

Dandezine

Issue_0.:

Guide Score and Orientation booklet



Making the Best of It is a series of regionally site-specific pop up food shacks and community dinners that feature a climate-change enabled (and often unwanted) edible indicator species, in order to engage publics in tastings and conversation about the risks of climate chaos, our business-as-usual food system, and the short term food innovations at our disposal.

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<http://makingthebestofit.today>

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WHAT TO WEAR

Please wear green and yellow in any combination if possible. If not, brown and denim is fine. Please wear a watch!

HYDRATION

We will have water
but please bring a refillable water bottle.

PARKING WILL BE CRAZY.

It would be best to take public transport or bike.
There is not parking set aside for any of us

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We will have a small safe area for your things,
but try to be minimalist!

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Overarching themes:

- Getting people to eat dandelions
- From Gut to Globe (inside>out)
- From Head to Root (out of your head, into action, getting up/rooted)

“Today, dandelions are found on all continents. Widely disparaged as a weed in the U.S., dandelion has a long history of medicinal uses in traditional Native American and Arabic medicines, as well as in ancient and contemporary Europe and China.” - Dr. Weil

Key themes / elevator speech:

Things that we have dismissed, possibly to the point of thinking of them as only deserving/inviting eradication, can be sources of joy –

Things we have relationships with that are more complex and persistent and nimble than we're likely to realize upon exploring our relationship with dandelions, they turn out to have all sorts of additional relational qualities we hadn't realized - histories, biologies (gut! fermentation!), food sources like so many others we've snubbed but perhaps might want to know more about under changing climate conditions...

Generosity and hospitality: how do we gracefully host and be grateful to something we've ambivalently considered a childish wonder and also a pariah? Can the dandelion provide an

allegorical focal point for our emotions and plans relating to climate?

SCORE FOR GUIDES

There is lots of room for improvisation!
Robust, Simple, Fast, Loose

1. @ The Orator's Gate (Entrance/Waiting Area)

Guide selects 6 people who are listening to ORATOR. Gather under the guide's umbrella. Offer a welcome to the project (general overview). Quickly go around: Names of all in your group

One sentence Introductions (with some flavor of MTBOI): “This project is called Making the Best of It, and we're focusing on Dandelions as a tool for understanding how we make the best of the changing climate conditions we find ourselves in.”

Introduce the plant (as if it is a friend, a member of this group): Where it's from and how it got here

Dandelion is native to Europe and Asia, and was originally imported to America as an important member of any Puritan or European settler's home medicine garden. It is now naturalized throughout North America, southern Africa, South America, Aotearoa New Zealand,

Australia, and India. It occurs in all 50 states of the USA and most Canadian provinces.

It is often viewed as a noxious weed, considered to be a nuisance in residential and recreational lawns in North America.

Its presence growing along side many crops worldwide reinforces perceptions of dandelion as causing significant economic liability, because of its competition for resources; however, some farmers appreciate dandelion's role both as a pollinator crop & as a redistributor of soil nutrition by merit of a long taproot that can bring nutrients up into the reach of shorter rooted plants

Historically, it appears in the Chinese medical record, and was known to the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans as a medicinally useful plant. It goes by many names! Its official Latin name is *Taraxacum officinale*, but it has many English common names (many of which are no longer in use), including blowball, lion's-tooth, cankerwort, yellow-gowan, Irish daisy, monks-head, priest's-crown puff-ball, fairy-clock, and pee-a-bed.

2. Walking to The MicroBiome

Questions to think about along the way (in this experience):

What do you usually do with dandelions when you see them? What do you think of them? (Do you view them differently than you did when you were a child?)

3. @ The MicroBiome (you and your internal community, where people encounter the gut fairy / microbiome being)

Focus on ROOT -- and on your 4lbs of familiar gut colleagues (your microbiota)

The kitchen/medicinal garden. What it's good for:

Diuretic (other names include pee-a-bed): doesn't flush the good minerals out, like other diuretics (coffee, black tea, beer)

Liver tonic (helpful antidote to a taxed liver)

ACTION: invite participants one by one to visit the person/strange being stationed inside the microbiome node who will serve a drop of tincture. Sample a part of the plant that feeds your insides (bitterness)

Dandelion contains Inulin (lots of it in the roots, a prebiotic, feeds the good bacteria in your gut ...)

