
The Garry Oak Leaflet



GARRY OAK MEADOW
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

SPRING 2026



Photo by Susan Grant. Sea blush Gore Park, Brentwood Bay (Central Saanich).

WHO WE ARE

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society (GOMPS) formed in 1992 because local citizens were concerned that Garry oak 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 associated ecosystems.

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 with **Urban Forest Monitoring, LiDAR, Measuring Surface Temperature, Advocacy and Outreach**, and the **Garry Oak Nursery**. [Follow this link to let us know your interest using our online volunteer form.](#)

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS E-TRANSFER

New! [Membership and Donation forms](#) are now online, and we accept **e-transfer**. Cheques are also still accepted. Tax receipts are mailed to your address.



Fundraising Appeal

We are fundraising for our nursery operations. GOMPS is working to improve our growing methods to provide high quality Garry oak seedlings to our conservation partners. Our nursery expenses for air pruning growing methods and organic soil as well as for other nursery inputs are increasing. Please consider helping us by making a donation by [e-transfer](#) or [Canada Helps](#). ❤️

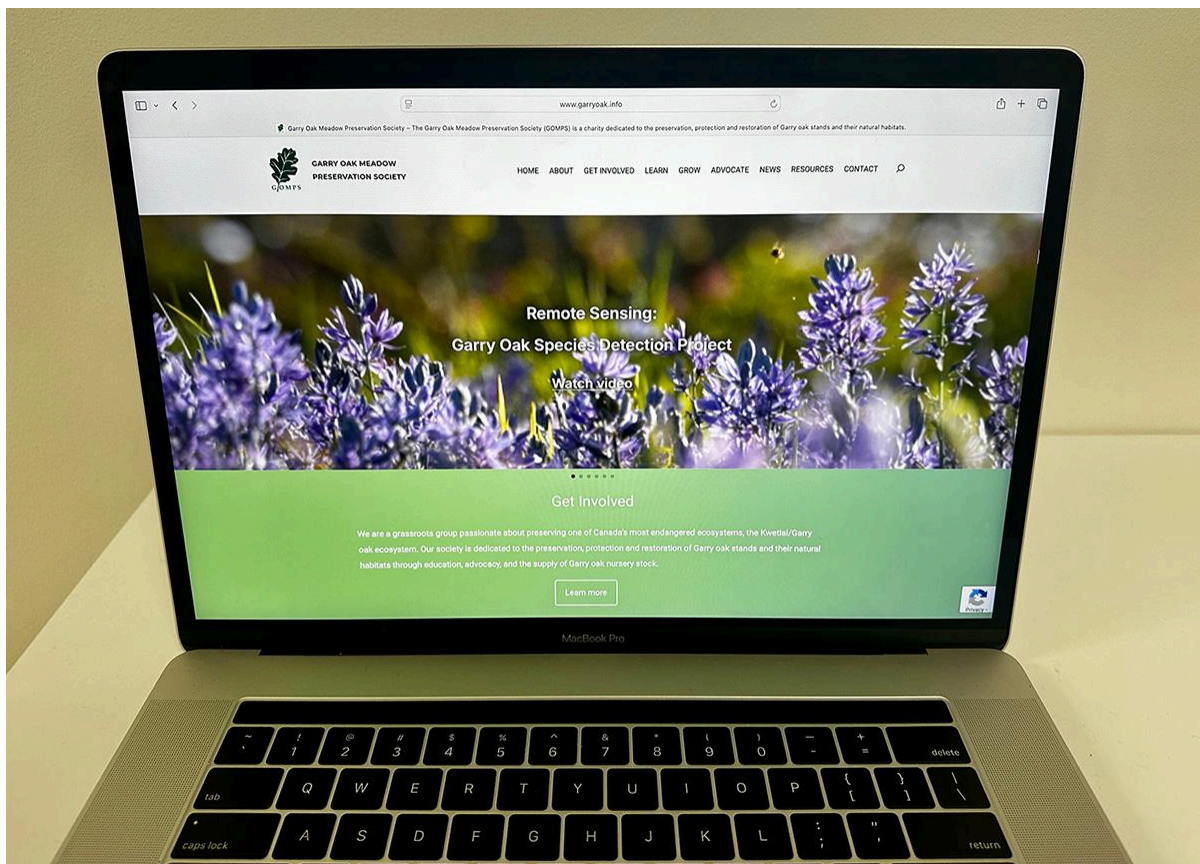
DONATIONS

Donate to GOMPS using your **credit card** through CanadaHelps. We are a registered society in BC with a charitable status recognized by CRA (141110908 RR0001). By donating through Canada Helps, you will receive **an automated charitable tax receipt**. Thank you!



