

A close-up photograph of a thorny rose stem. The stem is light green with prominent, sharp, reddish-brown thorns. It is surrounded by lush green leaves with serrated edges. In the background, a portion of a building with a blue roof is visible under a clear sky.

# **Stoney Creek Trail Report No. 77 - August 2025**



On the Front Page is a close-up of a **Cutleaf blackberry cane**. It was taken near the Latimer Street entrance at the top of the trail.

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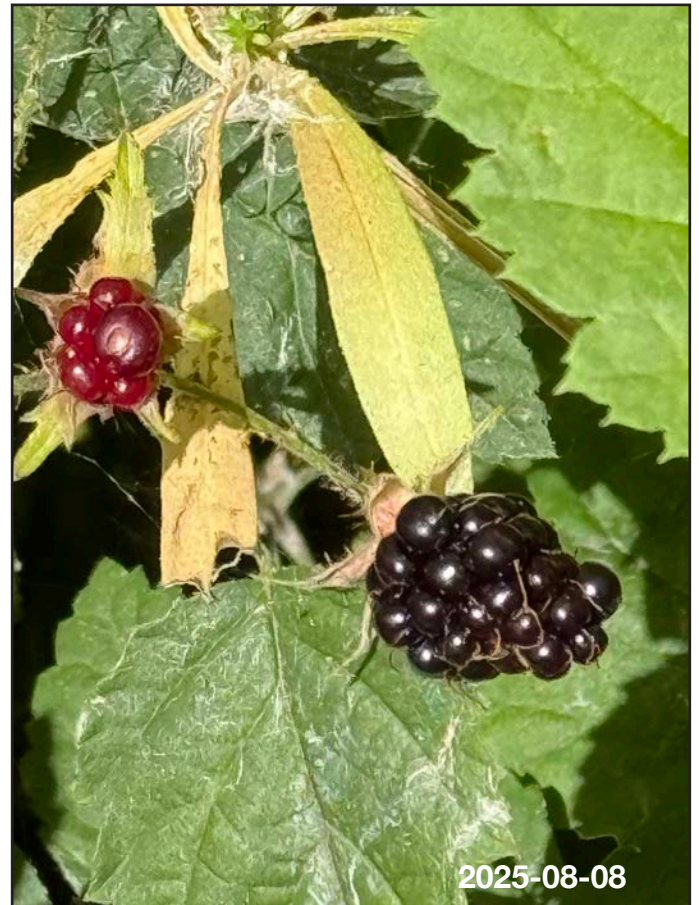
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This report will give you a chance to know a little better the three species of blackberries that grow here: the Trailing, the Himalayan and the Cutleaf. The last two are rampant invasives and, like the Himalayan balsam, have become beyond means of control.

**On the right:** Trailing blackberries at different stages of ripening. In 1881, this blackberry species was crossed with the red raspberry to create a hybrid called the Loganberry.



**On the left:** on the night of Saturday, August 9th, someone **built a fire** on the trail in front of Sadie's bench, drank beer, and left behind unburned pieces of firewood and trash.

**On the right:** a blurry photo of a very small insect called a **Green capsid** bug, so small ( $\approx 5$  mm long) that you barely notice them flying around these days. I have often wondered what they are and finally managed to grab one out of the air near the Hearthstone entrance. It is shown here, resting momentarily on my hand (see the palm lines).





## Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*)



The Himalayan blackberry is a member of the Rosaceae (Rose) family, as are all blackberries. It originated in Armenia and was introduced to North America as a food crop in 1885. It appeared in BC in the 1970's and is now designated as a [priority invasive species](#).

In the Lower Fraser Valley, this coarse shrub forms thick hedgerows along fields and waterways. The thickets

consist of long, arching, finger-thick, five-sided **canes** which sprawl and take root wherever they touch the ground. Armed with stout, hooked **prickles**, the thickets create a haven for small creatures such as birds and rabbits, as they are

impenetrable by larger animals and people.



Each cane can produce hundreds of berries and each **berry** has 50 or more seeds, so even a small thicket can produce tens of thousands of seeds which are dispersed by birds and animals that eat the berries. Thus, a blackberry can propagate in three ways: by roots, stem fragments and seeds.

Aggressive and damaging, it is a species capable of altering an ecosystem. There is no known biological control agent. The only way to eradicate it is to physically remove all traces. This would be very difficult, and the City would be probably be unable to do this.



