

Edible Plants on Stoney Creek Trail



Trailing Blackberry

A few of the many species are edible. When gathering any of them, use common sense. Harvest only from areas free of pesticides, herbicides, and dog waste, away from roadsides and heavy traffic areas where contamination is possible.



Salmonberries look like shiny, translucent raspberries and range in color from a bright yellowish-orange to a deep, ruby red. They ripen quite early in the summer (often peaking in June). While some find them a bit watery, a good ripe one has a lovely, mild, sweet-tart flavor. The young, tender spring shoots can be peeled and eaten raw or cooked as a juicy, sweet green vegetable as well.

The **Trailing Wild Blackberry** is native to our region. They are usually hidden beneath the taller brush along the Trail edges. Unlike the towering, thorny thickets of the invasive Himalayan blackberries that choke out the sunny parking areas, this native plant creeps low along the ground. Its tiny, dark berries pack an incredibly intense, sweet flavor that blows store-bought varieties away.

The **Himalayan Blackberry** (right) and **Cutleaf Blackberry** (not shown) are non-native, highly invasive species and ecological pests. Their large, juicy black berries are widely harvested and highly palatable in late summer.





Dandelions are another common plant many consider a weed. However, the flower, stems, and leaves are all edible. Young leaves are the least bitter, while the unopened flower buds can be eaten raw on salads or cooked. These flowers are an excellent source of calcium, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

Plantains are very common on the Trail. Their older leaves get tough and fibrous, but the very young spring leaves are tender and can be eaten raw or steamed.





Common Chickweed forms delicate, bright green mats and can be found in several places along the Trail. The tender stems and leaves are very mild and make a great raw salad green.

Nearly the entire **Pineapple weed** is edible. It can be harvested from May through September. The flower heads, the most popular part, have a sweet, fruity aroma and a flavour reminiscent of pineapple with hints of chamomile. They can be eaten fresh or sprinkled over salads, or to make tea when either fresh or dried. The young leaves have a mild, slightly herbal taste and can be eaten raw or cooked, although they're less flavourful than the flowers.





Stinging nettles are very edible and considered to be one of the most nutritious wild plants, high in vitamins and minerals. The most tender and flavourful parts are young shoots and top the 4–6 leaves. Pick them (using gloves!) from March to May before they flower, as after flowering the leaves become tough and gritty. They are best when cooked like spinach. Boil them for 1–3 minutes or steam them for 5–10 minutes. Try blending them for adding to soups or dry them for tea.

Wood bittercress leaves, stems, flowers, and young seed pods all have a peppery, cress-like flavor, similar to watercress or arugula. The best parts to eat are the young leaves and shoots, before the plant flowers, as they are the most tender. Add raw to salads, sandwiches, wraps, or as a garnish. It can also be stirred into soups at the end of cooking.



Here are the best edible wild mushrooms found along the Trail. Note: many poisonous mushrooms resemble edible ones, so positive identification is essential.



Chicken of the woods: meaty, and remarkably similar to chicken breast when sautéed or fried.



Shaggy mane: very delicate, tender, and mild with a subtle nutty finish.



Oyster mushroom: savory, earthy, slightly velvety, and versatile in almost any dish.



Shaggy parasol: rich, nutty, deeply savory, and excellent when browned in butter.

Never eat any wild plant or berry unless you are 100% certain of its identity. The ones below must be avoided. They are ranked from most to least toxic.



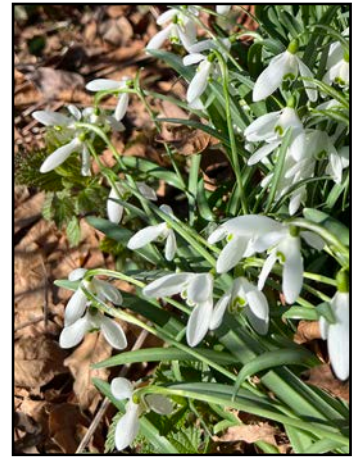
Foxglove



Tansy ragwort



Bittersweet
nightshade



Snowdrops



Periwinkle



Pacific bleeding
heart



Buttercups



Wild lettuce



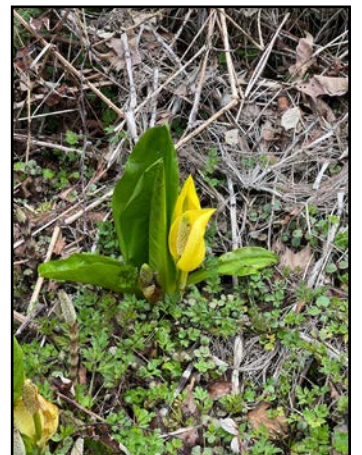
English ivy



St. John's wort



Horsetails



Skunk cabbage