

Orchids and roses can be sensible flowers for guests with pollen allergies because their pollen is less likely to become airborne than pollen from grasses and many trees. No bloom is safe for everyone, so ask guests about their known sensitivities before selecting flowers.

How pollen gets into the air

Flowers produce pollen as part of reproduction, but the pollen from different plants does not travel in the same way. Grasses and many trees release light pollen that wind can carry from place to place. This airborne pollen commonly contributes to seasonal allergy symptoms, including sneezing, a runny nose and itchy eyes.

Many flowers with showy blooms are pollinated by insects rather than relying on wind. Their pollen is often heavier or stickier, so it is less likely to drift around a room. That can reduce the amount of pollen guests encounter, but it does not remove all risk. A person who is sensitive may still react after touching a flower or holding it close to their face.

Blooms that may be suitable

Orchids are one option to consider. Their pollen is generally gathered in compact, sticky packets instead of being released as loose dust. A potted orchid can add a finished touch to a table without requiring a large arrangement of cut flowers. If scent could be a concern, choose an unscented variety.

Roses may also work well. Their pollen is relatively heavy, and varieties with many petals can leave the flower's central parts less exposed. Since people differ in their preferences and sensitivities to fragrance, choose roses with a mild scent.

These suggestions are not guarantees. A guest might react to a particular flower, to foliage included in an arrangement, or to another source in the room. If someone has reacted to a plant before, take that experience as a better guide than a general recommendation about the flower.

Consider scent and placement

Strong floral fragrance can bother some people, including guests who do not have a pollen allergy. Fragrance sensitivity and pollen allergy are separate concerns, but either may make a gathering uncomfortable. Ask about both, and choose lightly scented or unscented flowers when possible.

Think about where the flowers will sit. Keep arrangements away from food and avoid placing them where guests will have blooms close to their faces. A side table can add color to the room while keeping flowers out of the immediate space around each seat. As you arrange the blooms, avoid shaking or brushing them, particularly indoors.

Check with guests and have a backup

A short message before the event gives guests a chance to share what they need to avoid. Ask about specific flowers and scents, and take a named concern seriously. A flower being described as a suitable choice does not mean it will be comfortable for every person.

If someone has severe sensitivities, or you cannot find a flower they can comfortably be around, leave fresh flowers out of the shared space. Clean artificial flowers can add color without flower pollen, provided they do not have dust collected on them.

Planning ahead can help you choose an arrangement that guests can enjoy being near. Asking first, choosing carefully and keeping flowers thoughtfully placed are simple ways to make the gathering more comfortable for everyone.

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