

The bird featured on the Front Page is a **Barred owl.** This striking photo of the owl roosting near Bridge 4 was contributed by Trail regular, **Kurt Bozak** (Nala). This month I've received several reports of these owls being heard and seen along the Trail.

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The Barred owl (*Strix varia*) can easily be identified by its distinctive hooting call: "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?" Originally native to eastern North America, Barred

owls spread westward during the twentieth century, eventually reaching the Pacific Northwest. They have been present in British Columbia since the 1940s and now inhabit most of the eastern

and southern part of the province, including the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Barred owls don't migrate or even move very far, and they thrive in many different environments: forests, swamps, riparian zones, and increasingly in suburban neighborhoods with mature trees. Their adaptability allows them to occupy both natural and human-altered landscapes. Unfortunately, they are so successful that they are contributing to the decline of the Northern spotted owl, an endangered species.



This owl was perched on a porch roof overlooking the trail on Hemlock Hill. (2025-05-21)

**Note:** I have plenty of photos of flora—but not of fauna. I would be pleased if you submitted photos you've taken of wildlife along the Trail.



Our friend, Regina Dalton, benefactor (John's bench on the Straightaway), animal lover (Sasha) and artist, passed away on April 6th.

The <u>annual smolt release</u> took place on May 15th. There was a good turnout of both ARPSES volunteers and members of the City staff. Over 12,000 coho were released into Stoney Creek.



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#### A Benthic (bottom dwelling) Macroinvertebrate



One of the critters collected in the invertebrate survey done on April 25th is the tiny creature on the left. It is a flat-head mayfly nymph.

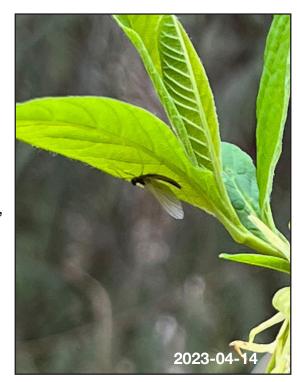


It has two caudal (tail) filaments rather than three—unlike the mayfly nymph on the right and most other <u>mayfly species found in BC</u>. Its flattened head and body, large abdominal gills (especially the first pair), and two tail filaments identify it as a member of the genus *Epeorus* in the family *Heptageniidae*. Its total length, including the tail filaments, is about 1 cm. Below is a photo of a tiny adult mayfly, very likely of the genus *Epeorus* as well.

Due to having flat body parts and large gills that can function as suckers, this nymph is able to crawl on rocks without being swept away in fast-flowing water. Finding this species is significant, as it is highly sensitive to pollution.

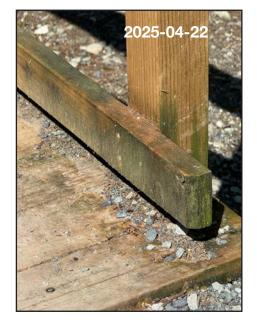
Mayflies (and grasshoppers, dragonflies, and some other common insects) undergo *incomplete metamorphosis*. This means they do not develop through the usual four stages (egg>larva>pupa>adult), but instead progress through just three stages (egg>nymph>adult), molting as they grow.

Thank you to **Pina Viola**, Benthic Invertebrate Taxonomist, for identifying this particular species of mayfly nymph.

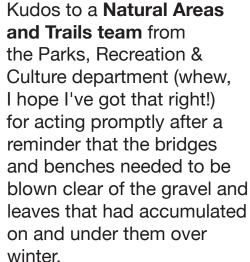


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#### **Trail Maintenance**



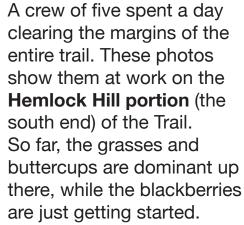














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## New Growth (1/2)







- 1. Thimbleberry (a relative of the raspberry and rose);
- 2. High bush cranberry (a relative of the elderberry;
- 3. Golden-twig dogwood;
- 4. Fragrant fringecup (saxifrage family);
- 5. Large-leaved avens (rose family);
- 6. Herb-robert (geranium family);
- 7. Bitter dock (a relative of buckwheat and rhubarb).







