

Sudden Oak Death Blitz planned for May 12-14

By William Hudson

This year's rain is welcome salvation for our parched oaks, but also revives a lethal wet-weather enemy, Sudden Oak Death ("SOD"). SOD spreads to oaks from infected leaves of our Bay Laurel trees (counterintuitively, the oaks are not infectious and the Bay trees themselves do not get SOD), and spring rains in the past allowed it to claim increasing numbers of oaks in larger areas of California. One consequence of the drought, however, is fewer infectious leaves on the Bays, substantially reducing and in some places perhaps even eliminating the risk to the oaks. According to UC Berkeley, this year offers a unique opportunity to learn much more about SOD, and to minimize its re-emergence.

SOD is an invasive, non-native disease, that harmlessly infects the leaves of many plant species, but in our iconic and invaluable California Live Oaks, obstructs the circulation of nutrients in the trunk and typically kills them.

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Shown are the results of the Blitzes from 2020-22 in the East Bay. Image provided

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