



## A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Dandelions

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**Other common names:** Common dandelion, puffball, blow ball, lion's tooth, monk's head, Eurasian dandelion, Irish daisy, etc.

**Scientific name:** *Taraxacum officinale*

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Description:** Common pests of turf, dandelions grow in a rosette (ground-hugging form) that develops into a bushy plant. All plant parts ooze a milky liquid when broken.

**Leaves:** Leaves are 2 to 12 inches long, deeply lobed and radiate from the center of the plant. The lobe tips point back towards the center of the plant. The lobe at the end of the leaf is largest, and leaf edges have teeth.

**Stems:** Plant lacks stems. What appear to be stems are flower stalks.

**Flowers:** Yellow and 1 to 2 inches in width. A single flower is produced at the end of a hollow stalk. Blooms from spring to fall.

**Seeds:** Produces a circular ball of seeds that blow with the wind.

**Roots:** Has a deep branched taproot.

**Native to:** Europe; has naturalized worldwide

**Where it grows:** Lawns, gardens, landscaped areas, roadsides, pastures and parks. Grows best in moist areas with full sun.

**Life cycle:** Perennial (grows back from the roots each year)

**Reproduction:** Reproduces by seed and from root fragments



Typical plant growing in disturbed site.

(Photo by S. Donaldson)



Rosettes have deeply lobed leaves.

(Photo courtesy of Ohio State Weed Lab Archive, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org.)

**Control methods:** Dandelions can grow back from sections of root as small as one inch in length. To control this weed, kill the root. Seed production should also be controlled to avoid spread by blowing seeds.

**Mechanical:** Dig plants, removing as much of the root as possible. Pulling and mowing are not effective, as the weed can regrow from the roots. Mulching with landscape fabric or 3 or more inches of organic mulch that excludes light can control seedlings.

**Cultural:** Plant desirable, thick stands of vegetation to compete with dandelions.

**Biological:** Can be grazed by livestock. Fungal pathogens are being studied as a means to control spread of the plant.

**Chemical:** Spot-treat young plants with broadleaf-selective herbicides. Glyphosate is effective but will kill lawn grasses and other desirable plants, as well as dandelions.

## References:

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The leaves are deeply lobed, and the lobes point back towards the center of the plant.



Flowers are yellow and have many petals. The flower stems are hollow.



The seeds dislodge and float with the wind.

*(Above 3 photos by S. Donaldson)*

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