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Aubrey Moore, University of Guam entomologist

# Volunteers take on rhino beetle

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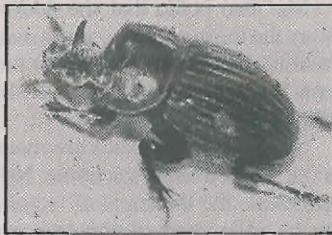
About 45 volunteers in the Department of Agriculture's eradication program took a slightly more peaceful approach to combat the rhino beetle Saturday, gathering 24 pickup loads full of rotting logs, discarded construction materials and other wood products for composting in an empty lot off Old Fujita Road.

Rotting wood is a breeding ground for the beetles, but the trauma and extreme heat of composting should kill any eggs inside, according to Agriculture officials.

The dozens of beetles and hundreds of grubs that were found during the cleanup were drowned in buckets of soapy salt water, although operations chief Roland Quitagua did admit to squishing one.

"They've got to be stopped," he said.

The rhino beetle is an invasive species that was introduced to Guam several months ago and threatens to kill many palm trees on the island if it escapes the quar-



## REPORT IT

▲ If you find a rhinoceros beetle—adult or grub outside of the Tumon area, report it to the Plant Inspection Station at 475-1427. The adult beetle can be identified by a horn on the top

antine area in Tumon, UOG entomologist Aubrey Moore said.

"Once it's in the boonies, it will be probably impossible to stop this thing," Moore said.

Volunteers included employees of the Guam Waterworks Authority, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the University of Guam, the U.S.

Geological Survey and even No

of its head. Grubs are C-shaped and white with pink dots.

## WANT TO HELP?

▲ The University of Guam will hold an invasive species first detection workshop from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Nov. 29 in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences lecture hall. The workshop will teach what residents should do if they spot a new species on Guam. Admission is free. For more information, call UOG entomologist Aubrey Moore at 735-2086.

## Ka Oi Termite and Pest Control.

Landscape Management Services Inc. loaned the chipper for Saturday's program.

Quitagua said volunteer support showed community awareness, an essential key to winning Guam's war against the rhino beetle.

Volunteer Shane Siers, a veteran of a similar battle, agreed.

"Every day that we don't do

something, chances go down of stopping this species," said Siers, a USGS researcher who studies the brown tree snake, Guam's most notorious invasive species. "Before you know it, the damage has been done."

Siers said the scientific world scoffed when it was first suggested that a few snakes were destroying Guam's birds in the 1950s.

Had the community embraced efforts against the snake like it is doing with the rhino beetle, Guam's jungles might not sound so empty, he said.

While not every volunteer knew the historical precedent as well as Siers, the need for action was obvious.

Plant Inspection Station employee Ben Quichocho put it in words anyone could understand.

"Can you imagine this place without any palm trees? Tourism is a backbone of Guam. Would anyone want to come to that place?" he asked.

Quitagua said the department plans to schedule more cleanups in the near future, but no dates have been set.

## TO THE POINT

▲ Volunteers composted decaying wood debris in Tumon Saturday to destroy breeding sites for the rhino beetle, an invasive species that threatens Guam's palms.