



'voice for the BC landscape horticulture industry'

Dear Homeowner:

November 2007

Re: CFIA and Landscapers Working Together to Protect BC's Environment Regarding Management of *P. ramorum*

We understand that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recently inspected plants in your or your neighbour's gardens, looking for a plant disease called *Phytophthora ramorum*, which was introduced to BC from California a few years ago.

As the industry association that represents its member landscape service providers, we would like to explain a bit more about this disease. (BCLNA also represents garden centres and growers throughout the province, working with them and liaising with CFIA on *P. ramorum* and other plant health issues).

P. ramorum, commonly called 'Sudden Oak Death' arrived in BC in 2004 on a shipment of plants from a wholesale grower. Scientists in the Pacific Northwest are still learning about this new and rarely found disease that has been responsible for the death of some trees in California and Europe. Since it may pose a threat to our landscapes and forests, great precautions are being taken to eradicate it.

Best Management Practices (BMP's) have been developed for landscapers to help them minimize the risk of spreading the disease. Your landscaper should be happy to discuss the Best Management Practices they have followed when working in your garden.

No one is to blame for this disease. *P. ramorum* is transferred from plant to plant by tiny spores. It is very difficult to detect, as there *are often no visible symptoms*. When symptoms do exist, they appear as brown spots on leaves, a common symptom of many other plant pathogens. The only way to definitively diagnose this disease is through DNA testing.

Your (or your neighbour's) garden is being inspected because your landscaper may have unknowingly purchased plants from a nursery where infected plants were found. The chance of there being an infection in your garden is extremely small. Rest assured *P. ramorum* poses no threat to human health.

If the disease is detected on your property:

- CFIA will ensure that it is dealt with efficiently and effectively. Plants may be removed and replaced. There is compensation available for your losses (CFIA will provide compensation information).
- Your cooperation is requested to respect the movement restrictions around the garden until the work is finished.
- Please discuss the restoration of your garden with your landscaper after consultation with the CFIA, to work together to ensure the health of your garden.
- Learn more about the disease at California Oak Mortality Task Force's website: www.suddenoakdeath.org and CFIA's website (see link on next page).

We wish you all the best in dealing with this inconvenience, and hope you continue to receive great enjoyment from your garden for many years to come.



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Plant Protection Division

***Phytophthora ramorum* survey**

You may be wondering about the plant sampling being done in your neighbourhood by CFIA staff wearing white suits. This sampling is part of an investigation for the plant disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, a quarantine-pest of concern that affects many common ornamental nursery plants.

This plant-pathogen is not harmful to humans and there are no known health concerns. For further information about plant symptoms, and a list of plants that it affects, please visit our website at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/pestrava/phyram/sodmsce.shtml>.

In our sampling, we strive to be as unobtrusive as possible and observe biosecurity precautions while on the site. This is why our plant-samplers will be wearing disposable bio-security coveralls, to prevent inadvertent transfer of the pathogen from site to site. It is also therefore important that members of the public take similar precautions such as not entering quarantined areas and preventing the movement of any plants or soil from the quarantined area.

If this disease is detected in samples, we will return to your site to discuss removal and treatment options with you. Due to its quarantine status, the pest needs to be eradicated from any infected site. This is done by careful destruction of infected plants, surveying adjacent plants to determine if the disease has spread, and following up with sampling to ensure it has been successfully eradicated. Plants can be replaced once these activities are complete, and we will work with you in returning your site to its original condition. Until quarantine measures have been completed, coloured tape will mark out the areas on your site you should refrain from entering, to prevent potential spread.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your landscaper for more information, or the BC Landscape and Nursery Association (ask for Ms. Hedy Dyck at 604-574-7772). Alternatively, please feel free to phone our office at (604) 666-4179. You will be contacted immediately, should any follow-up activity be required on your site.

Thank you and kind regards,

Nitin Verma
Program Officer