



ISLANDWIDE
Beautification
TASK FORCE

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Over 250 Volunteers plant more than 2,200 Trees During #GUAM Liberation Islandwide Beautification Tree Planting

Hagåtña, Guam – On Saturday July 24, 2021, the Islandwide Beautification Task Force (IBTF), chaired by Acting Governor Josh Tenorio, in collaboration with the Guam Department of Agriculture, and the Merizo Mayor's Office, hosted the #GUAM Liberation Islandwide Beautification Tree Planting. The event received support from more than 250 volunteers, including interns from the Guam Department of Education's 2021 Youth Employment Internship Program, government of Guam employees, and community volunteers.

Over 2,800 trees were planted, as recorded by the Guam Department of Agriculture (DOAG). The trees planted included the acacia (*acacia auriculiformis*), da'ok and lada species. The event was spearheaded by the IBTF summer interns Mariska Cruz, Thomas Demapan, and Ashton Manglona, who planned and coordinated the event with support from the Guam Department of Agriculture Chief Forester Christine Fejeran. Interns were taught that with tree planting, highly fire-prone areas become reforested. Acacia trees are specific to amend soils and shade out grasses, which give native trees a chance to grow, once planted.

"The As Gadao Plantation is a Landscape Scale Restoration project site which was funded by a USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration competitive grant. The plantation is now three years old and already showing signs that benefit the watershed," said Fejeran. "We owe its success to the Mayor's Office and families of Malesso', our diverse community and partners, and our hardworking DOAG Forestry team that works for you Guam - *Biba!* - *Munga masongge Guåhan*. Don't burn Guam!"

"Tree planting helps with the strengthening of the erosion coming from the mountain that eventually makes its way into our rivers and streams that ultimately end up in our ocean waters. The sediments from the erosion smother the life forms in our ocean that includes marine life as well as our coral reef," said Malesso Mayor Ernest Chargualaf. "I would like to thank the Governor, Lt. Governor, Department of Agriculture, and every volunteer involved in these endeavors."

"Thank you to all our volunteers who made this tree planting a success. Events like this highlight the impact that our community can make when we all come together for a common goal, especially when we engage our youth in environmental activities. IBTF will continue to support more tree planting events and similar initiatives to help combat erosion and flooding in our southern villages," said Lt. Governor Josh Tenorio.

To get involved with future events, email ibtfguam.gov or contact 473-1162.

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