



## REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE MAY 2002

---

### MONITORING

---

*Phytophthora ramorum* has been confirmed on *Viburnum tinus* at a nursery in England. All of the affected plants were destroyed. The origin of the plants is under investigation. This is the first finding of *Phytophthora ramorum* in England. For more information, go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/what.htm>.

*Phytophthora ramorum* was also isolated from rhododendron plants at a nursery in Poland. Pathologists in Poland isolated 3 cultures from 5 plants in 2000. According to scientists the plants originated in Germany. The infected plants were destroyed.

### EDUCATION

---

On April 10, 2002, the Task Force and CDFA sponsored the second “Basic Management of Sudden Oak Death on Forestlands” training session. This was the second training session offered to Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and personnel with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), USDA Forest Service, County Agriculture Departments and others that are responsible for sampling, confirming the presence of Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*), setting up timber or firewood sales in areas with the pathogen and enforcing Sudden Oak Death regulations. It included both lecture and a hands-on field session at China Camp State Park. Those who attended and meet all other qualifications are now considered “official” regulatory samplers by CDFA. The class was overbooked, with 135 people in attendance, including approximately 50 RPFs.

A SOD-sampling and regulation compliance training session for arborists is being developed in collaboration with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), Marin County for 6/6/02 in San Rafael. As with the “official” sampler training, this class will have a morning lecture and an afternoon hands-on field session at China Camp State Park. The class will cover material similar to that of the “official” sampler training, but will be adapted to the needs of arborists. After completion of the course, arborists will be considered “certified” by CDFA and allowed to take *Phytophthora ramorum* samples for diagnostic purposes. Registration materials for the course are available at <http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>.

UCCE, Humboldt County conducted a SOD awareness training session 5/1. The intention of the session is take a proactive approach in educating those in the field on the issues surrounding SOD as well as how to identify the disease in the event that Humboldt is found to be an infected county.

Task Force trailhead posters warning visitors of their regulatory SOD obligations as well as best management practices are being produced for distribution and posting. State Parks will receive 200 posters and CDF will have 800 posters for those who need them.

**FUNDING**

---

COMTF sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget 3/18/02 requesting that they reconsider their denial of the Secretary of Agriculture's request to release funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation to support critical research and urgent management actions on Sudden Oak Death.

Assemblymembers Nation and Migden's AB2251, calling for \$6.2 million in State funds for Sudden Oak Death management, monitoring, research, and education was presented to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee on 4/15/02 and passed unopposed. The bill was forwarded on to the appropriation committee. Co-authors include Keely, Strom-Martin, Wiggins, Koretz, Senator Chesbro, and Senator McPherson.

The Pitch Canker Task Force and the California Oak Mortality Task Force are planning a joint fundraising golf tournament on Friday, September 27, 2002. The intent is to raise money and public awareness of Pitch Canker and Sudden Oak Death. The event will be hosted by the Pebble Beach Company at their Del Monte Golf Course in Monterey. Fundraising will occur through sponsorships at the \$1000, \$2000, and \$2500 level. Sponsorships and prizes will be solicited through those in the private sector. All proceeds will be split between the Task Forces.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) is providing \$50,000 for research to evaluate composting as a treatment for plant materials infested with *Phytophthora ramorum*. Pat Paswater and Howard Levenson of CIWMB proposed the project and the research will be carried out by Matteo Garbelotto at UC Berkeley.

Senator Boxer's Sudden Oak Death amendment to the Farm Bill failed in mid-April as a result of the demise of most of the bill's forestry title.

**RESEARCH**

---

Over \$1 million of SOD research grants were awarded by USDA-Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Grants were provided for basic biology, treatments, and public safety. Pat Shea, USDA-FS Research and Rick Standiford, UC Berkeley coordinated the Request for Proposals.

**REGULATIONS**

---

The end of the comment period for the United States Department of Food and Agriculture (USDA) federal quarantine regulations for *Phytophthora ramorum* was 4/15/02. The date for release of the final version of the regulations is yet to be determined.

The California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF) submitted a formal request 4/12/02 to APHIS asking that they accept composting studies conducted by Matteo Garbelotto in their final regulations so it can be used as an effective treatment for infested materials.



The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), after consultation with the Agricultural Commissioners from each of the ten infested counties, issued a memorandum 4/9/02 allowing arborists to be certified samplers and submit non-regulatory SOD samples to the CDFA laboratory for diagnosis. Arborists must be trained on SOD symptom recognition and sample collection techniques. Negotiations are continuing with CDFA to broaden the rules so any trained person may be a non-regulatory SOD sampler. Official regulatory samples may only be submitted by government employees or trained Registered Professional Foresters.

On May 3, 2002, the United Kingdom imposed a ban on imports of plants from parts of the United States and added controls on wood to protect native trees and shrubs from *Phytophthora ramorum*. A number of new measures were announced, including a ban on the import of rhododendron, viburnum, vaccinium, and oak planting material from areas of the U.S. where the disease is known to occur and an extension of current controls on imported oak wood to include wood derived from all host trees originating in the affected areas of the U.S. For further information, go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/plant/what.htm>.

#### **PRESS COVERAGE**

---

The Press Democrat, Associated Press, and LA Times Wire Reports reported on 4/3/02 and 4/4/02 that there is concern about Sudden Oak Death spreading to vineyards, so studies are underway to test grapevines for susceptibility to *Phytophthora ramorum*. Studies are actually only in the planning phase. Researchers do not suspect grapes to be vulnerable any more than any other plant in an infested area not known to be affected by the disease. To date there have been no findings of infected grapevines.

USA Today reported on Sudden Oak Death (SOD) 4/8/02 and featured a SOD photo gallery on their web site. It was a relatively lengthy overview of the major issues surrounding the disease. Topics included an overview of SOD, its origin, its potential impact on redwood and the Sierra Nevada foothills, and the concern of possible spread to the rest of the nation.

#### **TASK FORCE BUSINESS**

---

Aurelio Posadas (CDFA) has replaced Nick Condos (CDFA) as a Regulations Committee Co-Chair and Executive Committee member.

Katie Facino (CDF) will be replacing Kim Keirnan (UCCE) as an Education Co-Chair in June.

The Task Force Operating Guidelines have been approved and finalized. These guidelines outline the Task Force mission, basic structure and committee roles, duties of Task Force officers, terms of office, and decision-making process.



**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

---

The next COMTF meeting will be held May 14 – 15, 2002 in Santa Rosa. On May 14<sup>th</sup> a field trip will highlight Sudden Oak Death in Sonoma County with presentations and a tour of symptoms and impacts at Jack London State Park. On May 15<sup>th</sup> Task Force committees will meet at the Finley Center in the morning, followed by presentations to the entire task force on research, regulations, and impacts on the ornamental/nursery industry. Presenters will be coming from California, Oregon, and the East Coast.