



## CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE REPORT JULY 2003

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### MONITORING/MANAGEMENT/REGULATIONS

**First detection of *Phytophthora ramorum* in Washington State** - On June 5, 2003, the Washington State Department of Agriculture announced confirmation of *Phytophthora ramorum* on four rhododendrons at a nursery in south King County, Washington. This detection was made as a result of trace forwards, determining that the plants were shipped from an affiliated Oregon nursery previously detected with the pathogen.

Four of the 261 plant samples taken in the affected nursery tested positive; results were confirmed by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Additional traces are being conducted with follow-up inspections and testing when warranted. Twelve additional Washington nurseries have been surveyed for *Phytophthora ramorum* since the King County find, with all results found to be negative. Additional nursery surveys are scheduled.

In response to the Washington find, an Emergency Action Order was issued requiring the nursery with *Phytophthora ramorum*-infested plants to:

- Hold all *Phytophthora ramorum* susceptible plants until inspected;
- Destroy all Rhododendrons in the same lot;
- Destroy all susceptible plants within two meters of the infected plants; and
- Hold all susceptible plants located within 10 meters of the infected plants for 90 days, with regular inspections. If no signs of disease are found after the 90-day period, the plants will be released for sale.

**Interception of *Phytophthora ramorum* in a British Columbia (B.C.) plant nursery** - On June 11, 2003, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed that *Phytophthora ramorum* (European mating type) was detected on a Rhododendron plant at a nursery in Greater Vancouver, B.C. The confirmation came as a result of sampling done by the Agency in response to trace-out information from APHIS regarding an Oregon nursery that has plants infected with the pathogen. On June 12, 2003, the CFIA had the infected rhododendron block destroyed.

The B.C. find was suspected on June 5, 2003, when the CFIA, Centre for Plant Quarantine Pests, Ottawa, reported that Rhododendron material at a Greater Vancouver area nursery was potentially infected. Once suspected, all nursery host material was placed under regulatory control, with plant material properly secured to ensure that the disease could not spread, until the final diagnosis was received. The CFIA also began re-sampling the nursery and obtained all information regarding the source and sales of hosts. These records indicated that the infected plant was purchased from another B.C. nursery. CFIA immediately began re-sampling this second nursery, but has confirmed that Rhododendrons at the second site are not infected. Additional host plants at the second nursery are still being tested.



The CFIA has established a *Phytophthora ramorum* Task Force to advise them on activities related to this situation. The Task Force is under the direction of Bruce McTavish, Canadian Landscape and Nursery Association, [bmct@intergate.ca](mailto:bmct@intergate.ca), and consists of all stakeholders, including other federal departments, the horticultural and forest sectors, provinces, and other potentially affected parties. The Task Force is currently reviewing Canada's action plan for dealing with this situation. Their goal is to ensure that appropriate measures are in place should trace-out information identify further infections or should future occurrences of the disease be detected.

On June 17, 2003, APHIS notified the CFIA that a nursery found infected in Oregon had received plant material from a third B.C. nursery that is not affiliated with the two known infested B.C. nurseries. CFIA has begun sampling all host material at the third nursery. Of the 465 samples taken, the 399 tested to date have been found to be negative for *Phytophthora ramorum*. Further investigations on the movement of plant material between nurseries are ongoing. CFIA is working closely with colleagues at APHIS to ensure that trace-out information is shared.

Canada considers *Phytophthora ramorum* a serious threat to its ecosystem and economy. The rapid regulatory action taken in dealing with a block of infected Rhododendron plants is an example of this resolve. The Canadian portions of trace-out activities continue in relation to B.C. and U.S. nursery detections. A broader Canadian survey for the disease is also continuing. In 2002, Canada surveyed 350 sites, including nurseries, botanical gardens, and parks, at which time the 2,200 samples taken were found to be free from *Phytophthora ramorum*.

This report was provided by Shane Sela, Forestry Specialist, CFIA. For more information, contact [selas@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:selas@inspection.gc.ca).

## REGULATIONS

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**The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) revised its enforcement guideline policy for *Phytophthora ramorum*.** The revisions, which apply only to intrastate movement of host material, went into effect July 1, 2003. The changes harmonize California's enforcement guideline policy with the requirements of the federal *Phytophthora ramorum* regulation and the anticipated amendments to the forthcoming revised federal regulation.

Under the revised enforcement guidelines, greenwaste, compost, wreaths, garland, greenery, wood products, and Christmas trees are no longer regulated for movement within the 12 known-to-be-infested counties (regulated area). However, host plant shipments from wholesale nurseries, both within and beyond the regulated area, will continue to be inspected.

