

**Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 55 - October 2023**

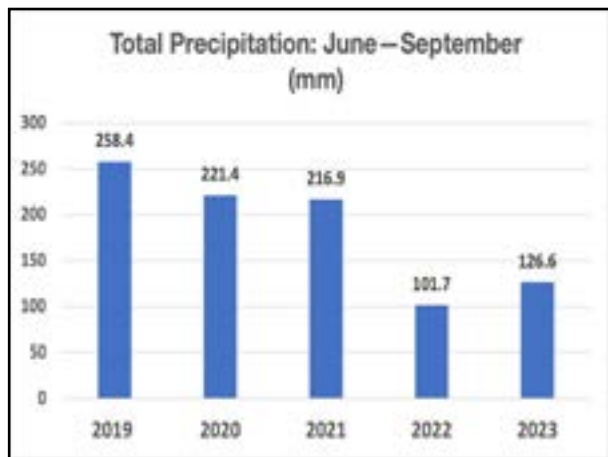
This month it's mushrooms, mushrooms, and more mushrooms. **Front photo: Mica caps** that popped up near Sadie's bench late last month. They are described in more detail on Page 3. Page 4 has descriptions of two other kinds of mushrooms that appeared near the same location in the first week of this month. On Pages 5, 6 and 7 are

Page 3: [Mica caps](#)
 Page 4: [More mushrooms](#)
 Page 8: [Trail dogs](#)
 Page 9: [Odds and Ends](#)
 Page 10: [What on Earth](#)
 Page 11: [Charts](#)

photos of 10 mushrooms that were found along a 50 foot stretch of trail on Hemlock Hill in 20 minutes on the 11th. That was probably "peak mushroom day" on the Trail. The two fungi at the bottom of Page 7 were found near Bridge 4.

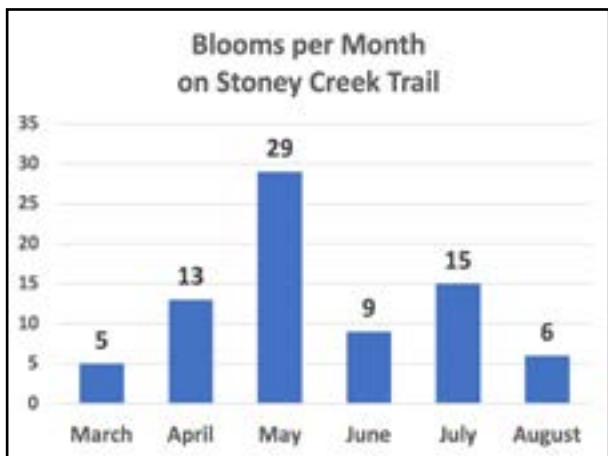


Two Trail Dog owners have found spectacular **Fly Agaric** mushrooms this season. They were not growing along the Trail, but here is a photo of some anyway, submitted by **Jean Lewis**. The Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) is often called a toadstool to denote that it is highly poisonous. The Amanita genus includes some favoured edible species, but also many of the world's most toxic mushrooms, responsible for most fatalities due to mushroom poisoning.



Diminishing rainfall: our long summer drought is over, thank goodness. We've now had two summers in a row with extremely low precipitation.

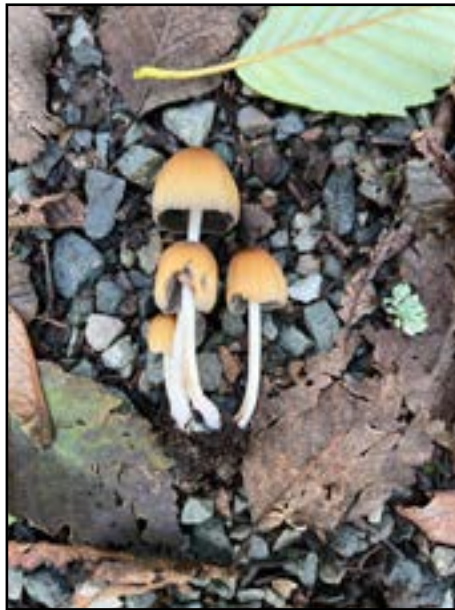
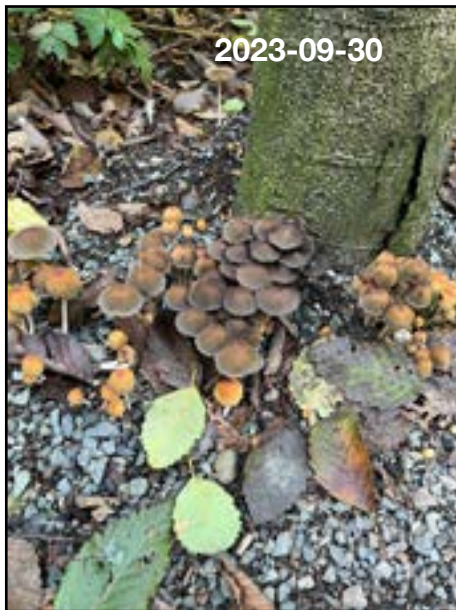
The chart on the left shows this past summer (June to September) did have 25% more rain than last summer, but that was just 60% of the amount that fell two summers ago, in 2021. Conversely, there was about as much rain in the summer of 2021 as in our last two summers combined.



