There are several species of gall-making wasps that attack oak trees in Oregon. These wasps are tiny (1-6 mm) members of the Cynipidae family. Most species lay eggs in leaves and branches, others in acorns, flowers or roots. These attacks cause tissues to swell, forming galls. Galls are a common sight in Oregon white oak in particular (left) but damage is mostly cosmetic. Galls made in branches may cause bark to rupture and girdle the branch causing tip dieback. Additionally, western gray squirrels debark twigs in search of gall wasp grubs to feed on, which causes branch dieback.

Damage
The primary damage that can occur from galls is dieback in leaves or twigs due to blockage of vascular tissues. Oaks typically can reflush their leaves normally even after a season of high gall insect attacks. In some cases, squirrels may peel
back the bark on twigs containing galls in search of larvae to eat. This peeling can kill twigs but typically will not cause large-scale or whole-tree mortality.

Management highlights
- Damage is often cosmetic and trees often flush leaves normally
- Tissues with galls may be removed if insects are still inside (i.e., no exit holes) to prevent further damage from squirrels digging for larvae

Management
Once galls are visible it is often too late for control because the insect may have already left the gall. Damage from these insects is usually cosmetic therefore management is often not necessary. Attacked trees often flush their leaves as normal the following year. To mitigate damage from squirrels, branches with galls may be pre-emptively removed.

Chemical
Some chemicals are listed for treatment of galls but none are advised due to this insect causing primarily cosmetic damage. Insecticides also have the potential to impact non-target species that may provide control of these pests.

When using pesticides, always read and follow the label

More information:
Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Forest Health
http://tinyurl.com/odf-foresthealth
2600 State St. Bldg. D, Salem, OR 97310
503-945-7200

Other references:
USFS Forest Health Protection
www.fs.usda.gov/goto/fhp/fidls
OSU Forestry Extension
http://extensionweb.forestry.oregonstate.edu/