

Sudden Oak Death: Issues for Traditional Plant Gatherers

What is Sudden Oak Death?

Sudden Oak Death is a forest disease caused by a newly discovered, invasive pathogen named *Phytophthora ramorum*. Since the disease was first noted in California in the mid 1990s, tens of thousands of susceptible oak and tanoak trees have died.



Which plants are affected?

There are now over thirty plants known to be infected by this pathogen. Host plants of special concern for traditional plant gatherers include tanoak, madrone, manzanita, toyon, big leaf maple, California hazel, coast redwood, buckeye, black oak, hazelnut, huckleberry, and California bay laurel/pepperwood/myrtlewood. Some common landscaping plants are also hosts, such as camellias and rhododendrons.

Tribal Concerns

- The pathogen is not toxic to people or wildlife.
- Approved chemical treatments for oaks and tanoaks are thought to be benign, and are not expected to affect acorns.
- We don't yet know how wildlife populations may be affected as tanoak and oak trees die.
- Some oaks seem to be resistant to the disease, and even in areas with high mortality there are trees surviving.
- It is unclear how traditional land management practices may impact the spread of the disease.
- There is concern that widespread gathering of plants for cultural purposes may move the pathogen great distances and increase the likelihood of disease.

What does it look like?



Tanoak



Oak



Bay/Pepperwood



Maple



Rhododendron



Camellia

How does it spread?

Moving infested plant parts, soil, or water can increase the spread of the pathogen and may cause new outbreaks of the disease. State and federal law prohibit movement of these materials out of the regulated area. Disease symptoms can be quite subtle, so it is safest to limit movement of all host plant material.



Can you distinguish the symptoms on this bay tree?

What can I do to minimize spread?

- Avoid collecting plants during the wet season, and in areas that appear diseased.
- Do not collect plants that look diseased.
- Remove soil from shoes, boots, tires, horse hooves, etc.
- Remove all plant material (needles and leaves) from your body, baskets, vehicles, or other containers.
- Do not collect and transport water from infested sites.
- Process and cook or dry the material as soon as possible.
- When storing material, keep it dry and out of any standing water.
- Boil water used to soak plant material before disposal.
- Burn excess materials if possible.



For More Information
www.suddenoakdeath.org

Janice Alexander
Regional Outreach Coordinator
UC Cooperative Extension
415.499.3041
jalAlexander@ucdavis.edu

Susan Frankel
Plant Pathologist
USDA-Forest Service
707.562.8917
sfrankel@fs.fed.us