



**‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou.  
No breadfruit can be reached when the picking stick is too short.  
There is no success without preparation.<sup>1</sup>**

In Hawai‘i, urban and community forestry projects exist in the context of increasingly high costs of living and an estimated 85 - 90% reliance on imported food<sup>2</sup>. That means these projects can meet Hawaii’s critical need to involve young people in promoting long-term access to nutrient-dense, culturally sustaining foods. Hawaii’s Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) projects stepped up to this challenge.

**University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) Extension, Farm to School Program:** SPROUTS-O‘ahu (Students Propagating ‘Ulu Trees for Schools on O‘ahu) engaged Kaimukī Middle School students in caring for 50 ‘ulu (breadfruit) trees, which were distributed to and planted at 17 public schools across O‘ahu. A popular “All About ‘Ulu” professional development course was created and delivered in two cohorts



to 84 public school teachers from 24 schools on five islands to prepare their school communities for planting, care, and curricular integration of ‘ulu trees.

**Hawai‘i Public Health Institute:** Food Trees for Schools Initiative expanded the scope of Hawai‘i Farm to School (a statewide network) to plant fruit trees in school gardens. The project supported tree establishment and vitality by conducting interviews, consultations, and increased campus buy-in by consulting an advisory panel and offering webinars and in-person planting training.

**MA‘O Organic Farms** expanded on its successful farm internship program by offering new workshops with agroforestry professionals and planting fruit trees in areas formerly dominated by invasive species. This project enhanced the food production potential of these farm sites and encouraged interns to connect their interests in farm work with the field of arboriculture.

Upcoming Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects share intentions to promote food security (two sub-awardees) and provide supportive frameworks for youth in tree-planting initiatives (three sub-awardees). In addition, statewide IRA initiatives will address food production (Community Coconut Project) and support schools (Shade



Trees in Schools). Food sovereignty and place-relevance are shared priorities across environmental, public health, and urban and community forestry sectors. Kaulunani is proud to partner with groups building resilient food forest systems.

**References**

- <sup>1</sup> Pukui, M. K. (1983). *‘Ōlelo no‘eau : Hawaiian proverbs & poetical sayings*. Bishop Museum Press.
- <sup>2</sup> Office of Planning, Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism; State of Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture. *Increased food security and self-sufficiency strategy*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Accessed from [https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/spb/INCREASED\\_FOOD\\_SECURITY\\_AND\\_FOOD\\_SELF\\_SUFFICIENCY\\_STRATEGY.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/spb/INCREASED_FOOD_SECURITY_AND_FOOD_SELF_SUFFICIENCY_STRATEGY.pdf) on May 24, 2024.

**Header:** SPROUTS professional development course participants with a newly planted ‘ulu tree. Photo: Lydi Morgan Bernal, UH CTAHR. **Left:** The Food Trees for Schools team delivers ‘ulu trees to teachers at Waipahu High School. Photo: Cailyn Schmidt, Hawai‘i Public Health Institute. **Above:** Gabe Schachter-Smith of Hawai‘i Banana Source led a workshop on cultivating and caring for various varieties of banana. Photo: MA‘O Organic Farms