



## CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE REPORT MARCH 2005

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### NURSERIES

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As of 2/25/05, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) reported that it had completed delimitation and perimeter surveys by 2/4/05 of the Los Angeles County nursery found to have one *P. ramorum*-positive camellia in January. Water, soil, and potting media samples were collected on 2/9. Diagnostic results from the delimiting samples are pending. To date, one culture sample from a block of 898 *Camellia japonica* plants has been determined by CDFA and confirmed by PPQ to be positive. Four other samples from the block have tested positive by CDFA. All 898 plants in the infected block were destroyed on 2/18/05.

According to CDFA, the nursery resumed shipping non-host plants from outside the destruction block and buffer areas on 2/4/05. Host and associated host plants, to the genera level are still being held and will not be released until all test results are completed.

No plants from the trace-forward investigations have tested positive to date.

### REGULATIONS

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The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing an amendment to the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Treatment Manual that would allow California bay laurel leaves to be treated with vacuum heat before being moved interstate from any area under *Phytophthora ramorum* quarantine. This would provide an alternative to the currently approved hot water dip used for CA bay laurel leaves, which ruins the use of the leaves as a dried spice. To provide comments during the 60-day window, or for more information on the proposed rule, contact James Writer, Agriculturist, Invasive Species and Pest Management, PPQ, APHIS, at (301) 734-7121 or via email at: [James.V.Writer@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:James.V.Writer@aphis.usda.gov).

### RESEARCH

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The USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station continues to manage a national program of research for *P. ramorum*/Sudden Oak Death. In preparation for their 2005 Request for Proposals (RFP), they conducted a Research Needs Assessment meeting near Washington DC on March 3, 2005. Representatives from USDA research, management, and regulatory agencies, including the Forest Service; Agricultural Research Service; APHIS; and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) participated in the meeting to identify research gaps and focus areas for the 2005 RFP. Susan Frankel assumed the role of acting program manager and succeeds Pat Shea who retired from the position in late February. Susan expects to issue the 2005 RFP in mid-March and anticipates issuing approximately \$1 million in new research funds around the end of May. The RFP will be sent to the COMTF list serve and posted at [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org) as soon as it is available. For more information, contact [sfrankel@fs.fed.us](mailto:sfrankel@fs.fed.us).



## MANAGEMENT

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**The Humboldt County Department of Agriculture, UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), and the USDA Forest Service** are conducting an ongoing survey and assessment of *P. ramorum*-infested areas near Redway and Garberville in southern Humboldt County in preparation for potential new suppression efforts. In the summer of 2004, USDA Forest Service aerial surveys identified seven patches of tanoak mortality near Redway and Garberville that were subsequently confirmed by ground crews to be *P. ramorum*-positive. The crews found these patches primarily in riparian forested settings, with steep, challenging topography (unlike the residential setting confirmations found in Redway in February 2004 where suppression efforts were conducted).

These findings triggered the development of a survey designed to: delimit the extent of the newly discovered infestations; provide a strategic sampling that will assist in the identification of other unknown local infestations in forested and riparian areas; and continue to monitor the development of the disease in residential Redway and Garberville, including sites on which suppression activity took place in 2004. The Humboldt County Department of Agriculture has begun surveying in residential areas where permission has been given by property owners to survey for the pathogen, and they continue to seek permission from remaining landowners in the area. In March, Humboldt County UCCE personnel will likely take over surveying efforts in wildland settings, and may be seeking volunteer help from cooperators experienced in *P. ramorum*-identification.

In addition, CDF and UCCE are developing drafts for potential suppression activities in known infested areas, as well as any new infestations that the surveys may reveal. Possible suppression scenarios range from pruning of selected host branches on residential properties where landowners are unwilling to have trees removed, to felling and removal of selected hosts with or without additional thinning and pruning. Soil, plant parts, and new host sprouts from treatment sites will be monitored for at least two years after treatment.