Summer droughts and subsequent wildfires seem to be permanently with us now.

"... April showers bring May flowers." This chart, based on photographs I took along the Trail over this past spring and summer, shows the number of different species of plants and shrubs that bloomed each month. It seems to verify the adage, doesn't it.

Mica cap mushrooms:



Mica caps (*Coprinellus micaceus*), also known as glistening inky caps, are widespread and common in the Pacific Northwest.

Mica caps are gilled mushrooms, growing up to 10 cm tall. They have bell shaped, honey brown caps that are covered with a distinctive dusting of shiny salt-like granules. They feed on decomposing wood, so

you will often find them near stumps and logs. As these photos show, they can appear in dense clusters at the base of deciduous trees (e.g. cottonwoods and alders), even when the trees seem healthy. As they mature, Mica caps gradually darken and dissolve through a process called autodigestion into a spore-laden gooey black substance.



Like many other mushrooms, Mica caps reproduce via spores which they release in countless numbers from gills under their caps. Dispersing widely in the air, the spores germinate after reaching suitable environments. Most mushrooms are more prevalent during the spring and fall when there is higher humidity resulting from rain such as we had at the end of September.

Mycorrhizal fungi like Mica caps play a crucial role in forest ecosystems. They spread via underground mycelium networks and form symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationships with plants and trees by exchanging nutrients through their roots.

More mushrooms:



[Left] The **Sulfur tuft** (*Hypholoma fasciculare*), also known as the clustered wood-lover, has been appearing every autumn on one of the fallen alder trees near Bridge 5.

Sulfur tufts are common and widespread in northern Europe and North America. They usually grow on decaying stumps and logs and can be abundant when other mushrooms are hard to find. They appear first in a tightly packed clump or tuft, later expanding. Sulfur tufts contain an alkaloid and are intensely bitter and poisonous.

[Below] The **Felt-ringed agaricus** (*Agaricus hondensis*) grows on the ground. It is found in the Pacific Northwest, usually from September to October in our area. These ones were growing near Bridge 5 as well.

Initially, this mushroom is round or button shaped, later flattening out. The flesh is white and stains yellow when scratched. The gills are pale pinkish gray, turning chocolate brown. It has a skirt or veil that flares out around the stem.

This mushroom is poisonous, although some *Agaricus* are not: for example, the *Agaricus campestris* (field mushroom) and the *Agaricus bisporus*, the cultivated mushroom sold in grocery stores.

You can tell that an *Agaricus* is poisonous if it stains yellow when scratched and has a chemical odor when crushed. The edible agaricus has a pleasant mushroomy smell. *Always be absolutely sure it is non-poisonous before eating any wild mushroom.*



And more mushrooms:



