

NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 2

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 Buckeye. 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/pramorur/), the California Department Of Food And Agriculture (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 Buckeye

Scientific Name: Aesculus californica



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Forestry Dept.

Cahto Name:	laashii', lashee'
Kashaya Pomo Name:	bahša (buckeye nut) bahša q ^h ále (buckeye nut tree)
Nomlaki Name:	fär' sökt, bok
Pomo Name:	dē sā' kā lā'
Wappo Name:	sumoto (shu mow'tow)
Yokia Name:	bā shā'
Yuki Name:	simpt' ōl, simpti ol, si' mt

Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Costanoan/Ohlone: Occasionally used as food after roasting, peeling, mashing and extensive leaching. It was eaten only when the acorn crop failed. Smashed fruit was used as a poison for stunning fish and as a salve for hemorrhoids. A decoction of the bark was used for toothaches.

Gabrielino: Smashed fruit was used as poison for stunning fish.

(see back)

Kawaiisu: Broken seeds were used to treat hemorrhoids. Raw seeds may have been used as a poison. The fruit was pounded, leached, boiled into mush, made into a cake and eaten with meat.

Wood sections were hollowed out by burning and made into bowls.

Mendocino Tribes: Fresh fruits may have been used as a poison. Bark was placed in tooth cavities to ease pain. The fruit was given to horses for bot fly larvae infestations. The fruits were roasted and eaten cold, without salt. Wood was used as twirling sticks for making fire by friction.

Miwok: Roasted, peeled fruit was ground into meal and used to make soup. The fruit, stored for long periods of time, was eaten when the acorn crop failed.

Pomo: Boiled fruit was eaten with baked kelp, meat, and seafood. Wood was used to make bows and to make drill sticks and blocks for making fire. Ground fruit was used to stun fish.

Tubatulabal: The fruit was used in some manner as food.

Wappo: The fruit was leached and made into flour.

Yana: The fruit was ground into a fine meal and eaten.

Yuki: Crushed seeds were thrown into streams to stun fish. Called "Indian potatoes", they were an important source of food. Preparation of ripe seeds included grinding, boiling, shell removal, mashing, leaching in running water until no longer bitter and stirring until the foam disappeared. They are said to taste better than potatoes.