

Air Potato Leaf Beetle Release at ORCA & FMEL



Janice Broda's long battle at ORCA with the exotic air potato vine took a new cool turn, when she found out that a biological control agent, common name air potato leaf beetle, (*Lilioceris cheni*) is available for release as part of an integrated pest management approach to control this currently out of control invasive vine. The beetle originally came from China (isn't everything now days) and has been tested and ready for release.

Here is Ken Hibbard and his assistant with FDACS bringing 434 beetles, half to ORCA and half to FMEL, in small plastic boxes.



Contents of the rearing plastic boxes with air potato leaves that have been eaten by the larvae and red adults ready for release.



Ken Hibbard demonstrating the placing of beetle infested leaves on the air potato vine leaves.



Infested leaf with red adult beetles on vine.



Adult beetles are small (9mm long and 4 mm wide) with the leathery or chitinous forewings (elytra) being red, orange, or brown. The abdomen, thorax, head and legs are black. Additional information on life cycle and photos can be found at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN97200.pdf>



Jean Romano, (ORCA volunteer) pictured here and below, Beth Powell (County Conservation Lands Manager), and I had fun assisting in releasing the beetles, which we hope will help control this terrible pest.



We will be watching this summer for signs that the released air potato leaf beetles and their new larvae will be eating the air potato leaves. FDACS will be bringing more beetles to ORCA.

GO BEETLES!