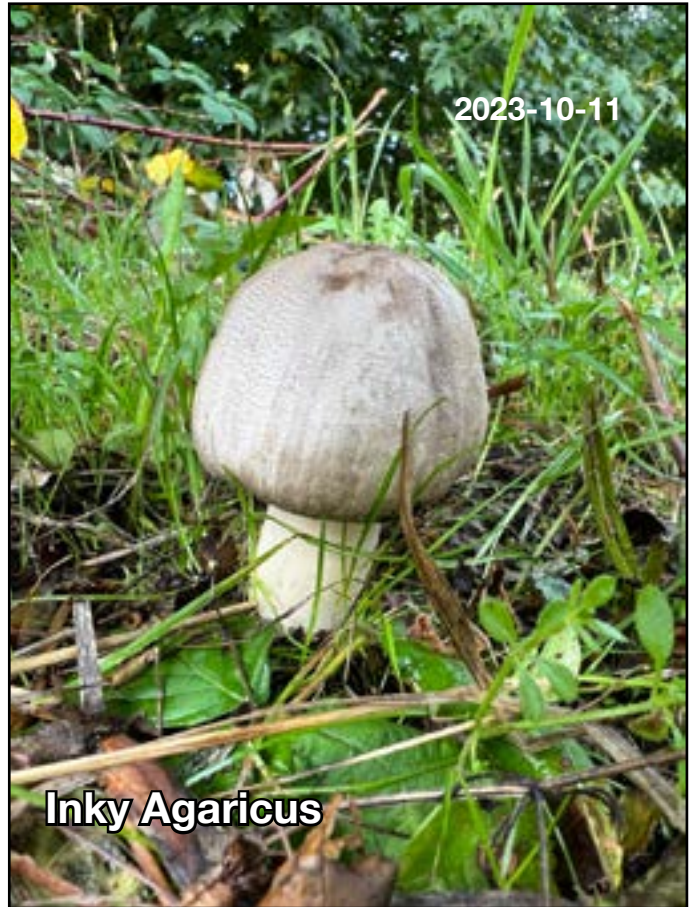
Brown Roll-rim



Lacklustre Laccaria



Dog Vomit Slime



Inky Agaricus

And still more mushrooms:



Still more mushrooms! (and two fungi):



White Fibrecap



Ivory Waxy Cap



False Turkeytail fungus



Witch's Butter fungus

Trail Dogs:



“**Violet** is an eight-year-old Lab Cross. We rescued her from the Oakville SPCA in Ontario when she was 22 months old.

“Violet loves her daily walks with her Mom on the many wonderful trails Abbotsford has to offer, especially Stoney Creek. She enjoys every opportunity to splash in a stream, pond, or puddle.

“Violet is selective of the many pup friends she encounters. She will let the pups know with a firm bark when they are invading her space.

“When she returns home, Our Princess lounges inside on one of many comfortable beds or outside in the warm sunshine.

“We provide many hand selected treats at her every beck and call . She has a selection of stuffed babies that she loves to show off and parades about, especially when Papa arrives home. Her loyalty and love for her family is unconditional. Violet is our Baby and our best friend!”

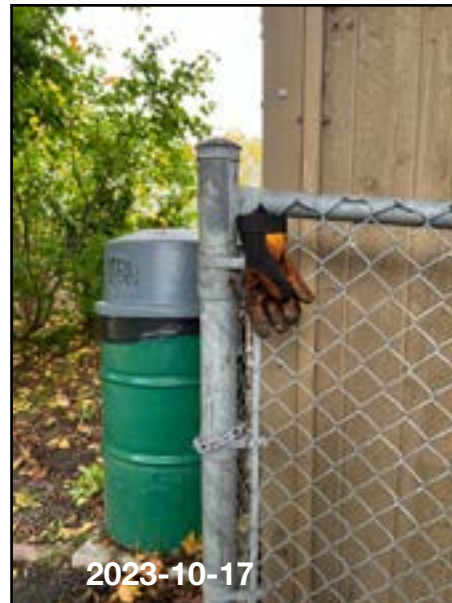
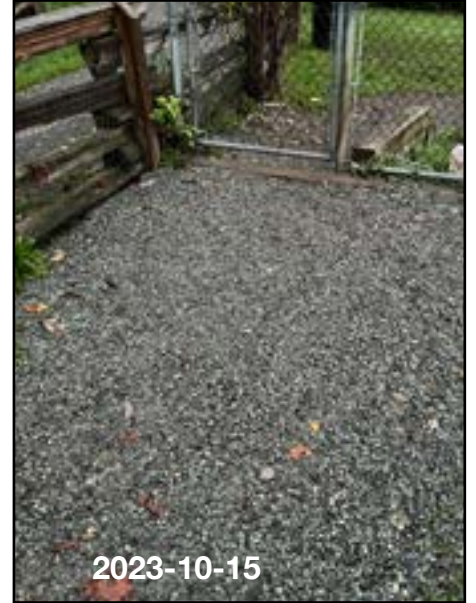
Odds and Ends:



Top: The colourless seed-pods of an **Honesty** plant are very much a contrast to the red leaves of a **Vine maple** tree. Persistent **Herb robert** plants have been blooming since May!

