



The Garry Oak Leaflet

Official Newsletter of the
Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

Volume 16, Number 1 October 2009

Come Celebrate With Us



GOMPS
17 Years of
Service to the
Garry Oak
Ecosystem



"Nuts about oak" Shawn Meagher, 2 1/2 years old, delivers his nut collection. See page 3 for growing instructions.

Friday, October 16, 2009 — 7:30pm to 9:30pm
Pacific Forestry Centre, 506 West Burnside Rd.

Speakers:

Paul Gareau — "GOMPS & Garry Oak Surveys"

Evelyn Hamilton — "Climate Change & the Garry Oak Ecosystem"

Light refreshments — Old, new, and potential members and guests welcome.

Join us — Meet or renew acquaintance with long-time members; Learn about GOMPS' early activities; Update yourself on recent activities; Provide advice to newer members.

Please let us know if you will be coming so we can plan for numbers. Email to:
mmeagher@pfc.forestry.ca

Urban Forest Planning Begun

GOMPS began urging the creation of Urban Forest plans in 2003 (see GOMPS Leaflet Volume 10, numbers 3 and 5 for articles by Hal Gibbard) to properly appreciate and manage local tree cover, especially Garry oaks and other native species. Doing so would rationalise their management over the long term and provide habitat for the many local species that assist in maintenance of habitats and the remarkable visual aspects of our vicinity.

Some of the factors to be dealt with in a “Strategic Plan” are:

- Setting of goals and objectives for this urban forest
- Inventory : trees and ecosystems
- Recognising the priority of listed endangered species
- Committing to the importance of selected native species
- Identifying the degree of variability in both species and age structure to achieve the above goals and objectives
- Determining pest control principles and strategies
- Establishing an Action Plan, including priorities
- Establishing time-lines for implementation
- Estimating costs and the required budget for implementation

Starting from such an informed perspective would facilitate further inventory of habitats, species, ecosystem health and remedial measures, such as removal of invasive species and replacement of lost trees with those best-suited to the site.

When the goals and objectives are agreed to, then each municipality can develop some of the tools required to achieve the objectives of their plan, such as Tree Protection Bylaws, Regeneration and Replacement Plans, Maintenance Schedules, projected budgets, etc. Some municipalities already have one or more of these tools, but without objectives and strategic direction, they may not measure up to the task. These tools must address both the problems of the preservation of existing trees and of the recruitment of replacements. There are many communities without a tree canopy, so consideration should be given to expanding the existing forest, particularly the Garry oaks where they used to cover the whole area. Initiatives and incentives must be included to deal with that major part of the forest that is on private land so that it does not die out, leaving only scattered islands of trees on municipal properties.

Recently, both Victoria and Saanich have formed advisory groups to address the status of their urban forests and draft recommendations for a management plan. GOMPS’ representative in the Saanich group is Hal Gibbard, and in Victoria it is Mike Meagher. Both have produced draft recommendations that have been discussed at public meetings and now are being reviewed by staff prior to advancing to the Councils for further discussion and possible adoption. Internet directions: Consult “*Victoria – Publications & Reports*”: type “Urban forests” in the “SEARCH” box then select “*Urban forests master plan*”. For Saanich, use the “SEARCH” option on the home page, type “urban forest” and select “*Urban Forest Strategy*”.

Following these initiatives, GOMPS might continue urging other governments to “join the club” of jurisdictions recognizing and managing their urban forest for the long-term appreciation of, and benefit to, their residents and visitors.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.hat.bc.ca/projects/ufsi.htm Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative





Nuts About Oaks: Acorns in a Bumper Crop Year

... in the years after the First World War, Louis-Hubert Lyautey, Maréchal de France, ...Resident General of Morocco under the French (was) told that the Moroccan Atlas mountain range, which stretches from Agadir to the Mediterranean, had once been covered by a cedar forest. He ordered it replanted at once. His civil servants objected that such old-growth forests took millennia to establish. Lyautey replied briskly: 'That, gentlemen, is why we shall start immediately.' (J. Roberts, *Mythic Woods*, 2004)

Let's take advantage of this year's abundant crop of acorns to begin replanting our Garry Oak forest **immediately**. Here are the instructions from the Native Plant Propagation Guidelines on the GOERT website, http://www.goert.ca/propagation_guidelines/trees/quercus_garryana

Seed Propagation

Flowering Time: February to May

Fruit Ripening Time: Late summer

Seed Collection Time: September to October

Crop Intervals: Two to three years

Number of Seeds per Kilogram: 165 - 225

Seed Viability: Empty or insect damaged seeds common

Fruit and Seed Collection and Extraction: Ripe acorns are best collected by hand-picking into picking bags (Banerjee et al., 2001) or by tapping off branches with a bamboo pole onto tarps. Avoid collecting mature fallen acorns to which the caps are still attached. Separate insect-damaged from sound seeds by presence of bore holes, and by floating off unsound acorns in water.

Seed Storage: Seeds should be sown as soon as possible in the fall. If storage is necessary it should be for as short a time as possible. Store under moist conditions in a refrigerator (do not freeze) until sowing. Fresh acorns germinate rapidly under warm moist conditions. Soaking in water for one to several days improves germination (Jebb, 1995; Buis, 1996).

Fruit/Seed Dormancy and Treatment:

No dormancy exhibited, thus no treatment required.

Outplanting Characteristics and Requirements

Seedlings can take 10 or more years to grow to 1 m in height. If possible, plant seed where they are intended to grow because seedlings do not transplant well.



Garry Oaks, Fire, and Regeneration

Fire is historically a major factor in the Garry Oak ecosystem, whether naturally occurring or set by aboriginal people to maintain Camas meadows and grazing for deer and elk. Evidence from dendrochronology (history written in the growth rings of trees) and other sources indicates that fires happened every 5 to 7 years, keeping shrubs and conifers out of the meadows while mature oaks were protected by their thick bark. Young oaks probably had their tops killed or severely damaged by some of the fires but, as the photo on the top right shows, burnt trees can regenerate from their roots.



The picture is of a stand of small Garry Oaks in Beacon Hill Park, burnt in a grass fire in the summer of 2008. They did leaf out this spring but the healthier leaf crop is that at the base of the stand.



The picture on the bottom left is of a group of Garry Oaks in Mount Stephens Park. Their trunks grow in a frequently-seen pattern, a circle, bases touching. One theory has it that they regenerated from the roots of an older tree that once stood in the middle, and that it's one of the most common patterns for Garry Oak regeneration.

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Membership Dues:
 Individual \$15 Family \$20

Please complete this membership form and mail along with cheque to:
 GOMPS, Suite A 954, Queens Avenue, Victoria BC, V8T 1M6.

Thank you for your support.

Membership Fees Enclosed \$ _____
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