



volume 1, issue 30

Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to issue 30 of Minis at Home newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

This week's theme = Dandelions and Other Weeds

Weeds are an important part of our environment. As we mentioned last week, all living things have a purpose and a job to do, and this includes weeds. Dandelions are one of the most recognizable weeds we see.



Dandelions flower in the early spring. They grow low to the ground and have beautiful yellow **blossoms** and jagged green leaves. The dandelion got its name because the leaves' jagged edges look like lion's teeth. In French, the dandelion's name is "dent de lion" which means lion's tooth! Dandelion roots grow deep in the soil and can be as long as 15 feet! This is why dandelions are so strong and resilient, returning every year—their roots are protected from the freezing winter underground.

Dandelions are related to flowers such as daisies and sunflowers. Like sunflowers, they open during the day and close at night. Have you ever picked a dandelion puff and blown on it to make a wish and to see the white fluff fly? When dandelion plants finish flowering, they turn into seed balls. These are the white puff balls that you see in parks, gardens and at the side of the road. The tiny seeds are attached to feathery-like stems, shaped almost like parachutes that can be easily blown by the wind (or by your breath).

With just a puff, the seeds get carried in the air, drifting down to plant themselves so that new dandelions can grow.



Some people see dandelions as very special because they are the only plant that has three phases in its **lifecycle**; the phases represent all three **celestial bodies**—the sun, the moon and the stars. Can you guess which part of the dandelion represents which celestial body?

Many weeds, such as dandelions, bloom early in the springtime before other flowers and plants have bloomed. When bees, moths and butterflies come out in the spring, they need food right away. Dandelions provide these insects with the nectar they must have in order to survive. If there were no dandelions, insects would die, and we need insects in our world to keep nature in balance.



Dandelions are good for your garden. When dandelions die, the decaying plant provides nutrients to the soil that garden vegetables need to grow.

Did you know that scientists have figured out how to make a kind of rubber from the white milky liquid that comes out of dandelion stems? Yellow dandelion flowers can also be used to make yellow dye.



People have used dandelions as food and medicine for thousands of years. You can eat dandelion salads or make dandelion tea from the leaves and roots. The entire dandelion plant is **edible**—that means you can eat it! Dandelions are also good for your health. Once upon a time, people even dug up the grass in their yards to make room for dandelions to grow. Now, many people just want green lawns and consider dandelions a pesky weed.

There are many types of weeds in addition to dandelions. "Weed" is simply a name for any wild plants that grow where people do not want them to grow. All weeds spread very easily by the wind or other pollinators, so they can pop up almost anywhere. Some weeds can be harmful to crops or gardens. Some may cause allergies, so people think that weeds are a big nuisance. Unfortunately, many people spray chemicals on their lawns and in their gardens to kill weeds. These chemicals, however, are bad for the environment and for our health! If you don't want weeds in your garden or lawn, just spend a few hours "weeding" or pulling them out of the ground from the root rather than using chemicals. Weeding can be a relaxing chore!

The writer and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A weed is just a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." That's a great way to think about weeds!

Activity: Budding Naturalist

Go on a weed hunt in your yard or the park and see if you can find these common weeds, which are all important for our environment:

Purple Dead Nettle



Broadleaf Plantain



Chickweed

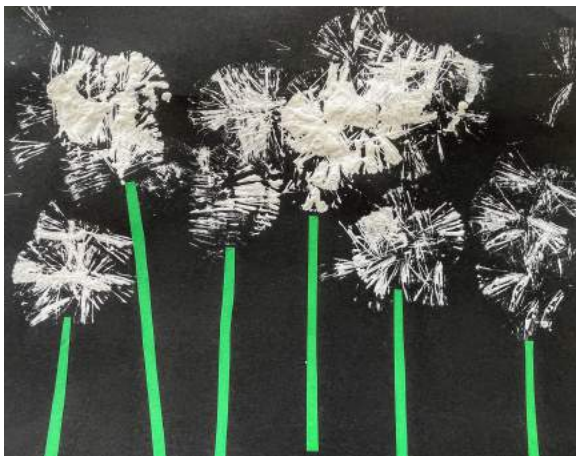


White and Red Clover



Activity: Craft

Dandelion Process Art



Materials:

Yellow and white paint

Paper plate “palettes” for paint

Green, white and black construction paper or card stock

A round kitchen brush

A kitchen fork

Glue stick

Procedure:

Pour white paint onto one paper plate

Dip kitchen brush into white paint and on the black or dark paper, dab (don't "scrub") the brush head onto the paper, making dandelion pom-poms all over it.

Pour yellow paint onto a new paper plate. Dip the fork prongs into yellow paint . Holding the fork head flat to the surface of the paper, press the paint to make dandelion head shapes all over the paper

While the paint is drying, cut out green stems and leaves for the dandelions. Remember to make the leaves jagged. This is great for scissor practice.

When dry, glue stems and leaves onto the dandelions

Activity: Move and Sing**Dandelion Rhymes and Songs:**

Take a breath and then you blow
You be the wind that makes the seeds go
Tiny boats on a sea of air
Sailing off to who-knows-where
These seed explorers find new land
To put down roots and firmly stand
Beneath their own small suns that shine
A bold fresh start for a dandelion.

