

## Glossary of Terms:

**Biodiversity:** The variety of life and all its processes. The definition encompasses all living plants and animals, the ecological relationships among species, and evolutionary processes that permit organisms to function in a changing environment. Food webs and other ecological interactions play critical roles in nutrient cycling, maintaining water and air quality, preserving soil fertility, and many other “ecosystem services.”

**Climax Species:** A species associated with the terminal stage of ecological succession.

**Crown:** The portion of a tree composed of branches and stem above the lowest live limb.

**Diameter at Breast Height (DBH):** The diameter of a tree stem measured 4.5 feet from the ground.

**Drip Line:** An imaginary line formed on the ground by the circumference of a tree crown.

**Habitat:** A place providing the necessary resources and environmental conditions for a plant or animal to live and reproduce.

**Habitat Elements:** The specific biological features (such as large trees, snags, prey species) and physical features occurring in the environment used by a species. The availability of habitat elements is assumed to have a significant effect on the survival, growth, and reproduction of wildlife.

**Habitat Structure:** See Vegetation Structure.

**Habitat Type:** A group of plant communities sharing similar characteristics such as species composition and wildlife relationships. Habitat types are usually named for the most dominant climax plant species in the community, for example, Douglas-fir / western hemlock forest” or “white oak savanna”.

**Mast:** A collection or crop of acorns produced by an individual tree or group of trees.

**Natural Regeneration:** The seeds, seedlings, and sprouts of trees that have become established on a site through natural processes of reproduction and dispersal.

**Overstory:** The highest vertical stratum of individual plants within a community. In a forest or woodland, the overstory is composed of dominant and co-dominant trees.

**Plant Community:** Any group of plants belonging to a number of different species that co-occur within the same habitat and interact through competition and the ecological relations.

**Plant Community Composition:** See Vegetation Composition.

**Root Zone:** The soil region that encompasses the roots of a tree.

**Savanna:** A plant community or vegetation type dominated by grasses with scattered, drought-tolerant trees.

**Site Quality:** The productive capacity of a site to grow trees. Site quality is determined by soil type, climate, elevation, and other intrinsic factors.

**Snag:** A dead, standing tree.

**Stocking:** The number of trees per unit area relative to the optimum number of trees for growth and yield.

**Suppression:** The inhibitory effect that a more dominant tree exerts on the growth of a shorter tree through competition for resources, for example, sunlight and water.

**Thinning:** The silvicultural practice of removing selected trees during stand development to accelerate the growth of the remaining trees.

**Shade Tolerance:** The capability of a tree to survive and grow in the shade of taller vegetation.

**Understory:** The layer of vegetation between the forest canopy and the ground. Typically composed of shade-tolerant shrubs, tree seedlings, and saplings.

**Vegetation Composition:** The assemblage of plant species in a given area.

**Vegetation Structure:** The spatial arrangement of trees and other vegetation within a forest stand. Vertical structure refers to the stratification of vegetation, from the uppermost portion of the tree canopy to the ground.

**Wildland/Urban Interface:** The transitional zone between a highly developed urban area and an adjacent forest or woodland.

**Woodland:** In this guide, woodlands refer to stands of deciduous or mixed deciduous-conifer trees with a generally continuous or semi-open canopy.

[Source: Oregon's Landowner Guide](#)