

More than 900 Oregon nurseries inspected. Two positive for sudden oak death
ODA nears halfway point in SOD certification program

March 30, 2005...Under requirements of a federal control order, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has inspected, sampled, and certified 901 nurseries as free of *Phytophthora ramorum*, the fungus that causes sudden oak death (SOD). The number is about 45 percent of all Oregon nurseries required to be inspected and certified by June 30, 2005 in order to meet the state and federal requirements. Even though an overwhelming majority of nurseries are free of *P. ramorum*, the inspection program has detected the presence of the fungus in two nurseries, which has led to an immediate hold on SOD-susceptible plant material on the premises pending further sampling and testing.

Despite the two new findings, ODA officials are pleased with the results so far.

"Our aggressive inspection and certification program continues to show that sudden oak death is clearly not established in Oregon," says Dan Hilburn, administrator of ODA's Plant Division. "The program is doing what we expected by reassuring customers that Oregon nurseries are, by and large, free of the disease while allowing us to detect *P. ramorum* early in those isolated cases when it is present, giving us a chance to eradicate the disease quickly."

Since last summer, ODA has required all growers and dealers of plants susceptible to *P. ramorum* to be annually inspected, tested, and certified free of the disease before they are allowed to sell those plants. That regulation came at the request of Oregon's nursery industry. In January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued a federal order that expanded the requirement to all nurseries, even those that do not carry SOD-susceptible plants. ODA's nursery inspectors and plant pathology laboratory have been busy working to complete the certification of approximately 2,012 Oregon nurseries by the deadline.

To date, ODA has tested 19,740 samples from 392 growing areas statewide. Samples taken from a small Washington County retail garden center and a small Marion County wholesale nursery were found to be positive for *P. ramorum*. Host plant material— species susceptible to SOD— have been placed on hold at the nurseries. All infected or potentially infected plants will be destroyed. Further sampling and testing will be done to ensure no other infected material remains.

P. ramorum causes leaf blight, dieback, or death in certain trees and shrubs including tanoak, rhododendron, viburnum, and camellia. Susceptible plants include species important to Oregon's native forests, horticultural landscapes, and the state's \$778 million nursery industry.

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