



Invasive Spotlight

by [Grace Nombrado](#)

This spring, behind Kinross Creek Co-op, along the Red Alder Trail, I noticed a new weed sprouting. By May, it had formed a dense carpet along the east exit of Kinross Creek and was extending, in patches, down the trail. It grew as tall as a foot in height, had light green elongated leaves growing in a cluster, and little yellow flowers extending from the top.



I grew curious to know what kind of weed this was, as it seemed to be prolific.

In a bit of serendipity, our Free the Fern member, Sylvia, was walking up the trail after the end of our recent Free the Fern meeting and spotted the weed. She said that it looked like

Himalayan Balsam or “policeman’s helmet” which she has helped remove from several local parks. When it comes to seed, this plant will spring seeds down the trail.



When I got home, I did a bit more research, and discovered that this weed is actually a relative to the Himalayan balsam, and is, in fact, called [small balsam](#) or small touch-me-not. While the Himalayan balsam has purple flowers, the small balsam has yellow flowers. Originally from Asia, it has now become an introduced, invasive species to BC. As Sylvia surmised, it does have capsules of many seeds that will eject themselves at the slightest touch. Luckily, most of the small balsam plants had not yet gone to seed, and, with their shallow root system, they would be relatively easy to pull out by hand.

The next day, with the support of Free the Fern member, Damian, we set to work removing the small balsam plants. If we could successfully remove most of the plants before they went to seed, then we would reduce the number that would regrow the next year.

After approximately 6 hours of work, over 3 days, and the support of another Free the Fern member, Kiki, we managed to fill 5 green bins, and successfully clear most of the visible plants adjacent to Kinross Creek Co-op. Success!

before and after:



This was a good reminder to always keep your eyes out for new invasives moving into your stewardship area.

THIS MONTH'S
OTHER STORIES

Tree Removal Progress

by **Grace Nombrado**

The city has marked several trees for removal along the Champlain Heights Trail.



They have also posted signs at several points along the trail to inform the public about the removal effort planned for June-September.



“The City of Vancouver has hired a contractor (Davey Tree Expert Co.) to remove hazard trees at Champlain Heights Trails. These trees are dead or dying and pose a safety risk to the people and property. A bird nesting survey will be undertaken by a registered professional biologist (TerraFauna Wildlife Consulting) to ensure birds are not harmed or displaced.”

Davey Tree began their removal effort on June 29. Most trees appear to be cut and left as small snags. All wood has been chipped and the wood chips have been dispersed beneath the trees along the trail.



