# News Release

U.S. Army Garrison, Pohakuloa

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Seeds for Big Island a'ina

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii—It may take two to do the tango, but it takes two or more people to take care of the land.  At Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA), where nearly half of the employees are natural and cultural resources personnel who ensure that the U.S. Army are complying with environmental laws while supporting military training, one section is focused on gaining the interest of Big Island's younger generation.

PTA's Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) provided an educational bridge between the installation and students during an information session at Haili Christian School in Hilo, Jan. 22.

"We gave students an overview on what we do at PTA in regards to our revegetation efforts," said Dave Faucette, land rehabilitation and management coordinator, ITAM. "I introduced the students to some of the common native plants we have at PTA, explained the importance of partnering up in our revegetation program and how to germinate some of those common plants."

The revegetation program extended to other Big Island schools in the past," he added. "But recently, some of the teachers in place left the Department of Education, moved and

there was no one willing to fill their spot. We looked up other schools and found an interest by Haili Christian School educators."

As Faucette's class continued, fourteen 8th grade students shared a common interest.

"I showed them three different types of plant seeds: the a'alii, aweoweo, and mamane," said Faucette. "We showed them what each seed looked like, how to pre-treat the seeds in order to speed up germination and finally, we had them set up an experiment in which they treated some of the seeds and not others. This was a simple control – treatment experiment. We made it as educational as we could for the students."

"It will take about a month and half before the seeds start germinating," Faucette added. "We'll return to the school, put the seedlings into individual pots, and at the end of the school year, we'll bring the plants back to PTA to acclimate. By early summer, before school lets out or next fall, we hope to bring the students back here, if there is funding, so the students can plant these and other seedlings at PTA If the students can come up for two days, we can put them up in the installation billets. Students really seem to be receptive to the idea of camping overnight up here. If Soldiers or Marines happen to train here at the time, we can have them talk to the students, do demonstrations on self defense and try on field gear."

The PTA revegetation program has been going on for more than five years.

"It's a program that we have been doing for a while," Faucette said. "In the past, we have received support from Federal Highways and Verizon to do various revegetation projects. We have probably planted more than 5,000 seedlings. Some out-plantings have been successful while others are not so because ungulates are the main culprits that lead to the failure of a site. Hopefully, we can find another source of funding to continue this program."

Pohakuloa's acting garrison sergeant major agrees.

"I believe that replanting is the best thing to do at PTA," said Staff Sgt. Gus Morante, installation senior enlisted leader. "ITAM makes sure that the various plants are good for the area. When we have students involved, they are excited and can't wait to visit PTA and plant the seedlings that will grow and beautify PTA."

- 30 –

CAPTIONS:

Dave Faucette, PTA land rehabilitation and management coordinator, Installation Training and Management, shares information to 8th Grade students about native plants and the revegetation efforts at Pohakuloa.

Students prepare trays that will be used for planting the seeds.

Students clip the outer seed shells of mamane seeds so that seeds will be able to germinate in less time when planted.