

Discover the Flora of Our Campus

Taraxacum (Taraxacum)

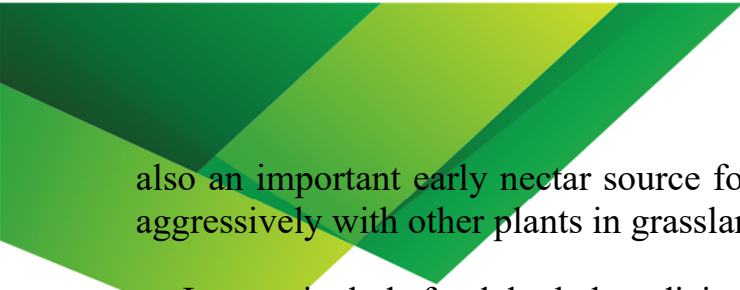
Taraxacum is a widely distributed genus of perennial wild plants commonly known as **dandelion** or “zəncirotu.” The most well-known species is the common dandelion. Its leaves form a basal rosette close to the ground and are deeply lobed or toothed. The stem is hollow and produces a milky latex, and it typically bears a single bright yellow flower head. The flowers are vivid, sun-like yellow and are highly noticeable in open fields and grasslands.



This plant is native to Europe, Asia, and North America, but it is now found in almost all temperate regions worldwide. It grows easily in meadows, gardens, roadsides, and disturbed soils. In Azerbaijan, it is also very common as a wild plant and is often considered a weed due to its rapid spread and resilience.

Taraxacum thrives in sunny locations and is highly adaptable to different soil conditions. It is both drought- and cold-tolerant. Its seeds have a parachute-like structure (pappus) that allows them to be dispersed long distances by wind, making it highly successful at spreading. It can flower and produce seeds from spring through autumn.

In terms of human and ecological impact, dandelion is both useful and weedy. Its young leaves are edible and used in salads and natural diets. The roots and leaves have been used in traditional medicine for supporting liver and digestive health. It is



also an important early nectar source for bees in spring. However, it can compete aggressively with other plants in grasslands and gardens.

Its uses include food, herbal medicine, and ecological benefits. Young leaves are rich in vitamins and can be eaten in various dishes. The roots are sometimes roasted and used as a coffee substitute. Its flowers are also valuable for pollinators, especially bees.

Interestingly, *Taraxacum* flowers respond to sunlight, opening and closing depending on the time of day. Its wind-dispersed seeds make it one of the most successful colonizing plants in nature. It is considered both a nutritious wild edible plant and an important ecological species.

