

## **Cleaning recommendations to prevent the spread of *Phytophthora ramorum*, cause of Sudden Oak Death**

If you travel to or live in an area infested with *Phytophthora ramorum*, cause of Sudden Oak Death, there is a chance that you could unwittingly spread the pathogen to other areas. What can be done to prevent spread? The best way to address these questions is to look at risk – some activities and situations clearly present a higher risk of spreading the pathogen.

### *Higher risk*

- Movement of infected plants or plant parts. If infected plants are transported to a suitable environment with suitable hosts, chances are very high that the pathogen will become established.
- The rainy season is the time when the pathogen is actively producing spores and spreading naturally. It is also the time when you are most likely to become contaminated with the pathogen. Detached plant leaves, organic material and soil, which may harbor spores of the pathogen, are more likely to stick to you, your pet, your vehicle and equipment when they are wet. Contamination is more likely in settings where native hosts of *Phytophthora ramorum* are common, such as wildlands and developed areas that are within or adjacent to areas of native vegetation.

### *Lower risk*

- The pathogen does not readily produce spores or spread naturally under dry conditions. Dry soil and organic material will not readily stick to you, your pet, or your equipment.
- Sudden Oak Death is not common in urban settings or suburban areas where native vegetation has largely been removed.

## **Simple precautions to prevent pathogen spread**

### **If possible stay out of the wildland in the infested area altogether**

- Do not collect or transport host plant material from an infested or quarantined area
- Take precautions to avoid becoming contaminated with the pathogen, such as
  - Avoid entering infested areas during wet conditions
  - Keep vehicles on paved and graveled surfaces when conditions are wet
  - Stay out of areas of wet soil and mud
- If you do enter an infested area during wet conditions, check yourself, your pet(s), vehicle and equipment for accumulations of mud, soil, organic material, and detached plant leaves. Remove these accumulations before traveling to an area that is not infested.
- If you live in an area infested with *Phytophthora ramorum*, chances are some of your belongings may be contaminated by the pathogen. If you travel to an area that does not have the disease, be sure that the belongings that you take with you are clean – shoes, bicycles, pets, vehicle, etc.

## **Some suggestions for removing contaminated mud, soil, and organic material from yourself and your belongings**

The risk of spreading *Phytophthora ramorum* increases in direct proportion to the amount of accumulated mud, soil, organic material and leaves that may be adhering to you, your pets, or your belongings. *Any effort that you make to remove these contaminants is likely to be beneficial.*

Below are some specific recommendations for various user groups.

Hikers / Runners: Carry cleaning materials in your car to use at the end of your visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris. Once contaminants have been removed from your shoes, rinse them with water if it is available. An additional level of sanitation can be achieved by washing with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol or a 10% bleach solution. If you take your shoes home to clean them, keep any plant debris, mud, and rinse water away from your landscaping. Carefully dispose of these contaminated materials in the garbage or down the drain. If you are frequently in and out of contaminated sites consider committing footwear for use in that environment only.

Dog walkers: Keep your dog clean by staying on paved paths and away from contaminated forest areas. Clean any plant material and mud from your dog's coat and paws with a towel and brush, or rinse off before leaving the site.

Bicyclists: You can carry cleaning materials in your car to use at the end of your visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris from your shoes, clothes, and bike. Once contaminants have been removed, rinse your shoes and bike with water if it is available. An additional level of sanitation can be achieved by washing with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol or a 10% bleach solution. If you take your bike home to clean it, keep any plant debris, mud, and rinse water away from your landscaping. Carefully dispose of these contaminated materials in the garbage or down the drain.

Equestrians: Keep yourself and your horse clean by staying on paths and away from contaminated forest areas. Clean any plant material and mud from the horse and its hooves with towels and brushes before leaving the site.

Plant collectors (mushrooms, firewood, etc.): Carry cleaning materials in your car to use at the end of your visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris. Remove contaminants from your shoes, clothes, and tools. You can rinse shoes and tools with water if it is available. An additional level of sanitation can be achieved by washing with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol or a 10% bleach solution. If you take your shoes and tools home to clean them, keep any plant debris, mud, and rinse water away from your landscaping. Carefully dispose of these contaminated materials in the garbage or down the drain. If you are frequently in and out of contaminated sites consider committing footwear and tools for use in that environment only.

Off-road vehicle operators (motorcycles, OHV's and FWD's): If you drive off-road during the wet season, mud can collect on your vehicle and drop off in un-contaminated areas. Take your vehicle to the closest car wash before driving out of the area to ensure removal of this contaminated material.

Campers: Camping equipment that may have collected plant debris and mud, such as tents, should be cleaned out before leaving the campground. You can carry cleaning materials in your car to use at the end of your visit. A stiff brush and towels are useful items for removing mud and other debris. Once contaminants have been removed, an additional level of sanitation can be achieved by spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol or a 10% bleach solution.