

NATIVE PLANTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) AND THEIR USE BY CALIFORNIA INDIANS – FACT SHEET No. 28

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 some California wildlands and affects several native California plants, including Spice Bush (Western Sweet Shrub). 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/), 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: Spice Bush

Scientific Name: Calycanthus occidentalis



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Forestry Dept.

Kashaya Pomo Name: šune

Pomo Name: sī kā lā

Past and Possibly present tribal uses.

Mendocino Indians: Wood and bark from fresh shoots were used in basket work.

Pomo: A decoction of scraped bark was taken for severe colds. An infusion of dried or fresh, peeled bark was used for chest colds, to cough up phlegm, for sore throats and stomach problems.

Yokia: Pithy shoots were used to make arrows.