## Cutleaf blackberry (*Rubus laciniatus*)

Also known as the Evergreen blackberry, it is an introduced species native to Europe and parts of Asia and is one of the two aggressive, invasive blackberries in the Pacific Northwest.

Like the Himalayan species, the Cutleaf will form dense, impenetrable thickets up to 3 m tall that can provide valuable cover for small animals, but which will out-compete native plants. Unlike the Himalayan blackberry, the Cutleaf blackberry keeps its distinctive lobed leaves through mild winters, allowing it to photosynthesize year-round.



Its compound **leaves** are composed of 5 deeply lobed leaflets with jagged tips. The **flowers** have pinkish or white petals, unusual among blackberries in having tips with 3 lobes.

Like other blackberries, the **fruits** are not true berries in the botanical sense. They are a cluster of many

small units called drupelets. The fruits of this plant are eagerly consumed by a large number of birds and mammals.

Compared to those of the Himalayan blackberry, Cutleaf berries have the same small, hard seeds, but a sweeter, fruitier flavour. If you wish to try them, there's a massive thicket near the Latimer Street entrance. Blackberries continue to ripen over a period of 3 to 6 weeks.





## Trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*)



The Trailing blackberry, also known as Pacific blackberry and California blackberry, is the only one native to the Pacific Northwest. While the invasive blackberries create impenetrable thickets, this shrub spreads over the ground, sending out trailing woody canes several metres in length. The thin, bluish stems will climb over obstacles, take root at the tips and eventually create a mat of ground cover.

The **flowers** are bright white, rising upwards from the horizontal stems. Male and female flowers

occur on separate plants. The male flowers are 2 to 4 cm wide with five narrow pointed petals while the female petals are slightly smaller but wider.

The flowers are often difficult to spot on Hemlock Hill because the margins of the trail are usually covered by

Himalayan blackberries and other plants.



The toothed, evergreen **leaflets** are widely spaced in groups of 3 along the stems (vines). The **prickles** are much less aggressive than those of the invasives. They won't gouge out chunks of flesh or tear clothing like those of the other blackberries. However, they can lodge in your skin and cause minor irritation for several days. Its ripe **berries** are black, elongated and about as big as the tip of your small finger. They look very similar to those of the invasives, but have a wine-like sweetness that makes them superior.





## Blackberry prickles



**Himalayan (1)** and **Cutleaf (2)** blackberries have prickles on their canes, leaf stems and leaves.

**Trailing (3)** blackberries have less aggressive prickles and thinner canes (2—5 mm). In this photo, they are about as thick as a drinking straw.

