

THURSTON COUNTY

OREGON WHITE OAK INSPECTION & POLICY

Building permit applications on soils which support Oregon white oak trees may require on-site inspection as part of the County's Critical Areas Ordinance. Soils are generally the same as those which require prairie and gopher inspection.

BASIC REVIEW PROCESS:

- On-site visits are conducted
- Proposed building area(s) are screened for the presence of Oregon white oak trees
- If Oregon white oak trees are found within the building footprint or if the footprint lies within 5 ft. of the canopy dripline (see diagram below), the project is considered an impact to the oak tree(s).
- In addition to the 5 ft. minimum dripline buffer, construction setbacks of up to 15 ft. are usually required.



IF OREGON WHITE OAK TREES ARE FOUND:

- if your building footprint lies beyond the 5 ft. dripline buffer and construction setbacks, you're good to go!
- If your building footprint is within the buffer and construction setback, you can :
 - ⇒ Relocate your building footprint to avoid oak tree(s), and you're good to go!
 - ⇒ Apply for a Reasonable Use Exception (RUE); this usually includes planting replacement oak trees and associated plants



READ THE CODE

Title 24: Critical Areas Ordinance

www.thurstoncountywa.gov/tchome/Pages/countycodes.aspx

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) list:
Thurston County Code 17.15.700, 24.25.065,
Chapter 24.03

Important Oak Habitat: Thurston County
Code 24.03.010, 24.25.065

Tree Protection: Thurston County Code
4.25.070; **Construction setbacks:** 24.01.035(G)

Hazard Tree Policy: Thurston County Code
24.03.010, 24.25.390

Oak Mitigation Requirements: Thurston
County Code 24.25.390

THE IMPORTANCE OF OREGON WHITE OAK TREES

- They support 200+ wildlife species.
- They're hearty! They are very resistant to disease, drought, and fire.
- They grow very slowly - even a small oak tree (i.e., 6" diameter at chest height) may be 70—100 years old!
- They can live up to 500 years, and don't start acorn production until they're about 20 years old.
- Like prairies, they're a living cultural resource from landscapes historically managed by indigenous people.

OREGON WHITE OAK (*Quercus garryana*) CHARACTERISTICS

Family: Fagaceae (The Beech family)

Ecology: Dry prairies, balds, and rocky bluffs at low elevations. Also in wetter riparian zones.

Flowering period: April—June

Characteristics: Deciduous, thick-limbed tree ranging from 10 to 25 m (32 to > 80 ft.) tall and with a trunk up to 1 m (39") in diameter when mature. Bark is light gray, thick, furrowed, and scaly. Younger trees may have slightly reddish-hairy bark. May grow as a shrub in harsher environments.

Leaves: Alternate, deciduous, 5 to 12 cm long, with 3 to 7 prominent, deeply rounded lobes on each side, with 2 to 3 teeth or toothless. Upper leaf surface shiny dark green, lower surface paler, greenish-yellow with brownish hairs. Stems 1 to 2 cm long. Leaves turn yellow-brown to orange in the fall, adding a splash of color to our evergreen-dominant landscape.

Flowers: Male flowers form hanging catkins, 1 per leaf node; female flowers individual or clustered, with each flower surrounded by a whorl of leaf-like bracts (involucres). Flowering occurs as or just before leaves develop.

Fruits: Edible, protein-rich, oblong to roundish acorns, 2 to 3 cm long. Acorns are held by a shallow, rough-surfaced cup formed by the hardened involucres, up to 2 cm. wide and 1 cm. deep.



Photos: *Top row*— #1 Marisa Whisman (2015); #2 Marisa Whisman (2015); #3 Marisa Whisman (2018); #4 Zoya Akulova (2016). *Bottom row*— #1 Keir Morse (2008); #2 Keir Morse (2008); #3 Keir Morse (2008); #4 Keir Morse (2008).