

DANDELION

Botanical Name

Genus: *Taraxacum officinale*

Family: Asteraceae

Plant Facts

Zone	3 and up.
Dimensions	Height 0.5 – 12 inches. Width 2 – 12 inches.
Sun Requirements	Partial to full sun.
Soil/Water Needs	Not fussy but rich soil improves its growth.
Propagation	By seed and root cuttings.

Wildlife Friendly

Bees – rich, early source of nectar. Foliage feeds rabbits, deer, chipmunks, and many caterpillars. Seeds are consumed by many birds.

Origins

Grasslands and cultivated ground in Northern Hemisphere.

Other Factoids

Not to be confused with false dandelions, which have many flowering stalks and hairy leaves.

Considered a noxious weed in Alaska.

Each plant can produce up to 20,000 seeds.

Windborne seeds can travel up to 62 miles.

Language of Flowers

Resilience and strength due to ability to thrive in challenging conditions (e.g. pushing through concrete and returning year after year). This resilience has made them a symbol of strength, determination, and ability to overcome adversity. They also represent true, strong love; creativity; faithfulness; grief; bitterness; and profound longing.



Historical References

The name ‘dandelion’ means lion tooth, referencing its jagged leaves. Other names include blowball, cankerwort, doon-head-clock, puff ball, witch gowan, milk witch, irish daisy, pee-a-bed, and piss-a-bed.

Medicinal/Culinary Uses

More nutritious than broccoli or spinach, leaves were eaten when lettuce or endive was scarce.

Roots have a turnip-like flavor.

Blossoms are used to make wine, and are an ingredient in root beer.

Be careful – too many roots can be a laxative and a diuretic (hence the name ‘piss-a-bed’).

Other uses: Design of the seedhead is being used for development puposes in the flight industry. The dandelion’s latex-producing properties are the subject of developing technology in the auto industry.