



A Closer Look by Beth Hall

Common Dandelion

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unless otherwise noted.

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How many times have you sat in the green grass, laughing with friends or family, and mindlessly picked a bright yellow dandelion by its soft, supple stem? With a satisfying ‘pluck!’, off from the root it came. But, is this all a dandelion is—a little lawn nuisance, something for wandering bees to enjoy and humans to erase?

No! You’ll learn there is so much more to this beautiful little plant we call the dandelion. It has so much good to bring our earth, and to you.

The common dandelion (or ‘taraxacum officinale’ if you want to know the fancy botanical name, pronounced tuh-RACKS-uh-cum oh-fis-ih-NAH-lee) has many uses in both earth’s ecosystem, food and medicine. If you have dandelions growing in your backyard or a nearby area that you know hasn’t been sprayed with pesticides, pluck and wash them and enjoy the soft greens in a salad, sandwich, or smoothie. They’re bitterly delicious like arugula (better in early spring when young and soft—a true French delicacy). The closed buds can be pickled or used in soups and salads.



The ‘common’ dandelion has much to teach us if we will listen, One such, how delicious white bread is when you add 1/3 cup dandelion petals to the dough.

You can even make bread with dandelion petals! Here is a delicious recipe. <https://homespunseasonalliving.com/homemade-dandelion-bread/>. Can you believe people ignore and try to get rid of this superfood full of antioxidants?

If you’ve never ‘foraged’ before (that means finding safe-to-eat food out in

nature), be careful and always research what you’re picking. Also, clean your harvest thoroughly! <https://homespunseasonalliving.com/clean-foraged-plants/>

When spring arrives and you see dandelions, celebrate!

YouTube It!



Dandelions are basically earth's little warrior helpers that most humans don't value and are always killing. WHYYYY? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpEy-Mpm6AI>



This guy in the bowtie will give you the lowdown. You can believe him because he's wearing a bowtie and has lots of official-looking hats behind him. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyePMeGE3CI>



Dandelion seeds fly using an "impossible method"! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2UbaDV909Q&feature=emb_title



Time Lapse Flower to Seed by Neil Bromhall https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQ_QqtXoyQw



Work with It!

You didn't think you were just going to get to watch YouTube videos, did you?



Learn the parts of a dandelion to better identify them in nature. <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Parts-of-a-Dandelion-Poster->



What you'll need: At least 20 dandelions. A ruler and pencil. A working knowledge of what 'diameter' means. <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Dandelion-Diameter-2543007>

