

Yellow flowers struggle for breath as tiny fingers pluck them from the earth and then squeeze the stems clasping the gift during a hot summer day. "Mommy," I picked these for you," says the four-year old as she runs from the yard into the house, the screen door banging shut.

Six dandelions gasp for cool clear water as mommy reaches for the pint canning jar, fills it with tap water and lovingly plunks down the fragrant gift. The flowers gulp in the refreshment.

Summer is finally arrived when bunches of dandelions adorn kitchen tables. The yellow weed doesn't last long, a few hours at most, however the gesture of love lasts a lifetime. This wild plant with a yellow flower and sweaty scent is a weed to most household owners. It grows where no one wants to see it, on nicely trimmed green lawns. The dandelion can also be harvested from gullies, ditches, and dried up fields where spur of the moment baseball games are played. They must thrive on dust storms. Growth is abundant when the rainfall is immeasurable for weeks at a time. However, they are always a mainstay during July Fourth celebrations. These yellow lovelies thrust their way through cracks in sidewalks and wave as parades pass them by and size 10 shoes miss crunching them by inches.

They have the distinction of telling whether or not someone likes the taste of butter. Place one cute little dandelion under the chin of a friend. Then look underneath the chin to see if a yellow color shows itself. If yellow is there it's a sure sign of a butter loving child who will definitely grow up to be a butter loving adult. (True with me.)

When the yellow turns grey during late summer days children help spread the dandelion offspring by blowing them over river and dell where they eagerly plant themselves. As each puff of air sends the "fairies" helter and yon, three wishes free float along their way. Three wishes may come true for the one owning the wind tunnel. "I wish for more summer days, I wish for a spaghetti dinner tonight, I wish to stay up tonight until dark." Just three wishes. Another grey lady would have to be found for the wishes yet to form.

Dandelions are free. Couple them with the other free flower, Queen Ann's, a beautiful bouquet blossoms. Canning jars were made for these bouquet gifts. They make the best vases. The next best thing to using them as a vase is catching grasshoppers in them. (No wonder sterilization is necessary to turn cucumbers into pickles.)

Dandelions have a life of their own. They are like a marching band in parades, Pressing Onward!

"Ha! Ha!" The lawnmower passed over me again. I'm going to reach the periwinkle blue sky high above me. I'm going to thrive with the warmth of the butter yellow sunshine. I'm going to grow full length surpassing my sister who last year grew nine inches before turning grey haired and passing on to greener pastures.

Yep! This is the right time of year to soar, to grow, to perplex the owners of that lawn mower. The monster machine won't be around for another week, time enough for me to become a true flower of distinction, to roar with a surge of life, to become a true Dandelion, to float onward, my one wish."

Lana Russ

