

Should You Be Worried About Sudden Oak Death?

Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*. Though its name would suggest otherwise, this species of *Phytophthora* can attack several different host plants. Recently, infected camellias were shipped from Southern California nationwide, increasing the likelihood of disease spread.

In general, *Phytophthora spp.* cause progressive tip dieback and extensive bleeding cankers on the stems of its major hosts, usually killing them. SOD symptoms vary among host species, and other environmental factors, including sunburn, drought, and salinity, may produce similar symptoms. Therefore, SOD cannot be visually diagnosed; it must be plated out and identified via lab testing.

Though you will not be able to identify SOD, you can screen leaf samples and determine if they should be sent for further testing. When a client brings a suspected SOD sample to your Plant Clinic, simply run through this check list:

1. Does the plant display foliar disease symptoms?
 - a. No – sample can be discarded
 - b. Yes – go to 2.

2. Is the leaf sample a camellia?
 - a. No – go to 3.
 - b. Yes – go to 5.

3. Is the leaf sample from a plant near a camellia?
 - a. No – sample can be discarded.
 - b. Yes – go to 4.

4. Is the plant sample on the host list for *P. ramorum*? (check recent web links)
 - a. No – sample can be discarded.
 - b. Yes – go to 5.

5. Was the camellia purchased after December 2000?
 - a. No – sample can be discarded.
 - b. Yes – submit sample for testing.**

If you have reached 5b, then the sample should be sent to WSU Puyallup for free SOD testing (this does not include postage, however). Follow the approved procedure found at <http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/plantclinic/samples/htss.html>. Sample submission forms can be downloaded directly from <http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/plantclinic/samples/pdf/c1006.pdf>.

Useful Internet Links:

SOD General Information:

California Oak Mortality Task Force: <http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>.

Extension Disaster Education Network:
http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/eden/Issues_View.aspx?IssueID=6f50dd52-cca0-4434-8173-b6b44c18a65c.

University of Florida: http://spdn.ifas.ufl.edu/FL_SOD_Conference.htm.

WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center:
<http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/sod/index.html>

Host Plant Lists:

California Oak Mortality Task Force: <http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>.

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/sod/usdasodlist.html>.



Prepared by:

Linda Chalker-Scott, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Extension Horticulturist
WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center
7612 Pioneer Way E
Puyallup, WA 98371

Phone: (253) 445-4542
Toll free: (877) WSU-MG4U (978-6448)
FAX: (253) 445-4569
URL: <http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~Linda%20Chalker-Scott/>