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Ragweed season is almost here!

Are you suffering from sneezing, runny nose, swollen, itchy, watery eyes this time of the year? It's the beginning of ragweed season. You are probably one of 36 million Americans with ragweed allergy who need to take precautions to avoid exposure to ragweed.

Ragweed is plant that can grow anywhere. It produces one billion pollen grains per season. These can travel up to 400 miles due to their light weight. It commonly grows in fields, along highways and in vacant lots. It is most prevalent throughout the Northeast, South and Midwest from Mid-August to October. Even city dwellers are not exempt from the wrath of ragweed due to its wide distribution.

In addition to typical allergy symptoms including runny nose, sneezing, itchy/watery/swollen eyes, ragweed can also cause symptoms of oral allergy syndrome (OAS). This causes people with seasonal allergies to experience itchy mouth/throat with mild swelling after consuming fresh fruits and vegetables. These include banana, cucumber, melon, zucchini, sunflower seeds, chamomile tea and Echinacea.

Tips for avoidance:

- Keep windows closed at all times to prevent ragweed pollen from entering your home.
- Use air-conditioning which cleans, cools and dries the air.
- Minimize outdoor activities between 10 am and 4 pm when pollen counts are high.
- Keep car windows closed while you are traveling and use air-conditioning
- Take a shower after being outdoors.

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