

# PACIFIC ISLANDS - YAP

## YAP STATE DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

In the state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia, the traditional agroforestry systems are tightly linked and integrated with the islands' natural ecological systems. The ecosystem services of the natural communities are essential to the welfare and survival of Yap's people. The fertile soil, fruits, building materials, fibers, foods, animals, medicines and clear running water provided by forests are extremely valued on Yap. Healthy trees are essential to the well-being of the community, and they ensure the continuation of these vital services.



Chief of the Bureau of Agriculture, Tamdad Sulong, with Yap Forestry staff, Francis Ruegorong and Valentino Orhaitil, and Amanda Uowolo of the USDA Forest Service and Melai Mai surrounded by breadfruit trees that were for communities in Yap Proper and 11 of the Outer Islands of Yap. Photo Credit: Amanda Uowolo.

In 2004, Typhoon Sudal hit the islands of Yap and disrupted many of the island ecosystem services. This resulted in requests from the community for breadfruit seedlings. Breadfruit, like the coconut tree, is considered on many Micronesian islands, as a tree of life with a lot of uses from the leaves to the roots.

Yap's Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) program initiated a breadfruit project to propagate locally available varieties for the communities. In 2015, Super Typhoon Maysak directly hit several of the Outer Islands of Yap, impacting 90% of crops and trees – including breadfruit. To help mitigate the impacts of Typhoon Maysak, a community based effort to promote the planting of breadfruit called Melai Mai (translates to planting gardens of breadfruit) was initiated and tissue cultured breadfruit plantlets were imported to Yap to increase the number of varieties on the island. Through the partnership of Melai Mai and Yap Forestry, these pest and disease free plantlets (triple index plantlets) were made available to the islands, thus reducing the number of breadfruit trees brought in from the other island states that potentially carry pests and diseases not present in all of the islands of Yap.

For many centuries, Yapese people and breadfruit have depended on each other for their existence, especially for the remote outer island residents. Most of the food, medicine, and materials that come from breadfruit are essential to the livelihood

of the people of Yap. Because of its importance, a breadfruit project was initiated to increase the number of breadfruit trees planted, to identify and revive the local breadfruit tree varieties, and to import additional varieties from other places with variation in fruiting seasons. These actions will help to promote breadfruit availability year-round and will help improve overall food security in the islands. This collaborative effort was done by Yap Forestry, Melai Mai, the Breadfruit Institute, the USDA Forest Service Region 5 U&CF Program, the Forest Stewardship Program, the USDA Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.

In 2017, 450 triple index plantlets of four varieties were brought in and delivered straight to the atoll of Ulithi and Fais Island to assist with the impacts of Typhoon Maysak. In 2018, an additional 500 trees of the two most successful varieties were imported and nursed at Yap Division of Agriculture and Forestry Nursery for distribution on the main island of Yap and an additional 300 breadfruit were also imported and delivered to 11 Outer Island communities.



Delivery of breadfruit trees in August 2018 to Ulithi Atoll for distribution to the islands of Falalop, Asor, Federai, and Mogmog in Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia. Photo Credit: Amanda Uowolo.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Yap State Division of Agriculture & Forestry, Urban & Community Forestry Program  
Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia  
yapucf@gmail.com