have his foot now.

- e. Steve Nimz added that AAA puts on more classes than anyone else he knows. He doesn't know what else we can do. The only way workers will attend is if it hits them in the pocket. If guys lose the job because they don't have a safety program, Certified Arborists and Certified Tree Workers, it will push them to get those things done. Right now those guys have no exposure to the training or certification programs. Certification won't make them invincible but it could raise the standards across the board. We don't want to be like Europe where you have to get a permit proving that the only way to get to the tree is by climbing before you can work on that tree.
- f. It was agreed that an AAA committee will meet with the HIOSH people and be proactive and explain why tree work only by aerial lift is not a good idea. Explain all of the things that are available. None of the people who have died recently have been certified or have been to training.
- g. If you go to the state website, there's a link to tree safety. It's the same one that Carol emailed around.

D) Andrew reported on a big failure that he took care of recently. It was an ironwood. There was a small stand of 5-7 trees. The tree on the leeward side was 2'-3' diameter. It grew leaning out toward the sun and fell. There was no root system growing in the opposite direction of the lean because the roots from the other ironwoods behind it were blocking the way. It looked like included bark in the root system.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A) The meeting was adjourned by President Steve Connolly at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kwan

PLEASE JOIN US!

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 15, 2012, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Sizzler's Kailua.

Attachments:

1. 2012 AAA Membership Application
2. Pest of the Month – Laurel Wilt

**2012 Aloha Arborist Association
Membership Application**

Please process my membership with Aloha Arborist Association for calendar year 2012.

Membership: \$10 Student \$25 Government Employee \$50 Individual

\$150 Company \$1,000 Lifetime Member Date: _____

Name: _____

Company: _____

If Company Membership, please designate 3 company representatives*:

Address: _____

_____ Website: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Mobile phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

You may publish this information on the AAA website: Yes No

**Company members may send any of their employees to workshops at AAA member rates*

Please send this completed form to Aloha Arborist Association, P.O. Box 893953, Mililani, HI 96789-0953 with a check made payable to Aloha Arborist Association.

Mahalo for your support!