



National Environment Week is here

Wed
5 Jun



Apii Rutaki kids put on an outstanding show for a performing arts competition for National Environment Week in 2010. 10060224

This is National Environment Week, and the National Environment Service (NES) has its sights on protecting the coastline.

The theme of the event is 'love your coast', which focuses on being aware of what is happening on the coastline – a theme that is repeated from 2012.

Matthew Rima of NES said the theme is being repeated because the welfare of the coast is of on-going concern.

"It's an issue that will never fade."

The week's events include radio announcements on Matariki FM and visits to schools by NES to talk about good and bad environmental practices.

While not all school events have been confirmed, members of NES will be at Titikaveka College on Thursday to attend the school's 'Go Green Day' – a school-wide celebration of the environment.

NES has already visited Titikaveka College on May 24 to talk about environmental issues that impact the coastline, such as soil erosion, pollution and deforestation.

Rima said the visit taught students about problems the coastline faces, and ways they can help.

"The students wanted to know more. It was a real eye-opener for them. The students were in awe of what they saw," he said.

Rima said it is important to educate young people about how to protect and preserve the environment, because they will be the next generation who will be doing so.

- Briar Douglas

Fruit fly eradication begins

Sat
1 Jun



Tina Akama of the agriculture department along with Tata Vaeau and Roger Nehemia of public health with a container of puru and wood blocks soaked in chemicals to attract and kill the oriental fruit fly. 13053113



Young men from various government agencies help set nails in to poisoned puru husks as part of the emergency response to the outbreak of the oriental fruit fly on Rarotonga. 13053114

It was all hands on deck this week as government agencies banded together in the fight to eradicate the oriental fruit fly which was discovered to be in Rarotonga on May 9.

Since the discovery of the destructive pest, the Ministry of Agriculture kicked into gear its emergency response with support amounting to \$50,000 worth of chemicals and equipment coming from the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in Fiji.

Agriculture's response to the outbreak of the oriental fruit fly has been to bait puru (coconut husks) and wood blocks with poison and distribute them right across the island starting from the Tupapa area where the pest was first discovered.

Along with the poison baited puru and wooden blocks, traps containing a mixture of poison pheromones to attract and kill the male oriental fruit fly have also been set up across the island.

30 people from the agriculture, health and environment ministries as well as concerned members of the public spent the week distributing the baits and traps across Rarotonga and were expected to have covered the entire island between the main and back road by yesterday.

Traps and baits will be distributed through the interior of the island next week.

A gang of men have also been tasked with spraying a mixture of protein, to attract females looking to lay their eggs, and poison as part of the emergency response to the outbreak.

Traps were also sent out to Atiu and Aitutaki to survey if the oriental fruit fly was present on the island.

William Wigmore of the agriculture department told CINews that the trap was set out on Aitutaki on Monday and on Tuesday, officers on the island discovered over 50 oriental fruit fly in the trap.

Wigmore believes that fruit fly is widespread on Aitutaki and would have been there since late last year, probably brought over by yachts that had come via Tahiti where the oriental fruit fly is prevalent.

Experts from SPC will be travelling to Aitutaki to investigate the situation before the emergency response campaign being undertaken on Rarotonga will also be carried out on the island.

Wigmore says that for now – the general public can help the process of eradicating the destructive pest by destroying all ripe fruits by either feeding them to the pigs or burying them.

Wigmore advises that covering fruit in 30cm of soil will help destroy any eggs and larvae already in the fruit.

Bags for disposing of the fruit are also available at the agriculture offices in Arorangi and there are plans to have a number of fruit collection points around the island where people can take their fruit to be disposed of by agriculture officers.

- Matariki Wilson