



PACIFIC ISLANDS AREA

PROFILES IN soil health



Corinne Weller

Waimea, Hawaii

Operation: nursery

Practices: seasonal high tunnel

Local Farmer Blossoms with Soil Health

Corinne Weller is a nursery grower on Hawaiian Homelands in the Puukapu area of the Big Island of Hawaii. She has three acres in a variety of flowers. Corinne says that with the right leadership, guidance, and understanding, we can care for the soil so that it will continue to feed us. There is so much to be grateful for when you look at what is on your table, from the food you eat to the beautiful flowers that adorn it. It all depends on healthy soil.

Making the Change

Compared to traditional farming practices from before, Corinne Weller noticed an 80 percent increase.

"To me, soil health means, if I put back what I take out, it's the only way to continue."

- Corinne Weller, farmer

Corinne's grandparents were taro growers in Waipi'o Valley. Her father also farmed the land for 50 years. He taught her that if she took care of the land, it will be productive in return. Her goal is to pass the nursery operation on to her children and grandchildren.



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They are no longer turning up the soil as often as before. They have also minimized the amount of chemical use on their farm. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Corinne has technical and financial assistance from the NRCS.

The Practices

For Corinne Weller, the benefits to having a seasonal high tunnel meant being able to minimize the damage from wind and rain. Tuberose is a rather fragile flower, susceptible to broken stems from the wind and spotted flowers from too much rain. The high tunnel also eliminates nutrients from washing away in large rainfall events. Corinne manages for organic matter in her soil by adding local composts when she prepares her beds for planting. She maintains ground cover on her farm with a combination of weed mat and turf (conservation cover) and has no erosion hazard.

Healthy Results

With soil health as a focus, Corinne Weller sees a positive change on her farm. They are managing weeds without the use of heavy chemicals. As a result, she notices that her plants have a higher quality, thus making it better for her business. She grows many of the flowers and greenery used in her Hawaiian leis. In addition to the protea, tuberose, and ti, she also has Ohia trees, which provides the blossoms in her tropical floral arrangements.

Contact

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Tuberose growing within the seasonal high tunnel.



Tuberose strung with orchids for a lei.



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