

Garry Oak Care for Gardeners in Oak Harbor

Thank you for choosing to support the growth of Garry oak trees. Garry oak trees take centuries to develop and mature. Garry oaks support pollenating bees, butterflies, nesting birds, squirrels and mosses. In addition, they are drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, beautify our green spaces and serve to clean and purify the air in our city. They also buffer and screen noise and reduce heat in the summer by providing shade. In Oak Harbor City code protects Garry Oaks and a special permit is required for pruning. See the entire code at www.codepublishing.com/WA/OakHarbor

Caring for Garry Oak Trees *courtesy the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team's Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook, 2011 edition, pg. 42, available as a free download at www.goert.ca/gardeners*

- Avoid sudden changes such as over-watering or long periods without watering.
- Don't create stress by hanging things off the tree such as signs or clothes lines.
- Protect your tree from soil compaction in its root zone, as well as from stress or damage from parked cars, kiddie swimming pools or construction projects.
- Don't pave under the tree. Tree roots extend out at least as far as the branches of the tree and the ground beneath the canopy should be protected from disturbance.
- The older the tree, the more important its shallow roots are and the less able it is to adapt to change.
- If you have a stand of oaks on your property, you may need to find out about techniques to maintain the trees' health. Consult an arborist for advice.
- Garry oaks do not grow well in the shade of larger trees such as Douglas fir. Consider thinning some of the shading branches to allow more light through.
- Protect your trees from invasive vines such as English ivy that can smother and kill. When English ivy matures, its leaf shape changes and it produces berries that are spread by birds. Vines growing up trees should be cut and removed at waist height all the way around the trunk in a 3' tall band to sever contact between the roots and the vines. The upper vines can be left to decay on the tree or removed when brittle. Remove ground ivy by pulling up stems and removing as much root material as possible, preferably in the fall.