

Life & Times

APRIL 2018

7 WAYS TO ALLEVIATE YOUR ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

Short of living in a bubble, there are no cures for allergies. Even with shots and medicines, patients living with allergies still experience flare-ups and symptoms, especially if their allergies are seasonal. Dr. Clifford Bassett, an assistant clinical professor of medicine at Long Island College Hospital, offered these seven tips, which may alleviate the severity of allergy symptoms, making it a little easier for

allergy sufferers to enjoy life.

1. Know the Pollen Count

You can check the pollen count at The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. "Consider exercising indoors on very high pollen days if you are sensitive to seasonal pollens present in the air," Bassett said. "Or, perhaps exercise later in the day since certain pollens are higher in the early to mid morning. Bassett said to also be aware of the fact that higher levels of pollen are usually found on warm, dry and/or windy days, whereas lower levels of pollen are present on wet, cloudy days.

pillowcases and wash your pajamas often, as these are places where pollens and molds can build up. You may not be able to see them, but you will breathe them in as you are sleeping.

5. Keep Eyes Clear

"Gently irrigate your eyelids while your eyes are closed with a mild, tear-free baby shampoo to remove excess allergens and pollutants that may have accumulated," Bassett said. If you wear contact lenses, or have specific eye allergies, check with your health care provider to learn what kind of eye cleanser is best for you.

6. Breathe 'Fresh' Air

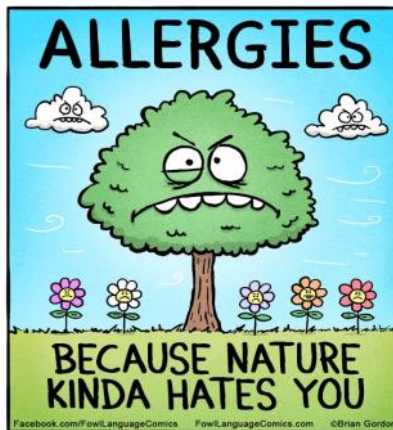
Whether driving or at home, keep your windows closed and set the air conditioner to re-circulate to keep out pollen, Bassett said. Clean the filters on the air conditioner frequently, especially during pollen season. If you or someone in your family has extremely bad allergies or asthma, consider a central air-filtration system for your home.

7. Avoid Cross-Reactions

Eating certain foods (pears, apples and hazelnuts) may cause allergic reactions if you have seasonal tree allergies, Bassett said. This is due to a cross-reaction between the proteins in the fruits and the pollens. Foods such as melons, tomatoes and oranges may cross-react with grass pollens, and melons, chamomile tea and bananas can cross-react with weed pollens. Symptoms of cross-reactions in allergy sufferers include a tingly mouth or itchy throat.

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2. Take a Seaside Vacation

Time your vacation during the peak allergy season, Bassett said, and go to the beach – pollen counts are likelier to be lower in areas near water.

3. Eat Healthy

Research shows that foods high in antioxidants and omega 3s, which are found in fish particularly, help individuals with asthma, Bassett said.

4. Lather, Rinse, Repeat

Take a shower and wash your hair every night before going to bed, Bassett suggested. Remember to change your

FREE

MONTHLY DRAWING

See Page 8
For Details

THE GRILL DRILL—SAFETY TIPS

Here are some safety tips to follow before you use your grill:

- (1) With a propane grill, check the connection between the gas hose and gas tank
- (2) Place your grill at least 10 feet away from your house, to include shrubs and bushes
- (3) Designate a 3-foot area around the grill as a "kid-free zone"
- (4) Frisky dogs should be kept on a leash away from the grill
- (5) Dress appropriately -- never wear long sleeves that hang loose around your wrists
- (6) Never douse flaming charcoal briquettes with starter fluid
- (7) Never leave an active grill unattended -- if you need a bathroom break, call for help.

Source: Military.com



7 ROOKIE MISTAKES IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

Even the best vegetable gardeners can forget basics and make rookie mistakes. Here are 7 no-nos to avoid.

Avis Richards, whose Ground Up Campaign teaches New York City school kids how to grow their own food, reveals the rookie mistakes that all gardeners should avoid.

1. Unwise watering. Too much, too little, too hard, too soft — they're all watering mistakes that'll wreck your garden. Before adding water, poke a finger a couple of inches into the soil. If it's moist, save the water; if it's dry, train a gentle spray at the base of plants. Better yet, wind a drip hose (\$13 for 50 feet) through your garden; that way, you'll deliver moisture to the roots without wasting water on leaves and to evaporation.

