

Roses, orchids, and tulips are useful choices for guests with pollen allergies because their pollen is not usually carried far by the wind. Choose lightly scented or unscented varieties, and ask guests about specific sensitivities before making a final selection.

Flowers to consider

Roses have relatively heavy, sticky pollen that is generally transferred by insects rather than released into the air in large amounts. Their fragrance varies, so check the flowers before ordering. Some have a strong scent, while others have very little.

Orchids are another option. Their pollen is packaged in compact masses, rather than shed as loose grains in the way many wind pollinated plants shed pollen. Orchids can still cause problems for someone with a specific sensitivity, and their scent varies by variety.

Tulips are often a practical choice for a table arrangement. Their pollen is relatively heavy, and many varieties have a mild scent. Handle the stems with care: tulip sap can irritate the skin, particularly with repeated contact.

No flower is guaranteed to be safe for every guest. An individual may react to a particular plant, its sap, or another material in the arrangement.

What to avoid or check

Wind pollinated plants release pollen that can travel through the air. Grasses are a common source, so skip ornamental grasses and dried grass heads if pollen allergies are a concern. Avoid arrangements that visibly shed pollen onto the table.

Strong fragrance is a separate consideration. A scent is not the same as airborne pollen, but it can bother some people or trigger symptoms such as headaches. Highly scented flowers may be a poor fit for a small room or a long meal, even if their pollen is unlikely to become airborne.

Lilies deserve care because their exposed anthers can shed noticeable pollen. Removing the anthers can reduce loose pollen, but it does not make the flowers suitable for everyone. Some lilies also have a strong scent.

How to arrange flowers for guests

Ask about known allergies before choosing flowers, especially for a small gathering where you can check with guests directly. Share the flower names if someone needs to decide what is comfortable for them.

Keep arrangements away from plates and serving dishes, and leave enough space for guests to move them if needed. In a confined room, use fewer stems and avoid heavily scented varieties. Fresh water and prompt removal of wilting flowers help keep the display tidy, though they do not prevent allergic reactions.

Questions about flowers and allergies

Are roses always safe for people with allergies?

No. Roses may release less airborne pollen than wind pollinated plants, but a guest can still have a sensitivity to them or their scent.

Are dried flowers a better choice?

Not necessarily. Dried arrangements can collect dust, and dried grasses may shed material. Ask the guest if dust is a concern.

Does removing pollen make a flower allergy safe?

No. Removing visible pollen can reduce loose grains, but other parts of a plant may still cause a reaction.

What if a guest reacts during the event?

Move the flowers away and help the guest find a comfortable space. For severe symptoms, seek emergency medical help.

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