

Patient Stories, continued

The Gastroparesis and Dysmotilities Association
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Calgary, AB

Oh Clover!

By: Jeanne Keith-Ferris, President / Founder, GPDA

I would say it as a swear word... "Oh Clover!"

We have a substantial rock garden in the front yard and share grass with our neighbor to the east. Push mower and weed extraction tool are my armaments for keeping the yard in shape. I like my yard work up close and personal and take delight in ripping weeds out with my bare hands. It is satisfying. Dandelions, thistles and any old weed come up with ragged roots.

Now I used to not mind clover, yet my neighbor saw it as an unwanted invader and would spend much time trying to pull it up. I would watch in curiosity. One season he stopped. The following year I felt compelled to carry on; after all, substantial amounts began on our property line and extended with "runners" into his yard. As a good neighbor, I felt compelled to intervene.

I began my campaign that spring. Without thought, and with quick work, I ripped, pulled, and yanked all that I could see. My methodical extraction of leaves, stems, and runners had me convinced I had subdued and removed the utter essence of the plant. I was content.

Yet, in one short week, not only did I see tender young leaves, but flowers too, white blossoms dotting the entire area I had just extracted the week previous!

Now I have never held any particular animosity towards clover, but this plant was issuing a challenge that I could not walk away from.

Closer scrutiny and study was needed. One thing struck me right away; you could follow the various runners back to their main source. Now this source had numerous fine, tenacious roots. No yank, pull -- and voilà --satisfaction as with other weeds. Somehow, this clover was different, unique.

So again I extracted and again it returned. Again I extracted and again it returned. "Oh Clover!" I would cry. Was I having any impact? What I was doing, did it make any difference? About all I was accomplishing was keeping the clover in "check". It resisted my efforts to subdue it.

A subtle transformation was occurring. What started as an automatic response to tidy up of the yard, and then mounted into a vengeful attack, was settling into a rhythmic routine.

Some days when life's struggles seemed to be more than I was capable of dealing with, I would find myself working with the clover. A sense of calm settled in and a newfound respect replaced my desire to have this plant yield.

I would bring my husband out to see the clover. I would tell my friends what remarkable tenacity the little plant possessed. No one paid much interest. These encounters and the reactions that I received made me realize I could not share what this plant was teaching me.

Through all adversities – not only resilience does the clover show, but also an outright celebration of life, with a grand display of flowers, even after enduring such harsh handling.

My clover is here to stay.

Today in our home, the term “Oh Clover!” holds new meaning.

Jeanne