

**SERVICE DAY-VOLUNTEERS INVITED
TO WORK WITH OCEAN VIEW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, HAWAIIAN OCEAN
VIEW ESTATES-ROAD MAINTENANCE CORPORATION AND STAFF FROM HAWAI'I
VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK TO**

Remove Fountain grass along roadsides in Ocean View!

WHEN: 9 am to 3 pm, Sunday, December 10, 2006

WHERE: Meet 9 am at Ocean View Community Center

WHAT TO BRING: lunch, water, hat, sunscreen

Volunteers are invited to work with Ocean View Community Association, Hawaiian Ocean View Estates-Road Maintenance Corporation and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park staff to remove fountain grass from roadsides in Ocean View. During the day, volunteers will learn about the increased fire potential caused by fountain grass, and effective and safe methods to remove plants through actual removal along roadsides in the community. Contact David Benitez (tel: 808-985-6085, david_benitez@contractor.nps.gov) for more information regarding the service project.

What is fountain grass? Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is a highly flammable perennial bunch grass native to Northern Africa. The grass was first brought to Hawaii in the early 1900's where it was used extensively for landscaping. The grass escaped cultivation and today invasive populations are spreading on the Big Island, in North Kona and south Kohala where it can dominate the natural landscape.



Why is fountain grass a problem? Fountain grass is a highly aggressive, fire-promoting species. It accumulates large volumes of dead biomass and burns rapidly with high intensity. Fountain grass further intensifies fire potential because it is one of the few invasive species that can colonize young lava flows. As a result wildfires spread unchecked into surrounding forests, pastures and subdivisions. In August 2005, fountain grass was responsible for the spread of a 25,000 ac wildfire that forced the evacuation of Waikoloa. Over \$500,000 a year is spent controlling fountain grass on the Big Island. Aggressive campaigns to remove incipient populations are underway in Maui and Oahu. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture has declared Fountain grass a noxious weed in the State.

What is the best way to control fountain grass? The best way to control fountain grass is to manually uproot or chemically (Roundup) treat individuals. Seed heads are collected in bags and destroyed to prevent the spread of individuals into new areas. You may call David Benitez for assistance removing fountain grass from residential lots in HOVE, at (808) 985-6085.

Fountain grass is invading subdivisions in Kau. Small fountain grass populations are found throughout Ocean View and Hawaiian Ranchos, and on adjacent lava flows. If populations are left unchecked, the grass will continue to spread and result in increased fuel loads and fire hazard in subdivisions. Fortunately, in most areas populations are still small and control efforts to remove or contain the spread of the infestations are still feasible.

For more information on fountain grass in Hawaii go to these websites:

<http://www.hawaii-forest.org/reports/EcolContofFountainGrass.pdf>

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pese1.htm>

http://www.hear.org/pier/species/pennisetum_setaceum.htm