



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Date:** June 23, 2014 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**Subject:** Flower grower who detected little fire ant in December 2013 receives award  
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Farmer and flower grower Masako Cordray was the 2014 recipient of the Malama i ka Aina Award, presented Saturday June 14th in a ceremony at the Maui Association of Landscape Professionals' Lawn and Garden Fair held at the Maui Mall.

The person nominating her said "Masako's passion for land stewardship extends beyond the boundaries of the land she farms to the entire island.

On December 23, 2013, Cordray tested plant material she had recently purchased for little fire ants. After finding small orange ants on peanut-butter coated sticks she contacted MISC. Confirmation of the detection by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture set off a chain of events that resulted in the discovery of little fire ants at other garden shops and nurseries on Maui and Oahu and has sparked a statewide response "The 45 minutes she took to sample plant material has had immeasurable consequences. This is truly an example of the contributions one person can make" said MISC manager Teya Penniman.

Cordray has influenced invasive species prevention efforts for many years. She was part of grass roots efforts to incorporate an improved biosecurity facility when the Kahului airport was being expanded--actions that led to the completion of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's state of the art inspection facility completed in 2007. In addition to being a farmer, Cordray is an award-winning photographer and videographer and donated much of her time to helping educate the public about invasive species. She worked to create a film about miconia in 2006 and when little fire ants were discovered on Maui in 2009, she approached MISC about creating a film about this devastating species. A true artist, her attention to detail and uncompromising standards are evident in the quality of her work, both in her photographs and floral arrangements.

The Malama i ka Aina Award is presented annually to recognize an individual or business working within the landscape or agricultural community to keep invasive species out of Maui County. The award is sponsored by the Maui Association of Landscape Professionals (MALP), the County of Maui, and the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC).

This year's award featured a glass sculpture of an endemic Hawaiian damselfly, or pinao, by local artist Jupiter Nielsen. Award presenters were MALP Vice-President Allison Wright, Maui County Environmental Coordinator Rob Parsons, and Penniman.

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