[Donate](#)

GOMPS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE 🚀



On February 4, 2026, GOMPS launched its revised [website](#)—made possible by the generous expertise of Graham Nott Enterprises and the dedicated work of volunteer board members.

This project grew out of our broader systems modernization, including the shift to [@garryoak.info](#) email. The new site makes it easier to get involved: membership, donation, and volunteer forms are now fully online, our content has been refreshed, and our news section allows us to share more timely updates with the community.

E-transfer donations are now up and running, and while we continue to build out a full payment gateway, CanadaHelps remains a simple option for credit card donations with automatic tax receipts.

We're also grateful to filmmaker [Ryan Wilkes](#)—known for his [CBC hummingbird documentary](#)—who contributed his award-winning skills to create our new [LiDAR video](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS



Friends of Uplands Park
*Creating opportunities for
stewardship, education and inspiration*

Save the Date: Kwetlal (Camas) Day 2026

GOMPS is excited to be part of the Friends of Uplands Park Kwetlal (Camas) Day Celebration again. We hope to see you there!

When: Sunday, May 3, 2026; 1-3pm

Where: Uplands Park (Beach Drive field, at entrance to Cattle Point), Oak Bay

Website: <https://friendsofuplandspark.org>

This year marks the 80th anniversary of Uplands Park, a cherished Garry oak ecosystem and community gathering place. Kwetlal (Camas) Day is a vibrant celebration of meadow ecology featuring local organizations, educational displays, guided meadow walks, family-friendly activities, and live music—including the Bald Eagles Band. With over 450 attendees last year, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect with community members, and to celebrate biodiversity and climate adaptation.



Save the Date: World Migratory Bird Day 2026

GOMPS will be joining local “twitchers” and the bird curious for World Migratory Bird Day to kick off Victoria Bird Week. This community event celebrates bird migration and the important work of local conservation organizations to preserve the habitats and well-being of migratory birds.

When: Saturday, May 9, 2026; 10 am-1 pm

Where: Beacon Hill Park (míqən), field by the North Playground

Website: <https://rpbo.org/what-we-do/community-education/world-migratory-bird-day/>

The Rocky Point Bird Observatory is hosting this celebration of the return of migratory birds. Held in mīqān / Beacon Hill Park, this lively, family-friendly event offers something for everyone. Throughout the morning, you can join guided bird walks, enjoy hands-on nature activities for kids, meet local conservation groups, and learn from bird experts who study and protect migratory birds.

PAST EVENTS



Photo by Carollyne Yardley. Seedy Saturday, February 14th, 2026, at Crystal Gardens.

Seedy Saturday Victoria

Thank you to the organizers and everyone who stopped by our table. GOMPS soft-launched our new website, tri-fold presentation, and historical banner on Saturday, February 14, 2026, at Seedy Saturday. We are grateful to connect with so many people who care deeply about the Garry oak ecosystem, native plants, and the future of food systems and biodiversity in the region. Our Giving Tree received much love through new memberships and donations!



Photo by Seedy Saturday volunteer. February 14th, 2026, at Crystal Gardens.



Photo by Carollyne Yardley. Includes new tri-fold and historical banner displays (far left and far right). February 14th, 2026, at Crystal Gardens.

Community Mapping Wildlife Corridor Workshop

GOMPS was pleased to participate in the [Southern Vancouver Island Wildlife Corridor Workshop](#) last month, joining a growing network of community members,

researchers, and organizations working to strengthen habitat connectivity across the region.

The day was full of thoughtful discussion, collaborative mapping, and shared insights —helping translate community knowledge into both physical and digital mapping outputs. We're encouraged to see this work continue, with ongoing updates and opportunities emerging from this expanding network.

