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To: gompssc@gmail.com



**GARRY OAK MEADOW
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

Welcome to our E-news

WINTER 2025



Photo by Ryan Senechal. Winter chill and Garry oak meadow in Victoria BC. Information about seedlings and winterization is included in this issue.

WHO WE ARE

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (GOMPS) formed in 1992 because local citizens were concerned that woodlands and meadows were rapidly disappearing as a result of expanding human habitation in the Capital Regional District. Our society is dedicated to the preservation, protection and restoration of Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) stands and their natural habitats.

We are a grassroots group helping to make a difference! We are 100% volunteer run. **Will you join us?**

VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for volunteers to help us engage in educational activities, to work with all levels of government through letter writing and attendance at council meetings and public hearings to raise awareness on the importance of Garry oaks and their ecosystems, and to work in GOMPS Garry oak nursery.

UPCOMING EVENTS



FEBRUARY 15, 2025

11 AM - 4 PM

ENTRANCE BY DONATION

Crystal Garden

713 Douglas St.

  **@vicseedysaturday**

Seedy Saturday Victoria, on Saturday, February 15, from 11 am - 4 pm.
Crystal Garden Entrance is by donation.

Over 50+ incredible vendors joining Seedy Saturday this year! From seeds, plants, and garden supplies to non-profits and more. Come by the GOMPS booth to say hello!

Every seed and plant vendor has signed our Seed Pledge, ensuring their seeds are GMO-free, not-invasive and grown locally by the vendor (or clearly labelled if not). Supporting our local growers means investing in climate-adapted seeds that strengthen food security & sovereignty in our community!

[More details here](#)



Kwetlal (Camas) Day, on Sunday, May 4, from 1 pm to 3 pm.

Uplands Park

Beach Drive grassy field at the Cattle Point entrance

Friends of Uplands Park Society is having its annual celebration. Come by and say hello, enjoy the displays, music, free refreshments, prizes, family activities and Wildflower Walks. Stay tuned for details.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING





Photo by Susan Grant. Members and guests attending the Annual General Meeting.

The GOMPS 2023-24 AGM was held on Sunday, November 17, 2024, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at the Banquet Room, Cedar Hill Golf Course, 1400 Derby Rd, Saanich. Please find links to the presentation and reports below.

Our meeting included:

- Presentation of various reports – [President](#), [Nursery](#), Treasurer & Volunteer, and Coordinator
- Election of officers, and
- An open discussion about Garry oak issues with a focus on future directions.

As per GOMPS bylaws, three board members were elected:

- President – Ryan Senechal (2-year term)
- Vice-President – Susan Grant (elected for a 2nd term),
- Secretary – Judith Carder (2-year term),
- Treasurer – Judy Spearing (2-year term),
- Communications Director – Carollyne Yardley (elected for a 2nd term),
- Director at Large – Carol Milo (2-year term), and
- Director at Large – Jacklyn Jolicoeur (newly elected).

The Meeting ended with a facilitated, open discussion among attendees about Garry oak and ecosystem issues.

Presentations at the Annual General Meeting

**Remote
Sensing:
Garry Oak**



Species Detection



LiDAR Presentation Slide by GOMPS President Ryan Senechal

Presentation by Ryan Senechal

Summary

Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society is a volunteer-run non-profit based in Saanich, BC, that advocates for individual Garry oak and Garry oak ecosystem protection and stewardship. Mapping and analysis of the overall Garry oak ecosystem and individual trees in the Capital Regional District is out of date. LiDAR (*Light Detection and Ranging*) is a cost-effective, high accuracy method of forest analysis that enables measurements such as change to tree populations through intensifying land development. Our interest is in developing a new approach to map Garry oak species presence using LiDAR and machine learning. By conducting species specific detection analysis to form a species composition baseline, we can enable future analysis opportunities that are Garry oak and Garry oak ecosystem specific. This is an important contribution to a growing body of regional urban forest mapping that could influence changes in tree protection policies (e.g., enhanced existing tree protections and requirements for Garry oak replacement trees through private development), and management and planning for Garry oaks on public property.

Analysis

Our initial analysis goals are to perform Garry oak species detection within a minimum of a single municipality (City of Victoria) and eventually expand the method to survey all municipalities in the Capital Regional District. We hope to have located and calculated the overall Garry oak canopy area. Our goal is to make the Garry oak mapping and high resolution raw LiDAR/ortho data flown for this project publicly available. This data sharing will support researchers, community members and other nonprofit organizations with our Garry oak species analysis, and also enable additional novel data analysis approaches supporting Garry oaks and Garry oak ecosystems

ecosystems.