**Below:** the canes of the **Cutleaf** and **Himalayan** blackberries have 5 sides and can be up to 2 cm thick.





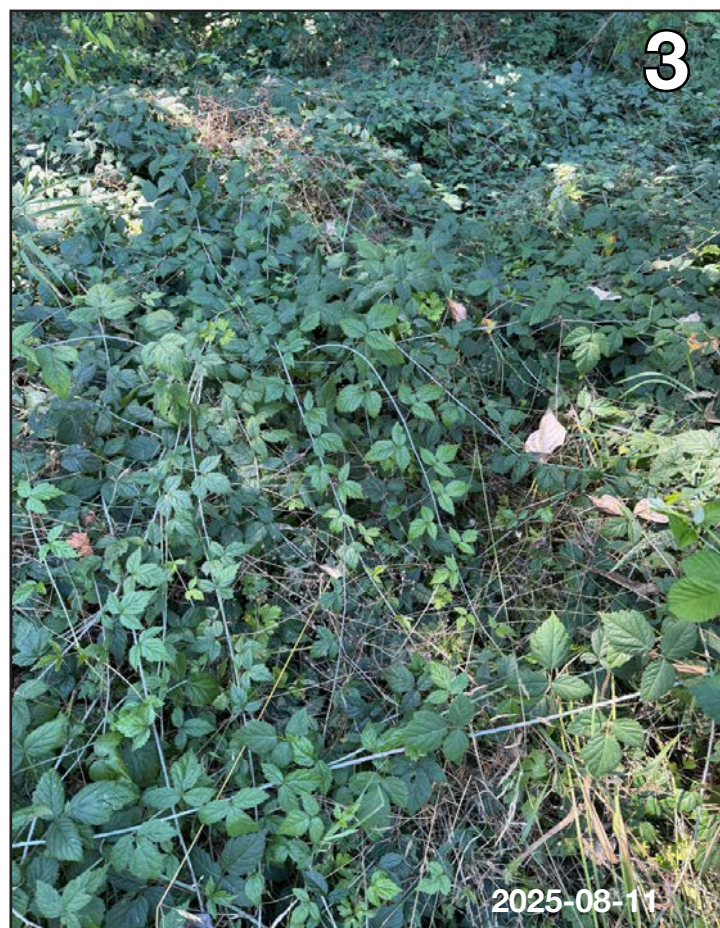
## Blackberries dominate



1. Every year, **Himalayan blackberries** climb several metres up into the **Mountain hemlock** tree near the Dog Corral. Next winter, you will see the dead canes hanging down.

2. On the Straightaway, a **Cutleaf blackberry** has intertwined its canes with the branches of a **Black chokeberry**, apparently without disturbing it.

3. At a certain location on the west side of the path on Hemlock Hill, **Trailing blackberries** have formed a large mat overlying other vegetation, as described on Page 5.





## Odds & Ends 1



1, 2. The *samaras* (winged seeds) on **Bigleaf** and **Amur maples** are turning red, anticipating the fall.

3. A little **Giant Sequoia** on Hemlock Hill has taken root and sprouted new twigs!

4. The **Chocolate vine**, originally from East Asia, looks much like a Trailing blackberry but does not have thorns.

5. The **Climbing rose** has prickles and behaves like a blackberry.

6, 7. The ripe fruits on the **Oregon grape** and **Mountain ash** are botanically not berries, but *pomes*. This is because their seeds are held inside a tough core (like those in an apple) rather than within edible flesh (like those of the blueberry or grape).





## Odds & Ends 2



1. **Cleavers**, like all annual plants, die after producing seeds. This one remains, clinging to a yellow cedar.



2. This **Crowned orbweaver spider** is suspended in its circular web on the Coachstone walkway gate.



3. An **Eastern bumblebee** is visiting a pinkish Himalayan blackberry flower.

4. A very unusual sighting: an exotic **Elephant hawk moth caterpillar** was spotted near the Bridge 5 bench.



5, 6, 7. The invasive **Himalayan balsam** can have flowers that are purple, white, or pink.





## Odds & Ends 3



1. The **Greater plantain** (*Plantago major*) is related to the Ribwort plantain mentioned in last month's report.

2. Immature male catkins on a **Beaked hazelnut**

3. Botanically, **Dogwood "berries"** are actually *drupes*, as the seed is inside a pit, like in cherries.

4. The stems of the **Hedge mustard** (*Sisymbrium officinale*) turn purple when mature.

5. This **Morning glory** has "turned the tables" on a Himalayan blackberry, climbing up its cane.

6. **Redroot amaranth** (*Amaranthus retroflexus*), also called pigweed, is eaten as a vegetable in other parts of the world.

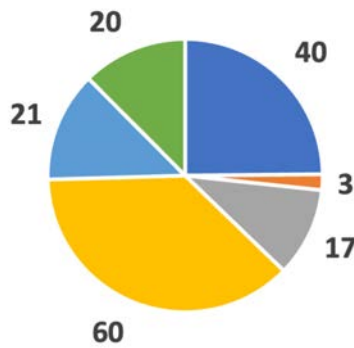
7. **Water pepper** (*Persicaria hydropiper*) is a member of the buckwheat family, as is Bitter dock.





## Litter Tally August 2025

- Butts
- Containers
- Paper
- Plastic
- Wrappers
- Misc.



