

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP. 166 "Dandy Dandelions"

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *Are weeds, like dandelions, good for anything?*

Logline: *Elinor learns that every plant has a purpose in nature, even the ones we call 'weeds'.*

LS3. Understand that all animals need food to live and grow, that they get their food from plants or from other animals, and that plants need water and light to live and grow:

a.) Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow

c.) Help care for living things at home or in the classroom (Elinor learns that a garden needs to be 'weeded' to thrive)

LS5: Begin to understand that animals and plants depend on other living things and nonliving things in the environment to meet some of their needs:

d.) Identify and observe the consequences of how plants and animals impact the environment. (e.g. Dandelions provide food for bees, and building material for nests.)

SEP7: Engaging in argument from evidence a.) Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations.

b.) Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence

SEP8: Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information

a.) Obtain information through discussing prior knowledge and observations with experts including teachers or knowledgeable adults

Line Count: 118

Mains: Elinor, Elinor's Dad, Joe Mouse, Ms. Llama

Secondary: Olive, Ari

Locations: Path, Joe's Yard, Park

Props: GARDEN GLOVES, BASKET, WEEDING TOOL, BUCKETS, COMPOSTER, SALAD BOWLS, SALAD DRESSING BOTTLES, OUTDOOR TABLES

OUTLINE: Jan 23, 2020

FIRST DRAFT: Feb. 14, 2020
SECOND DRAFT: Feb. 24, 2020

ELINOR and her DAD walk down a forest path. Dad carries GARDEN GLOVES. Elinor skips on ahead to blow on a dandelion that has gone to seed - the fluff swirls away. <SFX: PUFF, GIGGLE>

1 ELINOR 1
I love dandelions.

3 ELINOR (AMUSED) 3
What's the rush? It's a *garden*.

5 ELINOR (CONCERNED) 5
Overgrown? Are plants growing all
over his house?

6 DAD 6
(laugh) I sure hope not.

7 ELINOR 7
Hi, Mz. Llama.

9 DAD 9

It sure is. I've already made my famous 'carrot top' salad to bring.

10	MZ. LLAMA	10
	Sounds yummy!	
	(re. her basket)	
	(MORE)	

MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D)

I'm just off to Farmer Bear's to get some spinach, for my own special salad. Well, ta for now!

She waves - Elinor and her Dad wave back.

11 ELINOR 11
See you later!

Elinor and her Dad carry on down the path to...

2. EXT. JOE MOUSE'S HOUSE (YARD WITH GARDEN)

Elinor and her Dad arrive at Joe's not-at-all overgrown house, and follow the sound of grumbling to his garden.

12 JOE MOUSE (PART OS) 12
Oh, my poor vegetables. This garden
is a complete and total mess!

13	DAD	13
	Hi, Joe. Your gardening crew has arrived.	

Elinor's Dad 'salutes' with the garden gloves.

14 ELINOR 14
And we're ready to help.

15 JOE MOUSE 15
I'm so glad you're here. These
weeds are invading my garden! Just
LOOK at them!

Elinor looks.

POV - his garden beds are full of DANDELIONS. Some are bright yellow, some white and fluffy with seed. A few TOMATO and BEAN PLANTS peek out here and there.

16 ELINOR (CONFUSED) 16
Weeds? I only see fluffy
dandelions. And those yellow
flowers.

DAD

Actually, they're both dandelions.

He crouches by the garden bed, taking a yellow dandelion in hand. Elinor joins him.

18 DAD (CONT'D) 18
First they grow yellow flowers like
these... then the flowers turn into
bunches of fluffy white seeds.

He shows her a white seed head. Elinor nods.

19 ELINOR 19
Oh! So one's younger and one's
older, but they're the same plant.

Joe comes over to offer his two cents.

20 JOE MOUSE 20
The same weed, you mean.

21 ELINOR 21
A weed? What a weed?

22 JOE MOUSE 22
A 'weed' is any plant that's
growing in the wrong place. And
this is my veggie garden, not a - a
dandelion farm.
(He parts the dandelions,
to reveal a struggling
tomato plant. then,
tenderly...)
My poor vegetables can't grow
properly, with dandelions hogging
all the space, water and sunshine.

23 ELINOR 23
Oh. How can we help your veggies?

Joe picks up an empty bucket and hands it to her.

24 JOE MOUSE 24
By pulling up all these dandelions,
that's how! I can't wait to get
started...

Joe picks up a bucket for himself, and exits, muttering.