Presentation slides (.pdf)



VCAN Presentation Slide by GOMPS Director Carollyne Yardley.

Presentation by Carollyne Yardley

The Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN) Mapping project began as a conversation about the distribution of biodiversity within and between the City of Victoria's neighbourhoods (Burnside Gorge, Downtown, Fairfield / Gonzales, Fernwood, Hillside Quadra, James Bay, North Jubilee, South Jubilee, North Park, Oaklands, Rockland, and Victoria West).

To complement the City's excellent inventory of all trees on public land, VCAN involved each neighbourhood in an inventory of Garry oaks and other elements of biodiversity on private property. Each neighbourhood developed its own approach and will report to residents on what they learned about the larger patterns within our urban forest.

The urban area of the City of Victoria is the Garry oak ecosystem (GOE)— a fact often left out of discussions on the urban forest. The Garry oak tree, a keystone species, plays a crucial role. Over 1,645 organisms, including plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, have co-evolved with the Garry oak tree. Unfortunately, more than 100 of these species are currently listed as at risk in British Columbia.

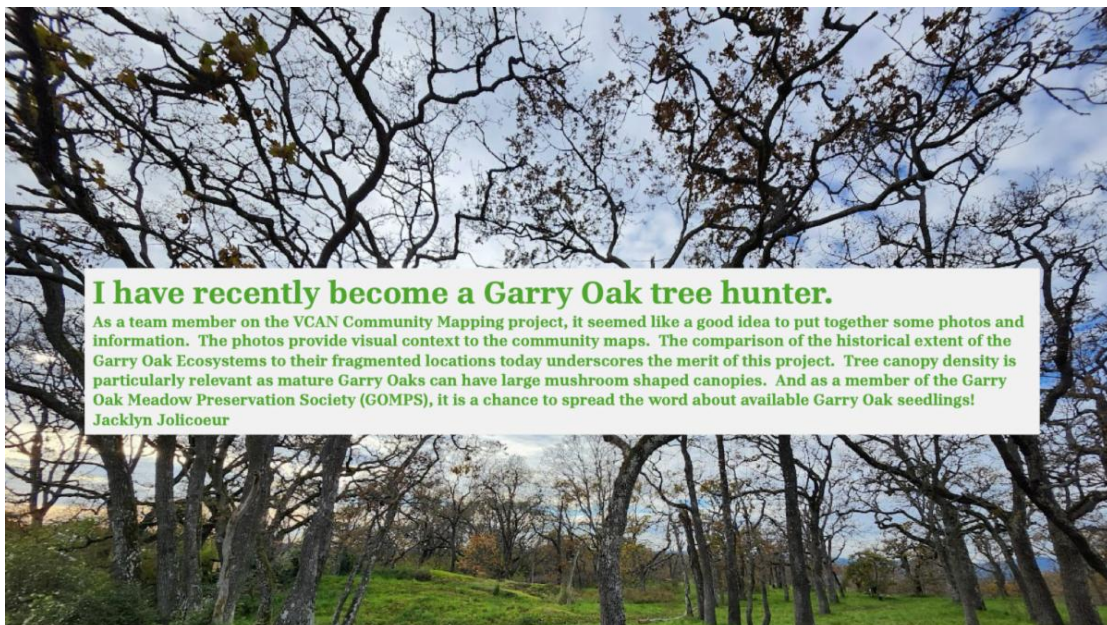
Objectives of the project include:

- to increase awareness of cultural connections to the territory and the impacts of settlement on the landscape.
- to create opportunities for Victoria residents to connect with the natural urban environment.
- to create a more complete map of the current distribution of Garry oaks.
- to identify wildlife corridors that facilitate the movement of organisms between large nodes of complex, functioning ecosystems.

The project aims to inform initiatives such as urban development, parks acquisition (9.2 of the Official Community Plan), habitat enhancement and restoration, and canopy equity across the city.

GOMPS provided a letter of support and urban forest expertise via a walking tour for participants. GOMPS Director Carollyne Yardley acted as the project manager through her membership with VCAN, as a Director of the Rockland Neighbourhood Association (RNA), and as Co-chair of the RNA Land Use Committee. VCAN is comprised of representatives from each community association within the City of Victoria who work to inform and educate stakeholders regarding items of common interest and shape municipal and regional public policy and processes. VCAN occasionally undertakes larger community projects that have cross-city or regional impact.