Soil microbe transfer...feed the soil, too...

The root is usually roasted or otherwise processed before consumption (dried, pickled)

Talk about bitter(ness), and discuss what it might serve physically and metaphorically:

In the plant world, bitterness often signals poison. But not always. Bitter is underrated in the western palate. European herbalists are very fond of "bitters" to stimulate and tone the digestive system. In China, bitter foods are believed to reduce body heat and dry body fluids. Bitter foods help bring balance to the overly sweet foods and can also help offset a general feeling of sluggishness, addiction to sweets, and even possibly hormonal issues.

Is there anything you'd like to say about being bitter? Why is bitterness so aversive feeling to us? Why do we say we feel bitter when things don't go our way? Politically, personally? Is there any other way to deal with bitterness? Are Americans too into sweetness?

4. Walking to The MacroBiome

How much time do you spend outside?

How often do you notice the natural world around you? What do you tend to notice, and when?

- Birds
- When/what's blooming?
- Insects (the seasonal appearance of things that bite!)
- What environmental changes are underway, locally and regionally? What have you noticed?

5. @ The Macrobiome Node

Focus on LEAVES

ACTION: invite everyone to take a seat inside the macrobiome node.

Ask: How do you fit into the larger world of species?

How Dandelions Are Connectors (bees, soil, etc):

Generative/Regenerative

A common sight

Easily Purchased/Most Commonly Available & Consumed part of the plant

The part of the plant that allows the plant to keep producing flowers, and to send nutrients to grow the roots deeper

Banal/commonplace...like this familiar view of this actually magnificent river, which connects us to supply chains and the globe

This may also be a place to get into the banality of Global Supply Chains that supply us:
Agribusiness in MN and globally
Our (the guide's) hats and aprons, bought so cheaply from China

Sample a part of the plant that feeds and connects species (leaves)

6. Walking from The Macrobiome to The Refuge

Discuss: what is "making the best of it?"
How do we balance personal practice with social change (i.e. things one does to PRACTICE change and resilience as opposed to contribute meaningfully to mass change)

What does that phrase "making the best of it" really mean to us? Is it a 'victory garden' approach, or a sense of compromising, or what we do to contribute to our personal, community, national or global resilience?

How can we make the best of this new normal (perceived as bad or disastrous uncertainty, and fast, erratic change), and make the best-tasting things we can?

We've been thinking about uncertainty and Nimbleness and bitterness and sweetness
And incorporating things we've often rejected but that are actually good for you and for the planet, in many ways

How are lawns connected to parks are connected to land? Where do we get these ideas about what our landscapes and lawns should look like?

Connecting the dots: lawns, weeds, pesticides.
Do you use pesticides? Do your neighbors?
What happens if we let dandelions grow and eat them instead? Could that be a motivator?
MPLS parks and non-spraying

7a. Waiting @ The Refuge Node

Focus on FLOWER/SEED/DISPERSAL
What lessons about living on earth can we learn from dandelions?

Useful metaphors: not one flower but many, acting as one.

How dandelions seed.

The dandelion is a colonizer of disturbed habitats, both by wind-blown seeds and seed germination from the seed bank. The seeds remain viable in the seed bank for many years, with one study showing germination after nine years. This species is a prolific seed producer, with 54 to 172 seeds produced per head, and a

single plant can produce more than 5,000 seeds a year. It is estimated that more than 97,000,000 seeds/hectare could be produced yearly by a dense stand of dandelions.

When released, the seeds can be spread by the wind up to several hundred meters from their source. The plants are adaptable to most soils and the seeds are not dependent on cold temperatures before they will germinate.

7b. Exchange(s) @ The Refuge Node

ACTION: Eat a morsel wrapped in a question
Each morsel comes with a question on a fortune cookie fortune.

Guide participants to carefully unwrap their morsel and take a look at the questions they have.

Encourage participant to be interviewed (they should start by showing the question (unwrapped, dirty!) and reading it out loud, then composing an answer

7c. Exiting The Refuge Node/Escorting to Site Exit...

Final thoughts? (Diversity instead of purity)