



The Legend of Dandelion (Osawapikones)

Note: When this legend was passed on, it was passed on with mention that it originated as a legend shared by the Ojibway peoples.

One day Mosum Kiwetin, Grandfather North Wind, was traveling across the lands. In his travels he saw many things in the world around him and he was happy to always see something new to him. On this day, as he traveled across the open prairies, he suddenly noticed the most beautiful maiden he had ever seen.

She had golden yellow hair and had a deep green blanket cloaked about her. North Wind immediately fell in love with her beauty. Although he was strong and powerful, he was shy and nervous to introduce himself to her, so he stayed back and watched her for some time, trying to build up the courage.

As he watched, he noticed that all the bees were surrounding her and gathering sweet pollen that formed in her golden hair. As soon as one bee would leave, another would come in its place. North Wind felt weird staring from a distance, so he decided to leave for a while and return later when she was alone. He took flight to go exploring once more.

A while later, North Wind returned and found that once again, the bees were taking up her full attention, so he again took flight intending to return later. North Wind traveled for a long time, but the beautiful golden-haired maiden never left his thoughts.

A great while later he returned to where he had seen the beautiful maiden only to now find a withered old woman with a dull green blanket covering her. Her once golden, lush hair was now completely white and beginning to fall out. North Wind knew that the bees must have taken all her youth and strength and that she had provided them with life.

Still intent on meeting her, North Wind rushed up to her and as he blew toward her, he was horrified to see that he caused all her remaining white hair to fall off and scatter in the wind! Although she was withering and dying, North Wind still remembered her beauty and he held her as she passed into the world of spirits.

North Wind began to cry at her passing and as he held his head down, he noticed something amazing! Where each strand of the maiden's hair had landed when he blew it off, a beautiful golden yellow flower with deep green leaves began to grow!

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He smiled as he looked around. As far as his eyes could see, a beautiful little flower sprung up where the maidens withered white hair had landed. It was then that North Wind understood that these were the children of the golden-haired maiden.

North Wind watched the flowers throughout the summer and when it became time for him to blow in the fall, he noticed that, just as their mother, the children of the golden-haired maiden started to wither, their hair grew full white, and their colour faded. North Wind knew that as long as he blew the hair of these little flowers across the landscape, they would once again spring up as children of the golden-haired maiden.

Before he began his travels in the fall, North Wind made a pledge to the spirit of the golden-haired maiden and promised her that for all time he would keep her alive on Mother Earth by making sure to scatter the hair of her children to the four directions for all time once they withered and their hair turned white.

We are told in legend that the golden-haired maiden was named Osawapikones, Dandelion, and to this day Mosum Kiwetin keeps his promise and makes sure the children of Osawapikones continue as they have for time immemorial.

Ekosi Maka