We look forward to contributing to future efforts that support ecological connectivity and the protection of Garry oak ecosystems across Southern Vancouver Island.



Photo by Carollyne Yardley. Community mapping at Wildlife Corridor Workshop, February 12, 2026.

ADVOCACY

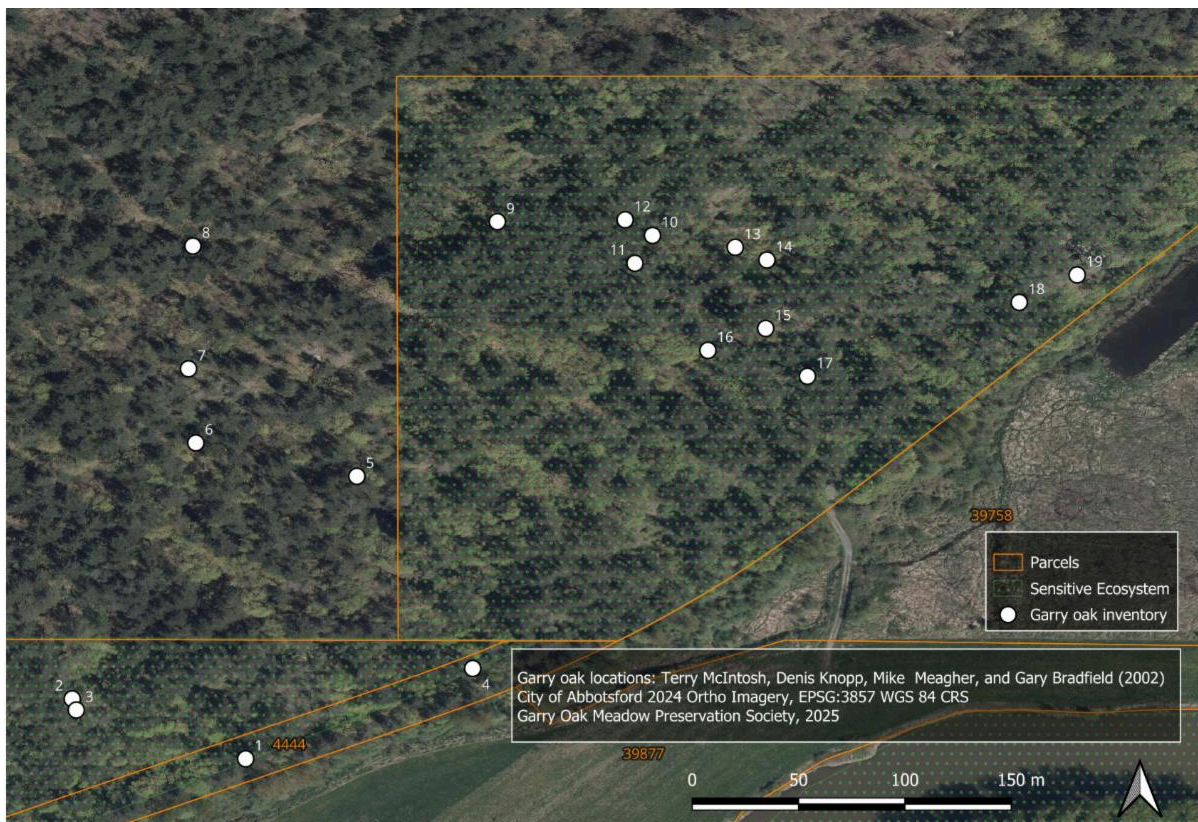


Presentation: Exploring Our National Treasure: The State of Garry Oak Ecosystems in Greater Victoria

On February 12, GOMPS joined the Community Association of Oak Bay for an online talk on the state of Garry oak ecosystems in Greater Victoria. The event opened with remarks from Chris Hyde-Lay (District of Oak Bay) followed by presentations from Ryan Senechal and Carollyne Yardley on the ecological significance of Garry oaks, gaps in their protection, and GOMPS' ongoing work in urban mapping, monitoring, and community engagement.

Watch the recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQAQ5p3pbL4>



Georeferenced map created by Ryan Senechal, integrating the 2002 Garry oak field inventory (led by Dr. Terry McIntosh and including Dr. Mike Meagher) with current parcel data, 2024 aerial imagery, and sensitive ecosystem datasets to support protection of the Sumas Mountain Garry oak population.