Presentation slides (.pdf)



I have recently become a Garry Oak tree hunter.

As a team member on the VCAN Community Mapping project, it seemed like a good idea to put together some photos and information. The photos provide visual context to the community maps. The comparison of the historical extent of the Garry Oak Ecosystems to their fragmented locations today underscores the merit of this project. Tree canopy density is particularly relevant as mature Garry Oaks can have large mushroom shaped canopies. And as a member of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (GOMPS), it is a chance to spread the word about available Garry Oak seedlings!

Jacklyn Jolicoeur

VCAN Slide by GOMPS Director Jacklyn Jolicoeur

GOMPS Director Jacklyn Jolicouer was a team member on the project representing the James Bay neighbourhood and created a slide deck for the wrap-up event.

[Printed slide deck at wrap up event by Jacklyn Jolicouer \(.pdf\)](#)

MEMBERSHIP

Join GOMPS today by filling out our printable membership form or make a donation via our website. Tax receipts are provided.

We're nearing development of an online form to accept memberships and donations through e-transfer and credit cards. Your support means the world to us, so thank you for being a part of this project. Stay tuned for updates! ❤️



[Printable Membership Form](#)

DONATIONS

- Donate to GOMPS effortlessly through Canada Helps and support our mission to protect Garry oaks and their ecosystems. We are a registered society in BC with a charitable status recognized by CRA (141110908 RR0001). By donating through Canada Helps, you will receive a charitable tax receipt. Thank you!



[Donate](#)

NURSERY NEWS





Last winter GOMPS experienced a devastating loss of seedlings due to the cold snap in January 2024. We lost 38% of our stock, or more than 1000 seedlings.

Our nursery is on an exposed open site; therefore, we typically move all the seedlings close together, "penguin" style, for overwintering. Given our losses last winter, GOMPS looked at other steps we could take to protect our seedlings from extreme cold events.

Our key considerations and possible solutions included:

Permanent wind desiccation reduction

- install a natural windbreak by building a low berm with available soil around the perimeter of the tarps
- grow some fast-growing conifers (e.g., Douglas fir) in larger containers to stage at row ends and mid-rows to disrupt and slow desiccating winds. Container-grown buffer trees are preferred because our nursery is on leased land, and containers provide for flexibility as seedling group configuration and need for irrigation and sunlight change through the seasons

Thermal protection to prevent root freezing injury

- build modular polytunnels out of PVC and secure fleece fabrics or 3mm white polyethylene to them. Remove ahead of warmer weather to prevent heat injury. Pros: sturdier protection from snow and good thermal protection through the entire cold season. Cons: requires more materials and must be secured to the ground which could potentially damage underground irrigation piping. Significant off-season storage required. Neglecting to remove the polytunnels from trees when normal temperatures return could cause plants to break dormancy early, leading to shoot injury.
- lay microfoam thermal blanket (e.g., <https://www.growerssupply.com/prod/gs-row-frost-cover-2/pg106368.html>) directly on the seedlings only when extreme cold events are forecast. Remove and store the blanket when normal

temperatures return. Pros: strong thermal protection, blankets are lightweight and quick to install/remove. Cons: potential for branch and stem breakage if left on during heavy snow events. Requires anchorage to prevent them going airborne. Potentially more labour intensive overall. Not all damaging cold events are foreseeable, particularly if microclimate related.

- install mulch or soil outside of and between pots to remove airspaces and increase shared soil volume. Pros: moderate thermal protection. Cons: high labour and material investment in purchasing, distributing and removing the materials annually.

Given our resources on site, to both block the wind and prevent root freezing injury we opted to surround our “penguin pods” with left-over styro blocks weighted to prevent airbourne losses and with soil bales. We’ll let you know how our seedlings make out this winter.