Total litter items = 161

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

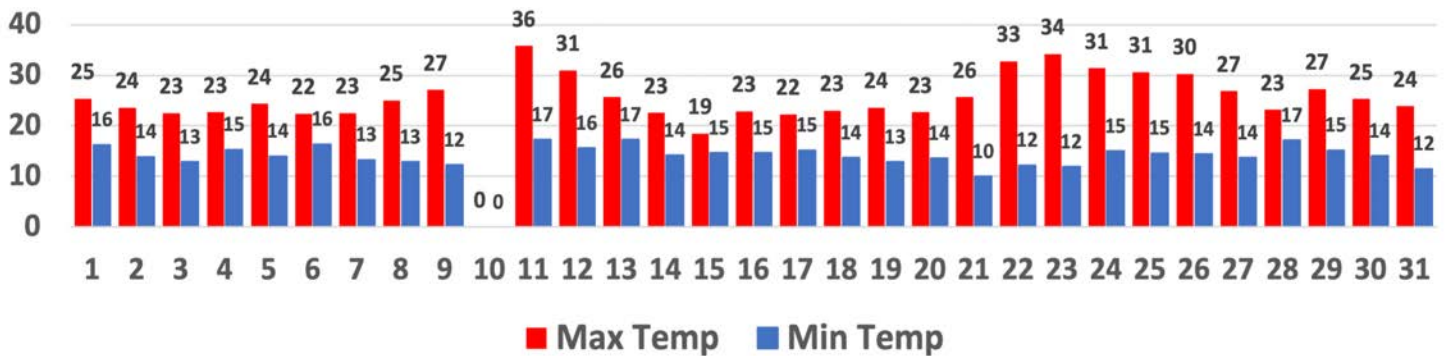
**Paper:** tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

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

**Wrappers:** candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

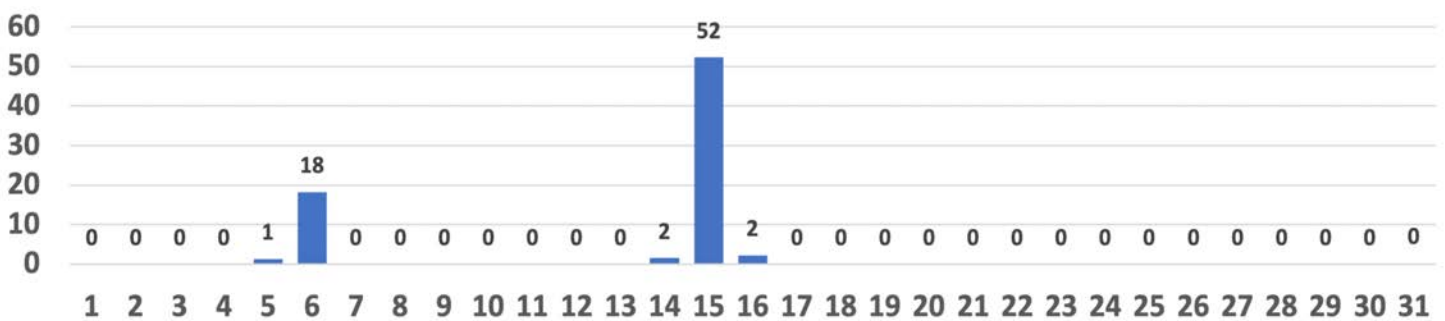
**Miscellaneous:** clothing, glass, chewing gum, dog balls & fragments, etc.

## Air temperature at YXX August 2025 (°C)



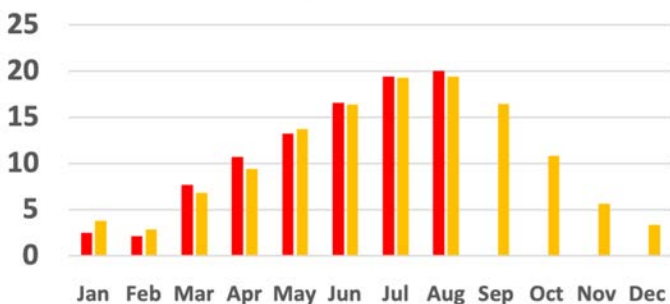
## Precipitation at YXX August 2025

Total = 75.7 mm



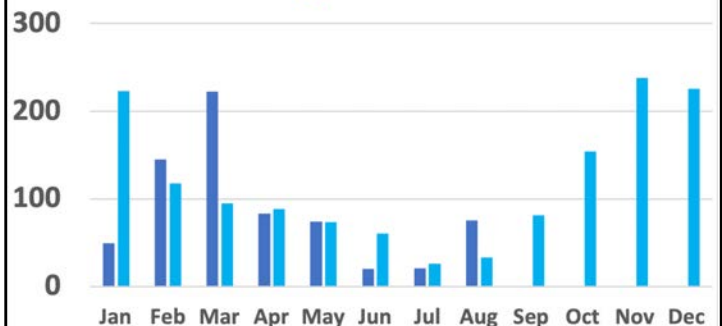
## Average Temperatures in 2025

Average: 2019-2024



## Precipitation in 2025 (mm)

Average: 2019-2024





For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

