



## *Another Invasive of Potential Concern: Sudden Oak Death*

Sudden Oak Death (SOD) was first reported in 1995 in California where it has killed tanoak trees and two other species of oaks. It also infects, but does little damage to understory forest plants and many plants common to the nursery trade like rhododendron and camillia. By January 2002, the disease was known to occur in a number of counties in California and one in southwestern Oregon; in addition, the pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*, has been moved widely across the country in infected nursery stock. Subsequently a pest alert concerning SOD, *Phytophthora ramorum*, was issued and can be found at [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest\\_al/sodeast/sodeast.htm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/sodeast/sodeast.htm). This is yet another in a list of invasive species that threaten the forests of Mississippi.

Positive samples from nursery stock in one nursery in Mississippi have been detected and appropriate eradication actions have been taken to eliminate the pathogen from the nursery. Sampling outside the nursery has resulted in positive detections in both water and foliage samples. Although it is not known at this time whether *Phytophthora ramorum* will become established in the forests of Mississippi, these detections increases our level of concern about this organism. Additional testing is being conducted by appropriate agencies to closely monitor the situation at this time. Pending the results of these follow up screenings action plans will be developed as appropriate.

It is important to note that even though infected material containing the causal organism – *P. ramorum*, has been detected, it **does not** mean the disease is established in native plants (especially oaks) in Mississippi. In order for the disease to develop four elements are needed. The first element is the pathogen itself. Second, susceptible hosts are required. Third, favorable environmental conditions

have to be present and fourth, there has to be sufficient time for the disease to develop. The possibility of all four factors coming together in such away for the disease to develop is certainly possible, but just the presence of the pathogen **does not mean** that the conditions are right for a disease epidemic to develop. However, we are concerned and are monitoring the situation closely. As additional information becomes available concerning this invasive species it will be posted at this site.

For additional information contact:

[Mississippi Forestry Commission Local Office](#) or T. Evan Nebeker [tevannebeker@bellsouth.net](mailto:tevannebeker@bellsouth.net).