Photo by Judith Carder. Seedling winterization





Photo by Judith Carder. Seedling winterization



Photo by Judith Carder. Seedling winterization

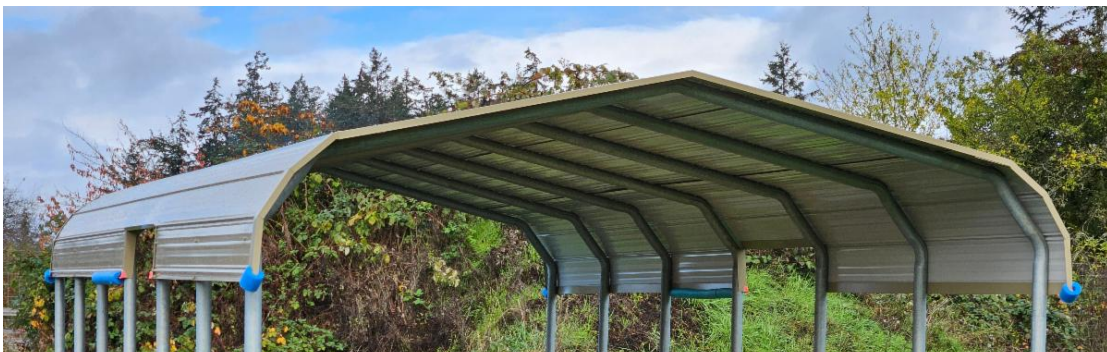




Photo by Judith Carder. Volunteer work shelter

Volunteer Work Shelter

This winter's nursery work parties have significantly benefitted from the new work shelter installed last June thanks to the organizational work of Board Director Susan Grant, with advice from Director Judy Spearing & assistance from nursery volunteer, Marion. This improvement was funded from a grant through the Victoria Foundation's Environment and Sustainability Fund, which we gratefully received in 2024.

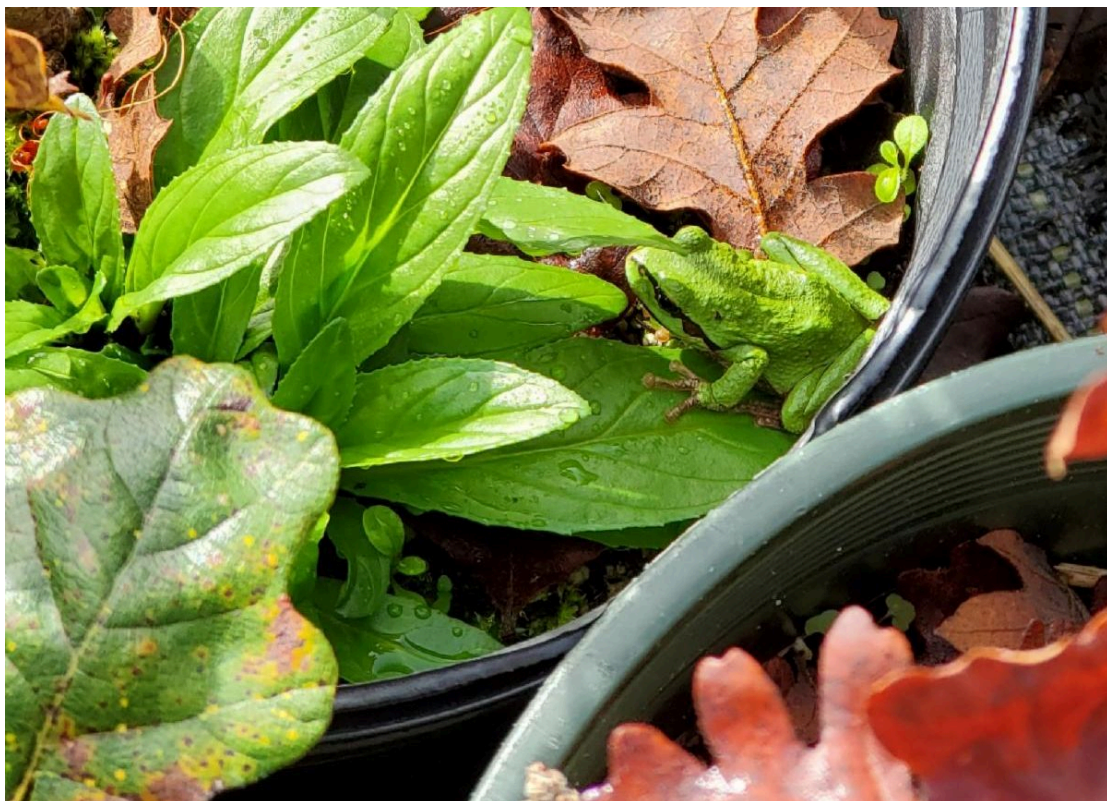


Photo by Judith Carder. Tree frog in the nursery.

