



Honest—I was talking to the weeds!
By Harriet Michael



“Crabgrass can grow on bowling balls in airless rooms, and there is no known way to kill it that does not involve nuclear weapons.”

— Dave Barry

Weeds! What’s a gardener to do?

Every year, I fight the battle of the weeds in both my vegetable garden and my lawn. In the vegetable garden, I get on my hands and knees, pull them up by the roots, and pray they won’t come back. (As I am on my knees already, I figure a few prayers can’t hurt.) Garden weeding is a never-ending battle.

For the lawn, I usually put a corn-gluten-based “weed and feed” treatment in a rolling fertilizer spreader and push it across the entire yard in early Spring to stop lawn weeds from emerging.

A few years ago, though, I forgot to give my yard the early Spring treatment, and by the end of May, the dandelions were rampant in the lawn. So—true confession time here—I spent the entire day hand-spraying the dandelions to kill them off. Usually when I do this (OK, I confess—as well—it’s happened before), the weeds begin to bend their heads and wilt the same day, sometimes right away. But that particular year, I saw no such reaction.

The next morning, I pulled my car out of the garage to take my young son to school, as I did every morning. Ty always sat on the passenger side of the back seat so he’d be close to the curb when I dropped him off at elementary school.

It was a beautiful morning: The sun was shining, the birds were chirping, and the air felt warm. But as I pulled out of my driveway, I noticed that the dandelions I’d spent the entire previous day trying to kill were still standing upright—perky as ever, bright and yellow, taunting me in the sun. As I turned and headed down the road in front of my house, I looked over my right shoulder and out Ty’s window.

Ty winced: He thought I was looking at him. I was so busy glaring at the weeds I didn’t even notice.

I shook my head and snarled, “Why aren’t you dead yet?!”
 “Mom!” Ty cried. “Why did you say that?”

Oops.

I had to do some serious apologizing *that* day.

My son and I can laugh about it now. But I did learn a couple of lessons from the incident:

1) Be careful where you look—especially when you’re about to mouth off.

2) Weeds aren’t worth getting obsessed over. There are more important things in life.

Now I don’t feel as much need to mouth off in the first place. Most days. ❖

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 entire previous
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY HANNAH ENGLAND