



Garden Lesson 6: What About Weeds?



SCIENCE

Observe, Question, Identify



LANGUAGE ARTS

Comprehend, Read, Write



VISUAL ARTS

Draw, Colour



FOOD & NUTRITION

Prepare Healthy Food, Plan a Meal



6.1 INTRODUCTION

Other than pests, weeds can be a gardener's worst enemy. They compete with garden plants for water, sun and nutrients in the soil. Sometimes, removing weeds from the garden can seem impossible!

Lesson 6 will identify some of the most common Nova Scotia garden weeds and how to get rid of them safely. We will also go over one of the benefits of weeds: many are edible and can make a tasty addition to a salad.

Common Garden Weeds



Oxalis / Wood Sorrel



Broadleaf Plantain



Dandelion



Oxeye Daisy



Purslane



Bull Thistle



Red Clover



Coltsfoot



TIPS AND TOOLS

Many weeds are "wrong place, wrong time" plants; they are sometimes unwanted due to the negative effects they have on other plants in a garden, even though they may look nice or have other uses.

Weeds like clover, dandelions and daisies are a main food source for pollinators, so consider letting them be if they're not interfering with the garden.

6.2 DANDELION SALAD IN A JAR

Did you know that dandelions are completely edible, from the roots to the flowers? Instead of throwing dandelions away when they're plucked out of the garden, try making them into the perfect packed lunch with this recipe for dandelion salad in a jar.

1. Wash, dry and chop all produce and dandelion greens before assembling salad.
2. Add 1 Tbsp of your favourite healthy salad dressing to the bottom of the jar.
3. Add the fruits or veggies that are high in moisture.
4. Add the veggies that are lower in moisture.
5. Add a source of protein, such as chicken, salmon, tuna, chickpeas, quinoa, seeds or nuts.
6. Add dandelion greens on top.

Optional: Add other salad greens for variety, such as lettuce, spinach or arugula.

7. Store in the fridge for up to 2 days. When ready to eat, shake the jar until all ingredients are mixed together and enjoy!



6.2 MATERIALS:

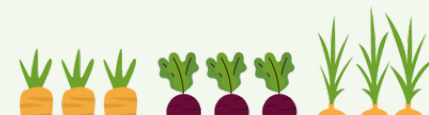
- Mason jar (or a clean recycled glass jar)
- Salad dressing of choice
- Fruits and/or veggies*
- Protein of choice
- Dandelion greens

OPTIONAL:

- Other salad greens

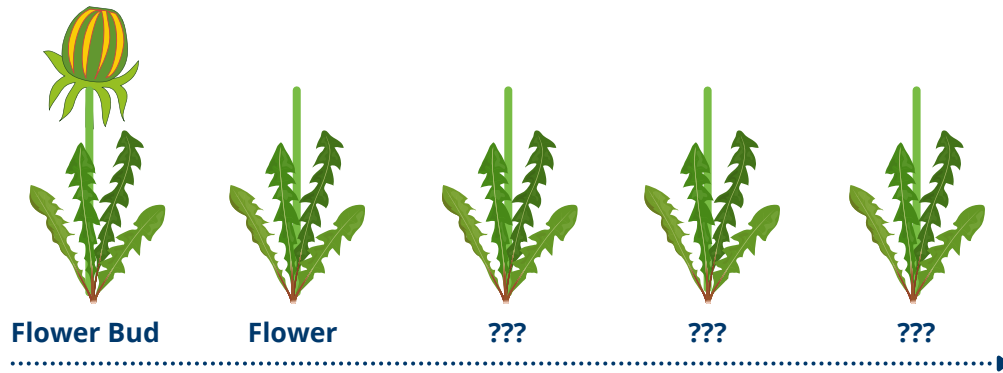
* **High moisture:** Tomatoes, cucumbers, oranges, clementines, apples, pineapple or berries.

Low moisture: Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, onions, avocado, cabbage or snap peas.



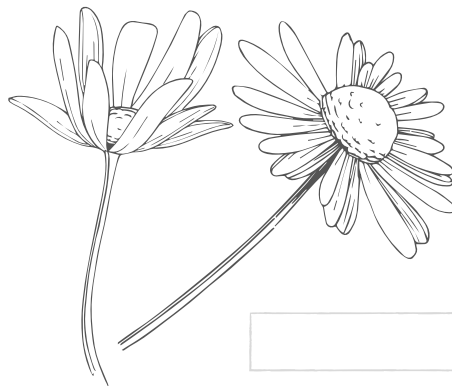
6.3 DANDELION LIFE CYCLE

1. Seek out a young dandelion from the garden, backyard or an outdoor community space. Young dandelions will often have a few thin, toothed leaves but no bud or flower yet.
2. Using a trowel or small cultivator, dig up the entire dandelion. Make sure you dig deep enough to remove the entire taproot, which is the large central root.
3. Fill three-quarters of a small pot or recycled container with soil. Place the young dandelion on top and add enough soil to cover the roots. Gently pat down the soil.
4. Place on a sunny windowsill and water regularly. Watch your dandelion grow!
5. On the diagram below, draw different stages of growth starting from a flower bud. Can you determine what the other stages are?



6.4 COLOURING ACTIVITY

Colour the following pictures of common garden weeds and write the name of each one in the box provided. *Hint: Refer to the images on the previous page for help identifying the weeds.*



6.3 MATERIALS:

- Garden tool (i.e. trowel or cultivator)
- Small plant pot or recycled container
- Soil or potting mix
- Coloured pencils, pens or markers

✓ TIPS AND TOOLS

Controlling weeds can be a struggle for gardeners, so here are some hands-on ways to deal with weeds in the garden.

Remove weeds by hand: Use hands or a garden tool (such as a trowel or claw-weeder) to remove weeds. Ensure that the whole weed is removed, including all the roots.

Remove flowers and seeds: Cut off the flowers as soon as they appear or remove seeds before they can spread.

Use mulch: Mulch is a layer of grass clippings, tree bark, moss or another cover that improves soil health, retains moisture and helps to prevent weeds. Water the garden beforehand and ensure that all weeds are removed. Spread newspaper over the soil and cover with a thick layer of mulch.

Cover and starve: For stubborn weeds, cover the area with cardboard or a tarp to starve the weed roots. This can sometimes take over a year to be effective, but can be used as a last resort.

✓ TIPS AND TOOLS

Dandelions aren't the only type of edible weed. However, weeds should always be washed thoroughly beforehand and eaten in moderation. Do not consume weeds that have been exposed to pesticides.

Other edible weeds include Red Clover (sprouts and flower heads), Broadleaf Plantain (especially young leaves), and Oxalis (flowers and leaves).

