

https://napavalleyregister.com/lifestyles/home-and-garden/columnists/bill-pramuk/bill-pramuk-trees-and-people-the-sudden-oak-death-blitz/article_cb8440c4-7bf7-5094-9995-784af2fafff0.html

Trees and People

Bill Pramuk, Trees and People: The Sudden Oak Death Blitz

BILL PRAMUK

Mar 25, 2022



Volunteers can help with the upcoming Sudden Oak Death Blitz on April 2.

Dreamstime

BILL PRAMUK

The Sudden Oak Death Blitz is coming to Napa on April 2. This will be the 12th year in which Napa volunteers participate in the statewide effort to map this devastating disease.

Sudden Oak Death showed an increase in Napa County following rainy winters and a decrease in drought years. Blitz leader, Dr. Matteo Garbelotto stated recently, "Napa County was well-sampled in 2021 but had no positive finds of SOD."



That is good news and an interesting comparison to other parts of the state. And we must not become complacent. SOD can rebound quickly when environmental conditions favor the disease.

SOD (*Phytophthora ramorum*) has killed millions of oaks and tanoaks in California. It spreads most readily in mild, wet weather. Napa's role in the statewide effort has been helpful in understanding how the disease spreads or retreats in various climate zones.

The Napa SOD Blitz is an opportunity to learn about Sudden Oak Death, how to assess the risk of the disease in your area and to get free testing using California bay laurel leaves from any property of your choice in Napa County. Bay laurels are the most significant carrier of the disease, which spreads in water from infected leaves into live oaks, black oaks and tanoaks.

Prof. Garbelotto and his UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Lab lead the project, perform lab analysis of samples, conduct research and maintain the mapping of the disease.

Volunteers interested in participating must go online to "matteolab" to view a training video and sign up.

On the day of the Blitz, they pick up their sample collection packet containing small envelopes for collecting symptomatic bay leaves and forms to fill out for each sample.

Locations are identified by using the free download smartphone app SOD Map Mobile. Participants can download it beforehand or on the day of the Blitz. The app provides the required GPS coordinates where each sample is collected.

Volunteers go out and collect samples on that Saturday or the following day and return the packets to the pick-up site by early Monday morning.

The samples are then taken to the UC Berkeley Lab.

Results are posted in October for the statewide effort, which is held in more than 20 locations in California.

On April 2, sampling packet pick-ups are from 9 a.m. to noon at the front porch of the Napa County Ag. Commissioner's Office, 1710 Soscol Ave. I will be there to greet volunteers and distribute the packets.

The sampling packets and lab analysis are free. Statewide results are posted by the lab in October.

It is an interesting, fun event and appropriate for families and classroom outings.

Join the SOD Blitz!

Bill Pramuk is an ASCA registered consulting arborist, and an ISA certified arborist. Visit his website, www.billpramuk.com, email questions to info@billpramuk.com, or call him at 707-363-0114.