

Evidence in Support of Saving the Dandelion

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Abstract

Dandelions should be saved for three reasons: to destroy them is emotionally draining, to poison them threatens the food chain, and to co-exist with them brings beauty and nutrition into our lives.

*Note:

An abstract is a summary of the whole paper –not a teaser– and not more than a half page or so.

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The neighbors believed they had tolerated the new family's dandelions long enough. At a secret neighborhood meeting, property owners voted to behead the yellow flowers after the new family went to church and before the dandelions went to seed (J. Smith, personal communication, October 5, 2014). If the new family had been invited to the neighborhood meeting, they could have pointed out that every living thing has a contribution to make to the ecosystem. The much maligned dandelion should be saved.

Background: Beginning Information

The dandelion takes its name from the French “dent de leone,” which is a reference to its leaves looking like a *lion's teeth*. The Pilgrims, who considered both the tender dandelion leaves and the deep taproots a useful vegetable, brought the plant to America from Europe in the 1600s (Watson, 2010). The dandelion is a perennial herb with a flower that is actually a composite of many tiny flowers, each one capable of producing a seed, which with the help of its famous parachute carry the seed to fertile soil. Dandelion reproduction has been so successful that the species spread across America from the east coast to the west coast, and the flowers were labeled “weeds” (*Weeds*, n.d.). The dandelion, which was brought to America by the Pilgrims, has itself become a pilgrim of the plant world (Watson, 2010).

Proof: Evidence for the Dandelion

There are many good reasons to justify saving dandelions from extinction. This report will focus on three of the strongest reasons.

First Reason: They Are Natural

According to Cerf and Brown (2015), it is downright neurotic to think dandelions should

not be growing in a yard. They believe that neurotic people need to get away from the clean, green, uniform look of a lawn that is mowed to the quick with edges straight as an arrow.

Wiggins (2015) mocks people who have their yard resemble a perfect green carpet. He feels natural people should get back to what nature was always supposed to be-natural.

Second Reason: They Are Biological

Environmentalists are concerned over the effect of weed spray on the animal population. Today, animals' health is in serious jeopardy because of the overuse of chemicals. While people attempt to create weed-free lawns, they may end up inadvertently creating bird-free neighborhoods (Cerf & Brown, 2015).

Reported bird deaths from poisoning have risen 8% over the last two years. Birds eat worms that have absorbed the poisons of the weed killers that seep into the soil. According to Johnson (2009) people must realize that when they kill dandelions they also kill birds (cited in Wiggins, 2015).

Third Reason: They Are Tasty

Dandelion leaves are nutritious, a rich source of vitamins. All plants have Latin names; the Latin name for dandelions means "official remedy" in recognition of the ancients' belief that eating dandelion leaves could cure many ailments. They were eaten in America from the time of the Pilgrims up the 1950s when perfect suburban lawns became all important to homeowners. Today in France and Italy, two countries known for their food, dandelions are still considered good eating (see Appendix A) (Watson, 2010).

Refutation: The Other Point of View

Of course, there are those who are very much against dandelions. They maintain that if one person in a neighborhood has dandelions in his yard, then the dandelions will go to seed and

will invade others' yards. The answer to this criticism is simple. A homeowner can enjoy dandelions, but just as the flower begins to fade and before it reaches the "granddaddy" stage, one can pick off the flower head. That way no seeds can blow into a neighbor's yard (Wiggins, 2015; Clark, 2013).

Discussion: Worth Remembering

Research by Cerf and Brown (2015), Clark (2013), Watson (2010), and Wiggins (2015) all shows that dandelions should be saved. To worry about dandelions is a waste of energy, for they are a part of the ecosystem. Dandelions beautify the environment-poems have even been written about them (see Appendix B). After 400 years in America, dandelions are here to stay.

References

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Appendix A

Dandelion Pesto

Dayton, Maine: Herbalist Pol Hermes substitutes tender young dandelion leaves for basil to make pesto. Using her idea, we developed this recipe in our Yankee kitchen.

4 cups tender young *dandelion* leaves

1/2 cup walnut halves

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

2/3 cup olive oil salt to taste

1. Wash the *dandelion* leaves in warm water until thoroughly clean. Spin or pat them dry and put in a food processor.
2. Add the walnuts, cheese, and garlic. Pulse briefly. With the machine on, add the olive oil all at once in a thin stream, blending several seconds until smooth.
3. Season to taste with salt, and serve atop pasta or on whole-wheat bread. Yields 1 1/2 cups.

(Watson, 2010)

Appendix B

Oh, Dandelion

by Sylvia Perkins

Oh, Dandelion, oh yellow jewel beyond compare.

Thou art the sun and moon,

The stars in the sky.

Oh, Dandelion, your yellow blossoms

Light the day and make us all smile.

(Cerf & Brown, 2015, p. 28)