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## New Growth (2/2)







- 1. A Mountain ash blooming near the Dog Corral;
- 2. Helicopter seeds developing on a Bigleaf maple (it finished blooming last month);
- 3. An Amur maple blooming near the Bowl (it was at peak fragrance this month).

**Below:** notice the different arrangement of leaves on the two species of Hemlock trees: the spiky Mountain hemlock (on the left) and the flatter Western hemlock.



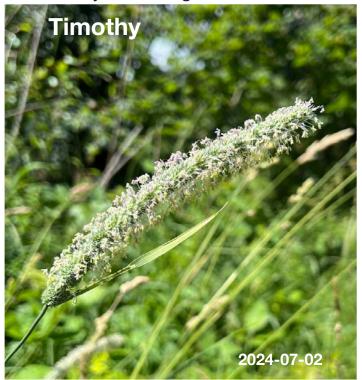


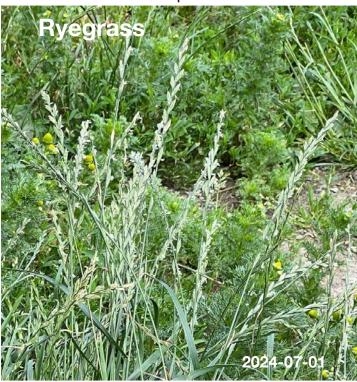
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### Allergic to Grasses, Anyone?

An allergy is a condition where the immune system overreacts to substances such as pollen that are normally harmless to most people. These substances are called allergens. The grasses below are a major cause of allergic reactions, otherwise known as "hay fever." They are arranged in order of severity, clockwise from the top left.





When an allergic person is exposed to allergen, their immune system treats it as a threat and responds by releasing chemicals called histamines, causing inflamation and other symptoms. The symptoms can be treated by medications called anti-histamines.



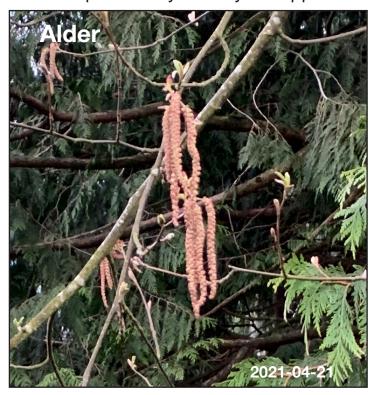


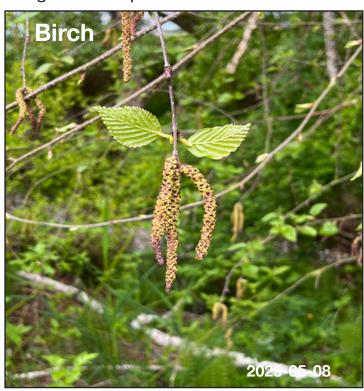
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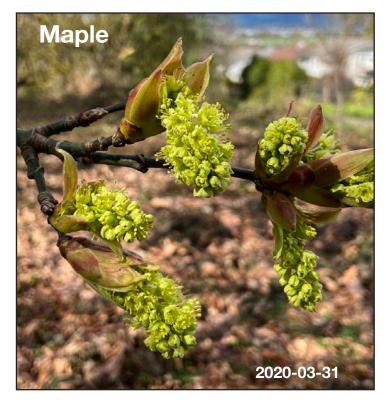
## Allergic to Trees, Anyone?

These trees growing along Stoney Creek Trail are known to cause allergic reactions. They are also are arranged in order of severity, clockwise from the top left. The alder and birch are particularly bad if you happen to be allergic to their pollen.





The dates on the photos show you roughly in which month to expect maximum allergic reactions. Note that these trees produce pollen earlier in the season than do the grasses on the previous page.





