



# *Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society*

*Dedicated to Protecting Victoria's Heritage Landscape*

## **Seedling Donation Policy Version 1, August 2013**

### **Donating Seedlings to the GOMPS Nursery**

The goal of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society's (GOMPS) Nursery Project is to produce young seedlings from locally-collected acorns to satisfy the public demand.

Our nursery will provide strong, healthy trees, genetically-molded by Mother Nature for our area, to local governments, major landowners, restoration projects and the general public.

The Garry oak, and many other oaks, have not been favoured by commercial nurseries due to their slow growth so growers often dedicate their land to fast growing, high-sales species to maximize profit. Our GOMPS Nursery will focus solely on Garry oak trees and aims to produce a single crop each year. GOMPS will grow Garry oaks until they are about 6-7 years old and of suitable strength to withstand the hardships of our urban settings.

In our operation of this mono-crop nursery, prevention of disease and pest attacks will help to achieve healthy plant development and subsequent growth. This policy addresses the issue of accepting donated seedlings with a goal to helping the public understand GOMPS's position on the matter of accepting donated seedlings.

#### **Disease and Pests**

Garry oaks are susceptible to several diseases and pests that could arrive at our nursery in soil from external sources. Our operations will not encourage or support the moving of soil within the growing areas of the Garry oaks, which range from the Comox Valley south to Greater Victoria. This policy conforms to agricultural regulations already in practice in the Saanich Peninsula which restrict the movement of soil in the plan to reduce the spread of the Golden Nematode and Sudden Oak Death. The latter arrived in Greater Victoria in 2007 on imported plants.

In addition to soil-borne micro-organisms, plants themselves may be hosts for insects and other pests, such as moths, wasps, weevils and loopers at varying stages of their development. Reducing soil transport will also help to control the spread of invasive plants, whose seeds, roots or stems may be moved and infest other areas. While in nature the damage done by these threats may be minimal, in a single-crop nursery environment, such contamination could infect or damage our entire inventory of plants!

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The operations of the GOMPS Nursery will use sterile soil-less (peat based) growing media in containers as a foundation for all acorn sowing and seedling transplants. By eliminating soil from our operations we will reduce the likelihood of introducing soil-borne diseases and pests into our operations and prevent them from spreading after our stock is sold and planted out. If this is successful we will also benefit from a reduction or elimination of chemical controls (i.e. pesticides) in our operations.

### **Healthy Plant Growth and Development**

The Garry oak is a hearty tree, well adapted to the drought stresses present in our Mediterranean-like climate. As we enter into an era of predicted temperature increases courtesy of global warming the Garry oak becomes a highly prized contender for tree plantings of all types.

A major factor in its ability to survive in such climates is the Garry oak's root system. As the primary root emerges from the acorn it grows downward into soil to form a tap root from which laterals will branch later. Proper development of the tap root ensures a healthy tree will grow from the founding root. In nursery operations this aggressive downward growth requires optimal soil conditions such as deep containers for early growth.

### **Acorn Source Identity**

GOMPS will record the source of all acorns and maintain the identity of the trees until sold. This will increase the allocation to the most-suitable locality, thus improving performance.

To maintain quality and ensure all of our trees develop and grow as healthy as possible we have decided not to accept seedlings from sources other than our own operations. Without removing all soil (see above concerns for pathogens and pests) or growing media it will be impossible for GOMPS to assess the root development of seedlings it receives as donation.

**GOMPS and its Nursery Project are grateful that your thoughts are of us but we must decline to accept any and all donated Garry oak seedlings for the reasons outlined above.**