

November - Week 1 *It's a Dandy Time for a Lion Hunt*

Dandelions were imported from Europe and have spread across North America because they are very adaptable and can start or continue growing when other plants have not begun or have quit for the season. Not only do they have a “longer” growing season, but dandelions keep producing flowers and seeds late in the fall. This may be your last chance to see a dandelion this year. In Minnesota, they can often be found in the first or second week of November.

Search your yard, the schoolyard, or a local park and see if you can locate a blooming dandelion. Look along the base of trees or the sides of buildings. Where do you find them blooming? Which side (North, East, South, West) of the tree or school? Measure the stem holding up the flower. How tall is it? (You can repeat this in the spring and compare the results.) Use a hand lens to look closely at the bloom which is made up of many flowers. Take the bloom apart and find a single flower. Make a sketch.

Are you able to find any ‘mature’ lions that possess a white fluffy ‘mane’? If so, inspect an individual seed and its parachute using your hand lens. What color is the seed? Sketch the seed and parachute, and consider adding color and labels to your sketch.

Make note the date or dates you are able to observe a dandelion in November. How long will it be until you are able to hunt more lions in the spring? Keep an eye out for them. They are known to bloom when the conditions are right in March and as early as February (as observed in 2024 by some lion hunters).