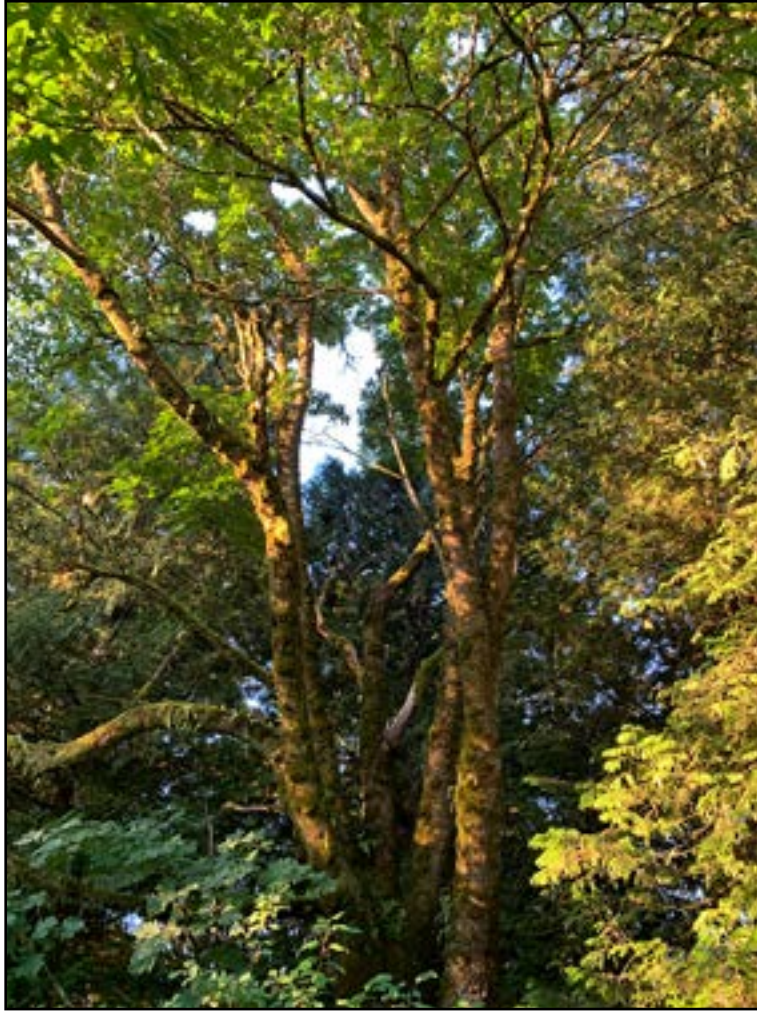
Middle: Kudos to the **PRC** for promptly gravelling the puddle at this Dog Corral entrance when requested.

Bottom: a USB cable. This work glove and a child's knitted toque had been unclaimed for days.



I am very concerned (as you might be) about the deterioration of our natural world. The CBC's radio broadcast [What on Earth](#) focuses on this topic. They also produce a podcast and a newsletter of the same name. I would like to share with you an exchange of opinions that arose from a recent broadcast.

Dr. Lindsay McCunn, a psychology professor at Vancouver Island University, said that feelings associated with climate change can range from **ecological worrying** to **climate anxiety**. Ecological worrying is when people are aware of climate change and may be concerned about it, but are able to respond in productive ways, like preparing for an emergency or taking part in climate action events. Climate anxiety, on the other hand,



is when this worry turns into potentially paralyzing despair.

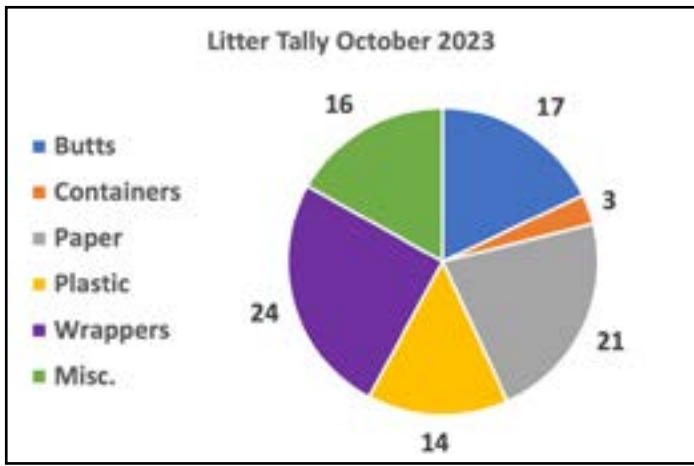
A listener from Victoria responded very poignantly (via the newsletter) to the above statement:

“Psychology professionals are missing the mark, only skimming the surface of people’s anxiety around climate change and the destruction of nature.