25 JOE MOUSE (CONT'D) 25
Silly weeds. I'll show 'em who's
boss...

Elinor looks from the bucket to her Dad, confused.

26 ELINOR 26
Pull up the dandelions? But, Mom
always says we shouldn't pick
flowers.

27 DAD 27
Well, that rule is for flowers
growing in the wild. It's okay to
pick things in a garden, IF you
have permission.

CUT TO Joe, whose hands are now wrapped around the biggest
dandelion in his garden. He's struggling to pull it up.

28 JOE MOUSE 28
And you do. (erf) You *really* do.

BACK ON Dad and Elinor.

29 DAD 29
It's called weeding. In a garden,
it's good to 'weed' out the plants
you *don't* need, so that the plants
you *want*, can grow better.

30 ELINOR 30
(nodding)
Oh. So a weed is a 'thing' and also
something we can do?

31 DAD 31
Right. Now, here's how you 'weed'.
First, loosen the soil a bit...

Dad loosens the soil with a weeding tool.

32 DAD (CONT'D) 32
...then get a good grip around the
bottom, and *pull*. (Uff!)

He grips the base and pulls up the plant, root and all.

33 ELINOR (IMPRESSED) 33
Whoa, you got the whole plant,
roots and all.

34 DAD 34
That's how we do it.

He puts the plant in his bucket.

35 ELINOR 35
Now we just have to do it a *hundred*
more times.

Dad laughs, and hands her a kid-sized pair of GARDEN GLOVES.

36 DAD 36
(laugh) Here, I brought you some
gloves. You'll need 'em.

As she pulls them on and they get busy 'weeding', we

DISSOLVE TO:

3. EXT. JOE MOUSE'S GARDEN / YARD (MINUTES LATER)

Elinor sings a ditty to herself as she weeds a garden bed.

37 ELINOR (SINGS) 37
*Gardening, is my new thing, it
makes me want to siiiing!*

Dad is working nearby. He grins.

Elinor pulls up an especially big dandelion, revealing a
struggling bean plant underneath.

38 ELINOR (CONT'D) 38
Hi, green bean. Look, now you have
more room to grow!

She smooths the soil down, then adds the dandelion to a pile
in her weeding bucket. Then, something occurs to her.

39 ELINOR (CONT'D) 39
Ranger Joe? What should we do with
the dandelions we pull up?

Ranger Joe beckons her over.

40 JOE MOUSE 40
I'll show you.

Elinor gets up, grabs her bucket, and follows Joe over to a
COMPOSTER. He opens a little door on the unit.

41 JOE MOUSE (CONT'D) 41
They go into my composter. We just
open it up... dump in the weeds...
(he does so)
...and shovel dirt on top.

Joe pitches a shovelful of dirt on top of the dandelions.
Elinor reacts with surprise and a bit of dismay.

42 ELINOR 42
Wha- why?

43 JOE MOUSE 43
Because it helps them to rot, and
turn into compost. That's plant
food, to help my vegetables grow!

44 ELINOR 44
Oh. Okay.

Elinor goes back to her garden bed, with her empty bucket.

45 ELINOR (CONT'D) 45
Hmm.

She kneels back down, looking thoughtful. Dad notices.

46 DAD 46
Everything okay, Elinor?

47 ELINOR 47
I guess. But it doesn't seem right
to throw out healthy plants. Are
*dandelions really not good for
anything but compost?*

48 DAD 48
I've never known a plant to be 'not
good for anything... '

Just then, a BUMBLEBEE flies between them, visiting a
dandelion in the bed. Elinor brightens. (Dad and Elinor both
stay quite calm and still, and just observe it.)

49 ELINOR 49
Look - bumblebee.

50 DAD 50
Mm, that's a big one.

TRACK WITH the bee, as it bee flies off to another dandelion.
(This one's in the lawn.) Then another.

Curious, Elinor gets up to follow from a safe distance.

51 ELINOR 51
It's going from dandelion to
dandelion.

Elinor passes Joe, who's still comically tugging at the same
big dandelion that just doesn't want to come up. <SFX: RRRRR>

52 ELINOR (CONT'D) 52
I wonder why it's doing that?

Joe pauses to wipe his forehead.

53 JOE MOUSE 53
The bee? It's drinking nectar and
getting pollen from the flowers.

Joe reaches for a pair of BINOCULARS, on a GARDEN BENCH. He
hands them to Elinor so she can safely get a closer look.

