CRB Response Update

March 15 - 21, 2014

- The Navy successfully staged the in-vessel composting operations this week, and temperatures of 170 degrees were sustained for several days. Such high temperatures are predicted to be lethal for CRB. The infested compost pile at the Par 3 Golf Course on Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam is being treated with the compost system and monitored for efficacy. If effective at destroying all beetle life-stages, the original mulch pile at Mamala Bay Golf Course will be similarly treated, and the method will be refined to efficiently treat future detections.
- Tests using a steam sterilizer to treat soil under CRB breeding sites were also carried out successfully this week. A mainland-based expert led the tests to disinfest soil beneath CRB breeding sites by pumping steam into the soil. This method will have limited application due to logistical issues with operating the system, but will be another tool for eradicating the beetle in small areas.
- Surveyors found 24 beetles in traps this week and visually surveyed 27 square miles for coconut tree damage and breeding sites. All of the trapped beetles were found on the Mamala Bay Golf Course where the original infestation is located. The buffer area was not expanded during this reporting period. Operations on Saturday, March 15 were suspended due to hazardous winds.
- So far, none of the trees outside the buffer area with damage signs have been confirmed to be positive for CRB. Rats, tree trimmers, and wind can cause damage signs that are confused with CRB. When damaged coconut trees are detected, traps are deployed nearby and the area is scoured for breeding sites. If possible, lift trucks are used to access the canopy for inspection, or the trees are felled to determine the cause of the damage.