

A Summer to Remember

by Graham Brazier

As I write, on the last official day of summer, the weather forecast for our region includes “A Rainfall Warning” which will involve “Periods of rain. Risk of thunderstorms late this afternoon. Amount 15 to 25 mm. Windy. High 14. UV index 1 or low.” Whew! Well, at last I can put away my worry about the UV index. However, while heavy rainfall, strong winds and cool temperatures close out the season it may be hard for us to remember that it was heat and the absence of precipitation that defined our summer.

In fact, the total precipitation for July and August this year was a mere 6.6 mm — the smallest amount ever recorded for these two months in the 74 year history of record keeping at the Comox weather station. This is particularly startling when it is considered that the average precipitation for these two months is roughly ten times what we experienced this year or 61.3 mm. In other words, in the summer of 2018 we had 1/10th of the *average* rainfall for July and August. Furthermore, only two other years among the 74 were even close. In 1967 we weren't far off with 6.8 mm, while in 2003 we had 8.4 mm. At the other end of the scale; in 1991, a year some of us may remember, we experienced almost one hundred times more rain in July and August than we did this year. Those two months produced an astonishing 140.2 mm, and, if I remember correctly, serious tomato blight.

Absence of precipitation, however, was not the only distinguishing feature of the summer of 2018. There were eleven days in July and August when the temperature exceeded 30.0 degrees and, not surprisingly, average daily maximum temperatures were also exceptionally high. Between 1971 and 2017 the average daily maximum temperature recorded for both July and August at the Comox weather station was roughly 23.0 degrees. This contrasts sharply with the numbers for 2018, where the average daily maximum temperature in July exceeded the *average* by 3.8 degrees and in August by 2.4 degrees. All in all, it was a hot dry summer!

But there is another noteworthy element to this summer's weather. While it is common that the transition from spring to summer is subtle and marked