Sumas Mountain Garry Oaks: Mapping Past Knowledge to Protect Present Habitat

Recent advocacy efforts to protect the Garry oak population on Sumas Mountain have been strengthened by the rediscovery of a 2002 professional field inventory led by Dr. Terry McIntosh and others, including former GOMPS President Mike Meagher. Community advocate Joan Septembre converted original UTM coordinates from this survey into mapped locations using iMapBC and Google Earth, clearly demonstrating the presence of Garry oaks on private land currently under development pressure.

Building on this work, GOMPS compiled a georeferenced map integrating the 2002 inventory with current parcel data, 2024 aerial imagery, and sensitive ecosystem datasets. This combined evidence is now informing discussions with the City of Abbotsford, where staff have indicated that Garry oaks must be considered in any revised proposal for the site. The mapping provides critical, credible data to support ongoing efforts to prevent habitat loss and ensure these ecologically significant trees are meaningfully incorporated into future planning decisions

Letters of Advocacy

GOMPS. [“Letter to Saanich Mayor and Council”, Quadra McKenzie Plan,](#)

Requesting a Natural Park Designation for 4015 Braefoot Road, April 12, 2026.

GOMPS. "Letter to Saanich Mayor and Council." Proposed Quadra McKenzie Plan (QMP), Submitted for the Committee of the Whole Meeting, February 2, 2026.

Times Colonist. Comment: Garry oak ecosystem is under great threat in Saanich by Ryan Senechal

Feb 3, 2026. Buried on page 135 of Saanich's Quadra-McKenzie Plan are clues about what is in store for present and future residents of Saanich.

<https://www.garryoak.info/comment-garry-oak-ecosystem-is-under-great-threat-in-saanich/>

NURSERY NEWS



GOMPS nursery has been in operation since 2017 at this location. Photo of early summer 2024.

Winter / Spring 2026

As reported by [Vic News](#), the GOMPS Nursery at Bear Hill is welcoming new tenants to get ready for a 5-year CRD public funded farm pilot program. Dubbed a farmer-incubator site, the district already allocated a partnership of Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society and LifeCycles Project Society to operate the site, the regional parks committee heard during its Jan. 28 meeting, and later approved unanimously at the [CRD Agenda meeting of February 12, 2026](#).

GOMPS has been working hard to stabilize our nursery operations to contribute to a broader vision of the site as a landscape where ecological restoration, food cultivation, and community stewardship can coexist.

GOMPS faces a growing demand for seedlings, restoration expertise, and ecological information. Your donations and memberships help strengthen our ability to maintain essential nursery infrastructure and expand education and outreach activities.

GOMPS 2026 planting season: Pioneer Pots

In previous ENews, GOMPS has shared our ongoing work to optimize early growth of our Garry oak seedlings, specifically to promote robust fibrous root development alongside the taproot. The goal is to help ensure establishment of our seedlings once planted in their permanent sites.

This year our entire crop of acorns will be potted up into “air pruning” Pioneer Pots or into an open bed. With the Bear Hill nursery site in transition, volunteer work parties are temporarily suspended but the acorns can’t wait so GOMPS Board members have been working hard to ensure our 2026 growing season proceeds on schedule.

We are fundraising to support the increased costs associated with this improved growing paradigm and the costs related to the Bear Hill nursery site changes. Please consider making a donation by [e-transfer](#) or [Canada Helps](#). Thank you!



Photo by Ryan Senechal. First batch of air pots for planting have arrived!



Photo by Ryan Senechal. Some of the Pioneer Pots potted up with our new crop of locally sourced acorns.