(from teacherexpress.com)



Dandelion fluff floats on a breeze
Tickles my nose and makes me sneeze
Some see a wish, some see a weed
Some see a medicine for those in need!

(from theclassroomcreative.com)

The Dandelion Song

(adapted from the original song by Linda Allen, Kristin and Jennifer Allen-Zito)
(sung to "I'm a Little Tea Pot")

Flowers come in green and pink and red
They sleep all day in their flowerbeds
But little dandelions grow wild and free
With uncles and cousins and their whole family



(Chorus)

Dandy, dandy, dandy, dandelion
There is truly something dandy 'bout you.
Dandy, dandy, dandy, dandelion
I wish that there were more of you!

First, I make a wish then I blow really hard
And the dandelions blow all over my yard
I wait and I hope for my wish to come true
I guess there's only so much a dandelion can do



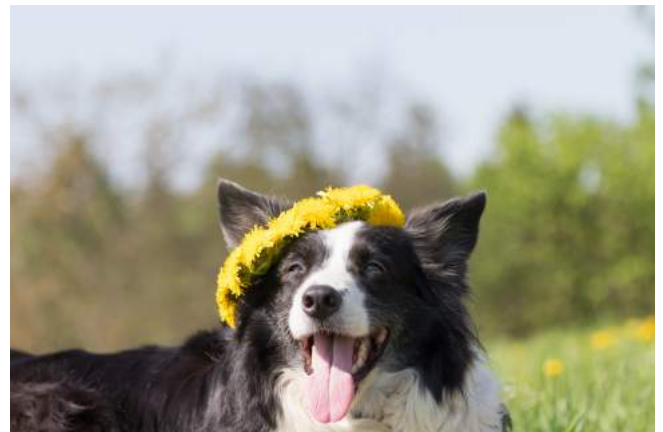
(Chorus)

Some people think that dandelions are a pest
But I think that dandelions are the best
Dandelions, don't you know, are really cool
And dandelion haters should go back to school!



(Chorus)

You can make them into necklaces and bracelets too
Or decorate the laces of your shoe
Make a dandelion salad or dandelion tea
That is why dandelions are for me!



Literacy: **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together

The Dandelion Seed by Joseph P. Anthony

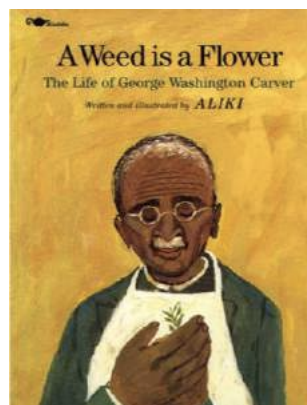
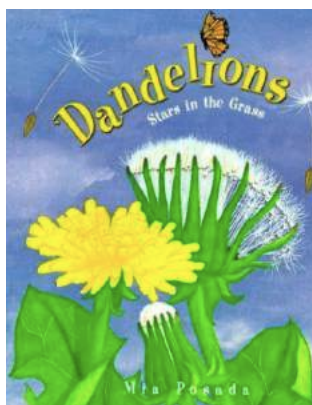
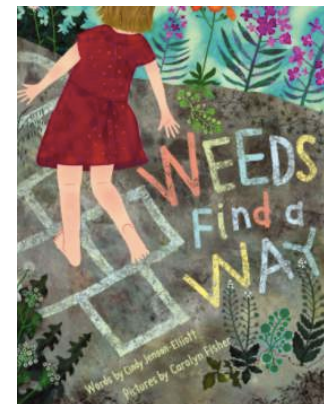
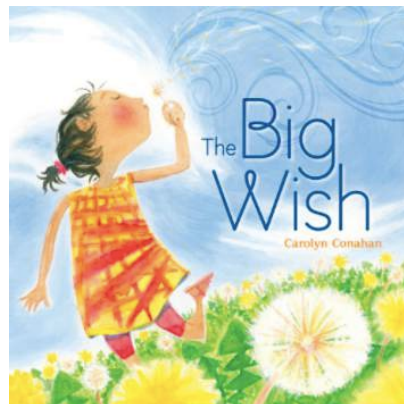
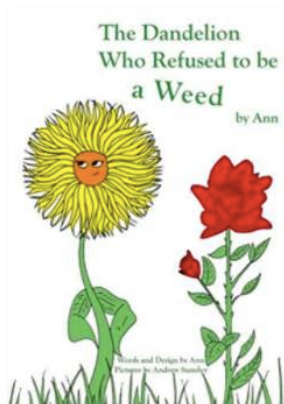
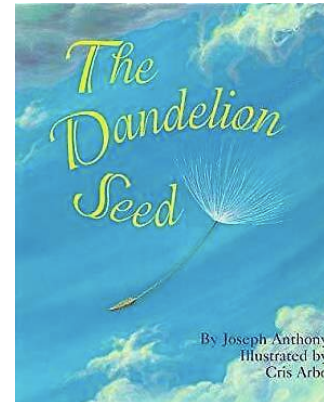
The Dandelion Who Refused to be a Weed by Ann

The Big Wish by Carolyn Conahan

Weeds Find a Way by Cindy Jensen-Elliott

Dandelions: Stars in the Grass by Mia Posada

A Weed Is a Flower by Alike



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See you next week with issue 31 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

or email pictures to Ann Hansen
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