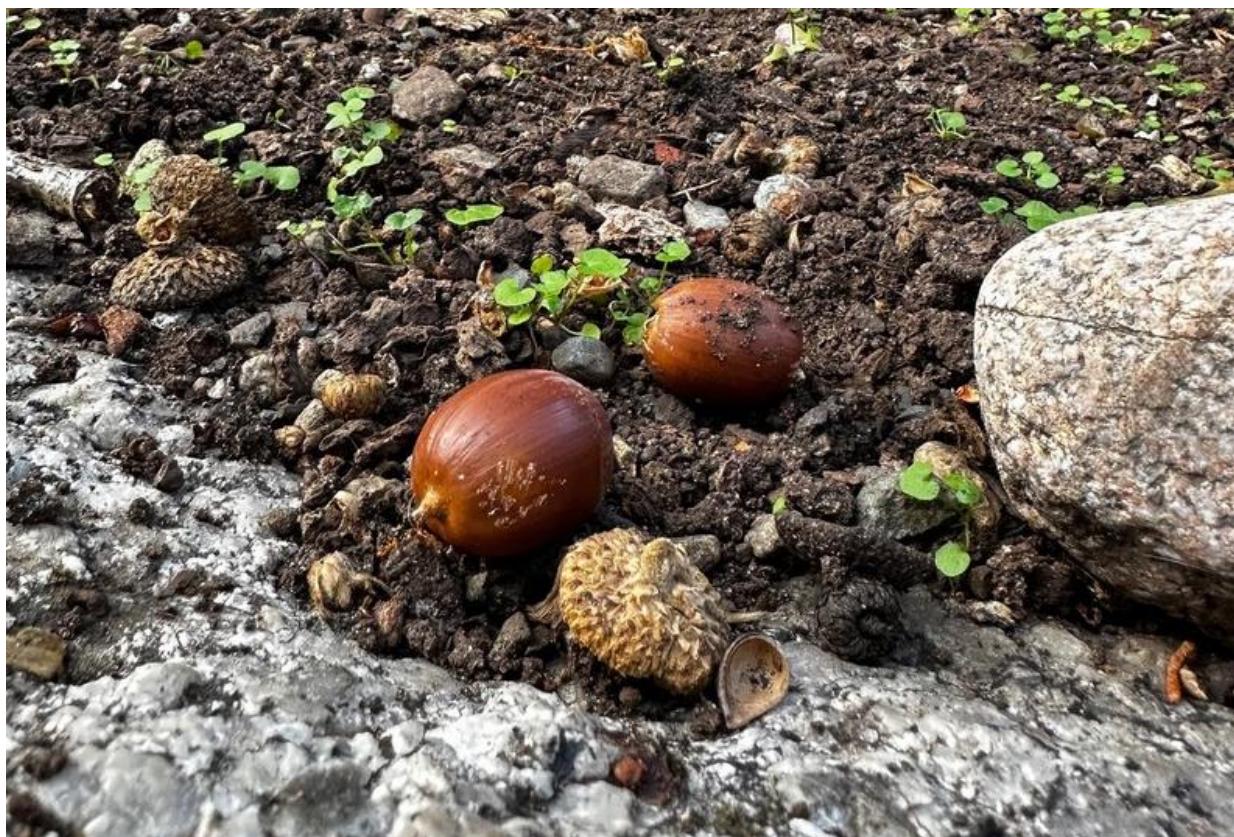




**GARRY OAK MEADOW  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

## Welcome to our E-news

FALL 2024



*Acorns on the ground in Victoria BC. Information about acorn collection is included in this issue.*

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### **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, work with all levels of government through letter writing, attend council meetings and public hearings to raise awareness on the importance of Garry oaks and their ecosystems, and work in GOMPS Garry oak nursery.

