

# Piedmont: No Sudden Oak Death found in city

*By Linda Davis, Correspondent*

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PIEDMONT -- The good news: No Sudden Oak Death has been detected so far in Piedmont.

Results were released this past week from UC Berkeley's Forest Pathology and Mycology Lab. The lab tabulated the findings from the 2014 SOD Blitz that was held in May, showing several infestations in Northern California.

Sudden Oak Death is a disease of oak trees caused by an invasive plant pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*. It currently occurs in coastal California counties from Monterey to Humboldt and in a small portion of southwest Oregon.

The primary carrier of the disease is bay laurel trees, although some nursery plants such as rhododendron and camellias can also carry the disease. Plant surveyors look for yellow discoloration on the tips of leaves of the host plants, which do not get sick. The pathogen's spores are transmitted to the oaks by rain water, dampness and humid conditions. The infection invades the oak's trunks and weakens them. Coast Live Oak, Canyon Live Oak, tanoak, California Black Oak and Shreve's Oak are all susceptible.

Former Councilman and biologist Garrett Keating, his son, and volunteer Marj Blackwell surveyed several sites along the border of Piedmont and Oakland during the May SOD Blitz. Sites included Blair Park, Mountain View Cemetery, Monticello Avenue, Sandringham Road, Saint James Drive, Trestle Glen and Ronada Avenue.

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"All the samples taken in Piedmont (area) were negative," Keating said. "But they have found SODS across Park Boulevard. There were 10 positive cases in Oakland."

Samplers need to get access to private land in Piedmont to do more surveying, Keating said. Several of the May SOD Blitz surveys were on private property where homeowners had given permission to enter.

"But we need more people to agree to that," he said, noting that the SOD Blitz only takes place in May.

If homeowners have bay laurels on their land, as well as oaks, they may contact Keating at [atgkeating@pacbell.net](mailto:atgkeating@pacbell.net) to give permission for the next SOD Blitz.

According to the results summary from UC-Berkeley, 1,731 trees were surveyed in the East Bay south, east and west corridors. No positive sample trees were found in East Bay south; 10 percent of sampled trees were found infected in East Bay east; 16 percent positive trees were detected in the East Bay west area out of 1,306 trees sampled.

Peninsula north area had 72 percent of trees sampled positive for the SOD disease, probably because of prolific vegetation and dampness.

UC Berkeley forest pathologist Matteo Garbelotto said this past week that the drought inhibits the spread of the SOD pathogen. But more than 3 million trees have been killed by the disease since 2000, he said. The disease was first discovered in Mill Valley in 1995, and since then, scientists have gone on the offensive to hamper the spread of the disease.

"They found SODS in the nursery in Golden Gate Park and on an estate property next to the Presidio," Keating said. "Relevant to Piedmont is that SODS can be spread from nursery plants such as rhododendrons, and Piedmont residents do a lot of landscaping."

#### IF YOU GO

What: Oak health 101 workshop When: 10 a.m. Saturday

Where: Garber Park, 150 Evergreen Lane, Berkeley

Contact: Shelagh Brodersen at [gerberparkstewards@gmail.com](mailto:gerberparkstewards@gmail.com)

online

To view reports and other information, go to <http://sodblitz.org>.