CDF, the Humboldt County Agriculture Department, and UCCE also continue to monitor soil and leaves from the lower Redway sites treated in February 2004. UCCE staff has installed seven new watercourse monitoring sites, in addition to the five already in place around Redway and Garberville. Three more watercourse monitoring sites are being established this month. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arcata Field Office staff has also installed two watercourse monitoring sites on the Mattole River and its tributaries in southwestern Humboldt County in cooperation with UCCE. These new monitoring sites in southern Humboldt County complement an already existing network of sites in Mendocino, northern Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties, which are regularly monitored by UC Davis and UCCE investigators. The remainder of Humboldt County, as well as Del Norte and northern Mendocino Counties, will continue to be surveyed in heavily visited municipal, county, state, and national parks, as well as in Six Rivers National Forest.



For more information on Humboldt County area efforts, or to volunteer for survey work, contact Yana Valachovic, UCCE Humboldt/Del Norte, at: [yvala@ucdavis.edu](mailto:yvala@ucdavis.edu) or Chris Lee, UCCE Humboldt/Del Norte, at: [cale@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cale@ucdavis.edu).

#### RESOURCES

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The updated table **[“\*Phytophthora ramorum\* Regulations for Forest Products”](#)** is now available and has been posted to the COMTF website. The matrix summarizes state and federal *P. ramorum* regulations pertaining to the movement of eight different categories of regulated forest articles.

**Stopping the Rot. Henry Nicholls. Public Library of Science (a public access journal)** Vol. 2 Issue 7:0891-0895. July 2004. This article discusses *Phytophthora ramorum* as well as *Phytophthoras* in general. The article includes information on the origins of *Phytophthoras*, genetic testing, financial impacts, environmental impacts, reproduction and recombination, and epidemiology. To view the article in its entirety, go to: [http://www.plosbiology.org/archive/1545-7885/2/7/pdf/10.1371\\_journal.pbio.0020213-L.pdf](http://www.plosbiology.org/archive/1545-7885/2/7/pdf/10.1371_journal.pbio.0020213-L.pdf).

#### EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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The COMTF is offering a **[“\*Phytophthora ramorum\*/Sudden Oak Death refresher training session](#)** on Tuesday, April 5, 2005 at the UCCE Contra Costa office in Pleasant Hill. This free, 3 ½ hour classroom training is designed for those who have attended a previous training session, although new participants will also find the subject matter informative. The agenda includes a disease update and overview, the latest information on pathogen diagnosis and sampling in both wildland and nursery settings, updated wildland and nursery management information, and a panel discussion. (The COMTF will be offering a full day course with field demonstrations in May.) For more information on the training session, or to register, contact Janice Alexander at: [jalexander@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jalexander@ucdavis.edu).

The COMTF is currently conducting a survey of past and current outreach efforts in order to evaluate the effectiveness of Task Force activities to date. Survey findings will be used to assist in the development of future outreach plans. Results will be posted to the [COMTF website](#), as well as submitted for publication to *California Agriculture*. Targeted audiences for the survey include County Agricultural Commissioners, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) offices, and COMTF training session participants, although all interested parties are encouraged to participate. Those who submit a survey are eligible to enter a drawing for an Oaks of California book or a Native Oaks of California poster. To assist with the project, UCCE Marin has hired Isaac Cunningham as the new Sudden Oak Death Outreach Assistant. Isaac, originally from Mt. Shasta, CA, is an Environmental Studies and Politics major at Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA. To participate in the survey online, go to: <http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=761&back=none>. For more information, contact Isaac Cunningham with any questions at [icunningham@ucdavis.edu](mailto:icunningham@ucdavis.edu).



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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**4/5 – Free half-day training session on *P. ramorum* diagnosis and management.**

UCCE Contra Costa, Pleasant Hill, from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Registration is required. For more information, contact Janice Alexander at: [jalexander@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jalexander@ucdavis.edu).

**5/24 – Free training session on *P. ramorum* diagnosis and management. This class** will be all day, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., and will contain a field component. Location and registration information will be listed in the April COMTF newsletter.