Intrastate movement of greenwaste originating within the regulated area to an area outside of the 12 infested counties will be permitted from origin facilities (and



transporters) under compliance agreement with the originating local county agricultural commissioner to a specified facility under CDFA permit outside of the regulated area.

For more information, contact Nick Condos, CDFA, at [NCondos@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:NCondos@cdfa.ca.gov).

**The Czech Republic has implemented a quarantine prohibiting the importation of *Phytophthora ramorum*-susceptible plants from the USA, Germany, and the Netherlands.** It joins the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, and South Korea in imposing a regulation designed to protect against *Phytophthora ramorum*.

#### **MONITORING**

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***Phytophthora ramorum* was isolated from grand fir (*Abies grandis*) Christmas trees on a plantation in Santa Clara County by Cheryl Blomquist, diagnostician, CDFA.** The infected trees were reported in January 2003 by the grower to Santa Clara County Agriculture Department inspectors. The symptoms were limited to branch tip dieback, similar to *Phytophthora ramorum* symptoms on Douglas-fir. The Christmas trees are growing under *Phytophthora ramorum*-infected California bay laurel trees. The grower reported seeing similar symptoms for approximately 10 years.

The grower has entered into a compliance agreement with Santa Clara County; the trees will be re-inspected before the 2003 Christmas season. No grand fir trees from the portion of the plantation with symptoms were sold in 2002. The grower was prohibited from marketing California bay laurel wreaths made from local collections.

Grand fir, identified as a potential host through isolation on January 31, 2003, is considered an “associated plant species” in the federal and state *Phytophthora ramorum* regulations. It will become a regulated species upon positive completion of Koch’s Postulates. (For an explanation of Koch’s Postulates, see the [COMTF April 2003 newsletter](#).)

**Background on grand fir** - In addition to Christmas trees, grand fir is used for lumber, plywood, pulp for paper, industrial crating, and furniture parts. Most of these products require grand fir wood, which, to date, has not proven to be susceptible to *Phytophthora ramorum*. So far only branches less than 1” in diameter have been observed as symptomatic. (See [SlideShow-Hosts and Symptoms](#) for images of infected grand fir.)

Native grand fir grows in stream bottoms and valleys as well as on the mountain slopes of northwestern United States and southern British Columbia. It also grows in western Washington and Oregon as well as in northwestern California (as far south as Sonoma County) along the Pacific Coast. Its natural range in the continental interior extends into northern Idaho and western Montana. In northern California, grand fir grows from near sea level to about 1,525 m. or 5,000 ft.

Background on grand fir can be found at <http://forestry.about.com/library/tree/blgrandf.htm> under “What you need to know about forestry.”



***Phytophthora ramorum* was isolated from redwood branch needles (*Sequoia sempervirens*) in Redway, Humboldt County's only known infested area.** The isolation was made by Cheryl Blomquist, CDFA. All previous isolates in the Redway area have been from California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*).

#### RESEARCH

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**Over \$1 million in Sudden Oak Death-related research projects is currently being awarded by the USDA-Forest Service, Pacific Southwest (PSW) Research Station and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF).** Thirteen projects are being funded of the more than 50 proposals that were submitted in response to the request for proposals issued in April 2003. Proposals will be solicited in the next few months for identified research needs not yet being addressed in current projects. A list of funded projects is posted on the COMTF website at [FY03 Funded Research](#). For more information, contact Patrick Shea, USDA-FS, PSW Research Station at [pjshea@davis.com](mailto:pjshea@davis.com).

#### EDUCATION

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**A revised reference list of *Phytophthora ramorum*-susceptible plants has been compiled by Lesley Cree, CFIA.** The document provides comprehensive tables of confirmed natural hosts, results from laboratory susceptibility assays, and information on geographical distribution and mating type, plus a list of references. The document can be accessed at through the COMTF website at [Hosts of \*Phytophthora ramorum\*, CFIA, July, 2003](#).

Photos of *Phytophthora ramorum* symptoms on Camellia, Viburnum, Kalmia, and other horticultural plants are now available on the COMTF website. To view the slide show, go to [Slide Show – Hosts and Symptoms](#).

**Washington held its first Sudden Oak Death informational meeting July 9, 2003 at Washington State University, Puyallup Research and Extension Center.** The meeting brought together horticulturists, land managers, regulators, researchers, and others concerned about *Phytophthora ramorum*. All 140 tickets available were sold. The meeting was videotaped and streamed via the Internet. With the recent *Phytophthora ramorum* finds in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia nurseries, interest levels were high. For more information, contact Gary Chastagner, plant pathology professor, Washington State University, at [chastag@wsu.edu](mailto:chastag@wsu.edu).