



## SOUTH COAST CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Protecting and Restoring at Risk Species and Ecological Communities on BC's South Coast

Published on *South Coast Conservation Program* (<http://sccp.ca>)

### Garry Oak

The only native oak species in western Canada, Garry oak are a rare hardwood community found along the Pacific Northwest from BC (southeast Vancouver Island, South Coast) to California. Garry oak ecological communities are typically upland and marine variant wildflower meadows, open woodlands or small populations of Garry oak in prairie type grassland communities.



Garry Oak Meadow P. Zevit



Garry Oak Meadow B. Klinkenberg



Garry Oak Meadow (Sumas Mtn.) P.  
Liley



Common Camas



Garry Oak Meadow Ecstaticist Flickr

## Characteristics

True Garry oak communities are ones in which Garry oak is naturally occurring and the associated vegetation resembles aspects of the ecological processes from pre-colonial periods. This ecological community can vary from dry, open woodlands with a rich native wildflower and grassland community (e.g. the common camas meadows of southeastern Vancouver Island) to small colonies of Garry oak trees on upland bluffs and rocky outcroppings and south aspect hillside clearings (like Sumas Mountain in the Fraser Valley). Some communities can have deep soil profiles, seeps and seasonal wetlands, but well drained soils and high levels of sun are key. Other species associated with Garry oak include the showy and well known common camas - a wildflower with a starchy tuber cultured as a food source by First Nations, shrubs like oceanspray, hairy manzanita (a type of low growing evergreen berry producing plant), Saskatoon berry, common snowberry and dull Oregon-grape. One red-listed butterfly - *Propertius Duskywing* is entirely dependent on Garry oak for its larvae. Garry oak communities may often be found near, or in combination with, other communities that do not contain Garry oak trees, though they often have similar characteristics in soils, disturbance regimes and understory plant species. These would include coastal Douglas-fir, arbutus and lodgepole pine communities. On the South Coast Garry oak communities are very rare, restricted to a few occurrences in the Fraser Valley (Sumas Mountain), Fraser Canyon (Yale) and the most northern and somewhat outlier population on Savary Island in the Sunshine Coast Forest District. The red-listed community for the South Coast is referred to as Garry oak - bigleaf maple - cherries.

## Resources

[The Ecological and Conservation Genetics of Garry Oak \(\*Quercus garryana\* Dougl. ex Hook\)](#)

**For further information see**

[Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team Society](#)

[Garry Oak Preservation Society](#)

## Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership (CPOP)

### Terrestrial & Predictive Ecosystem Mapping

#### Ecosystems of British Columbia D.V. Meidinger and J. Pojar

##### BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: Species and Ecosystems Search

A source for authoritative conservation information on thousands of plants and animals and hundreds of ecological communities in BC. From here connect to all provincial and federal recovery plans (including the SARA Registry), COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), Identified Wildlife guidance and conservation requirements for specific species and ecological communities of conservation concern impacted by forestry activities) and links to E-Flora and E-Fauna (the Electronic Atlas of the Plants and Wildlife of British Columbia).

##### British Columbia's Coast Region Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern

A joint venture resource providing comprehensive information on a range of species and ecological communities specific to the Coast Region of BC (including the South, Central and North Coast, Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii).

##### Develop With Care Guidelines (see Lower Mainland Region section)

Environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development in BC.

##### Species at Risk & Local Governments a Primer for BC

Learn what species are at risk in your area, search by name, habitat type, regional district and forest district.

##### E-Flora the electronic atlas of the Flora of BC

A volunteer-driven GIS-based biogeoclimatic atlas of the vascular plants, fungi, algae, bryophytes and lichens of BC.

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**Source URL:** <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/garry-oak>

##### **Links**

- [1] <http://www.goert.ca/>
- [2] <http://www.garryoak.info/index.html>
- [3] <http://cascadiaprairieoak.org/>
- [4] <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/ecology/tem/>
- [5] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>
- [6] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>
- [7] [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop\\_with\\_care\\_intro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro.html)
- [8] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>