2. Forgetting to test. Even veteran gardeners forget to test their soil every year to make sure it has the pH and nutrients plants need. For about \$10, you can send a sample to your state extension service and receive a complete analysis. Or, buy a DIY test kit at your local garden center. When you know what your soil is made of, either select plants that thrive in that type of earth, or amend soil to match your garden's needs.

3. Planting garden divas. Of course you love summer tomatoes, but they can be tricky to grow during summers that are too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry. So newbies should try growing a couple of tomato plants just for fun, then load gardens with foolproof veggies and herbs, such as beans, peppers, oregano, and parsley. If you must grow a tomato, plant cherry tomatoes that can survive anything summer can throw at them and even yield fruit into fall.

4. Raising too much. One cherry tomato plant can yield 80 fruit, and a



single zucchini plant can keep your neighbors in zucchini bread through winter. So don't plant more than you can eat, put up, or share with friends. The National Gardening Association says an edible garden of about 200 sq. ft. should keep a family of four in veggies all summer. If you do grow more than you need, donate it to a local food bank or plan a swap with fellow gardeners.

5. Growing everything from seed. Some crops, such as salad greens, radishes, carrots, peas, beans, and squash, are easy to grow from seeds that germinate in a couple of weeks. Experience will tell you that eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower, and tomatoes are better grown from seedlings, which someone else has nurtured for months. Pick plants that are short and compact; avoid leggy plants with blooms that are liable to die on the vine as the plant acclimates itself to your garden.

6. Assuming you know. Gardeners often read seed packages and figure they know everything about growing vegetables. Wrong! The more you know about your hardiness zone, soil, weather, insects, and vegetable varieties, the better your garden will grow. So curl up with a good gardening book, and surf the web for garden bloggers that share your passion. Better yet, join a gardening club where you can share tips and seeds.

7. Relying on pesticides. Don't bring out the big guns, which can contaminate the watershed, until you've tried less-toxic ways to get rid of garden pests. Ladybugs and praying mantis, which you can buy at garden supply stores, will eat garden intruders, such as aphids and beetles. Non-toxic insecticidal soaps will take care of soft-bodied insects (don't use if ladybugs are around).

