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Wednesday, October 2, 2019

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RESEARCH & IDEAS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

## UC Berkeley researchers detect deadly plant pathogen in Del Norte County



YANA VALACHOVIC/COURTESY

BY [SASHA LANGHOLZ](#) AND [SKYLAR SCHOEMIG](#)

LAST UPDATED SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Two tanoak trees in Del Norte County tested positive for *Phytophthora ramorum*, a deadly plant pathogen known to cause sudden oak death, or SOD, which is a forest disease that increases oak and tanoak mortality.

Originally from Asia, the pathogen arrived to the west coast of California during the 1980s, according to campus professor of forest pathology Matteo Garbelotto. Since then, about 50 million

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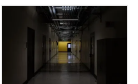


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trees have been killed on the West Coast, including in the Berkeley Hills.

According to Garbelotto, the pathogen spreads through leaf and stem infections. After signals were identified indicating the infection of the two tanoak trees in Del Norte, samples were sent to the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Lab.

Though the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Lab has verified that the two trees tested positive, Del Norte County is still waiting for a confirmation from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, or CDFA.

According to Garbelotto, detecting the pathogen early allows for its spread to be controlled, which can be achieved through removing infected trees and confining plant material to state grounds. Once the CDFA verifies the results, “the finding may affect any business that sells plant material that could potentially be infected by *Phytophthora ramorum*,” Garbelotto said in the email.

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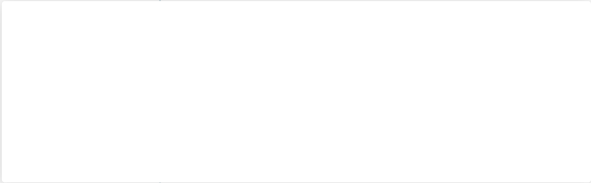
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