

Think 'what if' at timberline



Outdoors

By John T. Unger

The mountain weather forecast one day last week predicted clear skies until 1 p.m., then a 30% chance for rain and thunderstorms. Planning a solo run from Silverton to the top of Kendall Mountain and back, I had wanted to plan ahead properly.

"Planning ahead properly" can mean considering canceling, or choosing a lower elevation objective, or carrying more emergency gear than usual.

Especially on a solo outing on foot, many variables need to be figured before tackling high-altitude, to lessen the chance of burdening any Search-and-Rescue (SAR) organizations.

I read that San Juan County and Silverton were fully open and welcoming visitors again (after having forbidden non-resident visitors two months ago). I understand the crucial need for a small population county to avoid losing any SAR personnel to quarantine due to potential rescues of visitors.

The summit of Kendall Mountain is accessed not by a trail but a mining road frequented by jeep and 4WD traffic. At least the lower six miles of it is; however, the uppermost 250 vertical feet is only accessible by foot (and hands, too, due to its steepness and lack of even a trail).

One might reasonably assume that the many 4WD vehicles seen on that route on average June weekends in recent years could, in case of accidental injury, be some help.

Such an assumption would have some real holes in it, though.

"Tell someone your planned route and expected time of return" is almost always good advice, if traveling alone. I know, it can seem like overkill or seem limiting to the adventurer's spirit, but it is not just good sense, but common courtesy.

Having told a trusted friend of my plans, I still elected to bring my cell phone, though knowing that cellular signal is not available at all points in mountainous terrain, coverage varies widely among carriers' phone plans.

Also, I took a personal locator beacon with satellite phone capability, the size of a small brownie. I chose not to turn it on, until and unless needed. It is not uncommon to read about an experienced, healthy outdoors adventurer who sustains an injury leading to a poor outcome. Many of these cases could have turned out very well, had he or she been carrying such a device.

What other "what ifs" must one consider before running up to the snowfields at elevations higher than the trees can grow? If a person heads into the mountains without possessing a Colorado hunting or fishing license, a screaming good deal is to spend \$12 for a five year term for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search And Rescue



The waterfall at the old Titusville mine is still flowing in mid-June, and many snowfields are blocking the road to the 13,066 foot summit of Silverton's Kendall mountain. (John T. Unger/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

(CORSAR) card.

Not insurance, it reimburses the SAR organization whose services may, one fine day, be needed by even the most fit, knowledgeable, and skilled outdoors enthusiasts. While you are thinking of it, and with tomorrow being the official first day of another enticing Colorado summer, lay this down and get yourself one by going to the site for the Department of Local Affairs at <http://dola.colorado.gov/sar>.

Whew! For all of that preparation, it had better be a spectacularly awesome sight from up high on that mountain. Those of you who have run, hiked, or Jeoped up Kendall Mountain know that it is just that.

Having parked in town and strapped on my backpack of gear for the running that lay ahead, I made one last stop. I walked into the open roll-up door of the EMT/SAR bay.

The staff on duty confirmed that my intended route of mining roads was indeed allowed now. They informed me of the many snowfields. Which were still blocking the road above timberline, and wished me well.

In the several hours I was on the mountain that day on foot, only one vehicle passed me. It was a shiny new 4WD truck.

Above timberline, I ran by it

where the driver had parked it, facing uphill, where the first snowfield blocked the road. I exchanged greetings with its occupants as they were returning from a short walk in the snow.

An hour later, coming down from the summit, it was unsettling to see their vehicle still in that spot, now with the hood up. Tools in hand, a lone dirt-biker was trying to assist the driver to work on the shifting mechanism, which had refused to shift into either neutral or reverse.

After politely asking to be sure that they had cell phones with a charge, and having them decline any help from town, I continued my run back down into town. I had gotten their agreement that they would at least notify EMT/SAR when they did get off the mountain that day.

As my tired legs ran me back into town, I again stepped in the open bay door and mentioned that situation to the staff.

Many is the time it is great to be traveling on foot, on purpose.

John T. Unger is a Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, with over twenty-five years of practice in Montrose. Don't we all love getting up into the peaks! Ideas for future columns are welcomed at sportsdocunger.com.

Dandelions

My first experience with the dandelion takes me back to first or second grade. In the late springtime, our yard turned into a bright flowing sea of yellow flowers. Dreaded and hated by my grandfather, those weeds became my problem.

This was a time before we had sprays you could put on the lawns, killing weeds but leaving the grass unharmed. The method for removal of these interlopers to the grass was a dandelion removal tool. The preferred method of my grandfather was to have me remove dandelions from his yard with this tool.

