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Increases in Allergy Caused By Women's Lib?

By Thomas Ogren

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Recently my brother-in-law, a college professor, was seeing a famous San Diego allergist, who I'll not name. He tried to tell the allergist all about my book, Allergy-Free Gardening. The allergist dismissed it all as unimportant and then told him, "You want to know why there's so much allergy nowadays?" My brother-in-law said that, yes, he certainly did want to know. "Women's Lib," said the learned doctor. "Women used to stay home where they belonged and they took care of the kids and kept their houses neat and clean.

Now, well, now they all have to have jobs, just like the men, and who's taking care of the house? Nobody! That's why there's so much allergy now. Their houses are filthy and covered with dust." My brother-in-law wasn't quite sure what to make of that. I have an answer for that doctor. An increase in house dust isn't driving the allergy rates sky-high. Not even close. What's gone up is the amount of pollen in our cities. In some areas, Tucson, Arizona, for example, there is actually ten times more pollen in the air there now than there was just thirty years ago! And I can document that.

It isn't just Arizona either. In city after city, north and south, all around the civilized world, everywhere that modern, low-litter, litter-free, seedless, male landscaping has become popular, pollen rates are up. Even though in many cities there is now less total green matter than in the past, there is still more pollen than ever. And more allergy, too. Not long ago I was out in my own neighborhood, camera in hand, looking for some choice high-allergy landscapes to photograph. I didn't have to go far. I was standing, carefully, on the public sidewalk, taking a close-up shot of some Groundsel bush (*Baccharis* sp.) used as a ground cover in this front yard. An older gentleman came out of the house, looked at me and asked, "Now, what in the world could be worth photographing in my yard?" "I'm an allergy researcher, Sir," I said.

"Yeah?" he asked. "Some problem here?"

"This ground cover is all male," I said. "All-male, and all of it rather closely related to ragweed."

"Humm," he said.

"And that big row of junipers you've got there," I said, pointing to the side of his yard, "looks like every one of them is a male, too. That ash tree of yours, notice how it doesn't have any seeds?" "Yeah?"

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"It's a male tree. Actually, your entire yard, everything in it except that climbing rose bush on the front porch, all of it could have been designed to cause allergies. Anybody here have allergies?" "Sure," he said, "my wife. She's got terrible allergies."

I looked at the yard full of male ground cover, all of it in full bloom.

"Well," I said, "I'd be willing to bet she's having allergies right now."

"Yep," he said, "she certainly is."

Now, I didn't even bother to ask him if his wife kept their house spotless and dust-free. It was a nice house, in an expensive neighborhood, and somehow I seriously doubted, that his wife's allergies were being caused by Women's Lib.

Tom Ogren is the author of *Allergy-Free Gardening*, Ten Speed Press.

<http://www.allergyfree-gardening.com>

Tom Ogren, author of five published books, is a nationally known speaker, and does consulting for The USDA, the Canadian and American Lung Associations, and for Allegra. See his work at www.Allegra.com

Do You Know These Common Allergy Symptoms?

By Vance St. John

You know you're allergic when you react to certain substances you've been exposed to before. For instance, you may have eaten shellfish before but the next time you eat foods containing shellfish, you develop rashes.

An allergy occurs when your body overreacts to things that don't normally cause problems for most people. These things are called allergens and your body's overreaction to them are what causes allergy symptoms.

Common Allergy Symptoms are:

· Runny nose · Watery eyes · Itchy nose, eyes, and roof of mouth · Sneezing · Stuffy nose · Pressure in the nose and cheeks · Ear fullness and popping · Dark circles under the eyes · Hives

What Causes these Allergy Symptoms?

No one really knows why someone develops allergy. Studies have shown that allergy may be hereditary or genetic. Others say that allergy is just something that develops over time and disappears, also over time. But one thing is certain, there are certain specific factors found in the environment that can trigger the body to develop allergy symptoms.

The most common allergen is pollen from trees, grass, and weeds. Allergy symptoms caused by these

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allergens often occur in the spring (late April and May) and may also occur late in the summer (late May to mid-July). Ragweed allergens may also cause allergy symptoms in the fall (late August to the first frost).

In direct contrast to pollen, which is airborne, molds are contracted by contact through the skin. Mold is common where water tends to collect, such as shower curtains, window moldings and damp basements. It can also be found in rotting logs, hay, mulches, commercial peat moss, compost piles, and leaf litter. Allergy symptoms caused by molds become worse during humid and rainy weather.

Another common type of allergen is animal dander. These are proteins found in the skin, saliva, and urine of furry pets, such as cats and dogs. You can develop allergy symptoms from handling an animal or from coming into contact with house dust, containing dander.

Various more allergens are contained in dust. One of them is dust mites, which are tiny living creatures found in bedding, mattresses, carpeting, and upholstered furniture. These mites live on dead skin cells and other things found in house dust, and coming into contact with them may result in allergy symptoms.

How Can We Control Allergy Symptoms?

Unless you live in a vacuum, it is extremely difficult to avoid allergens all together. But with a little management and control, you can reduce the occurrence of allergy symptoms caused by these allergens.

Keeping clean is always the first step in controlling allergy symptoms. Before bedtime, it is advisable to shower or bathe to wash off pollen and other allergens in your hair and skin. You can also reduce the amount of mold in your home by frequently cleaning those places where mold often accumulates.

Avoid going outside the home during dry, windy days. Keep windows and doors shut, and use an air conditioner at home and in your car. This is one way to keep yourself from developing allergy symptoms caused by pollen and other airborne allergens.

To find out more about allergy symptoms, allergens and remedies just visit the authors website at:

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