Photo by Judith Carder. Native Northern Pacific tree frog (Pseudacris regilla)

Biodiversity at the Nursery

We had a visitor at the nursery - this lovely native green frog, a Northern Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*). They like the regular moisture provided by our irrigation system, particularly in the summer, as well as the shade and protection provided by the seedlings.

Garry Oak Seedlings

We have lots of Garry oak seedlings ready to be planted once the ground is workable. Fall is the best time to plant Garry oaks, as the fall and winter rains assist the root development of young seedlings and enable survival during the following summer drought period on Vancouver Island and the surrounding region. However, spring planting with supportive care is also possible.

Garry oak trees are slow-growing for the first 3 to 7 years, putting their energy into their root systems. But once established in the ground, they can grow one to two feet above ground per year eventually becoming a towering tree. Choose your site wisely to avoid conflict with structures, roads and transmission lines, and underground infrastructure. Please note that Garry oak seedling survival is enhanced by the use of stakes, protective caging to prevent browsing/damage, mulching, and supplemental water during drought periods.

Our society grows Garry oak seedlings with a view to restoring and/or infilling existing Garry oak meadows and associated ecosystems. If you have a large Garry oak(s) on your property, have you thought about planting the next generation of Garry oak(s)?

Please contact us a grow.oaks@gmail.com for more information.





Photo by Jacklyn Jolicoeur. One gallon Garry oak seedling at the nursery.

ADVOCACY

Harewood Plains

- [Harewood Plains Protection \(letter .pdf\)](#)

Crystal Pool Referendum

On February 8th, 2024, Victoria residents are being asked by the City of Victoria to vote on borrowing \$168.9 million to replace the Crystal Pool project with a project budgeted at \$215.9 million. This is a Yes or No referendum.

There will be a second, separate vote to choose whether the project should be built on the North or South side of the park. This will inform any future development.

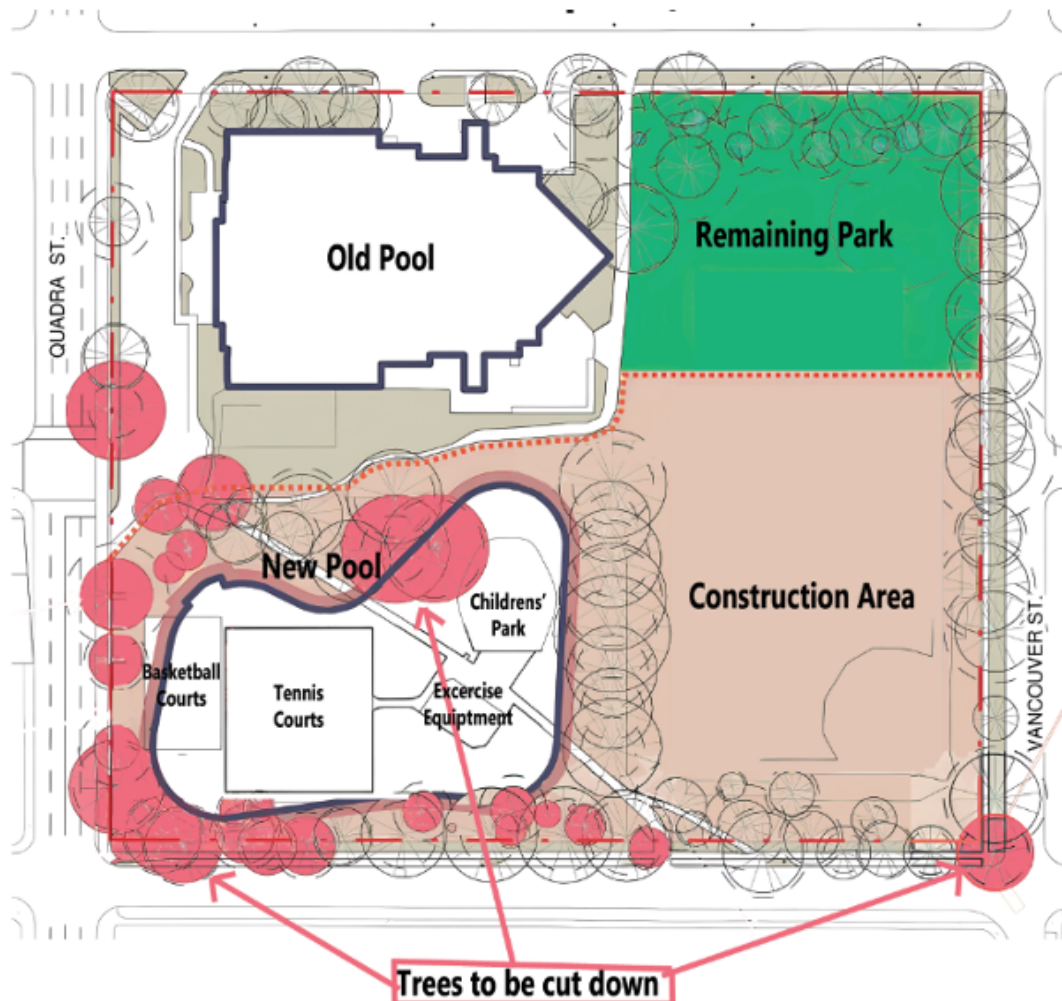
For more information, visit [www.victoria.ca/crystalpool](#)

