



Dandelion flower head holds 100-plus ray flowers

PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

**FLORA**  
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healthy food and drink. It's not difficult to find countless culinary and medicinal uses and recipes. Very popular are tender young leaves, fresh or cooked. Brown's engaging description of dandelion root coffee encourages me to go foraging around my yard this weekend.

Dandelion is described as a spring bloomer, with occasional flowers observed

in every month, but very seldom during the months of January and February. But this year you will have noticed it has not taken a winter rest.

Though countless insect pollinators have been observed on the composite heads of 100-plus small ray flowers, the dandelion does not seem to be dependent upon pollinators to produce viable seed. As a child, you most likely played with dandelion seed heads, watching the parachute-adorned seeds

soar skyward. Now as an adult you are likely to stoop down, pluck one, make certain no one is observing you, and with a strong puff or two, watch, in wonder, those seeds soar skyward.

Looking closely down on a dandelion flower, again I prefer Brown's description: "The close view of the flower itself creates an image of a fiery yellow explosion that originates from a common green heart. The myriad petals forming the rich golden-



It's a joy to see dandelion seed take flight.

PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

yellow crown seem to fire off in every direction, yet in perfect harmony, creating a balance of unity and common understanding."

How wonderful if human societies could “create a balance of unity and common understanding” like that of a dandelion flower.

Email Ken Moore at [flora@car-rborocitizen.com](mailto:flora@car-rborocitizen.com). Find previous Ken Moore Citizen columns at The Annotated Flora ([car-rborocitizen.com/flora](http://car-rborocitizen.com/flora)).



## Keep the gold

**T**his may strike some readers as hopelessly outdated, but in much of this country the success of the local newspaper is largely dependent on the work of the society/women's editor. Though that section is typically called "Lifestyle" now, the detailed accounts of local weddings, anniversaries, engagements, births and deaths are no less important to the life of the community. With Valentine's Day approaching, I choose 98-year-old Virginia Rucker as my honorary Valentine. She lives in a rest home outside Forest City in the foothills of North Carolina, where I once owned and operated a community newspaper. To the extent that our paper was such a resounding success is directly attributable to the work of this veteran journalist. During a recent visit with Virginia, the Grande Dame of Forest City regaled me with memories of our journalistic outings together in the '70s (she, the writer; and I, the photographer, always saying, "Yes, Ma'am, Mrs. Rucker;" and doing precisely as directed). And for the record, though she no longer writes for the paper, Virginia is still listed in the masthead of the *Daily Courier* as Contributing Editor. What's that song my daughter used to sing in Girl Scouts? "Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver and the other gold."



## A THOUSAND WORDS

BY JOCK LAUTERER

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