PROJECTS

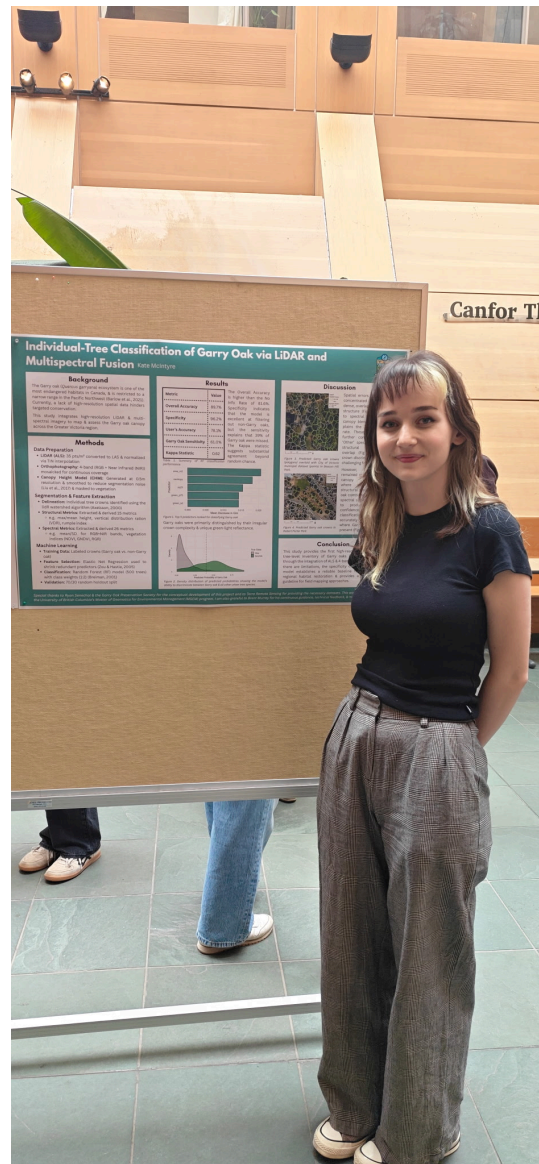
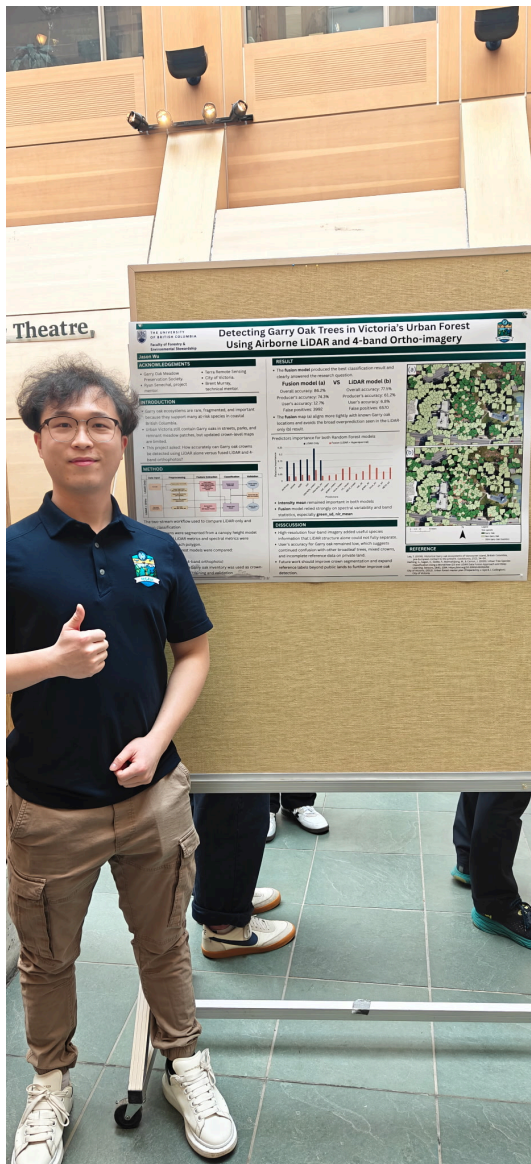


Photo by Ryan Senechal. Jason Wu, student in UBC's MGEM Program, at the UBC urban forest research hub, standing in front of panel presentation, "Detecting Garry Oak Trees in Victoria's Urban Forest Using Airbourne LiDAR and 4-band Ortho-imagery", April 10, 2026.

Photo by Ryan Senechal. Kate McIntyre, student in UBC's MGEM Program, at the UBC urban forest research hub, standing in front of panel presentation, "Individual-Tree Classification of Garry Oak via LiDAR and Multispectral Fusion", April 10, 2026.

