



News Advisory

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SUDDEN OAK DEATH

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BERKELEY—Seventeen coastal California communities from San Luis Obispo to Mendocino County will come together this spring as citizen scientists in the 7th annual Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz survey.

Citizens living near areas known to be impacted by SOD (plant disease caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*) are encouraged to attend a Blitz to learn how to look for the disease so that they can monitor for it in their community, facilitating early detection of new outbreaks. “By educating people about how to look for the disease, we increase our monitoring for new outbreaks exponentially. Early identification of a new outbreak is essential for containment, and possibly even local eradication of the pathogen,” said Matteo Garbelotto, the UC Berkeley faculty who runs the Blitzes.

When: Spring 2014, Weekends
April 5 – May 31, 2014
45 minute classes, times vary depending upon location

Where: For locations and local details, go to
<http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelotto/english/sodblitzparticipate.php>

Cost: FREE
Attendees should bring their mobile devices or 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 will be trained to identify and collect symptomatic bay leaves and record sample locations. Those that have attended a training before should still attend one this year to receive necessary supplies as well as to learn how to identify key bay trees that allow for survival of the pathogen during drought years.

Although not necessary, participants are encouraged to bring their iPhone or Android mobile to the training to upload the new version of the free App "SODmap mobile" (SOD distribution map of laboratory-confirmed positive and negative samples in California, not including nurseries) which can help tremendously in identifying from where to collect. Samples will be taken to the Garbelotto lab at UC Berkeley to determine the presence or absence of the pathogen. Results will be posted to SODMAP in the fall at www.sodblitz.org.

SODMAP assists homeowners and landowners in determining risk of infection for their oaks and tanoaks as it provides information on the known proximity of the pathogen to their location. 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.

“SODMAP is incredibly useful for homeowners and property managers, as the risk of infection is highest if infected bay trees are within 200 yards from oaks. SOD Blitz surveys help us continue to better define where the pathogen is and isn’t with each passing year,” said Garbelotto.

SOD Blitz activities are coordinated by local organizers and co-sponsored by the California Native Plant Society and are funded by the US Forest Service, State and Private Forestry and the Gordon and Betty Moore 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 three million trees have died in 15 coastal California counties, from Monterey to Humboldt, with more than 500,000 having died in the last two years alone.

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 Palmieri at (510) 847-5482 or kpalmieri@berkeley.edu.

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