

## NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 27

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 Poison Oak. 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/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/pramorur/)), 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: Poison Oak

Scientific Name: Toxicodendron diversilobum



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Forestry Dept.

Karuk Name:	kusvêep
Kashaya Pomo Name:	ma'tí'ho
Pomo Name:	ma tū' yä" hō
Tongva Name:	oar
Wailaki Name:	kots' tā-
Wappo Name:	kicu ma (kee'see mah)
Yuki Name:	kin macho, kin mate
Yurok Name:	me'yk'weluup' (me'y-k'we-luuep')

### Past and possibly present tribal uses.

Costanoan: Shoots were used in basketry. Leaves were used to wrap bread.

Diegueño: A decoction of roots was used in the eyes for small sores inside the lids and to improve vision.

Karuk: Leaves were used to cover soap plant bulbs while roasting in an earth oven. Twigs or branches were used to spit salmon steaks during smoking and to prop filets open. Although considered poisonous, the plant was sometimes chewed like tobacco. Leaves were swallowed in the spring as a prophylactic.

(see back)

Mendocino Indians: Fruits and leaves were fed to hogs as forage. Fresh leaves were used to wrap up acorn meal for baking. The black juice was used to apply temporary tattoo marks on skin. Moxa (downy hairs) of the plant was used for warts and ringworm. Slender stems were used for circular withes in baskets.

Ohlone: Juice of the plant was used to cure ringworm and warts and to counteract the effects of rattlesnake bite.

Pomo: The juice was used as a dye for blackroot sedge used in basketry. Ashes, charcoal and soot from the plant were used in tattooing. Ashes were rubbed on children to make their skin darker.

Tolowa: The plant was considered poisonous but the buds were eaten in the spring to obtain immunity from the poison.

Tongva: The sap was used to cure warts and ringworm. A decoction of boiled roots was used as an eyewash.

Wailaki: A poultice of fresh leaves was applied to treat rattlesnake bite.

Wappo: Leaves were used to dye baskets.

Yuki: Repeated applications of juice from the plant was used to treat warts.

Yurok: The plant was considered poisonous.