



THE CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE JULY 2001 REPORT

NEW HOSTS

The new *Phytophthora* associated with Sudden Oak Death was recovered from **buckeye** (*Aesculus californica*), a native tree species that only occurs in California. Positive samples, tested using DNA probes, were taken in a number of locations in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Preliminary lab inoculations support the field sample findings.

On buckeye the pathogen causes obvious leaf spots but it is still unclear if the SOD *Phytophthora* caused stem and branch cankers present on symptomatic trees. The pathogen has not been demonstrated to kill this tree species. Note that this tree is drought deciduous and therefore loses its leaves in the summer months.

The SOD *Phytophthora* was also recently isolated from the leaves of tanoak, previously it had only been known to infect the inner bark and a small portion of the outer wood on stems and branches. Researchers believe infection on tanoak leaves, along with increased susceptibility, may be a contributing factor in the larger number of dead tanoaks. Similarly to madrone, bay, huckleberry, rhododendron and now **buckeye**, these foliar infections may allow for the rapid build-up of *Phytophthora* in the environment. The infections may serve as a reservoir for inoculum increasing the risk of infection of nearby susceptible oaks and tanoak.

The findings are a collaboration of researchers under the direction of **David Rizzo** at UC-Davis and **Matteo Garbelotto** at UC-Berkeley and Steve Koike UCCE

DISTRIBUTION

Sudden Oak Death was confirmed in **Mendocino** County. The new *Phytophthora* associated with Sudden Oak Death is killing tanoak and causing bleeding in coast live oak just off Hwy 128 on private property outside of Boonville. Arborist Rob Gross discovered the infestation while he was working at an adjacent property. The infestation covers several acres and while the die-off of overstory tanoaks seems fairly recent, the infestation seems to have been present for two to three years. This estimate is based on site visits that confirmed large portions dead understory and a number of symptomatic, dead and dying trees. Infected bay laurel leaves were also found about 100 m from the dead tanoaks. The area is an undisturbed, mixed evergreen forest (redwood, tanoak, Douglas-fir and other species). Although near the highway, there is no obvious indication of where or why the infestation started. This area is 25 miles north of the northernmost infestation in Sonoma county, making it the northernmost site where Sudden Oak Death is known to occur.

Sudden Oak Death has been found in Skyline Wilderness Park, an 850-acre wilderness area in Eastern Napa County. This is the furthest point from the coast to date confirmed with Sudden Oak Death. Although this area is geographically located 45 miles from the coast, and is considerably drier than other known SOD locations, it is close to the San Francisco Bay. Researchers believe the Sudden Oak Death *Phytophthora* is adapted to cool, moist environments.

NEW NAME

A manuscript by Sabine Werrres et al. formally describing the new *Phytophthora* has been accepted by the journal Mycological Research and is now officially "in press". The new species name will be ***Phytophthora ramorum***. The species name "*ramorum*" derives from the Latin *ramus* (branch), referring to the pathogenicity to twigs and branches.

The full citation of the paper is:

Werrres, S., R. Marwitz, W. A. Man In 'T Veld, A. W. A. M. De Cock, P. J. M. Bonants, M. De Weerd, K. Themann, E. Ilieva and R. P. Baayen. *Phytophthora ramorum* sp. nov., a new pathogen on *Rhododendron* and *Viburnum*. Mycological Research (in press).

FUNDING

U.S. **Senator Barbara Boxer** introduced legislation requesting \$2.4 million in emergency funding to address Sudden Oak Death. If approved by the U.S. Senate, the money would be used for fire prevention, research and mapping. "I am requesting these funds as part of an emergency supplemental bill moving through Congress," Boxer said.

S997, legislation introduced June 7, 2001, by Boxer would provide more than \$70 million in funding over the next five years to local, state, and federal agencies. **Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey** introduced a mirror bill in the house (H214) on June 12.

The bill would direct the Secretary to conduct research, monitoring, management, treatment and public outreach on sudden oak death. It would also authorize a Sudden Oak Death Syndrome Committee and funding for projects and research. She introduced the bill on the behalf of Congress members Pelosi, Lantos, Honda, Capps, Lee, Thompson, Stark Miller, Farr, Lofgren, and Eschoo.

SONOMA COUNTY

Using a grant from the Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board, the University of California Cooperative Extension has hired Steve Swain to be the county Sudden Oak Death Project Coordinator. Steve has a Masters of Science degree in Horticulture and Agronomy from U.C. Davis. In addition, he has worked for several years as a consulting arborist in Santa Cruz, California. Steve's role in Sonoma County is to increase public awareness of the disease and its management, assist with existing research efforts, and develop future research projects with UC Campus Specialists and other researchers. Steve will work closely with several COMTF committees to ensure the integration of these county efforts with the California Oak Mortality Task Force statewide plan.

MEETINGS

The next California Oak Mortality Task Force Meeting will be held September 19-, with an educational day in Napa County on September 19 and a full meeting in Marin County on September 20. Details to follow.

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The Utility Arborist website is posting COMTF monthly updates at http://www.utilityarborist.com/ca_oak_mortality_task_force_updates.htm

CalFlora, a web accessible comprehensive database of plant distribution information for California, is keeping a good up-to-date section on Sudden Oak Death. This site is a must for those wishing to learn more about susceptible species distribution, biology and morphology (numerous photos available of most species). <http://www.calflora.org/calflora/SOD/>

KUDOS TO THE.....

Sunset Western Garden book for having a section discussing Sudden Oak Death. It is mentioned under Tanoak and Quercus sections. This book is a very commonly used reference for Pacific Coast gardeners.

If you know of a group that is working to minimize the impacts of Sudden Oak Death email the Nicole Palkovsky at palkovsk@nature.berkeley.edu and we'll be sure to include them in our Kudos section.