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## **New Web site provides information on strawberry guava threat in Hawaii**

*HILO, Hawaii, March 18, 2009*—The Pacific Southwest Research Station's Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry (IPIF) launched a new on-line resource to provide information about strawberry guava and the threat it poses to native Hawaiian forests. The Web site, which also discusses IPIF's proposal to manage the invasive tree using biological control, can be accessed by visiting <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/ipif/strawberryguava/>.

The site includes discussions of the benefits of healthy forests, the threat of invasive species, and the usefulness of biological control for managing invasive plants. Frequently asked questions and photo galleries also are featured.

Strawberry guava is a South American tree introduced in 1825 that has invaded and degraded extensive areas of native Hawaiian forest. It has the potential to invade 90 percent of the state's remaining forest ecosystems, forming dense thickets that crowd out native species, break up natural areas, and disrupt flow of water to streams and aquifers. Past control methods have been limited to removal by hand, bulldozers, and herbicides, which are feasible only over small areas.

Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry scientists worked with researchers in Brazil to find a natural control agent for strawberry guava to protect remaining native ecosystems. Successful biocontrol of strawberry guava would reduce dependence on chemical herbicides and benefit Hawaiian agriculture by reducing a major host of fruit flies.

Research begun in 1988 culminated last May, when IPIF scientists submitted a proposal to release a carefully studied Brazilian insect to control the spread of strawberry guava in Hawaii, where biocontrol agents have been used for more than a century. The scientists are currently revising a draft environmental assessment and planning public information-sharing meetings for late April through May 2009. The new Web site will have details on meeting dates and locations as they become available.

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