

Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*) Plant Communities in British Columbia: A Guide to Identification

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hre/becweb/resources/classificationreports/garryoak/index.html>



Ministry of
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Introduction

This field guide covers the native plant communities with a component of Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) in British Columbia. The purpose of the guide is to standardize the use of plant communities in conservation and recovery of the Garry oak habitat, and thus to move toward an ecosystem approach. Standardized communities can provide a basis for mapping and inventory. The guide is also intended to provide targets for Garry oak habitat restoration, and could help identify reference communities, which are then monitored to detect long-term ecological trends.

Contents – Technical Report 040

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Tr/Tr040.htm>

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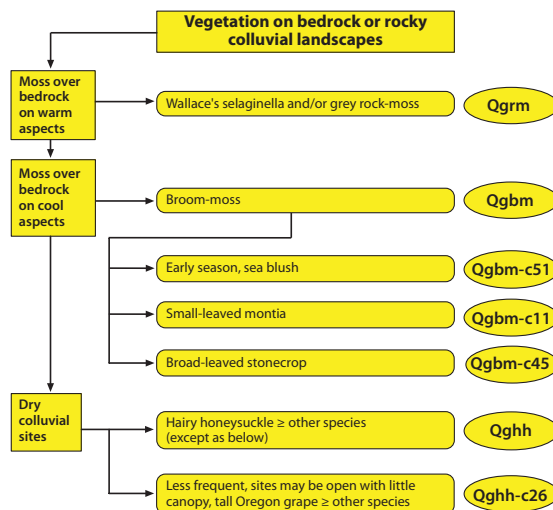
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Photos: Garry oak - Common camas - Western buttercup subcommunity (above); Common camas (right).



The number of communities included in this guide is as follows: plant associations – 7; community types – 17; and subcommunities – 6. This total is up from previous work because of the addition of the plant association level. However, this addition also provides simplification for applications that require a general approach (e.g., mapping at a scale that prevents detail). A full list of plant associations with their native communities is found in Appendix 3. The other communities are listed and described within a coloured section for each plant association. A synopsis of the key to the plant association follows, along with flowcharts covering both vegetation and sites are found in Appendix 1. Community designations below the plant association maintain the names and alphanumeric codes (via the last three digits) from the previous classification, for example, as highlighted: **qgbm-c11 Garry oak - Broom-moss - Small-leaved montia** (*Quercus garryana* - *Dicranum scoparium* - *Montia parvifolia*) community type. There have been some changes in the level of communities and subcommunities from previous work.



Notes: Defining species have at least 11% cover. Early season is April 15 to May 15. Other details are in the text and the full keys at the back.

Outline of the Plant Community Classification			
Plant association	Phenological plant community type	Native successional community type	Invasive alien community type
Plant community type	Phenological plant community type	Native successional community type	Invasive alien community type
Plant subcommunity	Phenological plant subcommunity	Native successional subcommunity	Invasive alien subcommunity



Photos: Garry oak - Common camas - White fawn lily subcommunity (above); Western trumpet (left); grassy Garry oak stand (below).



Photo above: Thelus Lake Nature Sanctuary Society



Qgbm-c51 Garry oak - Broom-moss - Sea blush

Quercus garryana - *Dicranum scoparium* - *Plectritis congesta* - phenological community type

General Description

This community type occurs infrequently in the main Vancouver Island range of Garry oak ecosystems. Sites are on cool, convex, and rapidly shedding but protected aspects, shallowly underlain by uniform bedrock. These are steep north and east slopes at low to mid-elevations (< 100 m). Moisture regime is xeric to very xeric but includes permissive on rubble with seepage. All plots have high bedrock exposure, surface and soil coarse fragments, and gravely shallow soils

(Orthic Humic Regossols) with Vermimul surfaces. There is still a relatively deep, fine-textured (loam to silt loam) Ah horizon (> 10-30 cm). Orthic Sombric Brunisols develop in deeper pockets. Oaks of various diameters grow in tree canopy form in these pockets. Most sites are moderately well stocked with saplings. All sites have seedling regeneration but stocking is light on average. Broom-moss (*Dicranum scoparium*), sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*), great camas (*Camassia leichlinii*), miner's lettuce (*Montia perfoliata* - *Claytonia* new name), electrified cat's-tail moss (*Rhytidadelphus triquetris*), and cleavers (*Galium aparine*) are important on all sites. Scotch broom* (*Cytisus scoparia*), sweet vernalgrass* (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Pacific snake-root (*Sanicula crassicaulis*), and broad-leaved stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*) are of lesser importance on all sites. Common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza chilensis*) are present on all sites. With intermediate cover on most sites are oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), Alaska oniongrass (*Melica*

Moisture regime	Western Gulf Islands	Western Pacific	Southern Gulf Islands	Saanich Peninsula	Western Shore
very xeric					
xeric					
mesic					
subhygic					

subulata, Kentucky bluegrass* (*Poa pratensis*), orchardgrass* (*Dactylis glomerata*), barren fescue* (*Vulpia bromoides*), and small-leaved montia (*Montia parvifolia*), plus the following with minor cover: blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), soft brome* (*Bromus hordeaceus*), barren brome* (*Bromus stertilis*), small-flowered alumroot (*Hesburgeria micrantha*), field chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), northern holly fern (*Polystichum cf. lonchitis*), Menzies' larkspur (*Delphinium menziesii*), white fawn lily (*Erythronium oregonum*), American vetch (*Vicia americana*), small-flowered blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), dovefoot geranium* (*Geranium molle*), tiny vetch* (*Vicia hirsuta*), common vetch* (*Vicia sativa*), and common chickweed* (*Stellaria media*).

Comments

This community type was previously included both in the early season and bedrock outcrop community groups. It can be distinguished by this early season occurrence on north-facing slopes, shallowness to bedrock, and association with fine-textured soils—loam to silt loam—with relatively deep Ah horizons. There may be a degree of resiliency in these settings, as suggested by the lack of successional role for this subcommunity (Erickson 1996, 1998).

Management Ranking	
Preservation priority	Very high
Restoration potential	Moderately high
Ecological appeal	Very high
Scenicity or esthetic value	Very high
Prescribed fire potential	Low
Timber	High
Restoration priority	Moderately high
Restoration energy	Moderately high

Relative Importance Value of Major Species

