



CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT

FY 2023

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The CNMI continues to be threatened by invasive species which has the potential to impact our natural environment, native species, and health. It can wipe out our entire food crops, pets, livestock, culture, and the quality of life of our residents, as well as our tourism industry. It is critical that we find and eradicate initial invasive species infestations before they spread and cause harm. Early detection and rapid response (EDRR) are coordinated set of actions to address the rising threat of an invasive species escaping into our islands. The CNMI has a zero-tolerance policy towards any and all invasive species invasion, and any pest found on our borders will be exterminated immediately. The Invasive Species Program, under the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, has two active high-priority projects that is firmly established in our islands, which are the Mucuna Pruriens Eradication Project, on Saipan, and the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Detection, Prevention, and Eradication Program, in Rota. Both projects are funded by the Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

THE INVASIVE SPECIES TEAM

SAIPAN

Francisco LG. Aldan	Invasive Species Coordinator
Renee C. Babauta	Administrative Assistant
Jesse T. Deleon Guerrero	Invasive Species Technician
Andrew M. Lizama	Invasive Species Technician

ROTA

Mark C. Manglona	CRB Eradication Supervisor
Dannuell Rangamar	CRB Eradication Technician
Frankie Muna	CRB Eradication Technician
Nickolas Songsong	CRB Eradication Technician
Kirido Manglona	CRB Eradication Technician
Raphael Quitugua	CRB Eradication Technician

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Saipan Office: 670-322-9834
Rota Office: 670-532-9495

FUNDING AMOUNT:

Invasive Species Coordinator	\$234,498.00
Mucuna Pruriens Eradication Project	\$130,628.00
CRB Detection, Prevention, and Eradication Project	\$280,351.00

WHAT IS MUCUNA PRURIENS?

Mucuna Pruriens is a non-native invasive species vine that was accidentally introduced to the island of Saipan about 30 years ago. Since then, it has spread throughout the island uncontrollably. Mucuna Pruriens has several negative impacts to the environment and the safety of our citizens. When the plant matures, it emits toxin serotonin and mucunain, which causes severe itching and triggers an allergic reaction. Anyone with a chronic skin disorder, such as eczema or psoriasis, might end up at the hospital, when in contact with the vine.

WHAT IS THE COCONUT RHINOEROS BEETLE?

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is a brown/black horned beetle that attacks coconut palm trees by chewing on its fronds, and feeding its sap until the palm is completely destroyed. The CRB is considered a major pest and is an invasive species in the Pacific. This species has no natural enemies and can inflict devastating loss to any island's natural and financial resources, such as the CNMI's tourism-based economy.

INTERDICTION, DETECTION, AND ERADICATION

In collaboration with Customs and Quarantine Biosecurity, Forestry Program, and NMC CREES, our Biosecurity Team was able to detect, interdict, and eradicate invasive species found on shipping vessels and shipping containers at the Saipan Seaport this year:

- On April 4, 2023, a container from Australia, consigned to Herman's Modern Bakery, was delivered to their compound in Lower Dandan, Airport Road. Cargo consisted of sugar, flour, and shortening. During unloading of the contents, a colony of black ants was found under the bags of sugar. Management decided to report the findings to Customs and Quarantine and Division of Agriculture. Upon inspection, Customs decided to seal the container until the

