



Janene Walkky

Garry Oak twig and acorns, *Quercus garryana*

Quercus garryana, or Garry Oak trees, stretch out their jagged branches over the dry meadows of the Pacific Northwest. Mingling with the native grasses, many wildflowers, such as Mission Bells (*Fritillaria* ssp.) and Camas (*Camassia* ssp.) flourish in these meadows. At one time oak savannahs covered more than a million acres in the Willamette Valley alone.

David Douglas and many other later explorers observed Native Americans maintaining the savannahs through controlled burns to favor hunting conditions and to cultivate the edible wildflower bulbs. Now most of these valley savannahs have been lost due to conversion to farmland and development, although an effort is being made to preserve the few remaining meadows.