

Roses and orchids are often good choices for people with pollen allergies because their pollen is less likely to become airborne than pollen from wind pollinated plants. No flower is safe for everyone, though, so ask about the recipient's allergies and scent sensitivities before sending a bouquet.

Start with roses and orchids

Roses are a familiar choice, and many varieties hold their pollen within layers of petals. A rose can still cause a reaction in someone who is sensitive to it, and its scent may bother a person who is sensitive to fragrance. Choose a lightly scented or unscented variety if you can.

Orchids have pollen held together in small masses rather than released as loose, dusty grains. A potted orchid can be a thoughtful option for someone who enjoys a lasting plant. Check that the recipient is comfortable receiving one, since allergies and sensitivities vary.

These flowers are not a guarantee of comfort. The safest choice is one informed by what the person already knows about their own reactions.

Think beyond the main flower

A bouquet is more than its largest blooms. Filler flowers, foliage and fragrances can also affect how comfortable it is to have nearby. Ask the florist what will be included, and request a simple arrangement without strongly scented additions.

Fragrance sensitivity is different from pollen allergy. A person may find a strong floral smell unpleasant or experience symptoms around it even if pollen is not the cause. Avoid perfumed sprays and scented packaging as

well as heavily scented blooms.

If the flowers will be sent to a shared workplace or a hospital room, remember that other people may be nearby. A small, low scent arrangement is easier to place than a large, fragrant display. Check the room's rules before sending flowers to a hospital.

Flowers to approach with care

Some people react to flowers in the daisy family, which includes chrysanthemums and sunflowers. Sensitivity to ragweed may also be relevant because ragweed belongs to the same plant family. This does not mean everyone with a ragweed allergy will react to every flower in that family, but it is worth asking before including them.

Lilies can have a strong scent and visible pollen that stains. Removing their anthers can reduce the loose pollen, but it does not make a lily suitable for everyone. Lilies are also highly toxic to cats, so leave them out of arrangements sent to a home with cats.

Make the gift fit the person

A brief message before ordering can prevent an uncomfortable surprise. Ask which flowers the recipient avoids, whether scent is a problem and whether there are pets at home. If they have had a severe reaction to flowers, let their own advice guide the choice.

If fresh flowers are not welcome, a card or another nonfloral gift may be kinder. The thought is in making it easy for the person to enjoy receiving it.

A simple bouquet of roses or an orchid can be lovely, but the most considerate gift is one that suits the person's home and health.

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