



News Advisory

2016 RAINS MAKE 10TH ANNUAL SUDDEN OAK DEATH SURVEYS ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT YET

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BERKELEY—With 2016 rain levels the highest they have been in 4 years for California, sudden oak death (SOD) spread is expected to be on the rise. Having so much at stake, researchers are calling for the 10th annual spring SOD Blitzes (citizen scientist surveys for SOD) to be the most well attended to date.

“This year is going to be one of the most critical yet for monitoring the more than 500 miles of susceptible and impacted coastal landscapes for SOD. We are calling for as many seasoned and novice SOD Blitzers as we can possibly get to join the cause. Their help will be critical to informing communities about disease encroachment while also helping to determine how effective current treatment and management efforts have been at reducing infection rates and protecting at-risk trees,” said Matteo Garbelotto, UC Berkeley faculty who runs the Blitzes.

When: Spring 2016, Weekends
April 9 – June 4, 2016
1-hour training sessions - Required

Where: For locations and local details, go to
https://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottowp/?page_id=816

Cost: FREE
Attendees should bring mobile devices or GPS units if they have them.

People living or recreating near areas known to be impacted by SOD are encouraged to participate in a Blitz. As symptomatic California bay laurel leaves generally precede oak and tanoak infections, and are often the first sign that *P. ramorum* is in a location, participants will be trained to identify and collect symptomatic bay leaves and record sample locations. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their smartphone to the training with the free "SODmap mobile" app

already installed (SOD distribution map of laboratory-confirmed positive and negative samples in California, not including nurseries) as it can help in identifying potential collection locations.

Blitz samples will be taken to the UC Berkeley Garbelotto lab to determine the presence or absence of the pathogen. Results will be posted online in the fall to SODmap (www.SODmap.org) and to the SODmap mobile app (www.sodmapmobile.org). When used as instructed, these two tools will help inform thousands of people as to the presence and risk of SOD at a given location.

SOD Blitzes are made possible by the work of local volunteers, along with funding from the PG&E Foundation and the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry. Not only do these volunteers provide invaluable data for the fight against SOD, but they also help lead the charge in proactive SOD management on private property, with Blitzers 10 times more likely to actively manage their properties, collectively helping to slow disease spread.

SOD is a serious invasive disease (caused by the plant pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*) that is killing tanoak, coast live oak, California black oak, Shreve's oak, and canyon live oak trees in California. It is the primary cause of tree mortality in coastal California, with more than 3 million trees having died in 15 counties* since its discovery in the mid-1990s. A water-loving organism, the pathogen continued to spread during the drought, but at a much slower rate than previously wet years.

For more information on SOD Blitzes, go to www.sodblitz.org. For more information on Sudden Oak Death and *P. ramorum*, go to the California Oak Mortality Task Force website at www.suddenoakdeath.org or contact Katie Harrell at (510) 847-5482 or kpalmieri@berkeley.edu.

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*Alameda, Contra Costa, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, and Trinity Counties