



## Beware of Ragweed "Relatives"

About 22 million people in the United States who have seasonal allergies are affected by ragweed. This plant produces light, airy pollen that can travel up to 400 miles. The ragweed season in this country is usually from August to November, peaking in mid-September. If you know you are allergic to ragweed, you may have picked up some tips on how to avoid ragweed pollen and how to reduce your symptoms.

Ragweed allergy sufferers may also need to stay away from other plants that are closely related to ragweed. In some people, certain things can cross-react with ragweed and either intensify allergy symptoms or cause other discomforts, like tingling of the lips, tongue, and palate and itching and swelling of the mouth and throat.

Chamomile is a common relative of ragweed. Chamomile leaves are often used for tea, and some people use them to soothe nerves or ease an upset stomach. Many people who are allergic to ragweed may find that drinking chamomile tea or applying lotion that contains chamomile might bother their allergies.

Other foods known to cause mouth or throat swelling in people who are allergic to ragweed include melon, zucchini, cucumber, and sunflower seeds. And because daisies, dahlias and chrysanthemums are related to ragweed, you might want to avoid bringing these flowers into the house.

Not everyone who is allergic to ragweed is also sensitive to these other plants and once ragweed season is over, most people will not have much of a problem with these plants.