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Dedicated to  
Protecting  
Victoria's  
Heritage  
Landscape**

**GARRY OAK MEADOW  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**



**Annual General Meeting  
(2023-2024)**

**Date: Nov 17, 2024 (Sun)**  
**Time: 3:00pm to 5:00pm**  
**Location: Banquet Room**  
**Cedar Hill Golf Course**  
**1400 Derby Rd, Saanich**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**GOMPS 2023-24 AGM** will be held:

**DATE: Sunday, November 17, 2024**

**TIME: 3:00 to 5:00pm**

**LOCATION: Banquet Room, Cedar Hill Golf Course, 1400 Derby Rd, Saanich.**

Our meeting will include:

- Presentation of various reports – President, Nursery, Treasurer & Volunteer
- Election of officers, and
- An open discussion about Garry oak issues with focus on future directions

As per GOMPS bylaws, there are 7 board members' positions including:

- President,
- Vice-President,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer, and
- 3 Directors at Large.

3 Director positions are up for election this year as 4 Directors continue in their 2-year terms and 1 Director becomes a Director Emeritus. Please consider joining our board or nominate someone for a board position by sending nominations to: Judith Carder (Secretary) at [judeathome@shaw.ca](mailto:judeathome@shaw.ca) by **Friday, November 8th, 5:00 pm.**

In order to vote at meetings and to run for election to the board, you **must have a current GOMPS membership.**

The opportunity to purchase or renew your membership will be available at the AGM (*cash or cheque only, at this time*).

Your attendance and input during the discussion period at our meeting will be greatly welcomed and appreciated!

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## MEMBERSHIP

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

But wait, there's more! We're thrilled to announce that we're currently developing 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! ❤️



## **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**



*Collected acorns ready to be "float" tested. See the links below to read the collection guidelines.*

### **Garry Oak Acorn Collection**

We are accepting acorns!

Please see the guidelines on collecting, sorting, and testing acorns below. The key for 2024

will be finding stand-alone oaks and searching for viable acorns that haven't been munched since acorns provide food for many urban animals. We thank all collectors for your work and contributions.

Here are helpful guidelines that include tips on collection, sorting, testing, labeling, and storage. After collecting acorns, please take the time to float test them—toss out the floaters! Those that sink can be delivered to a central location in Saanich, where drop-off containers are marked with our GOMPS name.

Please limit the volume of acorns/nuts to 1 litre per person per region. Imagine a milk carton full of clean, float-tested acorns/nuts! We want diversity, not quantity. Our nursery project aims to protect the genetics of Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) trees in all areas of the CRD.

Acorns with caps are not ripe and should not be collected.

Please note: We are only calling for acorns/nuts. If you have seedlings to donate please read our [GOMPS Seedling Donation Policy](#).

Are all the oaks I see in BC Garry oaks ( *Quercus garryana*)?

In short, no - but knowing what to look for can help to keep the task of acorn/nut collecting simple. [A Guide to Identifying the Garry Oak](#).

READ MORE: <https://www.garryoak.info/help-us-collect-acorns.html>



*Photo by Ryan Senechal. Collecting acorns North Saanich.*

## **Garry Oak Seedlings**

We have lots of Garry oak seedlings ready to be planted. Fall is the best time to plant Garry oaks, as the Fall and Winter rains assist the root development of young seedlings to enable survival during the following summer drought period on Vancouver Island and the surrounding region.

Garry oak trees are slow-growing for the first 3 to 7 years, but once established in the ground, they can grow one to two feet per year. Please note that Garry oak seedling survival is enhanced with 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 at [grow.oaks@gmail.com](mailto:grow.oaks@gmail.com) for more information.



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

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



# Tree Appreciation Day

## Celebrate our Urban Forest!

**Saturday, November 2**

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Meet at the entrance off  
Bernard Place



### Bernard Park

Visit the Saanich events page  
for more details:



Find out how you can  
play a role in  
supporting Saanich's  
Urban Forest

- Connect with nature and your community
- Plant a tree
- Learn about Saanich Parks volunteer opportunities



**Saanich**

PARKS, RECREATION  
& COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Tree Appreciation Day Bernard Park

Date & Time: November 2, 2024 (10:00 am - 12:00 pm)

### Celebrate our Urban Forest!

Come visit the GOMPS booth at Saanich's 2024 Tree Appreciation Day, which aims to increase the number of trees planted on municipal lands, including parks and boulevards, across our neighbourhoods. This year's event will focus on **Bernard Park**, located in the North Quadra neighbourhood.

