

# Tale from the Garden!

Common weed, nutritious food, powerful medicine ...

In springtime the dandelion's sunny flowering faces appear all at once. And they are EVERYWHERE — pioneers infiltrating cracks in pathways, grassy lawns, well-tended gardens, abandoned city lots, untended verges, mountain meadows. But they are an amazing gift & not just a weedy curse.

Every child knows these bright yellow perennials of the roadsides and grassy, waste places, with their wonderful heads of flowers borne, from March to October, on hollow stems full of sticky white sap. Consisting of strap-shaped florets which close over during cloudy weather and at night time, these flower heads (25-50mm across) progress to become 'Jenny Joes' or 'Dandelion Clocks' – spheres of miniature parachutes, each one attached to a little seed. The leaves are responsible for the flower's common name – Dents de lion (lion's teeth) – because of their toothed edges. These are native plants belonging to the family *Asteraceae* (the sunflower or composite family). What most of us think of as a single dandelion flower is actually hundreds of flowers growing together on a single base. The Dandelion flower is pollinated by over 90 insects.



These flowers have been around for thousands of years, and people have grown and used dandelions for much of that time. Every part of the dandelion has found a unique use. Their flowers, leaves, and roots have been used for food, medicine, and even dye.

Much more common than these practical uses, though, are the many folklore superstitions that have been attached to dandelions over the years. In addition to granting wishes, many people believe that dandelion seeds will carry your thoughts and dreams to loved ones when you blow them into the air.

Others believe that dandelions may be able to tell you if you're loved. Legend has it that, if you can blow all the seeds off a dandelion with a single breath, then the person you love will love you back. If seeds remain, then the object of your affection may have reservations about their feelings toward you.

One traditional legend about the Dandelion states that the tallest Dandelion found by a child in the early spring will show how tall he or she will grow that year. Another version of this superstition is that if you blow on a Dandelion's seed head, the number of seeds left will tell you how many children you will have.

Still others believe dandelions may help you tell the time or even the weather. For example, one superstition holds that the number of breaths it takes you to blow all the seeds off a dandelion equals the hour of the day. Dandelions have likewise been called a "shepherd's clock" by some, since their flowers open shortly after first light and close again at dusk. Of course, a clever shepherd could also keep an eye on the Sun for similar information! Amateur meteorologists might use dandelions as an informal barometer to predict the weather. When dandelions have seeded, they will extend into a full ball in good weather. If rain is on the way, however, they will fold like an umbrella and remain tightly closed.

How many of these superstitions hold any truth? You can be the judge. The one thing that is for sure, scientifically, is that blowing a dandelion's seeds into the air will have consequences. Where those seeds fall on fertile soil, there will likely be new dandelions in the future!

The Dandelion generally symbolizes happiness, joy and youthful thoughts, but can also symbolize health, power, perseverance, endurance and determination. It's also said to represent the sun's power, good wishes, hope and prosperity. More specifically, the yellow flowers resemble the sun, the white seeds resemble the moon and the dispersing seeds resemble the stars. In the text below we are going to talk about each of these meanings.

First of all, Dandelions stand for **happiness, joy and youthful thoughts**, and they are mostly attributed to positive things.

A garden full of golden dandelions in bloom can be a gorgeous sight. We might not always be happy to see this 'weed', but they usually bring a smile to our faces with their cheerful, bright yellow flowers. Eventually, all those beautiful flowers turn to white globes of exposed seeds that are often called "puffballs." Dandelions grow so successfully because those puffballs disperse their seeds over long distances in a stiff breeze. They have been known to travel on the wind as much as five miles! Some dandelions don't need to wait for the wind, though. As dandelions turn to seed, children everywhere rush to pick them, so that they can close their eyes, make a wish, and blow the seeds into the air. Hence, in many cultures they are seen as a symbol of youth and a harbinger of spring. They provide positive experiences for many children who are amazed at how they turn into whitish, fluffy crowns that are easily blown apart by the wind. The flying seeds are awesome and make you feel free and happy!

Dandelions can also symbolize **health and power**.

For such a small flower, the Dandelion is one of the oldest documented medicinal herbs. It was intentionally imported to the Americas on the Mayflower ship (around 1620) as a food crop and panacea (a cure all). It was quickly incorporated into American Indian medicine. Today, Dandelions are used in many traditional and modern herbal medical systems and are also used as a food source in much of the world. They have been used for detoxification, inflammation reduction, as a natural diuretic and antioxidant. The plant contains abundant amounts of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients such as Vitamin A, C, K, calcium, potassium, iron, manganese, proteins, carbohydrates and beta carotene. The Dandelion is higher in Vitamin A than any other garden plant! It is effective in treating a wide variety of ailments and diseases so you can feel your best and regain your health.

Dandelion represents **perseverance, endurance and determination**.

It is a symbol of overcoming all the difficult challenges that life throws our way. Dandelions are very good at adapting to their environments & will thrive just about anywhere. They are often resistant to many herbicides and grow anywhere where there is a pinch of soil. What isn't as well known is that they actually improve the soil quality. The roots draw minerals up from the deep layers of earth – concentrating them in the whole plant. When the plant dies back it deposits these minerals into the soil. Roots also aerate hard packed soil and create pathways for water to enter. Be mindful that when you dig dandelion even the smallest piece of root left in the ground will grow into a new plant.

Furthermore, it represents the **sun's power**.

Dandelions represent the power of the rising sun and the ability to rise above life's challenges. Their petals remind us of the rays of the sun as a source of life and warmth. The bright yellow flowers shine like the sun and warm our heart. Dandelions are sometimes associated with Belenus, the Celtic god of the sun. It is also believed that Apollo, the Greek god of the sun and medicine, had the Dandelion as one of his medicinal healing plants.

Finally, the Dandelion symbolizes **good wishes, hope and prosperity**.

For most of us, Dandelions are flowers that remind us of our childhood and bring back memories of making wishes while blowing the seeds away in the wind. In areas in which the plant is actively growing it can often be seen that people, usually children, blow the dried seeds of the flower, sending them into the air like tiny helicopters. They do this to attract good fortune because it's believed that blowing the seeds away brings good luck or grants a wish.

**John 15 v7:** "If **you** remain in me and my words remain in **you**, ask whatever **you wish**, and it will be done for **you**." Jesus gave us two qualifiers for asking whatever we wish and receiving it. First, He said, "**If you remain in me**." So our first instruction is to remain in Christ. Walk with the Lord. Abide in Him. Let His thoughts be our thoughts. Let His actions be our actions. Let Him lead and we follow. If this is occurring in our lives, our requests will be radically different. We will not be asking for self-serving things. We will be asking for God-honouring things. The second qualifier that Jesus gave us in order to receive whatever we ask for is if "**my words remain in you**." So, not only must we remain in Jesus, His words must also remain in us. That means that our requests and wishes will line up with what the Bible says. Words like: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9 v23 NIV). If we are asking in light of Jesus' words of denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Him, our wish list will be dramatically different. It will not be "What can I gain?", but "What can I lose so that others can gain for the advancement of God's Kingdom?"

We will get whatever we ask for, when we remain in Jesus and His words remain in us, because we will be asking in perfect harmony with God's will. And God's will is what will be done. We ask what God wants to do, and He does it.