

# Allergy season 'one of worst'

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<sup>13</sup> [Back to accessibility links](#)

## Beginning of Story Content



*Shane Nantz kicks up a cloud of pollen as he mows the front yard of his west Charlotte, N.C., home last April. Heavy snow and rain in some parts of the U.S. have nourished a profusion of tree pollen. Todd Sumlin/The Charlotte Observer/Associated Press*

There may be a dusting of truth to allergy sufferers' complaints that this season is, well, a bigger headache than years past.

Heavy snow and rain in some parts of the country have nourished a profusion of tree pollen, while a sudden shift to warm, sunny weather has made its release more robust. Add in the wind, and the suffering skyrockets.

Warnings for a difficult season have come from allergy specialists from New York to Atlanta, Chicago to California.

"This past week has been one of the worst ever," rasped Lynne Ritchie, 70, as she bought allergy medicine this week at a Manhattan drugstore.

Dr. Stanley Schwartz hears that from patients all the time — every year, in fact, he noted with a wry smile.

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"Literally, every year is the worst year," said Schwartz, chief of allergy and rheumatology for Kaleida Health and the University at Buffalo. "Now it may actually be, but when it's there and you're feeling it, you don't remember what last year was like."

April was a historic month for weather, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia all set records for the wettest April since 1895.