The dandelion removal tool was nothing more than a foot-long bar with a handle. The idea was to dig up the weed and not leave any roots behind, lest the plant grow back. Considering the yard had somewhere between three and four million dandelions, with new arrivals each day, it was a losing battle, albeit a battle I fought gallantly, but lost the war.

Nowadays, there are sprays that can be mixed with water and applied to the entire yard, killing all the weeds and leaving the grass alone. Fertilizers are also available with a "weed and feed" type of mix that accomplishes the same thing.

I might point out that the more modern methods of dandelion removal cause the flower to go to seed before it expires, scattering seeds throughout the yard, assuring you of more summer weeding fun in the future. I am sure it is a plan by the communists to keep us occupied with yard chores while they take over the world.

My second experience with the feisty little yellow flowers came along when I was around 12 years old. It was this point in life that I harbored ideas of becoming a mountain man, moving deep into the mountains where school, chores and bossy grandparents were all but a distant memory. This, of course, would require the young mountain man to learn to live off the land.

The dandelion was pointed out to me as an edible plant. Before I go any further with this, I should explain what exactly "edible" means. Edible means that you will not fall face down in your mashed potatoes after eating some of it. Edible does not necessarily mean "good to eat." If the "edible" plant was in fact tasty and good to eat, it would be in little cellophane wrapped packages and sold for \$5 a pound in the grocery store.

I offer the dandelion as a starter for anyone wishing to learn about edible plants. The dandelion is a hearty plant that grows just about everywhere. It is very difficult to make a mistake and eat the wrong part of the plant because everything on the plant is edible.

Besides being a potential survival food, the dandelion is actually very good for you. Health benefits include relief from liver disorders, diabetes, urinary tract problems, jaundice and anemia. The plant has helped with bone health, skin care and weight loss.

The term dandelion is a broad term for many types of flowers native to Europe and North America. The name "dandelion" translates in French to "lion's tooth." The flowering plant is believed to have evolved around 30 million years ago in Eurasia.

The genus to which this plant belongs is called the taraxacum. They are all herbaceous and perennial plants that grow very well in any temperate climate.

As nutritional food, dandelions contain more Vitamin A than spinach, and more Vitamin C than a tomato. They provide other nutrients including Vitamins B and D, and the minerals of iron, calcium and potassium.

I use the dandelion as an introduction for folks who wish to start foraging, mentioning earlier that it is hard to get into trouble eating them. There are mushrooms and berries that a single bite of could leave you deader than easy credit. Seems Mother Nature has made sure there is no "free lunch" in the woods.

Every part of the dandelion is edible. The yellow flower can be eaten, and has a bittersweet taste. The leaves are good eating and have a better nutritional content than any of the leaf lettuces in the grocery store. The leaves can be used as a salad, dressing to a sandwich, or steeped into a tea.

Dandelion roots are often dried and used as a wilderness substitute for coffee, although it does not contain any caffeine (which counts me out). There are people who make a pretty good wine from the dandelion flowers.

Like any other wild food, you will want to watch how much of it you eat at once. Dandelions are well known for their diuretic qualities and the increased production of urine. They can also be substantial roughage for the colon if you overdo.

See DANDELIONS page A13



Trail Footwear

10 SOUTH SELIG AVE MONTROSE, COLORADO 81401 970-249-4226

Are you experiencing annoying little bugs on the side of your house?

I wonder if you're one of the many in the Montrose and Olathe area who has very small bugs crawling on the outside of your home? If so, this may help you out.

Just when you think things couldn't get any worse, we hear stories about killer hornets and now the extremely annoying Elm Seed Bugs have shown up. These bugs are native to Europe and the Mediterranean region. They were first identified in Idaho in 2012 and within a year they were found in Oregon. By July 2017, it was also found in Mesa, Delta and Montrose counties.

Now don't panic. These bugs won't hurt you or anything that you're growing. It's mainly a nuisance insect that feeds on a number of plants including Siberian elms and linden trees. I know of a number of people who were excited when they first heard about the elm seed bugs, thinking we finally have an insect that will get rid of those horrid elm seeds that fall all over the garden and driveway, and blow into the house every time the door opens. While it's true that the elm seed bugs feed on elm seeds, they won't begin to make a dent in the number of elm seeds that you have. In fact, they're attracted to the elm seeds piled around your house and garden.

You may not need to



Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

look very closely to see these little guys crawling all over the exterior of your house. At this time, they begin wanting to live with you in your home. They will continue to try to take up residency in your home through September.