There are currently 100 trees on-site, predominately located around the perimeter of the lot. However, there is a row of London planes located to the west of the southern baseball pitch, and a group of trees located in between the existing fitness centre and the basketball/tennis courts. The majority of the on-site trees are mature elms (*Ulmus* spp.) and London planes (*Platanus X acerfolia*). Most of the trees included in the inventory are non-native species except for three mature Garry oaks (*Quercus garryana*) and four bigleaf maples (*Acer macrophyllum*).

Site #1, the North option, is where the Crystal Pool & Fitness Centre is currently located. Between 14 and 28 trees will be cut down according to the city arborist report, with one Garry oak to be removed and one at risk.



Site #2, the South option, is where the playground, tennis and basketball courts are currently located. Between 29 and 52 trees will be cut down according to the city arborist report, with three Garry oaks at risk. Loss of this much tree canopy reduces green space in the North Park neighbourhood where there is already a deficit associated with increased densification of the core.



City of Victoria website: <https://www.victoria.ca/parks-recreation/major-projects/crystal-pool-replacement-project> City arborist report: <https://www.victoria.ca/media/file/20241129crystal-pool-project-tree-impact-report-updatepdf>

Who can vote and how: <https://www.victoria.ca/city-government/elections>

GOMPS does not endorse any election candidate or campaign, but we do believe in the importance of informed voting. We would be remiss if we didn't tell local supporters like you, who care about the urban forest in our city, about canopy loss in the North Park neighbourhood.

COVENANT REPORT

The annual monitoring was recently undertaken by Islands Trust Conservancy for

a parcel of land on Retreat Island for which GOMPS is co-covenant holder. GOMPS is also co-covenant holder for land in Metchosin with the Habitat Acquisition Trust. Stay tuned for further information on covenant holding.

NEWS

[Vanier Garry Oak Restoration Project 2024 Report, *Comox Valley Naturalist*, Nov 2024 Newsletter.](#) by Jim Boulter

[An Analysis of Dialog's Technical Memorandum on the Centennial Square Sequoia Tree \(Victoria\), *Creatively United*, Oct 15, 2024.](#)
by Ryan Senechal

[Urban Forestry Strategy \(Saanich\), *Creatively United*, Sept 17, 2024](#)
by Natalie Chambers

[B.C. residents frustrated by FortisBC's 'devastating' tree trims](#)
by CBC Radio West and Zameer Karim [PKOLS / Mount Douglas 2024 Fall-Winter newsletter.](#)

PAST EVENTS



Photo by Ryan Senechal. Community members are planting at Bernard Park, located in the North Quadra Neighbourhood.

On November 2, 2024, GOMPS Director Ryan Senechal Participated in Saanich's 2024 Tree Appreciation Day.

This year's event focused on **Bernard Park**, located in the North Quadra neighbourhood. GOMPS' booth ended with a different approach at Saanich's 2024 Tree Appreciation Day, as everyone wanted to get their hands dirty. Community members turned to planting and engaged in great conversations. Next year, however, we hope that Saanich will plant some Garry oak seedlings from the GOMPS nursery. Goals for 2025!

Read more: <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/news-events/events-list/saanich-community-events/tree-appreciation-day-bernard-park.html>.





Photo by Jacklyn Jolicoeur. Community members are planting at MEE-qan (Beacon Hill Park), located in the City of Victoria.

On November 2, 2024, GOMPS Director Jacklyn Jolicoeur Participated in the City of Victoria's Tree Appreciation Day

This year's event focused on **MEE-qan (Beacon Hill Park)**, located in the City of Victoria. Director Jacklyn Jolicoeur planted her first Garry oak, and met several members of the Friends of Beacon Hill Park, a volunteer-led restoration group. For more information on this group see: <https://www.fbhp.ca/>

ARTICLES





Photo by Julie Emerson. Sprouting acorn found in the City of Victoria.

