

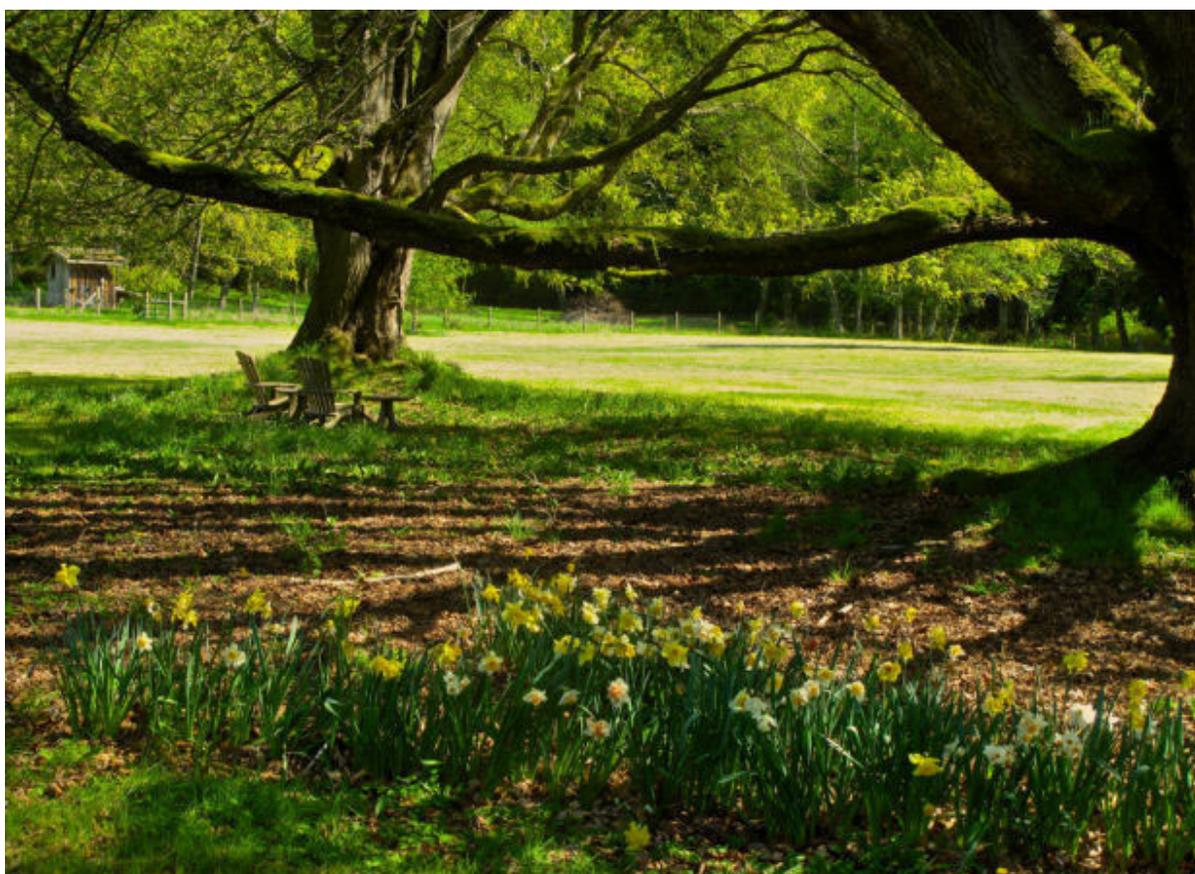
## HEALTH

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# Some allergy and asthma triggers, expected and unexpected

By Harry Jackson Jr. St. Louis Post-Dispatch May 12, 2016

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This April 22, 2013 photo shows Maple trees which release a lot of wind-borne pollen while mold is produced by leaves littering the ground, in Langley, Wash. Allergies are caused by pollen from plants, trees, grasses, weeds and mold spores. (AP Photo/Dean Fosdick)

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, says the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

May is a peak season for asthma and allergy sufferers as pollen-spewing plants are awakening, mainly flowers and grasses.

Asthma affects 24 million Americans. And 6.3 million children under the age of 18 suffer from asthma. More than 50 million Americans have all types of allergies — pollen, skin, latex and others.

Following are some common, and often overlooked triggers from the book, "Clean Design: Wellness for Your Lifestyle," by Robin Wilson, who is with the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

- **Tobacco smoke.** Make your home a no-smoking zone. Even secondhand smoke can cause respiratory problems, especially in children.
- **Pet dander.** Keep pets off of beds and furniture. Bathe pets at least once a week. Wash your hands and launder clothing after playing with your pet.
- **Mold.** Mold can cause problems for anyone, regardless of their sensitivity to allergy and asthma triggers. Lower your home's humidity, ventilate bathrooms and kitchens, manage moisture in the basement and monitor your home after a storm.
- **Pollen.** More people are allergic to pollen than anything else. Bathe before going to bed, wash your pillow cover and bedding.
- **Dust.** Clean your home and wipe down surfaces frequently. Use an air purifiers that have HEPA filters and keep the filter clean.
- **Clothing.** Chemicals in dry-cleaned clothing can contain perchloroethylene, which has been linked to cancer in animals and is believed to be a human carcinogen. If your dry-cleaned clothes hang in your closet for a while, they can release the chemical into the air.

- **Cleaning supplies.** Store household cleaning products in well-ventilated areas away from children. Keep containers tightly closed.
- **Vermin.** In addition to being unsanitary, cockroaches, mice, rats and other vermin leave behind droppings that are major triggers for asthma and allergies.
- **Odors.** Scented products — soaps, shampoos, perfumes, lotions, deodorant and even nail polish — can trigger symptoms. That also can include air fresheners, plug-in fragrance boxes and scented candles.
- **Wood smoke.** Burning wood can be a trigger, even if smoke isn't escaping into the room.

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Harry Jackson Jr.

Harry Jackson is a health reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.