



THE GARRY OAK MEADOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY (GOMPS) *wishes to extend its congratulations and hopes you will participate in its endeavour to protect and nurture these magnificent specimens of nature which are rapidly becoming an endangered species.*

DID YOU KNOW that these native oaks you have on your property are a vestige of what was, for the most part, a Garry oak forest, widespread throughout South-eastern Vancouver Island, with its abundant and complex ecosystem of rare plants, animals, insects and birds, over 100 of which are endangered and some, now extinct? Over the last 150 years or so, with the clearing of farmland by pioneers and then later, the accelerating onslaught of insensitive urban development, less than 5% of it remains. It is estimated that 10 to 20% of today's oaks will be lost in the next decade. Limited restorative efforts are currently underway, but virtually no untouched "intact" ecosystem exists.

DID YOU KNOW that Garry oaks are the only habitat on which about 40 species of insects are able to live? Some 20 of these are considered by biologists as endangered.

DID YOU KNOW that what you have on your property, depending on its size, is an irreplaceable natural "antique", likely to be 125 to over 400 years old?

DID YOU KNOW that with a little effort and a bit of knowledge you could become a responsible steward of a precious communal asset? All you have to do is keep a few principles in mind, remembering that your property will likely change hands several times in the next century. Garry oaks take years (several human lifetimes) to mature and decades to die. Your landscaping activities may inadvertently impact negatively on your, and adjacent, properties.

TO AVOID THESE MISTAKES

GOMPS urges you to consider the following:

- Garry oaks require lots of sunlight, while generously providing dappled shade for other co-existing plants; however, densely shading conifers (firs, cedars, cypress) are a menace to the oaks' survival. They outstrip the oaks in their aggressive growth, monopolizing the available sunlight, therefore avoid planting conifers and remove small ones before it is too late! Also, avoid like the plague the planting of climbing vines, English ivy especially, which eventually swarms and kills the trees. Get rid of any ivy on your oaks now!
- Garry oaks are surprisingly adaptive, surviving on extremes from stony outcrops to lush, well-watered lawns, but sudden changes (excessive watering or prolonged drought after years of watering) can severely stress or kill them. Cutting their roots or compacting the soil around them (parking vehicles, covering with asphalt) poses another threat to their survival.

