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# Avoid the Wheezes and Sneezes When Working in The Yard This Spring and Summer

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By Robin Wilson

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America has **declared** May National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and with good reason. As the weather starts getting warmer, people spend more times working in the yard and beautifying their homes. The problem is this time of year is the height of allergy season and when symptoms tend to be at their worst.

Not to worry, though; there are plenty of ways to spend time outdoors sprucing up the look of your home without the bothersome symptoms of allergies and asthma. Even better news: You don't have to limit your outdoor decorating choices to stones and concrete.

Here are 10 tips to remember when working outdoors this spring to help reduce and even eliminate allergy and asthma symptoms.



landscaping firm.

4. Keep grass cut low – a maximum of two inches high – to help keep stems of pollen from reaching high into the wind.
5. Be cautious about using hedges since their branches easily collect dust, mold and pollen, and keep them pruned and thin.
6. Keep the windows in the house closed while mowing and for a few hours afterwards. For extra comfort and clean air, use an air purifier like the [Honeywell True HEPA Air Purifier](#). The true HEPA filter effectively captures 99.97% of microscopic airborne particles that pass through the filter to keep the air as clean as possible.
7. Limit your gardening days to cool or cloudy days, and in the later afternoon or evening, when pollen concentration in the air is generally lower.
8. Immediately shower and change your clothes when you go back indoors, and make sure to wash your hair to remove allergens trapped there. Have a space by the door where shoes can be taken off so you don't track in pollen, dust, dirt and other allergens.
9. There are some days that asthma and allergy sufferers are better off staying inside. Always check the pollen count and smog levels in your area. When outdoor air quality is good and your yard is full of beautiful plants, grass and flowers that won't aggravate symptoms, you can work, play and relax outside with confidence.
10. Make smart landscaping choices that are less likely to contribute to wheezing and sneezing. There are many plants you can use to design your home garden – including shrubs, flowers, trees and more – that will not contribute to your outdoor allergy symptoms. Below is a more comprehensive list of what to use and what to stay away from.

### Avoid these garden plants if you have allergies

- **Grasses:** Bermuda, Fescue, Johnson, June, Orchard, Perennial Rye, Redtop, Salt Grass, Sweet Vernal, Timothy.
- **Shrubs:** Cypress, Juniper.
- **Trees:** Alder, Ash, Aspen, Beech, Birch, Box Elder, Cedar, Cottonwood, Elm, Hickory, Maple, Mulberry, Oak, Olive, Palm, Pecan, Pine, Poplar, Sycamore, Walnut, Willow.

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Miller, Geranium, Hosta, Impatiens, Iris, Lily, Pansy, Periwinkle, Petunia, Phlox, Rose, Salvia, Snapdragon, Sunflower, Thrift, Tulip, Verbena, Zinnia.

- **Grasses:** St. Augustine.
- **Shrubs:** Azalea, Boxwood, English Yew, Hibiscus, Hydrangea, Virburnum.
- **Trees:** Apple, Cherry, Chinese Fan Palm, Fern Pine, Dogwood, English Holly, Hardy Rubber Tree, Magnolia, Pear, Plum, Red Maple.

You certainly have less control over the air quality outdoors than indoors. When you play it smart and take a few precautionary measures, you can spend more time outdoors creating a beautiful looking yard that the whole family can enjoy during the spring and summer months.

*Robin Wilson is founder and CEO of Robin Wilson Home and an eco-friendly designer focused on creating healthy living spaces. She is the author of [Clean Design: Wellness for Your Lifestyle](#).*

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