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English W-131

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Dandelions Should Be Saved

The neighbors in the 1200 block of Judson Avenue had tolerated my dandelions long enough. At a neighborhood meeting—which I had not been invited to but later learned of—the complaints filled the room. The neighbors voted to destroy the yellow flowers while I was at church and before the dandelions went to seed. If I had been invited to the neighborhood meeting, I would have spoken up in defense of the much maligned dandelion. Many educated people have come to the realization that dandelions must be saved.

Some background information would be helpful at this point. The dandelion is a weedy perennial herb that is native to Europe. 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 it a useful vegetable because its roots could be used as a coffee substitute brought the plant to America. Furthermore, its leaves were delicious in salads, and its flowers could be used to make dandelion wine (“Dandelion”).

The first reason dandelions should be saved is that they are a natural part of the environment. It's downright neurotic to think dandelions shouldn't be in our yard. According to Cerf and Brown, “People need to get away from the clean, uniform look of the perfect lawn that's mowed to an inch with edges straight as an arrow” (95).

A second reason to save dandelions is that environmentalists are concerned over the effect of weed spray on the animal population:

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. People must realize that when they kill dandelions they also kill birds. Therefore, the use of weed spray must be evaluated. It is dangerous too birds. This should give everyone something to think about. (Wiggins 124)

Third, dandelions make this world more beautiful. Their delicate yellow petals unite in one circular flower that outshines the sun in its brilliance. They are like small stars on the lawn. Poets have written dandelion verses (see Appendix). Has anyone written a verse about weed killers? (“Weeds”).

On the other hand, there are those individuals 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 solution to this 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 (Cerf and Brown 100).

In conclusion, research shows that dandelions should be saved for many significant reasons. Worrying about dandelions is a neurotic waste of energy. They are a natural part of the environment. By leaving dandelions alone, other life in the ecosystem is not put out of balance. Dandelions have been in the New World for over three hundred years and are here to stay. Learn to live with and love dandelions.

Works Cited

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Appendix

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.

(“Take” 58)