

## NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 13

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 Cascara & California Coffeeberry. 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/pramorom/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/pramorom/)), 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: Cascara, Chittam  
Scientific Name: Rhamnus purshiana

Common Name: California Coffeeberry  
Scientific Name: Rhamnus californica



Photos from Oregon State University Landscape Plants

Concow Maidu Name:	pā, pō
Karuk Name:	xutyúpin (buckthorn, Cascara sagrada)
Kashaya Pomo Name:	baśaśa
Wailaki Name:	shast kēt' ā
Yokia Name:	hō sā' kā lā'
Yuki Name:	um' pē, tun' ti
Yurok Name:	soo'

These two plants are very similar and apparently have similar properties. It is apparent that they were probably not recognized as different plants and were both used as “Cascara” where their ranges overlap and where they do not. (see back)

Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Diegueño: Leaves of Cascara (actually Coffeeberry) and Chaparral Whitethorn boiled together and used to treat poison oak rash.

Luißeño: Cascara bark (actually Coffeeberry) used as a laxative to cure constipation.

Kashaya Pomo: A half-handful of fresh berries were used as a laxative. The bark, was boiled into a tea for the same purpose, but was stored for a whole year before being used.

Yuki: Cascara bark tea was used as a laxative, to treat indigestion or upset stomach and for dysentery and worms. A poultice of crushed bark was used for wounds and sores. Bark from the root or stems of Coffeeberry was used as a panacea for nearly any disease, but especially for flu, kidney problems and rheumatism. Ripe berries were used as a laxative or digestive tonic, or externally on burns, infected sores, wounds, and in combination with yarrow to stop bleeding.