Source: Lisa Kaplan Gordon

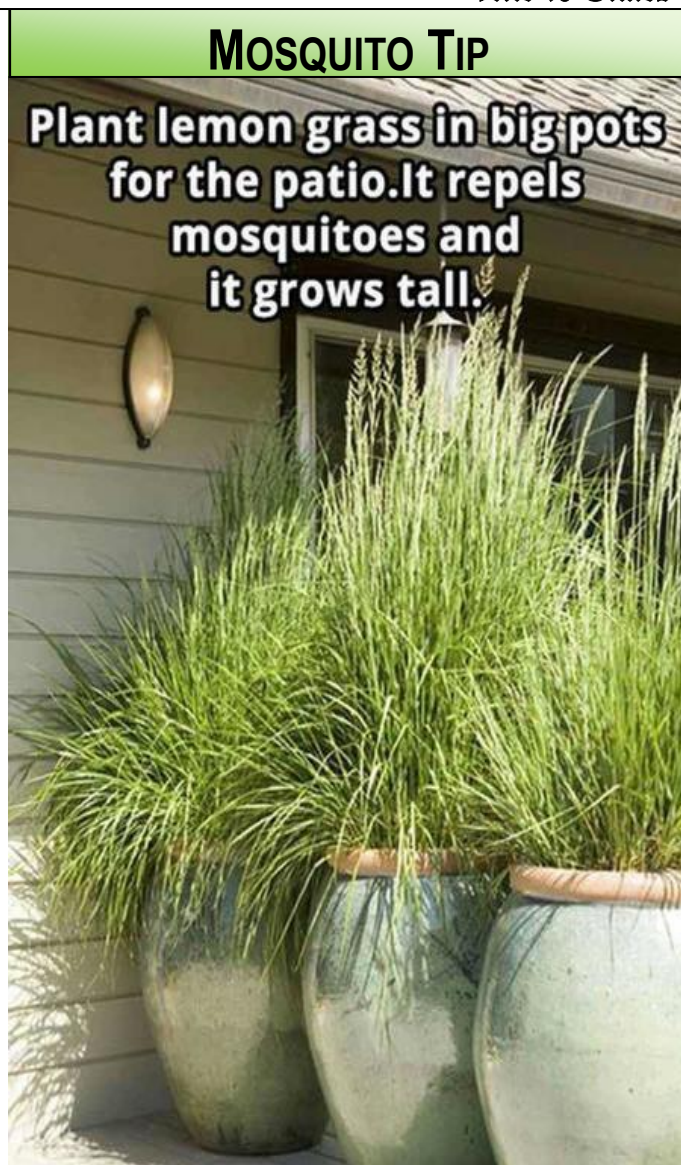


homesteadspirit.com

GROWING CALENDAR

PLANT	START INDOORS	TRANSPLANT OUTDOORS
Basil	April 15	May 20
Tomatoes	April 15	May 20
Broccoli	March 15	May 1
Cauliflower	March 15	May 1
Peppers	May 1	June 20
Parsley	March 1	May 1
Cabbage	March 15	May 1
Pumpkin	May 1	May 20
Beets	**	April 15
Kale	March 1	April 15
Celery	Feb 15	March 15
Cucumber	May 1	June 15
Onions	Feb 15	April 1
Lettuce	March 1	April 1
Melon	April 15	June 1
Spinach	**	March 15
B. Sprouts	March 15	May 1
Corn	April 15	May 15
Peas	March 15	May 1
Potatoes	**	April 15

homesteadspirit.com



MILITARY: VA BENEFITS FOR YOUR CHILD

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers several benefits for the children of veterans: (1) education benefits — servicemembers may transfer the GI Bill to their dependent children before leaving service; (2) health care — CHAMPVA provides coverage to eligible dependent children; (3) life insurance — family coverage is available to members insured under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI); and (4) memorial benefits — minor or unmarried adult children may be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. Also, specific benefits are available for children of servicemembers who died or were seriously injured in the line of duty. For more info, go to <https://explore.va.gov/spouses-dependents-survivors>

Source: Military.com



WHY IS MY DOG SO ITCHY?

Is your dog constantly licking and scratching? If so, you're not alone. Many dogs lick and scratch as result of itching (also called pruritus). The itching may be minimal or extreme, and can even cause injury.

Itching can be from many possible skin conditions and, treating an itch effectively requires determining the underlying cause. This is not a road you want to go down alone. Finding the cause of an itch requires testing, and help from your veterinarian.

What might make my dog itchy?

It is important to remember that itching is not a disease, or a cause of disease, but rather the result of a disease process. Effectively treating itching requires treating its cause. If your dog is frequently itchy, you may first suspect a problem with fleas. It's a common assumption, but fleas are far from the only cause of skin irritations and itches. That said, your dog should absolutely be on year-round flea and tick medication.

The most common broad causes of itching are:

- Parasites
- Infections
- Allergies
- Skin disease
- Skin cancer (less common)

Some diseases only start to itch when a dog develops secondary bacterial or yeast infections. Whatever the cause, it's understandable that intense itching is a serious source of distress for your dog.

Dog allergies

Allergen exposure may occur any number of ways:

- Inhalation
- Topical exposure
- Ingestion

All may result in a cascade of inflammatory chemicals from cells in the skin. A dog may show allergic signs like itching when his immune systems begins to recognize



everyday substances (allergens) as dangerous. Allergic conditions will also be considered by your veterinarian and efforts made to identify the cause, as well as attempt to stop the allergic reactions.

Atopic or allergic dermatitis is associated with inhaled or even topical materials that enter the body and trigger an excessive release of inflammatory secretions that result in itch.

Interpreting allergy tests requires experience and you may even need a specialist.

There are recent developments in the treatment of allergies and allergic reaction. Ask your veterinarian what can be done.

Diagnosing an itchy dog

Determining the cause begins with your vet taking a detailed medical and chronological history:

- What have you seen and when did you first see it?
- How has it progressed?
- Are other pets affected, are you?

Next is a thorough physical examination, focusing on—but not limited to—the skin. Parasites and infectious conditions should be considered. They are relatively common, and generally respond to appropriate treatments very well. They may or may not be the main cause of itching.

Dry skin can also be a cause of itching, or can be a result of other conditions. In either case, dryness makes itching worse and needs to be addressed.

Because some metabolic and systemic illnesses can cause itching, blood tests may be advised to evaluate the health of organ systems other than the skin.

One important thing to remember is that while you may be annoyed by your dog's itch, they are genuinely suffering and need to be diagnosed and treated without delay.
Source: Dr. Mike Paul, DVM

WOMEN, ASPIRIN, & COLON CANCER PREVENTION

Many studies show that taking a baby aspirin every day can reduce a man's risk of colon cancer.

Now, a new study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine shows that middle-aged women who took 100 milligrams of aspirin (a little more than a standard baby aspirin) at least every other day for 10 years were less likely to develop colon cancer.

Women at high risk because of family history or previous polyps should discuss it with their doctors.



Source: Cheryl Bower, SF Realtor

Feeling Trapped? Just Take a Nap

Need a break from today's high-speed world? Maybe you don't need a vacation. Perhaps you just need a nap.

