



## **NEWS RELEASE**

Date: May 6, 2004

Contact: Katie Palmieri  
Information Officer  
(510) 847-5482

### **SUDDEN OAK DEATH COLLECTION YARD CELEBRATES A YEAR OF SUCCESS**

SAN RAFAEL—The first Sudden Oak Death collection yard will celebrate its one-year anniversary tomorrow, May 7, 2004. Since opening, this “SODBusters” collection yard has focused on the safe handling, transport, and utilization of SOD-diseased wood. It receives an average of 40 tons of *Phytophthora ramorum*-related plant material each month. “We are very pleased that SODBusters, in cooperation with the Marin Resource Recovery Center, has been able to provide such a valuable service to the North Bay region. Thanks to the collection yard and to those choosing to participate in the program, nearly 500 tons of *Phytophthora ramorum*-infested plant material have been safely utilized and kept out of our landfills,” said Cynthia Murray, Marin County Board Supervisor.

Committed to receiving as much *Phytophthora ramorum* host material as possible, SODBusters is currently subsidizing the Marin County collection yard tip fee, allowing yard users to pay only half of the normal per-ton cost. Once received, the material is processed into fuel chips for biomass power plants or split for firewood, both renewable energy sources providing power or heat to businesses and homes. The firewood is stored at the yard for a minimum of one year and periodically tested for the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum*, while the chips are transported to biomass powerplants. “Not only are we removing potentially infested material from our local environment, but we are taking that material and putting it to good use,” said Joe Garbarino, owner of Marin Resource Recovery Center. For every two tons of green waste taken in, a biomass powerplant can provide 1,000 homes with one hour of electricity. During the first year of operation at the Marin collection yard, 325 tons of the 464 tons collected was processed into fuel chips, providing more than 150,000 homes with one hour of electricity.

The SODBusters program, managed by the University of California Cooperative Extension biomass utilization group in Richmond, California, was initiated at the request of professional arborists and foresters concerned about spreading *Phytophthora ramorum* during their tree maintenance and removal activities. Provided with \$900,000 in 2002 by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, SODBusters opened the North Bay Region Marin Resource Recovery Center Collection Yard in May, 2003 and the South Bay Region Ben Lomond Collection Yard in December, 2003. A rigorous monitoring program is set up at each site to detect any changes in the levels of *Phytophthora ramorum* at the sites and to help evaluate the risk of spreading SOD during processing and handling activities.

Discovered in July, 2000, *Phytophthora ramorum* is currently found naturally from Monterey to Humboldt County as well as Curry County, Oregon. Many of the 61 plants known to be affected by the disease are found to only have foliar and twig infections. To date, research indicates that foliar and twig host plants are often found to be breeders of the disease, allowing pathogen build-up at the infection site. If not handled properly, the leaf, twig, and small branch litter from these plants could inadvertently spread the disease to areas previously unaffected by the pathogen.

**For more information on SODBusters, go to <http://groups.ucanr.org/SODBusters> or call the SODBusters toll-free information line at (866) SOD-7411. For further information on Sudden Oak Death, or to arrange for a photo opportunity at the Marin Resource Recovery Center Collection Yard, contact Katie Palmieri, Pacific Southwest Research Station/California Oak Mortality Task Force PIO, at (510) 847-5482.**

#####