



Ragweed Survival Guide

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Hay Fever Relief Possible with Simple Steps

August marks the start of misery for as many as one in five Americans who suffer from hay fever, also called seasonal allergic rhinitis. That's because ragweed, the main cause of hay fever, begins blooming around August 1st and increases until early September and in one day each plant can produce a million pollen grains that can travel for miles from its source.

Drs. Ford and Brooks of The Asthma & Allergy Center offer these tips to help sufferers find relief from the sneezing, stuffy nose and watery eyes brought by this pesky weed:

Beat symptoms to the punch: Get a jump-start on ragweed allergy symptoms by taking allergy medications in advance, beginning in early August.

Beware of other allergies that increase suffering: If you're allergic to dogs, cats or dust mites you may be even *more* susceptible to ragweed allergy. New research suggests these allergies "prime" the system, making hay fever suffering even worse. The solution? Get treated for allergies year-round, which will make hay fever easier to tolerate.

Avoid peak exposure time: To reduce exposure during peak pollen levels, avoid scheduling outdoor activities between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. when ragweed pollen counts are highest.

Sidestep yard work: Hay fever sufferers should avoid mowing the lawn and raking leaves, two activities that stir up pollen. If you must mow or rake, or are doing other outside activities, such as gardening, wear a mask and gloves.

Grab some shade(s): Use style to your allergy advantage. Wear glasses or sunglasses that fit close to your face to keep pollen from irritating your eyes.

Steer clear of irritants: Reduce your exposure to air pollutants, such as cigarette smoke, insecticides, fertilizers, gasoline fumes, fresh paint and tar, which can worsen your symptoms.

Those who suspect they have hay fever or other allergies should get tested by an Asthma & Allergy Center Clinician who are experts in diagnosing and treating allergies and asthma.

To learn more about allergies and asthma and take a free relief self-test visit www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org.