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## Hawaiian Garden Revitalized!

Sat, 06/29/2013 - 05:45 -- suzy sanxter

With the funds from the KGI "Sow It Forward" grant the Kaiiao Community Garden at the Boys and Girls Club of Hilo, with the help of 4-H families and the community is back to life! After we received the grant, we scheduled a 2-day "work party", invited everyone we could, rented a big tiller, bought amendments, borrowed a chain saw, and worked, worked, worked !

We cleared, tilled and amended 1/3 of our large garden (75 x 120 ft. total garden area) well enough that soon we will be harvesting sweet corn, soy beans (edamame), tomatoes, potatoes and later okra, butternut squash, an assortment of beans, and GIANT pumpkins for the 4-H competition in October !

A second 1/3 of the total area was cleared well enough to plant cow peas which will help break up the compacted soil, fix nitrogen and add organic matter to the soil. Volunteers sawed fallen tree trunks, which were a hazard in the overgrown garden and used them to outline a composting area about 15 feet square next to the cowpea area.

We still have 1/3 of the garden to clear, but it will happen! It was awesome how many folks cared enough to show up for such hard work! There were plenty of 4-H children and their families. And in addition, it was like a mini reunion for the originators of the Kaiiao Community Garden and caretakers for the last 7 years. Also from the neighborhood was a lady who is a Hawaiian Cultural Practitioner and also the President of the neighborhood community association.

With the help of these folks and the Master Gardeners, we are planning a native Hawaiian section of the garden, a lei making section, herbs and areas of permaculture, which will help reduce the amount of maintenance labor for such a large garden.

As with any garden, there is much more to do, but everyone involved has found the process fun, educational and personally rewarding.

Image (optional):

