



NewsNote

A Periodic Note for State PLANTS Coordinators

1 October 2004



Interactive Encyclopedia of North American Weeds Version 3.0 Released

The Southern Weed Science Society recently released its completely rebuilt *Interactive Encyclopedia of North American Weeds* in DVD-ROM format. It includes high resolution graphics and features botanical descriptions, distribution maps, habitats, and over 2400 full color photographs of 447 weeds and crops common to the continental U.S., Alaska, and Canada. New features include 85 additional weed species, revised distribution maps including Canada and Alaska, an expanded illustrated glossary of 565 botanical terms, and updated common and scientific names. Its unique interactive visual identification key now includes all weeds in the program. For more information visit: <http://www.weedscience.msstate.edu/swss/> and click on publications.



Sudden Oak Death Syndrome

A variety of new information is available on the pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*, and its effect on *Quercus* (oak), *Lithocarpus* (tanoak), *Rhododendron*, and *Camelia*. The links below provide management recommendations, training opportunities, diagnostic guides, nursery guides, and research information on this topic. The Oregon Department of Agriculture lists the 28 plant species that are the pathogen's hosts.

- California Oak Mortality Task Force
<<http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/>>
- North Central IPM Center
<<http://www.ncipmc.org/sod/>>
- APHIS Pest Detection and Management Programs
<<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/sod/>>
- University of California Cooperative Extension
<<http://cemar.in.ucdavis.edu/index2.html>>
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
<<http://www.oda.state.or.us/plant/ppd/path/SOD/>>
- US Forest Service-Northeastern Area
<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/sodeast/sodeast.htm>



Cool Season Grasses

As we head into the fall, it brings to mind cool-season grasses. Valuable information on this subject is available on numerous Web sites. For direct links to some of the best sites, go to the PLANTS Home Page, click on Links--Agriculture Related--Forages--Cool Season Grasses.



NPDC Data Under Development for PLANTS and Smartech Tools

The NPDC recently established a number of collaborative agreements with universities and other agencies for developing data to assist the field. Some of these data will support Smartech Tools currently proposed in the agency Information Technology budget. If you would like more information on any of these topics, please contact us.

- **Alaska Weeds & Vascular Plant Distribution:** In collaboration with the Herbarium at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, additional vascular plant distribution data will be digitized focusing initially on records of weeds and invasive plants. The National Invasive Species Council provided funding.
- **Carbon Fixation:** In designing conservation practices, the field often requests information about determining if a plant is a cool or warm season plant—specifically how it metabolizes carbon. These data are being developed at the University of Kansas-Kansas Biological Survey and will be integrated into the Plant Profile with existing plant attributes. Additionally, brief discussions as to the role of each metabolic type in ecology, agriculture, and natural resource conservation are also being developed.
- **Mississippi Weeds & Vascular Plant Distribution:** In collaboration with the Herbaria at Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi, additional vascular plant distribution data will be digitized focusing initially on records of weeds and invasive plants. Funding was provided by the National Invasive Species Council.
- **Pacific Basin Vascular Plants:** This year, we will be integrating a vascular plant checklist for the Pacific Basin into PLANTS. This was produced in cooperation with Smithsonian Institution Botany Department and the Bishop Museum over a period of years. Our current Smithsonian collaborator on this project, Dr. Warren Wagner, is currently compiling a checklist for our last major data gap in the area, American Samoa.
- **Phytoremediation:** The Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Hazardous Substance Research Center located at Kansas State University is compiling these data. They will provide a list of plants and associated information useful for phytoremediation. These data will assist the field in the economic clean up of brown fields, establishing more effective buffers, and improving the management of excess nutrients for individual landowners and communities.
- **Plant Characteristics:** The National Wetland Research Center in Lafayette, LA has continued its development of plant characteristics data for 200 additional species. These data will be integrated into the Plant Characteristics on PLANTS and be available for use by applications, such as VegSpec and the Advanced Query.
- **Plant Identification:** Plant identification data will be developed in 2005 by Missouri Botanical Garden staff for 300+ additional wetland plants designated by the USFWS as having wetland indicator status. An illustrated glossary of botanical terms to assist in the identification process is also being developed. These data would be integrated into the proposed Smartech Plant-ID tool that, if funded in 05, would replace the old MARSH wetland plant identification tool with both PC and Web versions.
- **Seed Images:** In collaboration with the USDA ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory, imaging is underway (2004-2006) for 7,000 accessions in the National Seed Herbarium in Beltsville. As data sets are developed, they will be integrated into PLANTS.

- **Pollinator/Host Plant:** A global decline in pollinators has been noted by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, of which NRCS is a cooperator. A Smartech module providing the field with information on pollinators and their host plants is in the proposed 2005 IT budget. This module would assist the field in implementing pollinator enhancement and practicing pollinator-friendly agriculture and conservation. Last year, the NPDC established collaboration with the USDA ARS Bee Laboratory, Logan, UT, to compile pollinator/host plant data for the bees of the western U.S. An agreement was recently signed with the University of Maryland to begin compilation of data on eastern bees and other pollinators. The result would be information in support of pollinator conservation, increased crop production, ecological restoration, and numerous other conservation practices.
- **Taxonomy/Distribution Update:** This continues our routine taxonomy and distribution update working with the Biota of North America Program. The focus will be reviewing the scientific literature 2002-2004 and consulting with taxonomic specialists to maintain scientific currency, filling county distributional data gaps, and compiling county level data for the last state, Maryland.
- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** Under the direction of the NPDC Ethnoecologist, Kat Anderson, at the University of California-Davis, over 1 million pages of historical field notes will be reviewed. The 2005 effort will focus on the historical ethnographies pertaining to the Salinan and Nor-rel-muk. These plant use data will be digitized to repatriate the data to the tribes, support NRCS in assisting Native American customers, and support sustained natural resources management.
- **Vascular Plant Images:** Currently, we have data sets totaling over 50,000 slides awaiting integration into PLANTS. Unfortunately, we are short on staff and/or funds to assist in the processing. We can process about 10,000 per year with existing resources. In other words, we have about a five-year backlog. If anyone could assist in this effort financially, please contact us.
- **Wildlife Suitability Ratings:** The purpose of this agreement is to standardize, compile, and improve wildlife habitat suitability ratings for plant species through a cooperative effort with Clemson University. The foundation data will be derived from Martin, A.C., H.S. Zim, & A.L. Nelson. 1951. American wildlife and plants. A guide to wildlife food habits. These data will be integrated into the PLANTS Web site to assist the field in selecting plant species for improving wildlife habitat.

Your Feedback is Requested

Please send comments regarding PLANTS, NPDC NewsNote, or other plant-related issues to <rebecca.noricks@la.usda.gov>. Visit us on the Web at <http://npdc.usda.gov>.



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