These bugs are a lot like the familiar Boxelder bugs. They even look a lot like a Boxelder bug, except these bugs have a strange pungent odor when you crush them and they're much smaller.

The adult elm seed bug will spend the winter in homes or in hidden places on the outside of homes and in the landscape. About around March, they will emerge and move to nearby elm trees where they will lay eggs. Sometime in May the little critters hatch and will go through five growth stages before becoming a winged adult. They think the insects only have one generation per year, which I guess is the good news.

Entomologists think periods of extremely high temperatures, say

around 100 degrees, may trigger mass migrations of nymphs and adults to move to more favorable climates, like the inside of your home.

I'd love to tell you that spraying your tree will rid you of all the elm seed bugs, but unfortunately spraying isn't very effective because the bugs are so mobile. There are a few pesticide products that you can spray on the bugs to kill them if they're all over the siding of your house, but the bugs will most likely keep reappearing and you'll need to keep reapplying the spray. The bugs can easily be vacuumed up once they enter your house. Perhaps the best way to deal with them is to seal cracks and crevices, especially in areas around windows, doors and vents where insects can easily gain access.

Just so you know, there is an elm leaf miner bug that's causing problems in a number of elm trees. This little bug develops between the upper and lower surface of the leaf, feeding on the interior part of the leaf, giving the leaf a hollow appearance. The portion of the leaf that's affected eventually turns brown and the leaf may drop from the tree. If you look very closely you may be able to see the little insect in-between the surfaces of the leaf. The damage is usually more cosmetic rather than

a serious problem. However, if you choose to spray the tree, the pesticide should be applied shortly after the tree has leafed out in the spring. Permethrin, Bifenthrin, or Cyfluthrin are sprays that can help. A systemic insecticide drench is also an option that may help control the miners. Just be sure to always read the label and follow the directions.

I remember dealing with a number of various insects over the years that just came and went. They appeared in alarming numbers for a year or two and then just disappeared. Hopefully these insects will also go that route.

Linda Corwine McIntosh, ISA Certified Arborist, Licensed Commercial Pesticide Applicator, Advanced Master Gardener



Many people are seeing these very small but harmless bugs crawling on the outside, and oftentimes, inside of their homes. (Linda McIntosh/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)



These yellow flowers are not a welcome sight in your yard, but can be eaten if you are foraging in the great outdoors. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

DANDELIONS

FROM PAGE A12

Looking for edible plants can be a fun activity on a hike into the backcountry. There are several books and aids to help with the identification of edible plants. One is the pocket guide Edible Survival Plants of the Rocky Mountains by Jason Schwartz.

This simplified guide covers a widespread selection of edible berries, nuts, leaves, roots and plants found in the Rocky Mountains. The guide also has information on how and when to pick, and to prepare these edible plants. It also has a section of which plants should be avoided.

You will find there are many books available to someone interested in edible plants. There are also many apps available for your smartphone that can be taken into the field with you.

My wife and I collect wild asparagus, raspber-

ries, chokecherry and a few select other plants when we are out and about. Occasionally, we have run into some wild mint or currants, and we collect a few handfuls to have with our supper.

I have no intention, nor the room, to provide you with a catalog of all the edible plants in Colorado. There are hundreds of them, but be aware, there are just as many that could kill you or make you so sick you wish you were dead. Identifying and selecting edible plants is just another thing you can do to enhance your enjoyment of an outdoor trip.

As for the dandelion, I still don't want the things in my lawn. I prefer seeing them in the parks and meadows up in the mountains, where they belong. And up there, they can go to seed all they want.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a

Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

For outdoors or survival related questions or comments, feel free to contact him directly at his email elkhunter77@icloud.com

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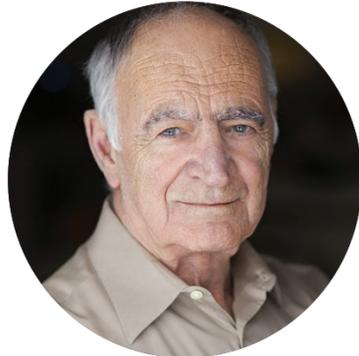
Led by Certified Validation dementia therapy instructor, Brandi Valdez, Memory Support Director at Valley Manor Care Center

TUESDAY, JUNE 23
FROM 2:00 TO 3:30 PM

Register in advance for this meeting at <https://tinyurl.com/y8yn3rv3>

Learn about signs and stages of dementia and memory loss, strategies for coping and communication especially related to the corona virus pandemic circumstances, and learn how to plan for future care for you or your loved one. Questions will be taken at the end of the presentation.

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