

Fadang & Fanihi

Endangered species with cultural significance

Micronesian Cycad

The fadang (*Cycas micronesica*) is endemic to Micronesia. This species used to be one of the most dominant trees in Guåhan's limestone forests. Since 2003, the health of the cycad population plummeted because of an invasive scale insect (*Aulacaspis yasumatsui*). In 2015, the fadang was listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. Conservation focuses on recovery of the species so its existence and cultural practices can be preserved for generations to come.

When it was abundant, the fadang's seeds were ground into flour to make titiyas fadang. Because the seeds contain cyanide, the CHamoru people developed leaching techniques to remove the toxins. The seeds were either leached in the river or soaked and rinsed at home for weeks. Families would gather to process and prepare titiyas fadang, which had a particular taste, smell, and texture.

Mariana Fruit Bat

The fanihi (*Pteropus mariannus*), or Mariana fruit bat, is endemic to the Mariana Islands. The fanihi's diet comprises many native fruits, such as the seed coat of the fadang. This bat species is threatened with extinction and has been listed as endangered in Guåhan since 1984, and threatened since 2005 throughout the Marianas. Researchers currently monitor the fruit bat populations in Guåhan and Luta. The fanihi are known to display inter-island migration, which may be highly influenced by typhoons, illegal hunting, and wild fires.

The fanihi was a traditional food among CHamorus prior to its population decline, and is still a special dish in other islands in Micronesia. As food, it is often described as an acquired taste. The fruit bat is typically enjoyed in soup and stewed with coconut milk.

The protection of limestone habitats, snake suppression, and restoration of limestone forests are crucial to recovering the species and making sustainable harvest of fanihi possible again.



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