In 2019, the District of Saanich declared a climate emergency and committed to expanding tree-planting efforts. Saanich's Parks continues to play a key role in this mission, with various tree-planting initiatives aligned with strategic goals for climate action and environmental leadership.

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

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## PAST EVENTS



*Photo by Carollyne Yardley. Tree Tour with nursery seedlings display at North Park Neighbourhood.*



*Photo by Carollyne Yardley. Tree Tour with nursery seedlings display and new GOMPS stickers at North Park Neighbourhood.*

On September 28th, 2024, GOMPS Director Ryan Senechal was asked to support an arborist perspective at a tree day organized by the North Park Neighbourhood Association. Residents of North Park came to learn about planting Garry oak seedlings and how well-adapted oaks are to an urban environment. Attendees shared stories about a special tree in their lives to showcase the power of individual stories of connection.

The attached photo shows an example of the display and our new stickers! At the end of the event, our seedling donations were given away to interested attendees to plant out. Due to the nature of urban living, a few seedlings will be stunted and pruned or "bonsai'd" in large containers on apartment balconies.

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# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Garry Oak Ecosystems Conference

**Saturday**  
**October 5<sup>th</sup>**  
8:45am - 4:00pm  
UVic



**Sunday**  
**October 6<sup>th</sup>**  
Restoration  
Fieldtrips



*Photo by Carollyne Yardley. 16th Annual Garry Oak Ecosystems Conference at UVic on Oct 5th, 2024. Presentation by Satinflower Nurseries, Dominique James, and Abigail Hyde.*

On October 5th, 2024, GOMPS Directors Ryan Senechal, Carol Milo, Judy Spearing, Carollyne Yardley, and nursery volunteer Jacklyn Jolicoeur attended the 16th Annual Garry Oak Ecosystems (GOERT) Conference held at the University of Victoria.

It was a day to listen, engage, and connect with speakers from the GOERT Team, UVic Ecological Restoration Club, Indigenous Ecology Lab at UBC, Comox Valley Naturalist Society, Satinflower Nurseries, and with Ken Elliot, Quw'utsun Plant and Restoration Knowledge Keeper.

For more information visit [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)

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## ARTICLES



*Photo by Susan Grant. Fall colour of Garry oak trees in Saanich.*

### Oak-Leaves

Crinkled oak-leaves, twinkling in the sun,  
Splashed by midday showers, dripping cold -  
Serrate oak-leaves, silvered by the sun  
That has brushed yon dull brown grass with gold.

Green and crinkled oak leaves, tremble now -  
Strong you would be, strong would be and bold,  
Ah! green oak-leaves, you are trembling now -  
By the saucy wind deceived - cajoled!

Trembling oak leaves - you are soon to fall,  
Soon to hide the earth with yellowing mould  
Twinkling, crinkling oak-leaves, soon you'll fall  
For the autumn sun is shining cold.

Helen Leah Reed (1860-1926)



*Photo by Susan Grant. Shredded Garry oak leaves ready for mulching, Royal Oak area.*

### **The leaves are falling ....**

by Susan Grant, Director of GOMPS

If you are among those lucky enough to have Garry oak trees in your yard, you have an amazing garden resource at your fingertips every Fall.

Leaf litter creates a natural mulch around tree roots that helps moderate the temperature and conserve moisture. Leaving fallen leaves in your garden helps preserve the soil microbiome of microscopic insects, bacteria, and fungi that digest organic matter to release essential nutrients, and the leaves contribute the many macro- and micro-nutrients they contain. Broken down leaves also improve the soil texture by increasing aeration and porosity in clay soil and improving water retention in sandy soil. They are an important part of the organic matter that helps the soil aggregate into lumps that facilitate pore spaces and helps stabilize soil architecture.