“Dr. McCunn refers to ‘ecological worrying’ as something like a nagging concern that people assuage by packing an emergency kit or removing invasive plants at a local park. She interprets climate anxiety in terms of threats to our homes or the places we work and play. But for many people, it goes much deeper.

“What I feel, every day, is ecological grief: a deep, unyielding despair over the loss of nature ... wildlife, forests, grasslands, wetlands, birds, insects, fish ... all of it, dying because of our greed and childish unwillingness to make small sacrifices for the common good and out of respect for the intrinsic beauty of nature and its right to exist.

“Although losing one’s home to a flood or wildfire would be devastating, I grieve, not just because my home and surroundings may be threatened, but more so for the loss of non-human life, regardless of my interaction with it. I know that I’m not alone in feeling this way. For many people, it’s not always just about us.”



Total litter items = 95 (last month = 73)

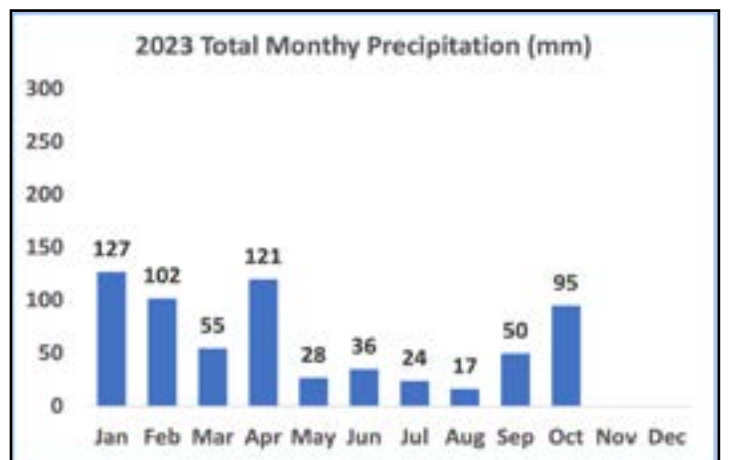
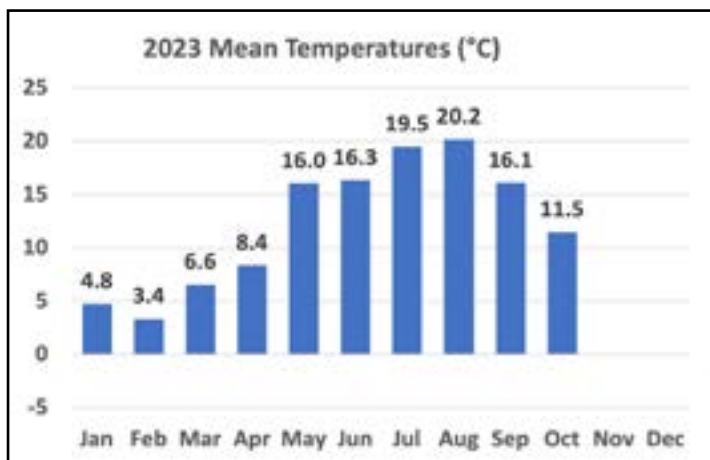
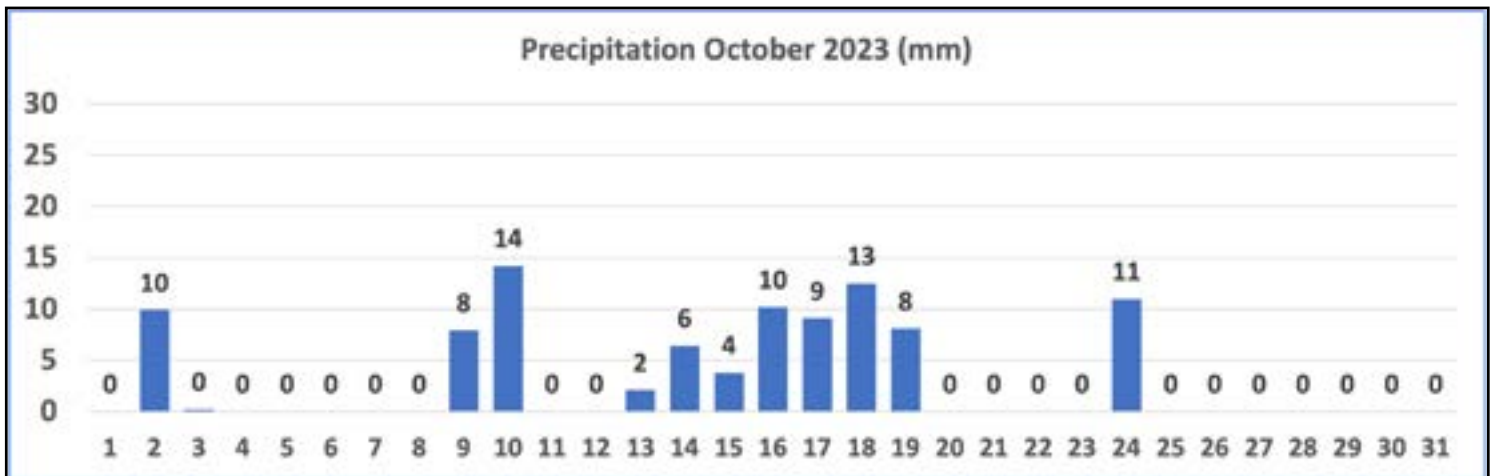
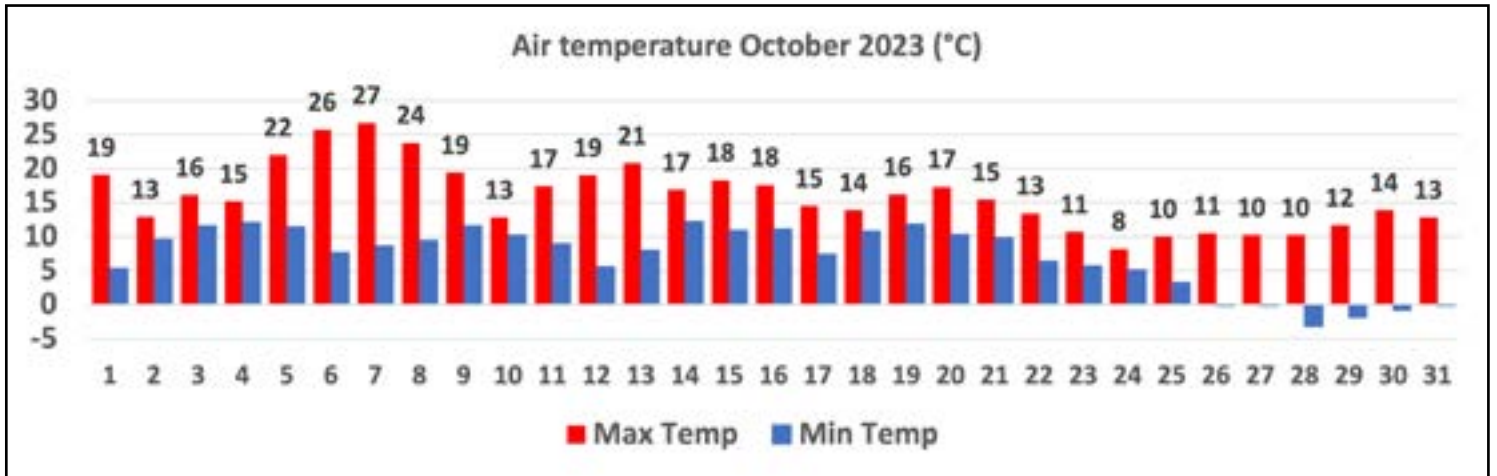
Containers: bottles, bottle tops, cans, coffee cups, lids, juice boxes.

Paper: tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

Plastic: dog waste bags & shreds, other items made of plastic.

Wrappers: candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

Miscellaneous: clothing, glass, chewing gum, dog balls & fragments, etc.



For convenience, I use these custom place-names