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#### **Orchard Grass**



It is rich in protein and fiber, and maintains good nutritional value even as it matures. It is one of the first grasses to grow in spring and last to go dormant in fall, providing extended grazing or hay production.

Orchard grass thrives in cooler climates and its deep roots allow it to withstand drought better than many other grasses.

Unfortunately, there is a downside: Orchard grass pollen is a well-known allergen in spring and early summer.

A clump of Orchard grass at the Forks, shown above, has grown rapidly since appearing at the beginning of the month. By month's end it will be in full bloom (like the one shown on the right).

Orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) will tolerate partial shade such as that found in orchards and treed pastures, hence the name.

Its seed heads grow in tufted, clustered spikes that lean to one side, resembling the foot of a rooster (cock), thus it is also known as **cocksfoot** grass.

Its leaves have a slightly dull, bluish-green colour, making them quite recognizable in the presence of shinier, lighter green grasses such as Reed canary grass.

Orchard grass is a perennial, native to Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia. It was introduced to North America in the 18th century and is now widely used for livestock hay and forage.



#### **A Selection of Unusual Litter**







- 1: metal pie pan and plastic spoon;
- 2: large plastic shopping bag;
- 3: soggy ring binder;
- 4: soggy hiking boot;
- 5: plastic pylon (under Bridge 3);
- 6: badly damaged bicycle (below Bridge 6);
- 7: plush hippo doll (resting in Dog Corral vestibule).



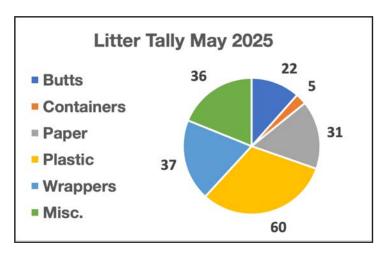








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#### Total litter items =

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

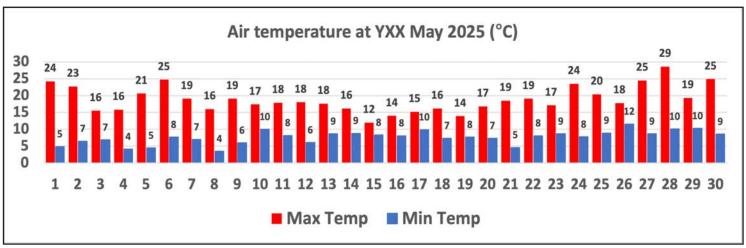
Paper: tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

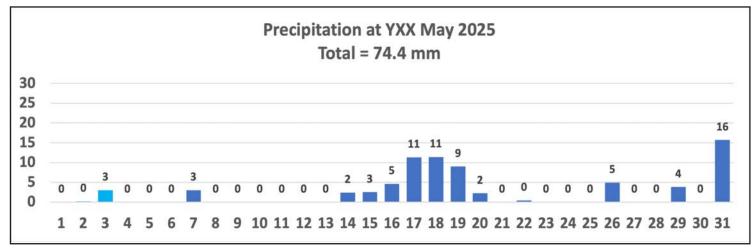
Plastic: dog waste bags & shreds, other items

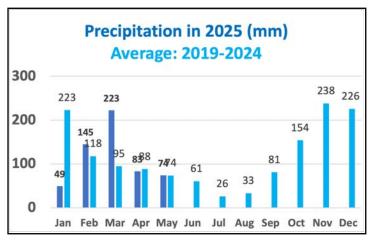
made of plastic.

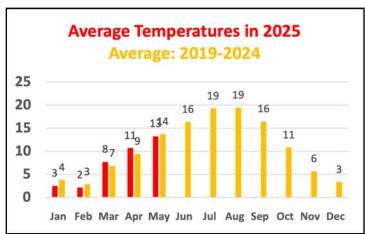
**Wrappers:** candy wrappers, foil, cellophane. Miscellaneous: clothing, glass, chewing gum,

dog balls & fragments, etc.









# For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