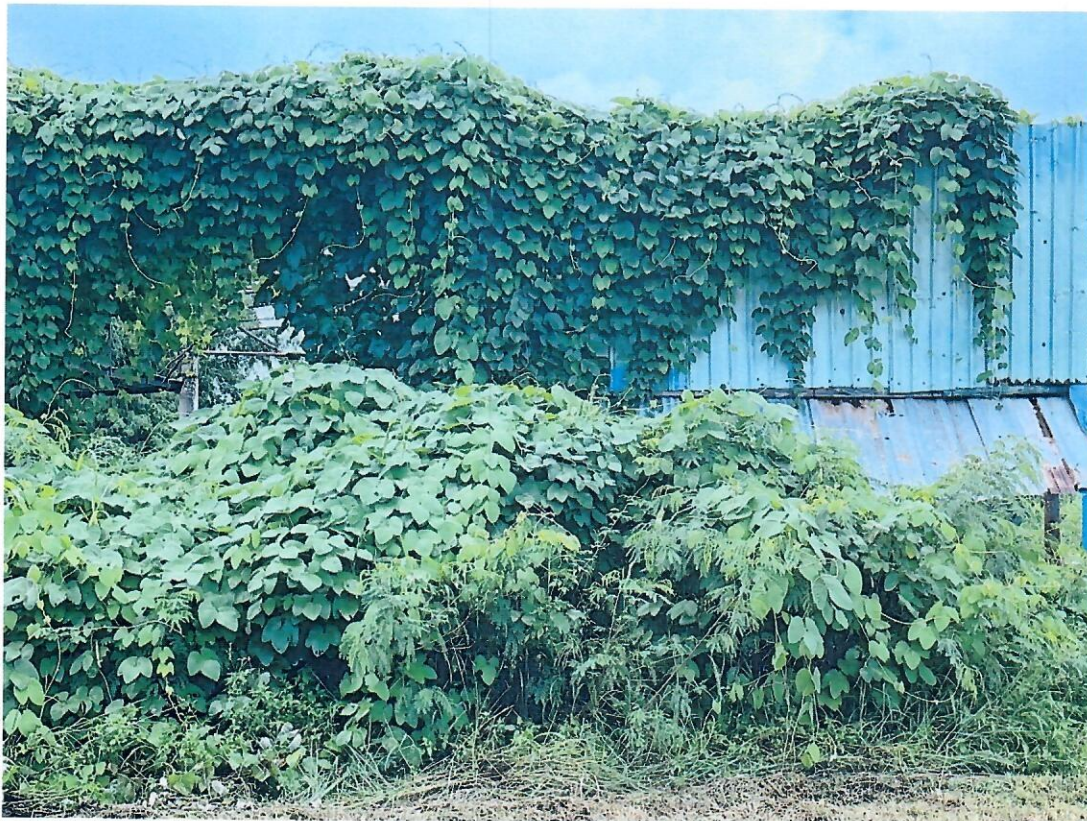
proper authorities were notified and a plan of action organized. The following day, NMC CREES Entomologist, JD Herndon, and I arrived to collect some specimens for proper scientific identification. We met with Michael Guerrero, General Manager of Herman's Bakery, and I informed him to contact his supplier and inform them of the situation, and that the ants will be fumigated, and the contents will be condemned and disposed of at the landfill. On August 7, 2023, a meeting was held at Herman's Bakery conference room, along with the DLNR Secretary, Director of Customs and Quarantine, Director of Public Health, NMC CREES Entomologist, Herman's Bakery Manager and Assistant Manager, and NO KA OI Termite and Pest Control Company. After a lengthy discussion on the incident, and with CNMI's zero tolerance policy for invasive species, it was decided that the container will be transported to the seaport, and the ants will be fumigated and exterminated. The next day, the container was brought to the Marpi Landfill, where the contents were disposed of.

- On April 14, 2023, a colony of honey bees was found on a cargo vessel coming from Japan. Although the bees were spotted on the vessel, Saipan Stevedore was given the green light to offload the containers from the ship. During the offloading operation, the bees were spooked and all flew off the ship and onto the seaport. Suddenly, there was over a thousand invasive species that had landed on the dock. Luckily, the bees congregated under a heavy equipment that was parked at the dock, and NO KA OI pesticide company contained the bees, which were later fumigated and exterminated.
- On the evening of August 28, 2023, at around 6:00 pm, I was called, by the Customs and Quarantine, about a barge that arrived from Guam, and onboard the barge were 7 tractor trailers that had spiders and spider webs. Saipan Stevedore unloaded the containers from the vessel. I drove down to the seaport to assess the situation. I informed Customs to cease operation and contact NO KA OI to schedule fumigation the following day. The shipping agent was informed to resume the unloading operation after 4 hours of fumigation on the following day. On that following day, at 8:00 am, NO KA OI fumigated and exterminated all spiders. Specimens were provided to the entomologist, and the spiders were identified as dome web spiders, which have been documented on Saipan, and a brown widow spider, which has not been detected here before. Our Biosecurity Team intercepted and prevented this invasive species from escaping undetected into our islands.

MUCUNA PRURIENS



PUBLIC LAND IN LOWER BASE, SAIPAN



MUCUNA PRURIENS FLOWER



MUCUNA PRURIENS GPS COORDINATES OCTOBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023



CRB WORKSHOP, GUAM, U.S.A



CRB OUTREACH PROGRAM:

ROTA CAREER DAY 2023



RIDGE TO REEF CAMP, ROTA MP



