News Advisory

BECOME A SUDDEN OAK DEATH CITIZEN SCIENTIST
JOIN THE CAUSE – MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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BERKELEY—In the largest Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz effort to date, citizen scientists in 21 coastal California communities from San Luis Obispo to Mendocino County will come together this spring in an effort to help stop the spread of SOD.

People living near areas known to be impacted by SOD (invasive plant disease caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*) are encouraged to attend a Blitz to learn how to look for the disease in their community, facilitating early detection of new outbreaks. "Early detection is essential for containment, and possibly even local eradication of the pathogen," said Matteo Garbelotto, UC Berkeley faculty who runs the Blitzes. "Really, citizen scientists are the cornerstone to maintaining such a large-scale, ongoing urban monitoring program. We simply couldn't generate the necessary people power without them.

When:	**Spring 2015, Weekends** **April 10 – May 30, 2015** **1-hour training sessions**
Where:	**For locations and local details, go to** **http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottowp/?page_id=816**
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 the necessary supplies for sampling

during the blitz as well as to further refine their skills on how to identify key bay trees that allow for survival of the pathogen during drought years.

New volunteers are encouraged to bring their iPhone or Android mobile to the training to upload 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 potential collection locations. Samples will be taken to the UC Berkeley Garbelotto lab to determine the presence or absence of the pathogen. Results will be posted to SODMAP in the fall at www.sodblitz.org.

SODMAP can help assist 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, as the risk of infection is highest if infected bay trees are within 200 yards of oaks.

SOD Blitz activities are coordinated by local organizers and co-sponsored by the California Native Plant Society. They are funded by the US Forest Service, State and Private Forestry and the PG&E Foundation. Thanks to data collected in the last 8 years by hundreds of volunteers during SOD Blitzes, SOD in California may have the best known distribution of any forest disease, with *P. ramorum*-positive locations having been viewed by thousands of users at www.sodmap.org.

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. It is the primary cause of tree mortality in coastal California, with more than three million trees having died in 15 counties* since its discovery in the mid-1990s.

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