Nowadays, workers very rarely get a real "break" from work. According to experts, a nap can refresh you and take you away from what is bothering you.

If you find yourself feeling sluggish around or after noontime, and you just wish you could ditch the rest of the day and go home, you might benefit from a quick nap. A nap can re-anchor you and at the same time, disconnect you from voices of tired self-criticism.



Today's Laugh

**I DON'T TRUST JOGGERS.
THEY'RE ALWAYS THE ONES
WHO FIND DEAD BODIES.**

**I'M NO DETECTIVE,
JUST SAYIN'.**

Louisiana Hot Crab Dip

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 pound jumbo lump crabmeat, free of shells
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
- 3 tablespoons minced green onions (white and green parts)
- Salt and pepper to taste



DIRECTIONS:

1. In saucepan, combine milk and flour. Cook over medium-high heat stirring constantly, until it forms a thick paste. Let cool.
2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.
3. Combine all of the ingredients in a casserole dish and gently stir until thoroughly mixed. Adjust seasoning to taste. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until lightly golden on top. Serve hot.
4. Makes about 1 1/2 cups

Source: My Foodies

Bug Jug



NEEDED

- Knife or sharp scissors
- Dirt (plants optional)
- Empty 2L plastic bottle with lid
- Glue
- Netting (bridal tulle was used in the picture. Panty hose works too.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. With a craft knife or sharp scissors, cut an air hole into your plastic bottle (parents-help the younger kids with this).
2. Add dirt, and plants if you wish, into the bottom of the bottle. You will need the dirt in the bottom to weigh the bottle down, and the bugs will like it too!
3. Securely glue on the netting around the air hole.
4. Now...ADD BUGS! Guide your bugs into the jug through the open top and then seal it u with the lid.



Source: BusyBeeKidsCrafts.com

THINGS A BURGLAR WON'T TELL YOU

13 Things A Burglar Won't Tell You

1. Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.

2. Hey, thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.

3. Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste ... and taste means there are nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.

4. Yes, I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.

5. If it snows while you're out of town, get a neighbor to create car and foot tracks into the house. Virgin drifts in the driveway are a dead giveaway.

6. If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.

7. A good security company alarms the window over the sink. And the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom-and your jewelry. It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there too.

8. It's raining, you fumble with your umbrella, and you forgot to lock your door-understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.

9. I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. (Don't take me up on it.)

10. Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.



11 Helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.

12. You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.

13. A loud TV or radio can be a better deterrent than the best alarm system. If you're reluctant to leave your TV on while you're out of town, you can buy a \$35 device that works on a timer and simulates the flickering glow of a real TV. (Find it at faketv.com)

8 More Things A Burglar Won't Tell You

1. Sometimes, I carry a clipboard.. Sometimes, I dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake. I do my best to never, ever look like a crook.

2. The two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors.

3. I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.

4. I'm not complaining, but why would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house without setting it?

5. I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets.

6. Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.

7. To you, leaving that window open just a crack during the day is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.

8. If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in.

Sources: Convicted burglars in North Carolina, Oregon, California, and Kentucky; security consultant Chris McGoey, who runs crimedoctor.com; and Richard T. Wright, a criminology professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, who interviewed 105 burglars for his book Burglars on the Job.

CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: FEBRUARY 2018

State/Region/County	Feb. 2018	Jan. 2018	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$522,440	\$527,780	-1.0%
Calif. Condo Average	\$461,400	\$433,160	+6.5%
Sacramento	\$350,000	\$350,000	+0.0%
Placer	\$472,370	\$446,000	+5.9%
El Dorado	\$468,000	\$480,000	-2.5%
Contra-Costa	\$610,000	\$555,000	+9.9%
San Francisco	\$1,730,000	\$1,330,000	+30.1%
Santa Clara	\$1,383,500	\$1,170,000	+18.2%
Solano	\$430,000	\$425,000	+1.2%



State/Region/County	Feb. 2018	Jan. 2018	MTM% Chg
Los Angeles	\$527,280	\$564,100	-6.5%
Orange County	\$805,380	\$780,000	+3.3%
Riverside	\$396,250	\$397,250	-0.3%
San Diego	\$605,000	\$590,000	+2.5%
Yolo	\$397,500	\$383,000	+3.8%
Fresno	\$265,000	\$245,450	+8.0%
San Joaquin	\$365,000	\$350,000	+4.3%
Stanislaus	\$300,000	\$295,000	+1.7%
Butte	\$297,000	\$314,750	-5.6%
Yuba	\$269,000	\$265,360	+1.4%

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APRIL

WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:

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