GOMPS Remote sensing: Garry oak classification

Kate McIntyre and Jason Wu have officially completed their course and capstone requirements in UBC's Master of Geomatics for Environmental Management. On April 10th, both delivered presentations of their individual approaches to use GOMPS-donor-funded LiDAR and aerial imagery acquired by Terra Remote Sensing in late June of 2025. The results of their separate models both achieved impressive accuracy in identifying Garry oak within all other species in City of Victoria's urban forest.

Starting in May, Jason and Kate will enter a new phase as contractors on this project thanks to a partnership with Raincoast Conservation Foundation and funding from UBC's Community University Engagement Support (CUES) stream of funding. The project will continue to be led by Ryan Senechal of GOMPS, and involve an initial merging of Jason and Kate's individual models followed by running the analysis over the entire study area of Victoria and the Saanich Urban Containment Boundary.

We are excited to be nearing completion of this pilot project and share datasets along with results in summer of 2026.

[Watch video of flight day](#)

ARTICLES

Lichens Love Garry Oaks Meadows

By Natasha Lavdovsky



Lobaria pulmonaria (Lungwort) at Matson Conservation Area in Songhees & Esquimalt First Nation Territory. (Photo by Natasha Lavdovsky)

Stepping onto a trail surrounded by gnarly Garry oaks can feel like you've entered a dreamy world of mosses, flowering plants, pollinators, and rocky outcrops where magic beings reside when you aren't looking. But wait! What is that covering the branches of the Garry oaks? You look closer and realize, wow, there is a truly magical world hidden within this ecosystem- it's the realm of lichens! The fuzzy bodies of *Usnea* species make a bold statement in the wintertime meadows of PKOLS, hanging off the leafless oaks in cascades of minty green hair. And if you take a moment to pause, lean in, and adjust the scale of your field of vision, you can start to notice more of the mysterious lichen species who call Garry oak meadows home.

Lichens are a mutually symbiotic organism comprised of a fungus and a photosynthesizing partner (a cyanobacteria, algae, or both). From here it is challenging to make generalized statements about lichen structure and symbiosis, since there is a diverse range of morphology and partnership arrangements amongst lichen symbionts. However, for the majority of lichen species, the fungal partner builds the body of the lichen, while the algae cells nestle under the top layer of fungal hyphae where they photosynthesize, making energy that feeds the fungus. In 2016, lichenologists discovered that every lichen they tested also contained yeast

DNA, suggesting that yeast is a necessary contributor to lichenization. With multiple symbiotic partners within a single lichen, they really are a micro-ecosystem and subvert the very concept of a species. Furthermore, lichens have countless morphological growth forms: jelly lichens, crustose lichens, fruticose, foliose, dust lichens and even lichens that grow like seaweed on rocky shorelines.



Lobaria anomala growing on an Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) shrub branch in W'SANEC Territory. (Photo by Natasha Lavdovsky)

Lichens benefit Garry oak ecosystems in many ways including: creating additional surface area for countless tiny critters (enriching the taxonomic diversity at the bottom of the food web), increasing humidity in the environment (since lichens are like little sponges), and providing a source of nitrogen to the soil (more on this below). A common myth about epiphytic lichens (that grow on trees or shrubs) is they cause their host plants to die. Not true! They don't take any nutrients from their substrate, preferring to anchor themselves on the surface. You often see lichens on dead/bare branches because they are opportunists (most lichens love sunlight).

Here on Southern Vancouver Island we are in a hotspot for cyanolichens (lichens whose primary photobiont is Nostoc, (a cyanobacteria, not an algae). Garry oaks and Ocean spray are a favourite substrate for many cyanolichens, especially in W'SANEC Territory, away from Victoria's downtown core (cyanolichens don't tolerate air pollution). These lichens are especially ecologically valuable because their cyanobacteria fix nitrogen from the atmosphere and make it bioavailable to terrestrial species either when nitrogen-rich water drips off the lichen or when they fall to the ground in a storm and their decomposing bodies slowly release nitrogen into the soil.

But don't take windfall lichens out of the meadows to fertilize your garden! Instead, leave them on the ground, get a hand lens, and peer into some low hanging branches to get lost in this delicate symbiotic realm.