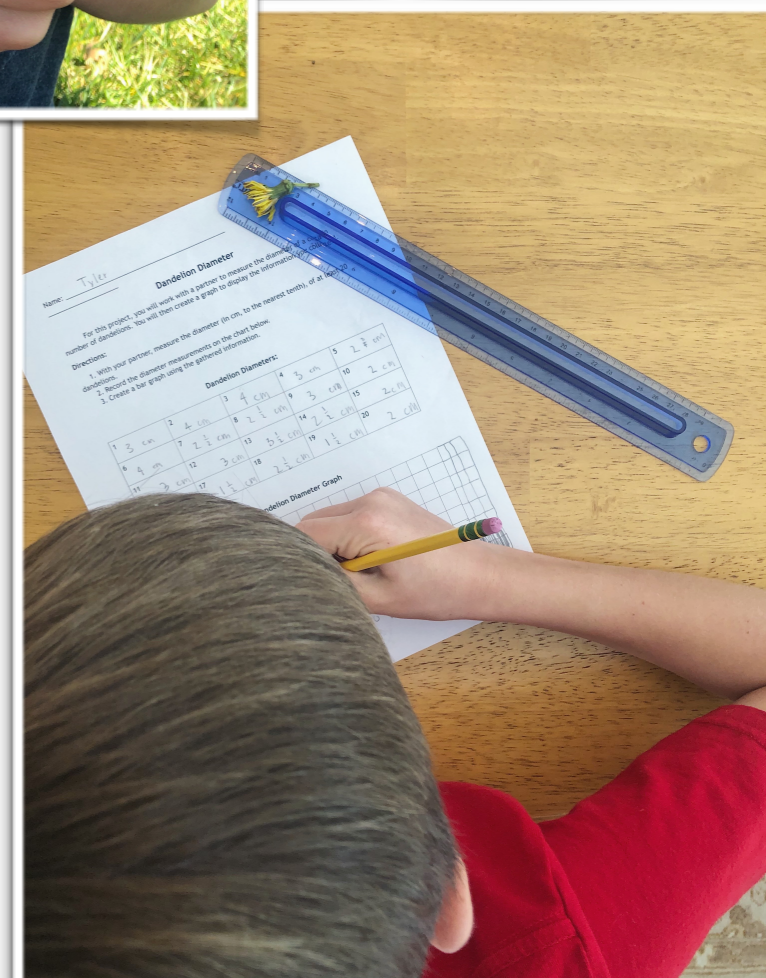


Writing or verbal story prompt **K-6** : If I were a dandelion seed, and were blown to a place of my choosing, what would it look/be like?

MS-HS: Through a permaculture lens, why are plants like dandelions valuable? What has changed in our culture to lessen their value and how can we think this through in a way that honors and protects our resources? What can I do differently?



How many doodles could a dandelion doodler doodle if a dandelion doodler could doodle dandelions?
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Draw-a-Dandelion-3795801>



Upper Middle and High School

Did you know weeds are indicators of what is happening in the soil? Before you rip out dandelions (and other plants), take a moment to read about/research why those plants have taken root and thrived in your soil. You might be surprised.

There are intelligent ways to work with and navigate around 'weeds'. This applies both to the land entrusted to you and to life. How do you manage 'obstacles'? Are

they truly obstacles, or just nature's signs of life? What is the best management approach? Chronically spray toxins to eradicate, or search for the more subtle and more holistic action to reach balance? Rushing to the quick solution is not always, and not usually, the best answer.

Why do we do the things we do?

Because we've always done them? How is that working? Is it? Does the earth around you tell you that our approaches are working?

*** Research: permaculture**





The Song of the Dandelion Fairy

by Cicely Mary Barker

Here's the Dandelion's rhyme:

See my leaves with tooth-like edges;

Blow my clocks to tell the time;

See me flaunting by the hedges,

In the meadow, in the lane,

Bright and naughty in the garden;

Pull me up – I grow again,

Asking neither leave nor pardon.

Sillies, what are you about

With your spades and hoes of iron?

You can never drive me out –

Me, the dauntless Dandelion!

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
● *To Do: Memorize this poem ●
● with your child. Or, read it ●
● together aloud over dandelion ●
● tea. ●
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Did You Know? *

*not that you were supposed to



False Dandelions! Right Out in the Open? Oh my!

Be very careful, or you might fall into the unfortunate position of having misidentified a dandelion. How embarrassing! (Just kidding, no one would judge you but botanists). In the picture above I took with my daughter (who prefers the look of cat's-ear), the differences in the yellow flowers are obvious. In the wild, it's not always so clear. Dandelion leaves are hairless and their lobes are more sharp-edged, like pointy teeth. Cat's-ear leaves are hairy and their petals have a more rectangle shape. Cat's-ear isn't safe for dogs!



Oracle: a Wise Person Giving Insightful Advice *

"The dandelion is called the rustic oracle; its flowers always open about 5am and shut at 8am, serving the shepherd for a clock."

—Source: Folkard (448. 309), from "The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought," by Alexander F. Chamberlain

*The above painting is 'Consulting the Oracle' by John William Waterhouse. Since it was painted in 1884, he probably won't mind it being used in this.



Dandelions as Barometer? Seriously?

"The dandelion is an excellent barometer, one of the commonest and most reliable. It is when the blooms have seeded and are in the fluffy, feathery condition that its weather prophet facilities come to the fore. In fine weather the ball extends to the full, but when rain approaches, it shuts like an umbrella. If the weather is inclined to be showery it keeps shut all the time, only opening when the danger from the wet is past."

—Source: "Camping For Boys," by H.W. Gibson, Photo by Seyedeh Kazimi