(<https://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/gardeningguides/using-leaves-as-a-winter-mulch/>)

A layer of fallen leaves also provides a home for the invertebrates in your garden – the native bees, overwintering moths and butterflies, larvae, and insects that hibernate in the leaf litter during the cold months and emerge in spring to pollinate and to provide food for birds. And if you're a worm composter or urban chicken farmer, fallen leaves can be mixed with shredded newspaper or straw / sawdust, respectively, and used as bedding material.

So what is the best approach to using this leafy bounty? The Compost Education Centre in Victoria provides advice on composting and mulching with urban leaves (<https://compost.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/6-Urban-Leaves.pdf>).

Oak leaves retain a smaller portion of their nitrogen than greener leaf litter and are slightly acid, becoming more alkaline as they rot down. They are also slower to break down than more tender leaf types proving a longer-lived mulch under trees and shrubs. A 2 inch deep layer of intact leaves is ideal arranged in doughnut-shaped rings around trees and shrubs. In perennial beds, intact leaves can be raked off and composted after temperatures warm in the spring to allow the plants access to sunlight. Shredded oak leaves decompose more quickly and can be left to mulch the beds as perennials leaf out when the season changes.

Be aware that oak and maple leaves release natural phenols for the first 6-9 months of the rotting period inhibiting root growth of seedlings. It's best to keep dead and rotting leaves off of areas where you will be sowing seeds. In your veggie garden, for example, only mulch down rows or around plants with rotted leaves once the plants are growing well.

Leaves only need to be raked off the lawn if the leaf layer is thick enough to block the sun. But try shredding them to bits with a mulching mower or rotary mower run across the leaves in multiple passes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=os-EFAPLcP0>). You should be able to see the tips of the grass once done. The bits of leaf will wash down to the base of the lawn to decompose and release nutrients and to improve moisture retention.

So this year, why not take advantage of one of nature's free resources and leave those leaves? Your yard will thank you.

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## NEWS



*Photo by Ted Lea. Knockan Hill Park, June 2024. Inside the post and rope fenced area, multiple species of invasive grasses and yellow-flowered hairy cat's ear dominate and are expanding rapidly. Limited restoration action is occurring. Focus Magazine.*

## **Saanich's new Biodiversity Conservation Strategy ignores key recommendations from experts**

Focus on Victoria

October 9

Ted Lea

IN JANUARY 2022, I wrote the following article for Focus Magazine: Saanich Park Report Card indicates failure by **Saanich to steward Garry oak ecosystems and species at risk**.

At that time, most report card categories received a failing grade. Little has changed, and it appears that little will change in the Saanich Parks system moving forward, even after significant resources were provided by Saanich Council to engage a group of experts, the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee (RSTC) to provide advice, and to hire consultants to write a State of Biodiversity report and a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS). Most of the significant recommendations made by the RSTC have not been addressed in Saanich's new Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Read More: <https://www.focusonvictoria.ca/commentary/102>

## INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

We'd love to hear from all interested volunteers!



We host weekly Garry Oak Nursery work parties on Sunday mornings from 10am to 1pm 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 utilize, our volunteer work requires care and attention to process. Training is provided.



*Photo by Judith Carder. Nursery with green seedlings.*

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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**

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

### **Garry Oak Tree and Garry Oak Ecosystem Facts**

- The *lək'wənən* word for Garry oak ecosystem is *Čaŋēłč* or *Kwetlal*
- The *SENĆOTEN* word for Garry oak is *ĆEN, IŁČ* 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'wənən* and *WSÁNEĆ* 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

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## Territorial Acknowledgement

The GOMPS Volunteer Garry Oak Nursery is located on the traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ people encompassing the five local communities: BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), and S̱TZAUTW̱ (Tsawout). We acknowledge and thank the W̱SÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, work, and teach. Our advocacy efforts extend over the Iəkʷənən territory, known today as the Esquimalt (Kosapsom) and Songhees Nations. The W̱SÁNEĆ and Iəkʷənən 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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