54 JOE MOUSE (CONT'D) 54
Here, you'll get a better look,
without getting too close.

55 ELINOR 55
Thanks!

BINOCULAR MATTE - as the bee comes into FOCUS, on the
dandelion. It's fuzz is covered in fluffy yellow pollen.

56 ELINOR (OS) (CONT'D) 56
What's all that powdery stuff on
the bee?

57 JOE MOUSE 57
It's pollen, from the flowers. It
takes that back to the nest, for
the young bees to eat.

BACK TO WIDE - as the bee flies away.

58 ELINOR 58
So, bees get food from dandelions?

59 JOE MOUSE 59
Yep. Especially in the Spring, when
no other flowers are blooming yet.

Just then - <WHIR!> - a HUMMINGBIRD zips by.

60 ELINOR (DELIGHTED) 60
(gasp) Hummingbird.

She heads out of frame to follow it, leaving Joe to push up
his sleeves and resume his battle with his big dandelion.

ANGLE ON a dandelion which has gone to seed, as the
hummingbird hovers over to it.

Elinor moves closer and uses her binoculars again.

BINOCULAR MATTE - the hummingbird comes into focus, just in
time for Elinor to see it take a beak full of white fluff.

61 ELINOR (OS) (CONT'D) 61
It's taking some fluffy seeds. I
wonder why!

The bird zips out of frame. Elinor lowers the binoculars, excited.

62 ELINOR (CONT'D) 62
I need more observations.

Elinor quickly follows the bird to the edge of Joe's yard.

CLOSE ON the hummingbird as it returns to a TINY NEST in the fork of a slender tree branch. It tucks the seed fluff into its nest. (The nest is already partly lined with it.)

63 ELINOR (OS) (CONT'D) 63
Oh, wow. It's using the fluff to make its nest soft and warm.

BACK ON Elinor as her Dad quietly joins her.

64 DAD 64
Looks cosy, doesn't it?

65 ELINOR 65
Yep. That's a smart bird!

Elinor looks thoughtful as she counts on her fingers.

66 ELINOR (CONT'D) 66
So, dandelions make food for bees, and their seed fluff is good for making bird nests?

67 DAD 67
That's right. Some birds eat the dandelion seeds, too.

68 ELINOR 68
It seems like dandelions are good for *lots* of things.

Dad nods in agreement.

69 DAD 69
It's like I said - in nature, *everything* has a place. Even so-called weeds.

70 JOE MOUSE (OS, BREATHLESS) 70
That's true...

CUT TO Joe, who is seriously losing patience with this giant dandelion that is still refusing to be pulled out.

71 JOE MOUSE (CONT'D) 71
...but that place does NOT have to
be in my veggie garden! (strains)

Elinor and her Dad <SFX: TRY NOT TO LAUGH> Just then -

72 MZ. LLAMA (OS) 72
Joe? Are you home?

WIDE - Elinor and her Dad turn to see Mz. Llama approaching,
still carrying a basket. She chuckles when she sees them.

73 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 73
Oh, hello! We meet again.

Joe dusts off his hands for a moment.

74 JOE MOUSE 74
Morning, Mz. Llama. Can I help you?

75 MZ. LLAMA (HOPEFUL) 75
I hope so. Do you have any spinach
growing in your garden right now?

Joe makes a grumpy face.

76 JOE MOUSE 76
I *wish*. It's mostly dandelions.

77 MZ. LLAMA (DISAPPOINTED) 77
I see. Hmm...

78 ELINOR 78
What's the matter?

79 MZ. LLAMA 79
I went to Farmer Bear's to get
spinach for my Spinach Surprise
salad. But the surprise was on me.
She's all out of spinach!

Mz. Llama shows them her still-empty basket.

80 ELINOR 80
I guess *everyone's* making salad for
the party.

81 MZ. LLAMA 81
Yes. But now I don't know what I
can bring! How can I make a salad,
with no leafy greens?

ANGLE ON Elinor. She looks down at her Dad's bucket, which is brimming with picked dandelions. <SFX: HMMM WALLA> She gets an idea.

ELINOR

Dad, are dandelions safe to eat?

83 DAD 83

Good question! Most flowers are NOT
safe to eat, so I'm glad you asked.
You should never try one without
asking first.

Dad plucks a leaf from one of the plants in his bucket.

84 DAD (CONT'D) 84
But as a matter of fact, dandelion
leaves are safe to eat.

ANGLE ON Mz. Llama, who has perked right up.

85 MZ. LLAMA 85

Oh, and not just safe - they're
delicious in a salad! I don't
suppose Joe could spare any
dandelions?

