

# Pollen in Tahoe triggering allergic reactions

By Kathryn Reed

That runny nose and cough may not be a lingering cold. It could be allergies.

There is no “allergy season” per se, just peak times for certain allergies. With plants beginning to bloom sooner than normal in the basin, people are experiencing allergic reactions to them. How this affects an individual all depends on what one is allergic to.

The pollen count in the Lake Tahoe Basin has been on the rise with the arrival of an early spring. According to Pollen.com, South Lake Tahoe is expected to have a pollen count of 8.8 today, which puts it in the medium-high zone. Sunday it could hit 10 and Monday 11.3 – both in the high category.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says 8 percent of the people in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies – that is about 40 million people.

“The most common plant allergy in South Lake Tahoe is pine pollen. Other common allergies are dust and pet dander,” Ronald Roth, a board-certified otolaryngologist at Barton Ear, Nose, & Throat, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Plants, flowers and trees  
are blossoming and blooming  
in Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Pollen is the main allergen of hay fever.

One way to help curb the problem is to stay inside and try not to bring pollen indoors. But this can make people feel like a shut-in. It also means not opening windows to have a fresh breeze.

While plant allergies are seasonal, dust allergies can be a year-round problem. However, dust and fungus allergies are more common in winter, according to Roth.

“If you experience allergies, try an over the counter medication. Decongestants such as Claritin or Zyrtec, or nasal spray, including Nasacort, can relieve allergy symptoms for some people,” Roth said.

**He offered these tips:**

- Wash your pets.
- Change your air filters.
- Buy down-proof pillowcases and protectors.
- A HEPA air filter can also make it easier to breathe.
- If you're seeing persistent symptoms, contact your primary care provider for a prescription medication or for other treatment options.

**Symptoms include:**

- Runny nose
- Congestion
- Headaches

- Cough
- Throat irritation
- Post nasal drip
- Ear itching
- Ear fullness or congestion.

Allergies treat everyone equally. Men and women of all ages are susceptible to being allergic to something.