By Julie Emerson, Nursery Volunteer

Every day I searched my neighbourhood for Garry oak acorns, but because last year was a superabundant mast year, the trees weren't producing many acorns this year. After digging through several piles of wet leaves like an enthusiastic puppy, I found some acorns that had fallen to the soggy ground. Of the 25 whole acorns I found, two were sprouting and only four more passed the float test by not floating to the top of a water container.



Photo by Julie Emerson. The Garry oak family: Mary, Harry, Barry, Carrie, Terry, and Larry

The Garry oak family of Mary, Harry, Barry, Carrie, Terry, and Larry was planted in peat moss, soil, and large perlite bits. The small plastic pots are temporary until I see some growth. Following the advice of the GOMPS team, I've placed some leaf mulch around them and will cover them with Dampso cloth foundation.

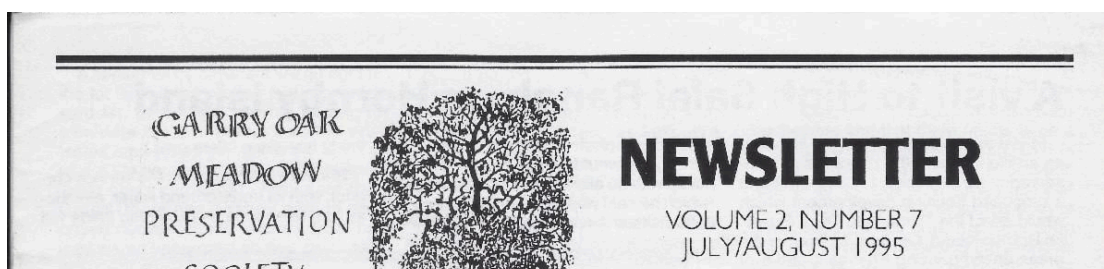
mulch around them and will cover them with Remay cloth for winter.



Photo by Julie Emerson. Hand-crafted necklace: acorn cupules with beads.

I saved all those acorn caps, soaked them in vinegar water, and then briefly dried them in the oven. I poked them with a leatherwork needle and threaded them onto fishing line, creating a necklace to wear while watching my Garry oak seedlings. 🌱

ARCHIVE



Four-hundred-year old Garry oak gets the axe



REMAINS OF GARRY OAK cut down by Sir James Douglas School's annex.

The City of Victoria urgently needs a tree protection bylaw. As it is now, cutting down a 400-year-old Garry oak can occur just because a few people think it isn't as healthy as it ought to be.

On July 21 an arborist felled the large Garry oak near the annex of Sir James Douglas School at Fairfield Road and Moss Street. Members of the Fairfield Community Association were outraged.

GOMPS member Tom Loring phoned the School District's head of maintenance, Doug Grant, to find out why the tree had been cut down. Mr. Grant was quite apologetic because he hadn't alerted the association beforehand.

Apparently some teachers at the school thought the tree hadn't leafed out fully and were concerned about its healthiness. Mr. Grant called Mt. View Tree Service, which the school district had used previously and its certified arborist decided that the tree should come down because it was rotting. Tom said the side of the tree facing the building was dead, but it otherwise appeared healthy.

Tom suggests that in the future a second opinion from a qualified arborist be sought before a Garry oak of questionable health is cut down. He also advocates a tree protection bylaw for trees on public and private lands, especially if the "ownership is of a major tree which affects the neighbors."

Tom sits on the City of Victoria Advisory Committee on the Environment and Public Works. It has drafted a bylaw, using as reference the tree protection bylaws of Oak Bay and Esquimalt. The committee's proposal is currently being considered by Victoria City Council.

Mount Tolmie Broom Removal Project

Broom removal activities in Mount Tolmie Park recently resumed, with several volunteers attending 5 events between July 12 and 26. The broom-free zone in the southeast corner of the park was significantly expanded on its northern perimeter, between Mayfair Drive and the eastern park boundary. Volunteers removed the equivalent of 30-40 cubic meters of plant material, in addition to smaller amounts of blackberry and ivy.