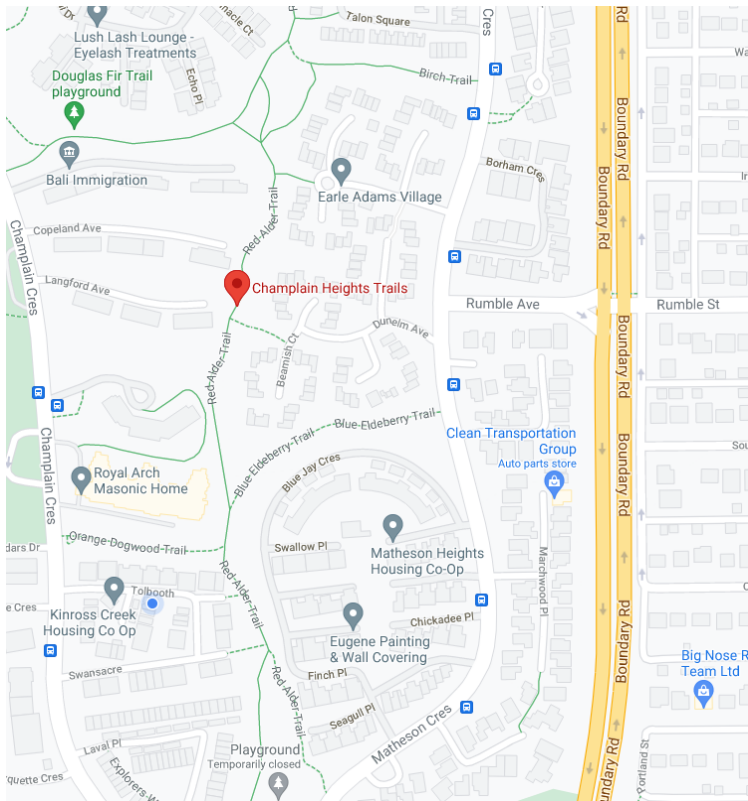
Google Maps Updated

by [Grace Nombrado](#)



Several years ago, the Vancouver Parks Board put up trail signs along the Champlain Heights Trail, but forgot to notify Google maps of the new trail names. For example, Red Alder trail, which runs north to south between Kinross Creek Co-op and Matheson Heights Co-op, appeared as "Fir Trail" on Google maps. In reality, Fir Trail is a small trail running east to west between The Royal Arch and Kinross Creek Co-op, ending at Champlain Crescent. Meanwhile, other trails appeared without any designated name at all. So, in April, I contacted the Parks Board to inform them that the Champlain Heights Trails were incorrectly labelled on Google maps.

Several months later, Google maps has [finally updated](#) the trail names to more accurately reflect the posted signage. Although I have noted at least one error that remains (Fir trail is incorrectly labelled as Orange Dogwood Trail), this update is a movement in a positive direction. Visitors to the trails will be better able to find their way and avoid getting lost. Also, participants and volunteers at Free the Fern events will be better able to locate us. In the future, we at Free the Fern would like to produce our own map of the trail, as a printed resource to the public, with correct trail names.



Invasive Ed 101

by Grace Nombrado



Thank you to the hard work of our volunteer members - Paul, Kiki, Martin, Paola, Susan, Anne, and Damian for your help with our Invasive Ed 101 Event on Saturday, June 12, 2021.

We had a successful morning with 10 participants learning about invasive removal techniques for Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, and common periwinkle. Through the effort of volunteers and participants, we successfully cleared 18 green bins of invasive weeds.



June Members Meeting

by [Grace Nombrado](#)



We had our first ever in-person Free the Fern members meeting on June 23 under the Douglas Fir trees. It was wonderful to have a discussion in person. Grace led a “Don’t You Fern Get About Me” game to get to know our members and Kiki engaged members in a post-it-note brainstorm session to generate ideas for a Free the Fern promo video. Everyone was engaged and excited to contribute their ideas.

Plant Propagation

by **Grace Nombrado**

Free the Fern member, Teresa, has offered to share her knowledge of plant propagation with any interested members. If you are interested, please contact us at freethefern@gmail.com and we will put you in contact with Teresa. Thank you Teresa for your knowledge sharing!

Indigenous Plant Walk

by **Grace Nombrado**



We have 12 registered so far for the **Indigenous Plant Walk** on **August 14, 2021** from **10-11:30am**. The walk will be led by Lori Snyder, Métis herbalist and educator, and take place at Champlain Heights Park.

Please continue to share this info, as we can accommodate up to 20 participants for this event. To register, email freethefern@gmail.com. Free the Fern member, Damian, will also be filming a video version for those who cannot attend in person.

Summer Break

by [Grace Nombrado](#)

After careful consideration, I have decided to **pause our monthly Free the Fern meetings over the summer**. Due to the hot weather, most of our major invasive removal efforts are on hold until the fall of 2021. In addition, many of our members will be busy with summer holidays and reconnecting with family and friends.

We will be resuming our Free the Fern meetings, on the 4th Wednesday of the month, starting on **Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 7-8pm**. If anyone would like to volunteer over the summer to do some light weeding or watering in Doug's Garden, please contact me and we can arrange a time for you to help.

Also this will be the **last Free the Fern newsletter of summer 2021**. We will resume our Free the Fern newsletter in **September 2021**.

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer holiday with family and friends!

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)



Free the Fern.

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