Elinor grins.

86 ELINOR 86
Let's ask him.
(calls, innocently)
Ranger Joe? Would you mind if Mz.
Llama took some of these
dandelions?

CUT TO Ranger Joe, who is pulling with all his might on his 'Moby Dick' of a dandelion. Just then, it finally comes free -

<SFX: STRAIN AND RELEASE> - sending him flying backwards into big, soft clump of even MORE dandelions! He sits up, holding the bushy plant.

87 JOE MOUSE 87
 (Oof) Mind? I'd be thrilled! Take
 'em, *please!* Take 'em all!

As the friends <SFX: CHUCKLE> and Mz. Llama accepts a bucketful of dandelions with delight, we

DISSOLVE TO:

4. EXT. PARK - 'SALAD PARTY'

LATER THAT DAY. Elinor, her Dad, Mz. Llama and Joe Mouse, RANGER RABBIT, ARI, OLIVE and MRS. COW all gather in the park. Two PICNIC TABLES have been pushed together to make one long dining table. Right down the middle are a line of SALAD BOWLS, with a selection of potluck salads.

88 OLIVE 88
Mm, this is a great fruit salad,
Ari.

89 Thanks! ARI 89

Mz. Llama is standing up, with a salad bowl.

90

MZ. LLAMA

90

Who wants the last of my dandelion
salad?

91 I do! JOE MOUSE (QUICKLY) 91

Elinor looks at him in surprise. Joe smiles sheepishly.

92 JOE MOUSE (CONT'D) 92
Can't let it go to waste.

93 ELINOR 93
Speaking of waste...

(Elinor indicates a third table nearby, which has a CUTTING BOARD, KNIFE, SALAD DRESSING BOTTLES and a bowl of DANDELION FLOWERS AND STEMS.)

94 ELINOR (CONT'D) 94
What's going to happen to all the
flowers and stems, that aren't good
to eat?

95	MZ. LLAMA	95
	Oh! I know what they're good for...	

Mz. Llama brings over the bowl of flowers and stems.

96 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 96
I used to do this all the time, as
a little girl. (ALT: little 'cria')

Ari, Olive and Elinor lean in to watch as Mz. Llama quickly ties the flowers together. (OS) Then, she holds it up.

97 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 97
Ta-da! You can make them into
dandelion crowns, like this.

She places it on Elinor's head, and admires her work.

98 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 98
My, that looks -

99 ELINOR'S DAD 99
- Dandy? It sure does.

Elinor looks brightly at Olive and Ari.

100 ELINOR 100
Let's make crowns for everybody!

101 OLIVE / ARI (OVERLAPPING) 101
Okay! / Sure!

Ari and Olive get busy knotting the flower stems into
'crowns' as Elinor begins to SING...

SONG MOMENT: 'Dandy Dandelions'

Elinor indicates the rampant dandelions in the park lawn.

102 ELINOR (SINGS) 102
*Oh you may wonder why I care
about a plant that's everywhere
But it helps Nature here and there
It's more than just a weed*

Elinor delivers a flower crown to her Mom, then to Mz. Llama.

*The bumblebees can't get enough
They eat its tasty flower stuff*

She then puts a 'crown' on her Dad - only this one has a head
of seeds on it. He accidentally inhales a fluff -

*And hummingbirds like its cozy
fluff.*

Dad <SFX: SNEEZES>

It's more than just a weed

Elinor scoops up a 'bouquet' of dandelions from the dandelion
bowl to hold as she dances on the grass, singing the CHORUS:

*Dandy Dandelions,
you're more than just a weed
(MORE)*

ELINOR (SINGS) (CONT'D)
*'Cause every single part of you
is something nature needs*

Ari and Olive (now crowned as well) join her in the dance.

*ELINOR/ ARI/ OLIVE
Dandy Dandelions,
you're more than just a weed
'Cause every single part of you
is something nature needs*

The SONG ENDS, to cheers and applause from the adults.

Everyone <SFX: CHEERS AND APPLAUDS> Just then, Olive notices that Ranger Joe's head is bare.

103 OLIVE 103
Oh, Ranger Joe didn't get a crown.

104 ELINOR 104
Well, we'd better make him one. He
can be 'king of the gardeners.'

Elinor quickly knots him a small crown, which Joe puts on.

105 MZ. LLAMA 105
He already is. Why, I've never
known anyone so good at growing
dandelions!

As Joe's pride dissolves into <SFX: AD LIB LAUGHTER>, we...

FADE OUT.