



Topic: Fall Seasonal Allergy in Southwest Florida

Question: This is the second year in a row that I have been sick right at Halloween. The doctors are skeptical of it being a bug from seasonal travelers and instead believe it is an allergy. Is there some type of plant in bloom that is strongest at this time of year that may be affecting me? I work on Pine Island and live in North West Cape Coral.

- Bobbi, Cape Coral

Answer: One can never be sure what may be the cause of an allergic reaction in some people. There are numerous trees, shrubs and grasses that are in bloom at this time of year. However, two stand out because of their colorful displays. The earleaf Acacia, *Acacia auriculiformis*, begins blooming in late summer. It is the tree that is covered with yellow flowers from September into November. This is an invasive species that fruits prolifically, the seeds of which are dispersed by several bird species. The tree has made significant inroads on Pine Island in the last three or more years. Hundreds of young trees can now be seen blooming on the island in October. Another species to consider is the salt bush, *Baccharis halimifolia*, which is currently in full bloom. It is the large shrub one sees cloaked in white along the highways and in the fields of south Florida. Saltbush is a dioecious species with male and female plants. A single male plant will have thousands of florets and a greater amount of pollen. The white bristles from the female plants will soon fall apart to float in the air. These may not be the cause of your problem, but they are worth considering.

Useful Links

[Saltbush Fact Sheet](#)

[Saltbush Video](#)

[What's Blooming Fact Sheets & Powerpoints](#)

[Stephen's Webpage](#)



Earleaf Acacia



Saltbush

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