Work at this time of year is particularly

demanding, due to warm temperatures, bright sunshine, and the occasional wasp nest. To make matters worse, volunteers have to carry debris about 200 meters from work areas to the side of Mayfair Drive. While wasp nests are flagged with pink tape to warn park visitors walking through newly cleared areas, some of these warning flags somehow get removed between events, so be prepared to run (or get stung) if you go exploring in these areas of the park.

Informal work events continue on Wednesdays, beginning at 9:00 a.m., and will run until the end of August. Loppers and saws are the tools of choice to cut broom stems at this time, as pulling is minimal. Work will be suspended for September to prepare for the winter broom removal season, which will commence after early autumn rains have moistened meadow soils enough to permit pulling of stems. If you would like to participate, call Eric Redekop (595-7270).

GOMPS Newsletter, Volume 2, Number 7, July/August 1995. Front page.

We've been collecting items for our archive from our long-time members. Check out this GOMPS newsletter from 1995 discussing the urgent need for a tree protection bylaw in the City of Victoria.

[GOMPS Newsletter, Volume 2, Number 7, July/August 1995. Front page. \(.pdf\)](#)

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

We'd love to hear from all interested volunteers!





Photo by Jacklyn Jolicoeur, GOMPS Nursery work party, planting acorns.

We host weekly Garry Oak Nursery work parties on Sunday mornings from 10 am to 1 pm to keep our oaks growing and healthy.

The Nursery work area is outdoors and structured so volunteers can safely join Board members on site. Learn more about [volunteering here!](#)

*Please note there are certain areas within our premises where children may inadvertently put themselves at risk. Our activities may involve planting and transplanting seedlings. Considering the nature of the tools we use, our volunteer work requires care and attention to process. Training is provided.





Photo by Judith Carder. Nursery with green seedlings.

The GOMPS Volunteer Garry Oak Nursery has been in operation since 2017 to meet the challenge of producing locally sourced Garry oaks. The Nursery project is run by a task force drawn from members of GOMPS and addresses the rapid loss of Greater Victoria, Southeastern Vancouver Island & Gulf Island's native flagship tree - the Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) – our province's only native oak.

Garry oak ecosystems are among the most endangered ecosystems in Canada with **only 3%** remaining in a natural state. In Canada, they are only found in British Columbia, on the southeastern tip of Vancouver Island, some of the Gulf Islands and a few spots on the mainland. We are looking for more volunteers to help at the nursery. Please connect with us and help grow the oaks!

Volunteering at the Garry Oak Nursery

What you can do at home

Help us collect acorns

Become a Member or Donate



Photo by Ryan Senechal. Camas meadow at Playfair Park, Saanich, BC.

Garry Oak Tree and Garry Oak Ecosystem Facts

- The lək'wəŋən word for Garry oak ecosystem is Čəŋəłč or Kwetlal
- The SENĆOTEN word for Garry oak is ČEN,İŁĆ and pronounced Chung-ae-th-ch
- The HUL'Q'UMI'NUM word is p'hwulhp
- Garry oak ecosystems were shaped by Indigenous agroecological management over thousands of years.
- This population of oaks connects lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ people with their lands, traditions, foods, medicines, cultural practices, and ancestors.
- Of the family Fagaceae, and the genus Quercus. *Quercus garryana*, was named by Botanist David Douglas in the early 1800's to honor his friend Nicholas Garry, an officer in the Hudson Bay Company.
- Garry oak ecosystems arrived after the glacial retreat approximately 10,000 years ago, and at least 1,645 organisms (plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, etc.) have co-evolved with them.
- Garry oak ecosystems in Canada are some of the rarest, and the area they occupy is declining in large part due to development
- The largest urban oak in Victoria is on Falkland Rd. near Beach Dr. in Oak Bay

Territorial Acknowledgement

The GOMPS Volunteer Garry Oak Nursery is located on the traditional territory of the W̱ SÁNEĆ people encompassing the five local communities: BO,́KE,ĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEL (Malahat), W̱ JOŁELP (Tsartlip), W̱ ,SIKEM (Tseycum), and S,́AUTW̱ (Tsawout). We acknowledge and thank the W̱ SÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, work, and teach. Our advocacy efforts extend over the lək'wəŋən territory, known today as the Esquimalt (Kosapsom) and Songhees Nations. The W̱ SÁNEĆ and lək'wəŋən people have lived and worked on this land

since time immemorial and whose historical relationship to the land and territories continues to this day.

Connect with us!



Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society | Saanich Peninsula | Victoria BC, BC V8P3T7 CA

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