

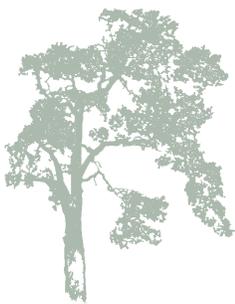


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Ways that developers can protect Garry oak areas during land development



Contact the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) if you would like a meeting to discuss protection of Garry oak areas on or near your proposed developments.



*Garry oak areas are unique features that can be an asset for your development.*

Protecting Garry oak areas can add to a development’s triple-bottom line, by adding to sales value and community amenities while protecting one of Canada’s most endangered ecosystems.

**CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES**

*Consider selling or donating all or part of the Garry oak area*

- Garry oak areas are environmentally sensitive. If these lands are donated to a local government or land trust as an ecogift, there may be significant income tax advantages. Your local government may offer a property tax incentive if a covenant is in place. Contact GOERT for more details.



Photo left: Chris Junck. Photo top: Fred Hook

- These areas may be given to the local government as part of the park land dedication during subdivision.
- Local land trusts or community groups may be interested in purchasing the Garry oak area if the price is favourable. If the land is sold for less than market value, tax advantages may apply.

*Consider clustering*

- Look at ways to cluster development in less sensitive parts of the development site in exchange for setting aside Garry oak areas. Clustering reduces developments costs as there are fewer trees to clear, less land to grade, and less road, water, hydro, and sewer infrastructure needed to service the development. Some local governments will allow an increase in density in exchange for natural area protection.
- Consider conservation subdivision design. Smaller lots with significant amounts (more than 50%) of protected open space targets the growing consumer market that is seeking homes in natural settings with less property to maintain.<sup>1</sup>
- Use alternative development standards such as narrower roads to help reduce the development footprint, leaving space for the protection of natural areas on site.
- Design the lot layout to avoid roads, trails and utility corridors that bisect natural areas. Keep large adjoining blocks of natural areas whenever possible.

<sup>1</sup> For more information see “Conservation design for subdivisions: a practical guide to creating open space networks” available from [www.greenerprospects.com/products.html](http://www.greenerprospects.com/products.html)

## DESIGN FOR SUCCESS

### *Get detailed information*

- If there are (or you think there may be) Garry oak areas or species at risk on or near the development site, contact the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team for more information. If a site includes federally-listed species at risk, be aware that harming them may have implications under the *Canada Species at Risk Act*. In some cases there are Recovery Strategies or Action Plans for these species which will need to be considered.<sup>2</sup> GOERT can help you find funding for species at risk protection and can provide additional information.
- Have a professional ecologist prepare a detailed site inventory that identifies Garry oak areas and any species at risk on or near the development site. Be aware that some species are only visible at certain times of the year, and that some can only be identified by specialists.<sup>3</sup> For more information see the Ministry of Environment's *Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia* and *Terms of Reference for Bio-inventory and Site Evaluation*.<sup>4</sup>
- Review the Ministry of Environment's *Develop with Care* guidelines for developments near sensitive areas.

### *Design to protect the trees and other vegetation*

- Retain existing Garry oak trees and natural wildflower meadows. Remember that even small Garry oak trees may be quite old.
- Retain and create wildlife corridors between Garry oak areas and other natural habitats.
- Retain natural ground cover and shrubs in addition to Garry oak trees. Many species that depend on Garry oak areas need fallen leaves and native plants to survive. Fallen trees also provide habitat for a variety of plants and animals.
- Provide guidelines for landscaping and maintenance that will take place post-construction. Typical gardening practices such as mowing, fertilizing and watering can harm oak seedlings as well as other native plants and animals that are adapted to dry conditions and poor soils.
- Look for opportunities to restore Garry oak habitats. Contact GOERT for ideas and information. You may even be able to create Garry oak habitat on your green roof!

## DEVELOP CAREFULLY

### *Protect during and after construction*

- Use a qualified arborist<sup>5</sup> with Garry oak expertise to define tree protection areas, and place temporary fencing around Garry oak trees and ground cover plants to avoid accidental damage during construction. Ensure that construction crews do not dump fill in tree root zones, as it may lead to death of the tree. Remember that the tree's root zone is at least as large as the crown area of the tree.
- Retain buffers of natural landscaping around Garry oak areas. This will help to protect these sensitive ecosystems during and after construction.
- Ensure that course of construction documents specify requirements to protect Garry oak areas during development, for example by ensuring that surface and sub-surface water flows are unchanged and that concrete wash is not spilled into these areas. Make sure the sub-trades are aware of and follow these documents too.
- Use site-appropriate native plants in landscaping. Avoid invasive plant species such as English ivy or butterfly bush (*Buddleia*) that can alter and harm neighbouring Garry oak areas.
- Minimize the area cleared during construction. Bare soils allow invasive plants to colonize. Once established, invasive plants may be hard to remove.
- Remove invasive, non-native plants such as English ivy, Scotch broom, daphne, English holly and gorse. Note that removal of invasive plants requires gloves and skin protection as some plants, especially daphne, contain oils that can harm the skin, eyes and lungs. The GOERT manual *Invasive Species in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems in British Columbia*<sup>6</sup> contains information on ways to remove some common invasive plants.
- Provide new homeowners with GOERT's information about native plants to use and invasive species to avoid when landscaping, such as the *Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook*.

For more details please talk to the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team or see the Ministry of Environment's *Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia*.

<sup>2</sup> For information on Recovery Planning see [www.sararegistry.gc.ca/plans/default\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/plans/default_e.cfm)

<sup>3</sup> For a list of experts see the GOERT website [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)

<sup>4</sup> Available from [www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html)

<sup>5</sup> For a list of arborists with Garry oak expertise, see [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)

<sup>6</sup> Available from [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)



**Garry Oak  
Ecosystems  
Recovery Team**

Download the latest version and find more  
information at:  
**[www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)**

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