Usnea species growing on *Quercus garryana* (Garry Oak) trees in W'SANEC Territory.
(Photo by Natasha Lavdovsky)

Here is a list of conspicuous local cyanolichens to look out for on your next visit to a Garry oak ecosystem: *Sticta limbata*, *Sticta gretae*, *Peltigera collina*, *Lobaria scrobiculata*, *Lobaria anomala*, *Lobaria pulmonaria* (has *Nostoc* cyanobacteria & green algae photobionts), *Nephroma bellum*, and *Nephroma laevigatum*. And as you start to develop your lichen eyes, you'll see how Garry oak meadow species diversity is even more complex than you might have initially realized. What a magical world it is indeed!

To learn more about lichens, [reach out to artist/aspiring lichenologist Natasha Lavdovsky](#) (lead facilitator of The Lichen Cult), to sign up for a lichen ID workshop, [buy a lichen ID booklet digital download](#), or be added to their email list!

NEWS

Petition. Save the Mighty Braefoot Oaks! We the signed, call upon the District of Saanich to save all of the over 100 Garry Oaks at [4015 Braefoot Rd.](#)

The majestic Garry oaks at [4015 Braefoot Rd.](#) in Saanich, British Columbia, are at critical risk. Over 100 of these magnificent trees, many of which have stood for centuries, may be cut down due to proposed developments on the property. These

trees are not just flora; they are vital keystone components of the living ecosystem, cultural heritage, and community identity.

Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/save-the-mighty-braefoot-oaks>

Times Colonist. Comment: Garry oak ecosystem is under great threat in Saanich, Feb 03, 2026

<https://www.garryoak.info/comment-garry-oak-ecosystem-is-under-great-threat-in-saanich/>

Petition. Demand more Garry oaks and their ecosystem are saved on this Admirals Road (Esquimalt) development

Support preserving as much of a rare patch of Garry oak and Douglas-fir ecosystem on an Esquimalt private property earmarked for development as possible, whilst still allowing appropriate development of the site. The design in its current form does not achieve this and will result in 33 trees being taken down. Since its original submission in 2024 it has not changed in any significant way to address concerns raised by the Parks Department. **Sign the Petition:** <https://c.org/vTqDpCKmMJ>

The Narwhal. A Nanaimo trail project reveals how BC fails to protect rare ecosystems

<https://thenarwhal.ca/nanaimo-slimleaf-onion-disturbed/>

Tree Canada. Urban Forestry | Biodiversity and Livability

A recent study titled "[Lessons from exploring the relationship between livability and biodiversity in the built environment](#)" — co-authored by Kayleigh Hutt-Taylor and led by Morteza Hazbei published in the journal Urban Forestry & Urban Greening — examines how a diversity of plant and animal life in urban areas can boost human wellbeing, environmental resilience and livability.

<https://treecanada.ca/article/biodiversity-and-livability-designing-cities-where-nature-and-people-thrive/>

CDFCP. Local Government Toolkit

Biodiversity Atlas based on LiDAR mapping of the Coastal Douglas-fir zone.

<https://www.cdfcp.ca/webinars/> (Webinar 4 Dec 11, 2025)

Vancouver Sun. Opinion: B.C.'s commitment to biodiversity put on hold

<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/op-ed/opinion-bc-commitment-to-biodiversity-put-on-hold>

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

We'd love to hear from all interested volunteers!

GOMPS Nursery work parties should restart in a few weeks. We are also looking for volunteers to help us with **Urban Forest Monitoring, LiDAR, Measuring Surface Temperature, Advocacy and Outreach.**

[Follow this link to our website for details.](#)

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 $l\acute{a}k^{w}\acute{a}n\acute{e}n$ word for Garry oak ecosystem is Čanĕłč or Kwetlal
- The SENĆOŦEN word for Garry oak is ĆEN, IŁĆ 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 $l\acute{a}k^{w}\acute{a}n\acute{e}n$ and WŚÁNEĆ 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,ĶE,ĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), W̱ JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), W̱ ,SIKEM (Tseycum), and S,ŦAUTW̱ (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 ləḱʷəŋən territory, known today as the Esquimalt (Kosapsom) and Songhees Nations. The W̱ SÁNEĆ and ləḱʷəŋən 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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