



## CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE REPORT NOVEMBER 2003

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### RESEARCH

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Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is susceptible to *Phytophthora ramorum*. UK Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) scientists discovered *P. ramorum*-infected witch hazel in a public garden in Wales, close to rhododendron infected with the pathogen. *P. ramorum* symptoms on witch hazel may be viewed at [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org). For more information see "Host of the Month" later in this report or DEFRA's website, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/oaknew3.htm>.

### REGULATIONS

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**Indian tribal governments have until November 30, 2003 to notify USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) if they would like to be consulted concerning the federal quarantine regulation for *Phytophthora ramorum* (7 CFR 301.92, February 14, 2002).** USDA-APHIS will be revising the regulations which could impact tribes' abilities to gather and move *P. ramorum* host plants in 12 coastal California counties and part of Curry County, OR. Contact Jonathan Jones, USDA-APHIS, National *Phytophthora ramorum* program manager at <mailto:Jonathan.M.Jones@usda.gov> for more information.

**Development of an action plan for responding to new *Phytophthora ramorum* detections in nurseries outside of the quarantine area was the goal of a workshop for state and federal regulators held October 29-30, 2003 in Portland, OR.**

Representatives from California, Oregon, Washington, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Canada agreed to protocols for delimitation, eradication, post-treatment monitoring, investigations of sources of infected plants, and notification. The action plan will be used by USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the states to implement the federal *Phytophthora ramorum* quarantine consistently and effectively. For more information contact Donald Givens, USDA-APHIS, Western Regional program manager, at <mailto:Donald.R.Givens@usda.gov>.

**Effective October 20<sup>th</sup>, the Republic of Korea updated their *Phytophthora ramorum* quarantine to add 12 species of plants and to prohibit importation of all propagative and non-propagative materials of known *P. ramorum* hosts from Belgium, France, Sweden, Poland and Italy.** The added plant species include grand fir, camellia, lilac, yew and other susceptible plants identified in 2003.

### MANAGEMENT

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**Information on AGRI-FOS® and Pentra-bark surfactant, registered to treat individual oak and tanoak trees at high risk of contracting *P. ramorum*, may be found at [www.cnr.berkeley.edu/garbelotto](http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/garbelotto), the website of the Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory of the University of California Cooperative Extension.** Look for the link to new treatment information to find a compilation of treatment research, labels and material safety data sheets (MSDS).

## MEETINGS

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**DEFRA's "*Phytophthora ramorum* – meeting of interested organizations" held October 13, in York, England attracted over 65 people representing various interests.** The first half of the day consisted of presentations on the current situation regarding outbreaks, research findings and the potential impact of the disease. In the afternoon, industry perspectives concerning historic gardens and commercial nurseries were provided. An outline of current regulatory activities and open discussion concluded the meeting. Some of the topics discussed include: the extent of the financial impact of the disease on commercial nursery trade and tourism; the latent period of the disease when no symptoms are expressed; the use of fungicides to suppress the disease; the ability of the nursery industry to provide guarantees that traded plants are pathogen-free; and the availability of resources within DEFRA and the Forestry Commission to deal with *P. ramorum*. The agenda is posted at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/phnews/csl.htm> and notes from each presentation will be posted shortly.

## EDUCATION

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**The Task Force, in coordination with UC Cooperative Extension, and Agri-Chem conducted training for use of AGRI-FOS® and Pentra-bark surfactant.** The training, held October 20<sup>th</sup> (San Rafael) and 21<sup>st</sup> (Felton) covered proper use and application procedures and was attended by approximately 240 people.

## HOST OF THE MONTH

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### ***Phytophthora ramorum* on witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)**

Another *Phytophthora ramorum* host has been discovered in the United Kingdom, Virginian Wych hazel or witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). Witch hazel is a deciduous shrub or small tree with a short trunk, bearing numerous spreading, crooked branches. At maturity, it is commonly 15 to 25 (4.5-7.5 m) feet tall.

The *P. ramorum*-infected witch hazel was discovered in August 2003 in a public garden in Wales. The garden was being treated to eradicate *P. ramorum* from infected rhododendrons. The symptoms on witch hazel were brown lesions on the leaves, often delimited by large and small leaf veins, typically on the leaf tip or edge. Twigs were also affected, resulting in aerial dieback. Laboratory test confirmed *P. ramorum* and Koch's postulates were completed. The plants were destroyed and measures were taken to eradicate *P. ramorum*. No other cases of infected witch hazel have been found. Photos of the symptoms have been posted at [http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/host\\_of\\_the\\_month\\_witch-hazel.html](http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/host_of_the_month_witch-hazel.html).

Witch hazel is native to North America. The genus name, *Hamamelis*, translates from Greek as "at the same time" and "apple," possibly because flowers and fruits are present simultaneously. The species name, *virginiana*, refers to the Virginia colony. It obtains its common name from the dowsers, or "water witches" who used forked witch hazel sticks to detect groundwater. Leaf and bark extracts were traditionally used medicinally, a

practice that is still common today. Extracts of the twigs were also believed to infuse the imbiber with occult powers.

Witch hazel is unusual in its flowering schedule. Pale yellow flowers appear from late October to early December and are pollinated by the winter moth, which can visit trees during temperatures as low as 28° F. Because of this rare winter flowering and its tolerance for shade, witch hazel is a common ornamental tree. Although individual witch hazel plants probably do not live more than 100 years, they reproduce from root sprouts, and clones may live for a very long time.

#### **WEB NEWS - WWW.SUDDENOAKDEATH.ORG**

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Photographs of *Phytophthora ramorum* on witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) from Wales, UK are posted under [Host of the Month](#).

A referral list of pesticide applicators, who attended the AGRI-FOS® application training sessions, held October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, is now available on the [Homeowners](#) page.

New citations were added to the [Bibliography](#) page, bringing the total to 117. See [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org), Publications and Resources, Science and Management Materials.

#### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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10/24/03 – 01/04/04. Oaks of Jordan: Caitlin McCaffrey Photographs at Sonoma County Museum, 425 Seventh Street, Santa Rosa. A Sudden Oak Death panel discussion will be held on November 20 from 6 to 8 pm. For more information see <http://www.sonomacountymuseum.com/> or 707-579-1500.