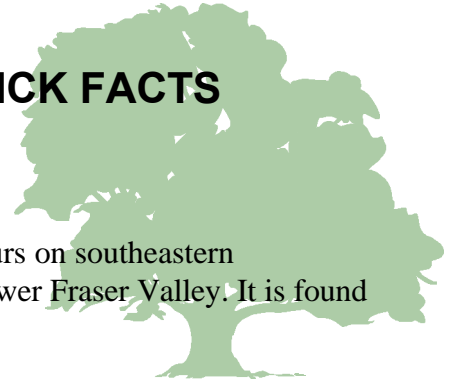


# THE GARRY OAK ECOSYSTEM: QUICK FACTS



## Why is this ecosystem important?

- q The Garry oak tree is an important part of an ecosystem that occurs on southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and two tiny patches in the lower Fraser Valley. It is found nowhere else in Canada.
- q Garry oak ecosystems stretch along the west coast of North America as far south as California. The Canadian portion is geographically, genetically and ecologically important because it occurs at the extreme northern limits of this distribution.
- q The Garry oak ecosystem is ranked as one of the three most endangered ecosystems in Canada.
- q Less than 1% of the original area of this exceptional ecosystem remains in a natural condition. Over 20% of the remaining area is likely to be lost in the next decade, mostly due to urban development.
- q Spectacular spring wildflower displays, including blooms of the blue camas, white fawn lily, and the yellow western buttercup are a hallmark of the ecosystems.
- q The Garry oak ecosystem supports more than 100 rare and endangered plant and animals within Canada. Some species, including Lobb's water-buttercup, the Island marble butterfly, Lewis' Woodpecker and the Western Bluebird have already been lost. (For more information see the **Conservation Data Centre's** web page at [www.elp.gov.bc.ca/rib/wis/cdc](http://www.elp.gov.bc.ca/rib/wis/cdc)).
- q Garry oak ecosystems are an important part of the cultural heritage of British Columbia. First Nations peoples tended them with fire and cultivation, and depended on the bulbs of the camas flower as a staple food.
- q As global warming progresses, drought-tolerant Garry oak trees and other plants of the Garry oak ecosystem may become increasingly important within the landscape of British Columbia. These species will likely colonize new habitats as they are created due to changing climatic conditions.

## What are the threats to this ecosystem?

- q Urban development is the greatest threat to this ecosystem, and oak trees lost to urbanization are not being replaced. Mowing, fertilizing, watering, and other gardening-type treatments of Garry oak ecosystems damage oak seedlings as well as other natural vegetation. (For more information contact the **Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society** at A-954 Queens Street, Victoria, BC V8T 1M6).
- q Introduced plant and animal species stress and threaten the oak and other native species. Pests such as the oak leaf phylloxera and introduced plants such as Scotch broom and orchard grass



have stressed the ecosystem. (For more information on insect pests, contact Bob Duncan at the Pacific Forestry Centre at: 506 West Burnside Road, Victoria, BC 250-363-0600).

- q Garry oak ecosystems are adapted to fire, and since we have suppressed fire the ecosystems are changing. In many places, Douglas-fir trees and snowberry shrubs are starting to shade out indigenous plant species of the Garry oak meadow.

## What can you do?

- q Support Nature Conservancies (acquiring lands for protection) such as The Land Conservancy of BC, the Habitat Acquisition Trust Fund and The Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- q Plant nursery propagated native shrubs, perennials and bulbs in your yard.
- q Plant and nurture Garry oak seedlings and avoid cutting Garry oak seedlings and trees.
- q Join Naturescape British Columbia.
- q Join the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society, a Natural History Society or a Native Plant Society.
- q Treasure the natural and wild areas in our yards, parks and all public and private lands.

## Contacts:

- q Habitat Acquisition Trust Fund. Website: [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca) Address: PO Box 8552 Victoria, BC V8W 3S2. Phone: 250-995-2428.
- q Land Trust Alliance of BC. Website: [www.island.net/~ltabc/](http://www.island.net/~ltabc/) Address: #204-338 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2V3. Phone: 250-538-0112.
- q Native Plant Society of British Columbia: E-mail address: npsbc@hotmail.com Membership coordinator: Jan Kirby 2610 Harpoon Rd., RR#2, Pender Island, BC V0N 2M2 email: jankirkby@gulfislands.com
- q Native Plant Study Group of the Victoria Horticultural Society c/o Susan Bastin 250-361-3122.
- q Naturescape British Columbia. Website: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/hctf/nature.htm](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/hctf/nature.htm) Address: P.O. Box 9354 Stn. Prov. Gov. Victoria, BC V8W 9M1. Phone: 250-387-9853
- q The Land Conservancy of BC. Website: [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca) Address: 5793 Old West Saanich Road, Victoria, BC Phone: 250-479-8053.
- q The Nature Conservancy of Canada. Website: [www.natureconservancy.ca](http://www.natureconservancy.ca). Victoria office: #202-26 Bastion Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1H9. Phone: 250-479-3191.
- q Victoria Natural History Society. Address: PO Box 5220, Stn. B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4. Phone: 250- 479-2054
- q Garry Oak Restoration Project c/o Environmental Services, The District of Saanich, 770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria, BC V8X 2W7. Phone: 250-475-5494, Local 3477

Prepared by the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team  
c/o A-954 Queens Street, Victoria, BC V8T 1M6

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