

Orchids and roses are often practical choices for guests with pollen allergies because their pollen is less likely to drift through the air than pollen from grasses and many trees. No flower is guaranteed to be safe for every guest, so ask about known sensitivities before choosing an arrangement.

Why some pollen travels farther

Pollen is made by the reproductive parts of flowers, but it does not all behave the same way. Grasses and many trees release light pollen that can travel on the wind. That airborne pollen is a common cause of seasonal allergy symptoms, such as sneezing, a runny nose and itchy eyes.

Many showy flowers rely on insects for pollination instead. Their pollen tends to be heavier or stickier, which makes it less likely to float around a room. Less airborne pollen may mean less exposure for guests, though touching a flower or bringing it close to the face can still cause a reaction in someone who is sensitive.

Flowers to consider

Orchids are worth considering because their pollen is usually held in compact, sticky packets rather than released as loose dust. A potted orchid can also give a table a finished look without needing a large mix of blooms. Choose an unscented variety if fragrance is a concern.

Roses are another option. Their pollen is relatively heavy, and roses with many petals can keep the central parts of the flower less exposed. Look for blooms with a mild scent, since fragrance preferences and sensitivities vary.

There is no reliable flower that suits every person with allergies. Someone may react to a particular plant, to foliage in an arrangement, or to something else in the room. If a guest has had a reaction before, their

experience is more useful than a general rule about a flower.

Think beyond pollen

A strong floral scent can bother some guests even if they are not allergic to its pollen. Scent sensitivity and pollen allergy are different issues, but both can make an event uncomfortable. Ask about each separately, then choose lightly scented or unscented flowers where possible.

Keep arrangements away from food and from places where guests will sit with flowers close to their faces. A display on a side table can bring color into the room without putting blooms directly in front of each person. Avoid shaking or brushing the flowers as you arrange them, especially indoors.

Ask guests and prepare alternatives

A brief message before the event can help you make a safer choice. Ask guests to name any flowers or scents they need to avoid, and take a specific concern seriously rather than assuming a bloom is safe because it appears on a suggested list.

If a guest has severe sensitivities or you cannot identify a suitable flower, consider skipping fresh blooms in the shared space. Clean artificial flowers can provide color without flower pollen, though they should be free of accumulated dust.

The most considerate arrangement is one your guests can comfortably be around. A little advance planning leaves everyone freer to enjoy the gathering.

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