

## NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 32

The plant disease caused by a fungus-like microorganism, Phytophthora ramorum, is referred to as “Sudden Oak Death” because of its association with premature death in tanoak trees. This disease occurs in Northern California wildlands and affects several native California plants, including California Nutmeg. Susceptible plants can become infected through exposure to water borne infective agents via rainfall, splash or drainage. In addition to natural spread of the disease, it can also be transmitted by human transport of infected plants and their parts to susceptible new plants in the environment. Good cultural practices and restrictions on the movement of infected material can minimize the risk of spreading the disease. For more information, please refer to website links for the U.S. Department Of Agriculture/Plant Protection And Quarantine ([www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/pramorurum/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/pramorurum/)), the California Department Of Food And Agriculture ([www.cdffa.ca.gov](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov)), the California Oak Mortality Task Force (<http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf>), or contact your local County Department Of Agriculture.

Common Name: California Nutmeg  
Scientific Name: Torreya californica



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech. Forestry Dept.

Kashaya Pomo Name: q<sup>h</sup>abéhe q<sup>h</sup>ale (water peppernut tree)  
Pomo Name: kō' bē, kē bē'  
Yokia Name: kā' hē

### Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Costanoan: Smashed nuts and fat were rubbed on the temples to ease headaches, rubbed on the body to cause sweating and relieve chills. The nuts were chewed to treat indigestion.

Pomo: The roots were used in basket making and the sharp needles were used to prick pitch soot into the skin in tattooing. A decoction of cracked, soaked nuts were used to treat tuberculosis.

Mendocino Indians: Whole nuts were roasted and used as food.