



**Growing Oaks & LIVE**  
**Acorn Collecting & Storing Guide**  
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## Growing Oaks Project Acorn Collecting and Storing Guide

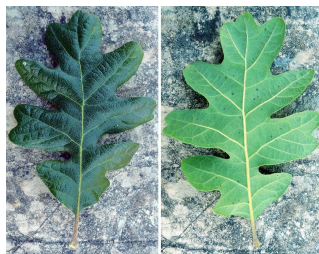
*Thank you for your participation in the Growing Oaks & LIVE Oregon Oak Hubs! We are excited to work with you in growing a new generation of the Oregon Oak, and helping to restore some of the lost oak savanna and woodland habitats. This document contains information to help aid you in collecting acorns for the hub. Thank you again for your contribution!*

**When To Collect Oregon Oak Acorns:** Oak trees typically start producing acorns in the late summer and early fall. The tree will drop several batches of acorns at different points in the season. The first batch of acorns will be bad– cracks found in the acorns, predation of acorns by insects, and acorns becoming hollow– these acorns are least likely to germinate. Please only collect them after the second batch of acorns: these acorns start falling in September through October and that is the best time to collect.

**Selecting a Tree(s) To Collect From:** You only want to collect from Oregon White Oak trees. In the Willamette Valley there are several other oak species in the area including - Northern Red Oak and California Black Oak - and we want to avoid growing Oak trees that are nonnative to the area. Once you find an Oak tree, you will want to do a two step check to determine if it is the correct species. If you answer “yes” to all the questions below, proceed to collect acorns from the area around the tree. As animals like squirrels will move acorns far from the original tree, you will want to only collect from the dripline of the canopy inward. Do not go beyond the dripline as that increases the probability of collecting acorns of another species.

*Two step check:*

1. Leaves: a) Oregon oak leaves are long, shiny, and dark green; edges deeply lobed, lobes and leaf tips rounded as seen in the bottom left b) If leaf tips are pointy, it might be a Northern Red Oak such as in the bottom right.



2. Tree Trunks/Bark Pattern: a) If the bark pattern looks like the photo in the bottom left, it's an Oregon Oak tree b) If the bark looks like the photo in bottom right, it's a Northern Red Oak.

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**What Acorns Should You Collect:** Acorns collected should only be on the ground and you should not collect acorns off the branches. The fallen acorns will be in different conditions and you should intentionally select mature deep dark brown acorns that have no holes or visible wounds and have a nice weight to them. Always make sure to visually inspect every acorn you collect and leave any that don't look healthy on the ground. Discard any moldy or diseased acorns. Please collect after the Honorable Harvest, as discussed below.

**Honorable Harvest:** Robin Kimmerer, an environmental science and forest professor at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, discusses the concept of the Honorable Harvest in her novel, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. The Honorable Harvest is practiced by indigenous communities that teaches everyone how to mindfully take, use and share natural resources, while understanding the deep indigenous legacies that shows us how to better commune with our planet. There are seven main ideas to keep in mind when harvesting in nature:

1. Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.
2. Introduce yourself. Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.
3. Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need.
4. Take only that which is given.
5. Never take more than half. Leave some for others. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.
6. Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken. Share!
7. Give thanks for what you have been given. Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.

**The Hub:** We have organized a series of participating winery hubs for you to drop off your acorns. Some hubs may also allow you to collect acorns on site.

- 1) Once at the Hub, supplies are provided. For collecting you will need a container or bag to hold acorns and an acorn intake form for each tree you collect from. This form will be taped to each vermiculite bag later to identify the origin of the acorns. If you have

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multiple trees in one small area and can't differentiate which acorns on the ground came from which tree, label the bag with the range of tree numbers (example: Zena A 2-5 trees). Label bags with the date, given/created tree ID and bag number if there are multiple bags for one tree (Figure 1A). Collect acorns using the above criteria and place into bags.

- 2) Storing Acorns in Vermiculite: You will fill ziplock bags with acorns; each bag can hold approximately 30 acorns- use additional bags if necessary. Each bag will be differentiated by tree so if you collect from 5 trees, you will use 5 bags. Label each bag with the date, given/created tree ID and bag number if there are multiple bags for one tree, and the number of acorns in each bag (Figure 1B). Attach the Acorn Intake form to the bag. Using the scoop, place vermiculite into each labeled bag. Refer to Figure 2 for a visual guide to organizing the acorns into the bags. Add a ½-inch layer sufficient to cover the whole bottom of the bag. Then sit the acorns into that layer leaving about an inch between each acorn. Next, place another ½-inch vermiculite layer on top of those acorns to fully cover them. Continue this layering process until the bag is "full". Leave some extra space at the top of the bag so it isn't stuffed to the point of exploding. Finally, place the bag(s) of acorns filled with vermiculite with the completed Acorn Intake form in the designated Hub area.

- a) Materials needed found at hub: Vermiculite (coarse- ground) to keep the acorns viable for germination. Ziploc Freezer Gallon Plastic Bags to hold the acorns in the vermiculite while in storage. Sharpies to label bags with the Date, Tree ID, and Bag Number. Small hand-held shovels to scoop the vermiculite into the bags. Acorn Intake Forms to record information about the tree you collected from.

**After the Hub:** Students from the Growing Oaks project will collect the bags left at each Hub and store them in a large walk-in refrigerator at Willamette University. This refrigeration promotes viability and extends the life of the acorn. The acorns will be grown by Growing Oaks later in the spring, and saplings will be planted/donated to private/public properties.

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Figure 1A Example of the labeling on bags for acorn collecting.

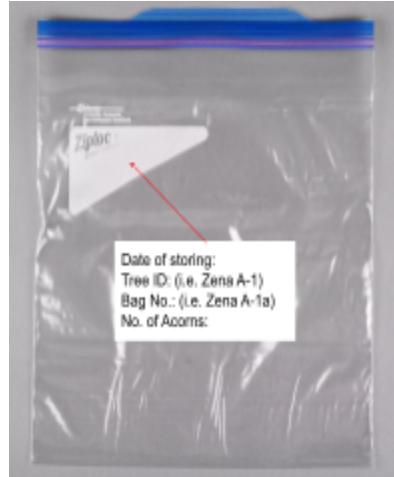


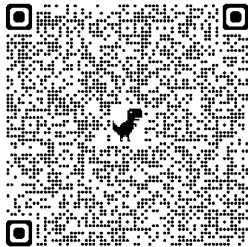
Figure 1B Example of the labeling on bags for acorn storing with vermiculite.



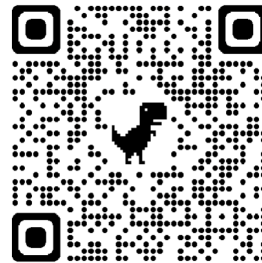
Figure 2 Example of how to store the acorns in the vermiculite.

**If you'd like to learn more about the Honorable Harvest and about Professor Kimmerer, here are some useful links:**

[Book: Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Kimmer](#)



[Robin Kimmerer: TED Talk; The Honorable Harvest](#)



[Gaia Project: The Honorable Harvest](#)



[The Honorable Harvest](#)

