



News Advisory

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY JOINS UC BERKELEY IN SUDDEN OAK DEATH CITIZEN SCIENTIST SURVEYS – KICKOFF IN SANTA CRUZ

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SANTA CRUZ—UC Berkeley welcomes a new partnership with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) in hosting the 2013 Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitzes in coastal California communities where *Phytophthora ramorum* (the pathogen that causes SOD) is found.

Garbelotto, the UC Berkeley faculty who ideated and organizes the annual SOD Blitzes, stated, “This partnership is essential for the future of the Blitzes, and I am delighted CNPS joined UC Berkeley to help cope with one of the most significant threats to oaks and tanoaks - not only in forests, but also in residential neighborhoods.”

CNPS has worked to protect and celebrate California’s native plant heritage for nearly 50 years. According to Executive Director Dan Gluesenkamp, “CNPS members are very worried about the effects of SOD, and they are grateful for the efforts of the Garbelotto lab to understand and address this disease. We are excited to join the SOD Blitz effort to educate the public, expand important detection efforts, and prevent further spread of this terrible plant killer.”

The community-based outreach campaign kicks off this weekend in Santa Cruz at the University of California Santa Cruz Arboretum. “We are excited that this training will provide a genuine opportunity for our community members to gain the necessary skills to help prevent the spread of SOD. Learning where the pathogen is in our community at large will help us sustain the health of our trees,” said Brett Hall, UC Santa Cruz Arboretum Director and CNPS State Board President.

When: Training and Organizational Meeting
Friday, April 12, 2013
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Where: UCSC Arboretum
<http://arboretum.ucsc.edu/visit/directions/>
Santa Cruz, CA

Cost: FREE
Attendees should bring GPS Units if they have them.

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 at each of the 18 different SOD Blitzes this spring will be trained to identify and collect symptomatic bay leaves and record sample locations. Within 48 hours of collection, samples are taken to the Garbelotto lab for processing to determine the presence or absence of the pathogen. Results from all blitzes are published on an online SOD Blitz map at the beginning of October each year.

“Last year more than 500 citizen scientists participated in surveying over 10,000 trees,” said Garbelotto. “This outreach is really important because it not only teaches people how to look for the disease, but it also helps them to monitor for it in their community, allowing them to identify new outbreaks quickly.”

Community members living near known SOD areas are encouraged to attend a Blitz and become engaged in the issue at a local level. Follow-up local sessions in the fall will present the mapped outcomes of the blitzes. Attendees will learn how to correctly use the distribution maps, determine risk of infection for their oaks and tanoaks, and learn science-based recommendations to help prevent and manage SOD. Some management options are available (sanitation, chemical preventative treatments, and selective bay removal); however, they are most effective when implemented before oaks and tanoaks are infected. Therefore, timely detection of the disease on bay laurel leaves is crucial.

“The published maps are incredibly useful to homeowners and property managers, as the risk of infection is highest if infected bay trees are within 200 yards from oaks,” said Garbelotto.

Blitzes are coordinated by local organizers in cooperation with UC Berkeley and the CNPS, and are endorsed by the USDA Forest Service, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

SOD is a serious invasive disease that is killing tanoak, coast live oak, California black oak, Shreve’s oak, and canyon live oak trees in California. To date, more than a million trees have died in 14 coastal California counties, from Monterey to Humboldt.

For more information on SOD Blitz locations and contacts, go to www.sodblitz.org. To learn more about CNPS or become a member, go to www.CNPS.org. For Santa Cruz Blitz information, contact Nadia Hamey at nadah@big-creek.com or Brett Hall, CNPS, at brett@ucsc.edu. 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 Palmieri at (510) 847-5482 or kpalmieri@berkeley.edu.

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