

Save Kauai's Forests, a Vine At A Time !

Now in the 20th year, the Banana Poka RoundUp, that plucky mountain event that celebrates Kauai's natural environment, will occur on Sunday, June 21st in Koke'e State Park.

Every year, the colorful event "rounds up" visitors, families and residents for a cool day of mountain music, workshops, exhibits, and family activities that has become a tradition on Kauai's west side. Hui o Laka, the non-profit organization that operates Koke'e Natural History Museum, sponsors the event with support from community volunteers and businesses and Hawaii Tourism Authority ~ County of Kauai.

The festival is named for just one of the many threats to Kauai forests, the resilient and spreading banana poka vines that sport candy-pink blossoms that threaten to crowd out native Hawaiian plants and trees of the upland forest.

Basket-makers may happily spend the day learning to weave the pliable vines into baskets of functional form and beauty to the strains of beautiful Hawaiian music this year played by Uncle Harry Koizumi, Westside Smitty, Paul Togioka, Norman Kaawa Solomon, and Walter Keale. To sign up for the basket workshop (the \$15 fee makes you a member of Hui o Laka), call 335-9975, Ext. 0. Free Oshibana card making will be offered from 10:30 am to 11:30 am. A free family hike on the Berry Flats Loop will leave the RoundUp at 12:30 pm.

The core message of the day-long RoundUp is always in its array of educational exhibits, displayed by a variety of environmental agencies and organizations, with lively hand-on exhibits attended by volunteers and agency representatives who can answer questions.

Exhibitors on June 21st will include Hui o Laka~Kokua Kokee, DLNR - Conservation & Resources Enforcement, Storybook Theatre of Hawai'i, Garden Island RC&D, Kauai Invasive Species Committee, Koke'e Resource Conservation Program, DLNR~DOFAW Na Ala Hele, Firewise, DLNR~DOFAW, Kokee Leaseholders, Kauai Society of Artists, and DLNR's Division of Forestry & Wildlife Kauai Seabirds.

The "One Person Can Make a Difference" volunteer awards will be announced at 12 noon and then join "Russell da Rooster" and Mark Jeffers of Storybook Theatre of Hawaii for the annual children's parade and "Crowing Contest" at 12:15 pm, with child and adult categories.

The Banana Poka RoundUp is supported by Big Save, Lapperts, Costco, Chris Faye Designs, The Blue Orchid, Kauai Beverage and Ice Cream Company, Ishihara Market, The Sound Man, Wranglers Steakhouse, RSI Roofing, TYRI, West Kauai Business and Professional Association, Namahana II Catering, Hopaco, Ventures Associates, Hopaco, Garden Island Security, Flowers Forever, The Waimea Theatre, Kauai Fruit & Flower Company, Nite Owl Tshirts, Aunty Lilikoi, Kauai Kookie Kompany, Jojo's Anuenue Shave Ice & Treats, and Subway Waimea.

The "festival with the funny name" is free and begins at 10 am and winds down at 4 pm. Please carpool, as parking is limited and absolutely no animals will be allowed. For more information, call Koke'e Museum at 335-9975, Ext 0.