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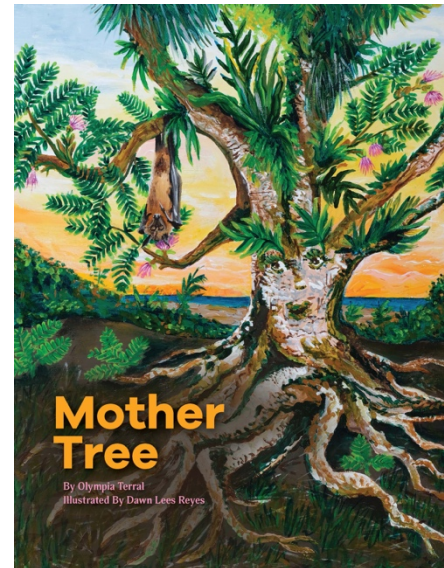
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**Latest children's book from UOG Press shares story of
Guam's last mature *håyon lågu* tree**

A new children's book titled "Mother Tree" tells the story of the last remaining mature *håyon lågu* (*Serianthes nelsonii*) tree in Northern Guam. The book, written by Olympia Terral and illustrated by Dawn Lees Reyes, was published by Taiguini Books, the cultural imprint of the University of Guam Press, in partnership with the UOG College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

The book captures a beautiful friendship between the tree and other native species, including the *fanihi* and *ayuyu*, while teaching young readers the value of protecting the natural world and the jungle creatures.

"Watching the development that has occurred on Guam over the last 30 years, it saddens me that future generations may not know what it feels like to spend time on a beach with native trees offering shade, not large umbrellas and beach bars," Terral said. "I thought if I could tell a story from the point of view of the trees and animals, it may help some people to consider the impact rampant development has on the animals and plants that share this planet with us. It is my hope that this book will inspire people to take action to nurture nature, which ultimately nurtures us all."



The scientific features of the *håyon lågu* and the cultural elements depicted in the story were reviewed by scientists and CHamoru cultural advisors to ensure appropriate representation and capture the significance of the island's native species and their habitats.

“Our island’s one and only mature *håyon lågu* faces grave danger as it is located in Northwest Field, where the surrounding jungle is being prepared for the construction of a U.S. Marines live-fire training range complex,” Terral said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Guam National Wildlife Refuge, Ritidian Unit, worked with the University of Guam to plant *håyon lågu* seedlings in different parts of the refuge to study where they thrive best and in hopes of keeping the species alive.

A series of events related to book launch, including author readings, are being planned for later in the year. However, “Mother Tree” is currently available for sale for \$15 at the University of Guam Triton Store, Bestseller, Faith Bookstore, other local vendors and on Amazon.

“We hope that parents will look for the book at local stores and use it to help children explore our island’s native species and the threats to them,” Terral said.

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