

Grow an Allergy-Friendly Garden This Spring

They say you reap what you sow—and when it comes to gardening with allergies, that old saw couldn't be more true. If you're one of the estimated 40 million Americans with hay fever, the grasses, trees and weeds in your yard can aggravate symptoms. But planting the right seeds, shrubs and saplings this spring can help you have fewer symptoms all season long.

UPROOT THESE GRASSES AND TREES

Seasonal allergies occur when your body treats pollen in the air as an unwelcome invader. This overreaction can cause congestion, sneezing, a red nose, a scratchy throat and itchy, watery eyes.

Some greenery can make allergy symptoms sprout more than others. Aim to keep these irritating offenders off your property:

- **Grasses:** Johnson, rye, Timothy, Bermuda, orchard, sweet vernal grasses, bluegrass, fescue
- **Allergy-triggering trees:** maple, oak, ash, birch, hickory, juniper, cedar, cottonwood

RAISE THESE FRUITS AND FLOWERS INSTEAD

Having allergies doesn't mean you're stuck landscaping with gravel and concrete. These buds and blooms will beautify your yard with less chance of giving you the sniffles.

- **Flowers:** lilac, daisy, geranium, dahlia, hibiscus, iris, roses, snapdragon, tulips
- **Low-allergen trees:** cherry, crepe myrtle, redwood, apple, dogwood, pear, plum

Another option? If you're in a warm, dry climate, choose succulents, such as the cactus, which produce minimal pollen.

HEDGE YOUR BETS WITH THESE HABITS

Gardening is good exercise, produces nutritious fruits and vegetables and helps beautify your community. In short, it's worth the effort, even with allergies. To increase your comfort, follow these tips when tending to your plot:

- Check pollen counts in your area at www.aaaai.org/global/nab-pollen-counts.aspx. Skip gardening on days when they're high.

- Take your allergy medications before you head outside. And if you have asthma, keep your quick-relief drugs on hand.
- Don't touch your eyes or face while you're working. Wear a mask and gloves if they help.
- Wash your hands often, and rinse your eyes when you come back inside. Shower before you go to sleep to avoid getting pollen on your sheets.
- Visit an allergist. He or she can help you identify the plants that aggravate your symptoms. You might benefit from treatments such as allergy shots. ●



Are you in control of your allergies or asthma? If you have questions about managing symptoms, you can receive around-the-clock answers by calling 24/7 Nurse Now. AllOne members call **866.430.2551**; RelianceOne members call **877.969.7751**.



Become informed! Find secure, personalized information about managing your health on our website. AllOne members: www.myallonehealth.com; RelianceONE members: www.myrelianceone.com.

Strength Training Offers Weighty Benefits

Strength training—also called resistance exercise—includes such activities as lifting weights, stretching elastic exercise bands and doing push-ups and sit-ups.

Strength training just twice a week can help to:

- Restore balance and reduce the risk for falls
- Strengthen bones
- Improve blood sugar control in people with diabetes
- Ease conditions such as arthritis, back pain and depression
- Promote weight management by replacing stored fat with muscle
- Prolong mobility and independence
- Improve sleep

Expensive equipment is unnecessary. All you need to start is a sturdy chair; walking, running or cross-training shoes; and a set of dumbbells, or hand-held weights, and ankle weights.

Talk with your doctor before starting strength training.

The CDC offers videos to demonstrate several strength training exercises you can do both in the gym and at home. Visit www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/videos/index.html.



Arthritis Isn't Just a Concern for Older Adults

According to the CDC, more than one in five adults has arthritis. What's more, nearly two-thirds of those diagnosed with arthritis are younger than age 65. Clearly arthritis is not limited to older adults. Luckily, there are steps you can take to protect your joints so that arthritis does not slow you down at any age.

WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

Arthritis describes any disease that involves inflammation of the joints. Interestingly, the most common type of arthritis, osteoarthritis, is less often associated with inflammation but degeneration of a joint. It typically affects the hands, knees and hips. Symptoms include joint pain, stiffness, swelling and limited movement of the joint.

Several factors can increase your risk for arthritis, including:

- **Too much stress on a joint.** Some jobs and high-impact sports can be risk factors for arthritis. Jobs that entail repetitive movements or frequent squatting and crouching, like retail jobs, raise your risk. Many athletes, such as soccer and football players, face a higher risk as well.
- **An injury to the joint.** Because arthritis

often involves the breakdown of cartilage and bone, joints damaged by injury are often later affected by arthritis.

- **Excess weight.** Being overweight puts stress on the joints, especially the knees.

