

The Goldenrod Fairy

Once there was a man who loved to garden and he went out to his yard everyday to tidy it up, weed, and plant new flowers. He loved most plants but when he saw goldenrod, he said, "There's that good for nothing weed again" and would pull it up and throw it in the ditch. He also thought that goldenrod gave him hayfever in the summer so that was another reason he would always get rid of it.

This went on for years but one day a little Goldenrod Fairy was passing through town and she noticed all of the goldenrod in the ditch near the man's house. She got quite upset and went to talk to her other fairy friends. "What can I do?" she asked. "He doesn't understand how important goldenrod is!" The fairies put their heads together to try to solve the problem and then one older fairy whispered in the Goldenrod Fairy's ear. Her eyes lit up and she knew what she had to do to save the goldenrod!

That night after the man had fallen asleep, she flew into his bedroom window and took a small bottle out of her pocket that contained some very special fairy dust*. She sprinkled some over his closed eyes.

When he woke up in the morning and went out to his yard, he saw a goldenrod blooming and when he went up to it intending to pull it up, but then he stopped. For the first time he saw a monarch butterfly sipping nectar from the little golden flowers. He realized that this butterfly needs goldenrod nectar to fuel up for its long migration to Mexico in the fall.

That night again the fairy came to his room after he had gone to sleep and she sprinkled some fairy dust over his eyes.

When he woke up and went outside he was drawn to the goldenrod and noticed for the first time a goldenrod soldier beetle climbing all over the flowers, also drinking nectar and eating pollen. So cool! The man thought, as he had never seen such a beautiful orange beetle before. And that day he decided he wouldn't pull up the goldenrod but leave it for the insects.

The next night again the fairy came and sprinkled fairy dust and the next day he saw a cottontail rabbit munching on goldenrod leaves and stalks. Awww he's so cute, the man thought and look how hungry he is! The man once again left the goldenrod standing.

One morning he saw a smaller green plant near the goldenrod's yellow flowers and he realized that this plant called ragweed is actually the one that causes allergies and hayfever and not goldenrod at all! His fondness for goldenrod was growing fast! And the Goldenrod Fairy was pleased by his response and knew he was learning.

The fairy's work wasn't quite done however so she continued to come every night and one morning the man woke to see a crab spider clinging to the goldenrod and another morning he saw a bumble bee. One morning he came out and didn't see any animals but instead a little ball of yellow yarn and he realized that goldenrod can make a beautiful dye! He decided to try it and make gifts for his friends! And one morning he realized that goldenrod flowers can make a lovely refreshing tea and so he tried that too.

As summer turned into fall, the Goldenrod Fairy came back one more time and flew through the man's bedroom window after he had fallen asleep and she sprinkled the last of her fairy dust on his sleepy eyes. When he woke up the next morning he found goldfinches eating the seeds of the goldenrod. And he understood then that birds like goldfinches and dark-eyed juncos eat the seeds to store up for winter and this gave him an idea! He gathered some seeds himself and went around his yard scattering them to grow more goldenrod for next year and he also gave seeds away to his friends so they could grow goldenrod in their yards as well! And from then on, he never called the goldenrod a good-for-nothing weed but welcomed them into his yard and sang their praises far and wide!

* special fairy dust can be made from the mother-of-pearl inside mussels shells found on the beach. Just crush with a rock and use!

THE END

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