

Expert recommends careful flower selection to prevent allergic reactions this Mother's Day

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When it comes to allergies, all flowers are not created equal, according to an expert at Baylor College of Medicine. If your mom suffers from allergies, be sure to select her Mother's Day flowers carefully this year with these tips.

"When you are selecting [flowers](#), pay attention to the flower's gender because that influences how the plant will affect people's allergies," said Dr. Sana Hasan, assistant professor of medicine in the section of immunology, allergy and rheumatology at Baylor.

Plants should be thought of in three separate categories when it comes to allergies: dioecious plants, monoecious plants and perfect flowers. Dioecious plants, which are either male or female, use the wind to pollinate and could cause symptoms for people who have [seasonal allergies](#). Examples of these include anything in the daisy family such as chamomile, chrysanthemums, asters or sunflowers, and are best avoided since they release a lot of pollen. Monoecious plants, which have both male and female anatomy on the same plant, are the ones that you should seek out for allergy sufferers, Hasan said. These plants don't depend on long distances for wind pollination, so the pollen does not get distributed as much as other plants that need air to pollinate. Good options are begonias, daffodils, geraniums, lilies, pansies and tulips.

Even better choices for flowers are what are known as "perfect flowers."

These flowers have both male and female anatomy on the same flower and release little pollen into the air. Examples of a perfect flower are roses and lilies. Outdoor plants within the monoecious and perfect flower group are a good Mother's Day option because they would not be in an enclosed environment. These also are ideal for people who may not have allergies but are sensitive to strong fragrances. While sunflowers are not great for people with allergies, there are some outdoor variations, such as the apricot twist or joker, that are good for [allergy sufferers](#).

When considering other types of potted [plants](#) or shrubs, Hasan said that a cactus plant, azaleas, boxwoods, hibiscus and hydrangeas are great options for those who suffer allergies. Apple and cherry trees also are good choices for people with allergies. Plants to avoid include cypress, jasmine and juniper.

While baby's breath is a popular filler in many arrangements, it can really affect those with allergies, Hasan said, so try to find a flower arrangement that does not include baby's breath.

You don't need to know specifically what mom is allergic to pick the right flowers for her, but remind mom that in the long run it is helpful to have [allergy](#) testing done to know specific allergens, since there can be other things in the environment, including grass and mold, that cause allergic reactions.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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