



Local News World's 32 most invasive species are found on Guam

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THURSDAY, 12 APR 2012 03:00AM BY LOUELLA LOSINIO | VARIETY NEWS STAFF HITS: 140



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THE Guam Invasive Species Council (GISC) held a meeting at the Guam Department of Agriculture's Plant Inspection Facility in Tiyan yesterday at 10 a.m. Created by Public Law 31-43, one of the mandates of GISC is to develop and lead an invasive species management plan for Guam.

Tony Nakamura, acting port director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine in Guam & CNMI, presented an overview of the core functions, programs and initiatives of the agency, specifically their role in safeguarding Guam from agricultural pets and invasive species.

According to Nakamura, Guam has 32 of the world's 100 worst invasive alien species. With the existence of these non-endemic species on-island, Nakamura said, "It is incumbent upon all agencies responsible for invasive species regulation and enforcement along with stakeholder organizations in Guam to work collaboratively with GISC."

The National Invasive Species Information Center defines "invasive species" as non-native (alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes, or is likely to cause, economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."

### Horrendous damage

Dr. Aubrey Moore, of the University of Guam, said aside from the brown tree snake, there are less popular, non-endemic plants and animals that are causing horrendous damage to the island's ecology.

He cited the example of the Asian cycad scale, an insect that specifically targets cycad plants. These pests, according to Dr. Moore, are the main cause of the decline of the native Fadang, one of the major plants in the limestone forests of Guam. At present, "90 percent of the Fadang population is heading towards extinction," according to Dr. Moore.

Roland Quitugua, chairman of the Northern Soil and Water Conservation District, emphasized the importance of education, outreach and border inspection in preventing the incursion of invasive species on the island.

The online [database](#) provides updated information on the worst invasive species around the world. The database is maintained by the Invasive Species Specialist Group, a network of technical and policy specialists working under the support of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Species Survival Commission.

Quitugua said the public may contact the University of Guam Cooperative Extension Service at 735-2080 to report invasive plant species. For invasive pests, call the Guam Invasive Species Hotline at 475-PEST.

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Representatives from the Customs and Quarantine Agency, the University of Guam and the Department of Agriculture review the latest information on invasive species during a meeting in Tiyan yesterday. Photo by Zita Y.

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