

along the southern Parana River in Argentina. Efforts to identify natural enemies of the Argentine ant for biological control should focus on this area, Tsutsui said.

Earlier research by Suarez and the same colleagues traced the rapid decline of coast horned lizards in California to indirect impacts of invading Argentine ants. The invaders displaced indigenous ants, the lizard's favored food source. They are not a palatable substitute.

In related research published in several journals, the four scientists also showed that the loss of genetic diversity in introduced populations led to reduced aggression among the ants, allowing the formation of the supercolony in which queens and workers mix freely among separate nests. The invaders wipe out indigenous ants through sheer numbers.

### SOD found on UC Berkeley campus

A pathogen that has devastated wide swaths of California's oak trees has been discovered on the grounds of UC Berkeley, campus officials announced Oct. 31, 2001. The microbe responsible for sudden oak death (SOD) has infected three host species, including two California bay trees near the Faculty Glade. The infection has not been detected in any of the oak trees on campus, suggesting that it arrived recently.

Matteo Garbelotto of the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources noticed the infections while walking through campus. Subsequent tests confirmed that the infections were caused by *Phytophthora ramorum* (see *California Agriculture*, January-February 2001). Garbelotto and UC Davis associate professor Dave Rizzo, in conjunction with the California Oak Mortality Task Force, were recently awarded a \$1 million grant from the San Francisco-based Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, to study *P. ramorum*.

Approximately 50 campus groundskeepers, gardeners, arborists and horticulturists from UC Berkeley's Botanical Garden have received training to identify signs of SOD infection. They are canvassing the campus and gathering samples of suspicious vegetation. Disease management will include regular monitoring of the campus grounds and preventative treatments with fungicides. Areas surrounding the campus also will be surveyed through a joint effort between UC Berkeley and the Alameda County Agricultural Commission.

There are at least 10 known tree and plant species that are susceptible to the *P. ramorum* pathogen. The highly contagious microbe is a

brown algae related to the species responsible for Ireland's potato famine of the mid-1800s. Its ability to infect a wide array of plant life through soil, water and air has made it particularly difficult to control.

SOD was first noticed in Marin County in 1995 and has since felled tens of thousands of coast live oaks, black oaks and tan oaks in the state. Infections have recently been discovered along Crow Canyon Road in Alameda County and near Lake Madigan in Solano County.

### Mondavi gift benefits UC Davis wine and food sciences

On Sept. 19, 2001, Robert and Margrit Mondavi announced a personal gift of \$25 million to UC Davis to establish the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science. The gift will be combined with campus funds and other private contributions to create new state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities, to house the UC Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources departments of viticulture, enology, and food science and technology.

The institute will include an academic building of approximately 75,000 square feet for classrooms, laboratories, offices and meeting rooms. A 13,000-square-foot plant for food-processing, and a 36,000-square-foot building for a new campus teaching and research winery, also will be constructed within the proposed institute. Current plans call for the institute to be located on Old Davis Road; ground-breaking is expected in 2004.

The gift is the largest private contribution ever to UC Davis and represents one of the most generous single gifts from an individual donor in UC history. The Mondavis also donated \$10 million to name the UC Davis campus's Center for the Performing Arts, which is currently under construction.

— Compiled from U.C. and other news sources



Marc Dantzker

**Nonnative Argentine ant workers nurture scale insects in exchange for the sweet honeydew they excrete. By protecting scale, aphids and other homoptera from potential predators, Argentine ants promote populations increases among these agricultural pests.**



Tony Novelo/Axion

**A \$25 million gift from Robert and Margrit Mondavi will allow UC Davis to build a new facility combining viticulture, enology, and food science and technology. Graduate student Fiona Hutchinson pours peanuts into a machine that coats them with an edible covering made from whey proteins, a byproduct of cheese processing. The coating prolongs freshness while utilizing a dairy byproduct that has long been a waste disposal headache for cheese processors.**