

NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 8

The plant disease caused by a fungus-like microorganism, Phytophthora ramorum, is referred to as “Sudden Oak Death” because of its association with premature death in tanoak trees. This disease occurs in Northern California wildlands and affects several native California plants, including Douglas-fir. Susceptible plants can become infected through exposure to water borne infective agents via rainfall, splash or drainage. In addition to natural spread of the disease, it can also be transmitted by human transport of infected plants and their parts to susceptible new plants in the environment. Good cultural practices and restrictions on the movement of infected material can minimize the risk of spreading the disease. For more information, please refer to website links for the U.S. Department Of Agriculture/Plant Protection And Quarantine (www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/pramorur/), the California Department Of Food And Agriculture (www.cdffa.ca.gov), the California Oak Mortality Task Force (<http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf>), or contact your local County Department Of Agriculture.

Common Name: Douglas-fir

Scientific Name: Pseudotsuga menziesii



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Forestry Dept.

- Karuk Name: itháriip (Douglas-fir tree)
 itharip'arákaas (old fir tree)
 ichániipich (little fir tree, 15-20 feet high)
 ichaníp'uusich (fir cone)
 míitah (dry fir limbs or twigs)
 mitahásxaay (green fir limbs)
 tahpúsip (young fir tree, limbs of big fir trees)
 tahpúsipith (Douglas-fir tree 4 feet high or smaller)
 táhpuus (young fir tree or fir bough)
- Kashaya Pomo Name: q^hawam?
 q^hawam? qahwe (douglas-fir pitch)
- Cahto Name: tc'ibee, tc'uubee
- Yokia Name: ká lā' shā, nā ká'
- Yuki Name: nū (the tree)
 nū fal (needles)

(see back)

Yurok Name: stowstek' (small fir tree)
 trprnr' (large fir tree)
 wrhkwich (fir bark)

The most common use today is probably for firewood.

Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Karuk: Young sprouts were used to make tea, and boughs were used to season barbecued elk or deer meat. An infusion of young sprouts was used for colds and boughs were used as an antiseptic. The plant was used as a sweathouse fuel and soot from burned pitch was rubbed into punctures for tattooing. Boughs were considered "good luck".

Ohlone: Tea was brewed from the tips of branches and used to treat lung congestion.

Paiute: Boughs or branches were used to flavor barbecued bear meat. They were also used on the floor of sweathouses and for camping beds.

Pomo: Needles were used in a sweatbath to treat rheumatism and a decoction of buds was used to treat venereal disease. Pitch was used as a glue and the wood was used as firewood.

Round Valley Indians: Fresh needles were used as a substitute for coffee. Small roots were used to make baskets and small branches were used as torches for fishing.

Yuki: Fresh needles were used as a substitute for coffee. Tea, made from the bark, was used to treat colds, coughs, sore throats, intestinal pains and excessive menstrual bleeding. Needle tea was used as a tonic for colds and urinary tract ailments. Boughs were sometimes used in sweatlodges and branches were used to construct shelters when camping out.

Yurok: Young sprouts were used to make tea and chewed as candy.