PROTECT YOUR JOINTS

Research shows there are ways to prevent arthritis:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Weight control lowers the risk for osteoarthritis of the knees and perhaps the hips. Ask your doctor about your recommended weight. If you need to lose weight, eat a variety of healthy foods and engage in regular exercise.
- **Show your joints some TLC.** Don't overwork sore or damaged joints.
- **Protect joints from injury.** Wear the recommended gear to protect your joints while playing sports or doing household tasks and avoid repetitive motions. ●

 Find more tips to prevent and manage arthritis by going to the Arthritis Foundation's website at www.arthritis.org.



Sugar Shock: Could Too Much Harm Your Heart?

The average American consumes more than 22 teaspoons, or 355 calories, of added sugars per day. That means sugars that are put into the foods you eat, rather than those that occur naturally in fruits, vegetables and other unprocessed products.

What's so wrong with a sweet treat? Eating more sugar than we need has been linked to a variety of health problems, including risks to your heart health. It can cause:

- Higher triglyceride and lower HDL "good" cholesterol levels
- Tooth decay

- Trouble controlling diabetes
- Obesity

Most added sugars in our diets come from soft drinks and other beverages, candy, baked goods and ice cream. They also lurk where you wouldn't expect them: dairy products such as in some yogurts, canned fruits and fruit drinks, and cereal.

Experts at the American Heart Association recommend women get no more than 100 calories a day from added sugars and men no more than 150 calories. To spot sugars, check food

labels for amounts. Remember that 1 gram is about 4 calories. And look for these red-flag words in ingredient lists:

- Cane juice or syrup
- Corn sweetener or syrup
- Dextrose, fructose or glucose
- Lactose or maltose
- Molasses ●

 For nutrition tips and healthy recipes for you and your family, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

Caregivers Need Caring Too

In many families, the care of elderly or sick relatives falls to women. Most female caregivers wouldn't have it any other way.

But caregiving without relief can harm a woman's mental and physical health. It can raise her blood pressure, interfere with her sleep and trigger depression.

If you're a caregiver, care for yourself too:

- **Get moving.** In one study, caregivers who exercised four times weekly



for at least 30 minutes each time slept much better than nonexercisers. Exercise also curbed stress-related jumps in blood pressure.

- **Get together.** Social support may ease the stress associated with caregiving. Join a support group, or make a special effort to see friends regularly.
- **Get online.** Participate in an Internet discussion group for caregivers.
- **Get relief.** You deserve time to visit a friend, read a book and do other things for yourself. Friends, relatives, social-service agencies and religious groups may be able to help out with duties.

This material is not intended as medical advice. Talk with your doctor about this and any other health information. Please be sure to check your health care plan contract or employer group benefit summary to determine what health care expenses are covered.

To speak with a health coach, call weekdays between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET
AllOne: **866.430.2551**
RelianceONE: **877.969.7751**



Broccoli and Walnut Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups roughly chopped broccoli florets
- ½ medium head cauliflower, roughly chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- ¾ cup chopped onions
- 1 small red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 6 to 12 large lettuce leaves
- 2 beefsteak tomatoes, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the broccoli, cauliflower, raisins, onions, bell pepper and walnuts.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the vinegar and olive oil.
3. Toss with the combined salad ingredients and serve on lettuce leaves with tomato wedges.

NUTRITION FACTS

Makes 6 servings. Per Serving: Calories: 271, Total fat: 16 g, Saturated fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 0 mg, Carbohydrates: 32 g, Fiber: 6 g, Sodium: 37 mg

Q&A: Can Snoring Be Stopped?

Q. What causes snoring?

A. Snoring happens when something blocks the flow of air at the back of your mouth or nose. Occasional snoring can be caused by colds or allergies that stuff up your nose.

Chronic snoring can often be blamed on anatomy. For instance, large tonsils can block the air passage at the back of your throat. So, too, can excess weight. Snoring also results when the muscles in the throat and tongue relax during sleep, blocking the airway.

Q. How can chronic snoring be treated?

A. Snoring that is mild or occasional might be reduced or prevented with the following strategies:

- Avoid alcohol for at least four hours before sleeping. This can help prevent the

muscles in your throat and tongue from relaxing.

- Try to sleep on your side. Sleeping on your back makes snoring worse.
- Prop up the head of your bed with 4-inch blocks.
- Lose weight, if necessary.
- Try over-the-counter adhesive strips for your nose. Some research shows these help open up the nasal passages.

Heavy snorers should consult a doctor about other treatments. Loud, chronic snoring is linked to a higher risk of heart disease and may be a symptom of sleep apnea, a syndrome in which people stop breathing for 10 seconds or more many times during the night. Special devices or surgery can help reduce snoring and breathing problems during sleep. ●

