

Outdoor Activities for Children



When you see the first dandelion flower, it means that the soil is warming up and spring is here. Have you ever noticed that the flowers do not remain open? Here is an experiment you can do to find out why.

You will need:

- A lawn or field with dandelions blooming.

What to do:

- Pick a dandelion plant and observe the flowers several times a day for several days.
 - Try checking them first thing in the morning, around mid-day, late afternoon and at dusk.
 - Notice whether the day is sunny or cloudy. Does this make a difference?
- Do you think sunlight makes a difference? Here is one way to find out.
 - On a sunny morning when the flowers are open, cover the plant with a large can or bucket.
 - Check back regularly to see what has happened. How long did it take?
 - Now uncover the plant and see what happens. How long did it take?



Did you know that dandelions are not native to America?

They were brought over by Europeans to plant in their gardens.

Since dandelions are one of the first plants to begin growing in the spring, the young leaves provided the first salad greens of the season. People also made wine from the flowers and a coffee-like drink from the roots.

Photo of dandelion plant courtesy of Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, , Bugwood.org

Close-up photo of dandelion plant courtesy of Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org