

NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 6

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 Tanoak. 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: Tanoak

Scientific Name: Lithocarpus densiflorus



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Forestry Dept.

Cahto Name:	saahching (tanoak tree) ch'int'aang, ch'int'aan (acorns in general)
Central Sierra Miwuk:	watýk'a (acorn in general)
Coast Miwuk Name:	'umpa (acorn in general)
Concow Maidu:	hā' hā
Esselen Name:	palatsa (acorn), ha'as (oak)
Inezeño Chumash Name:	'ixpaniš (acorn in general)
Karuk Name:	xunyêep (Tanoak tree) xúnpuut (Tanoak acorn)
Kashaya Pomo Name:	bi?du (acorn in general), cíšq ^h ale (beautiful tree)
Paiute Name:	wea (acorns)
Tongva Name:	wet (oak in general)
Tsungwe Name:	kinehsta:n

(see back)

Yuki Name: shō kish (acorn) , cokci ol
Yurok Name: ho'mono' (tanoak)
rooget (tanoak bark)

The most likely use for tanoak today is for firewood.

Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Coast Miwok: Acorns were stored for year round consumption.

Costanoan: Acorns were used for food. Bark was used to prepare dye. An infusion of bark was used to treat face sores and held in the mouth to tighten loose teeth.

Hupa: Acorns, a dietary staple, were roasted and eaten. They were also used to make mush, meal, bread, biscuit, pancakes and cake.

Karuk: Acorns were a dietary staple. Acorns were shelled, dried, pounded into a meal, leached and used to make a gruel. Acorns were used to make a flour. Acorn flour was used to make a paste, and gruel, flavored with venison and herbs. The paste was made into patties and baked in hot coals. Flour and whole acorns were stored for winter use.

Mendocino Indians: Acorns were leached and used for food.

Ohlone: Acorns were ground into flour, sifted, leached and used for mush, or fried or baked bread.

Pomo: Leached acorns were used to make mush (moldy acorns mixed with whitened dry ones), gruel, soup, and meal or flour. Flour was used to make bread or pancakes. Acorns were sun-dried before storing. Acorns, with their high tannin content, were used as cough drops. The bark was used by a ceremonial figure (wale-pu) as tinder to create flashes of light. Acorns were used in the “first fruits” ceremony in October, after the first rainfall. Strung acorns were twirled in a special way to make music.

Shasta: Acorns were a dietary staple. Acorns were pounded, winnowed, leached and made into bread, mush, or a thin soup.

Tataviam: Acorns were eaten frequently.

Tolowa: Acorns were a dietary staple. Bark was used to dye baskets and fishing nets so that fish could not see them.

Tongva: Acorns were collected and stored in graneries. They were dried, cracked open, and peeled as needed.

Tsungwe: Acorns were part of the daily diet. Acorn meal was cooked in baskets, with hot rocks, to make acorn soup.

Yuki: All kinds of acorns were used but this was the favored species. Ripe acorns were ground and leached with hot water. The ground meal was salted and used to make soup, mush, bread and pancakes.

Yurok: Acorns were a dietary staple. They were leached and ground into flour or dough for bread. Acorns were also used to make soup.