**SOD Blitzes 2020**

**Citizen Science responds to the Coronavirus outbreak**

Dear Californians,

Due to the recent developments and to the statewide “Shelter in Place” ordinance, and based on the outcome of a videoconference among 25 Blitz organizers that took place on March 20th, we have decided not to cancel the activity but to redesign it, so that it may be safe for everybody to participate in it, while allowing participants to exercise. The SOD Blitzes have become a tradition for many, while providing key information to help us save our oaks from a devastating disease. The presence of new SOD strains is alarming and the SOD blitzes are the best, if not the only, program to intercept them before they spread. We also feel it is important to provide a sense of continuity in our daily lives amidst this crisis, by providing you with the option to participate in a safe, healthy and tremendously useful activity.

The bullet points below summarize how to safely participate in the 2020 SOD Blitzes.

1- All participants are asked to train by going to the website [www.sodbitz.org](http://www.sodbitz.org) where you are asked to view: a)- a Training Short Powerpoint, b)-a 15 minute training video, and, c)- a questionnaire on how you have responded to the SOD epidemic . Please access all three to be fully trained and ready.

2-If you have any questions you can ask them through the [www.treefaqs.org](http://www.treefaqs.org) portal or by emailing one of the organizers of your local blitz (emails are in the schedule pasted below).

3-At the end of the online training, please click on the “Register for the 2020 SOD Blitzes” and fill in the required info.

4- If you are a professional tree care specialist and you are participating in any of the 2020SOD Blitzes, you can enroll in the OakSTeP program for free (a $ 200 savings) by clicking on the OakSTeP registration link towards the bottom of the page. For information on OakSTeP go to www.oaskstep.org

5-Remember to download the free App SODmap mobile before you go to the field. Tap the risk button on the App to identify the latitude and longitude of a tree you are sampling. Copy that on the Data Collection Card as explained in the video

6- The Schedule (date time and location) of SOD Blitzes as indicated in the list below remains active. At each venue (on the doors or nearby), the exact location of two bins will be posted. The bin on the left is where you are going to collect your packets. Bins should be open, so you will only touch the packets you will take with you to the field. Please take one or two packets: each packet allows you to sample 10 trees. If bins need to be covered, place one of the plastic bags supplied at the venue on your hand to open and close the lid and dispose of the bag in the clearly marked “bag disposal box”. If multiple people are picking up packets, you must stay at least 6 feet away and wait for your turn. No more than 9 people are allowed online at any given time.

7- If you did not sign up or trained online before collecting the packets make sure you do so before you go to the field. There will be the possibility of signing up at the “SOD blitz station”, please use your own pen if possible.

8- Packets are 100% sterile so do not worry. They were prepared in a sterile lab by personnel with lab coats, gloves and face masks and then they were UV irradiated in a sterile hood

9- You have until **10 am of the Tuesday following the date of your local Blitz** to return the packets. Please return both used and unused packets by simply dropping them in the left bin. The bins should be open: if they are close, use the plastic bags provided to open and close the lid and dispose of the bag in the clearly marked “bag disposal box”. ***Depending on the health situation at the time of the Blitz and on the local organizer, instead of returning packets at the “SOD Blitz station” you will be given preprinted mailing labels and postage to simply mail in your samples to the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology Laboratory***

10- SOD Blitz organizers: When collecting the bin wear gloves and sterilize it using a 10% bleach spray or Lysol. place the whole bin inside a large trash bag and store in an appropriate location.

11- ***Returned SOD Blitz material (such as collection packets and individual envelopes containing leaves) will be handled by trained UC Berkeley personnel following the guidelines for the handling of infectious agents. Materials will be processed in a biological safety cabinet and by personnel wearing fully protective gear, including an appropriate respirator.***

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