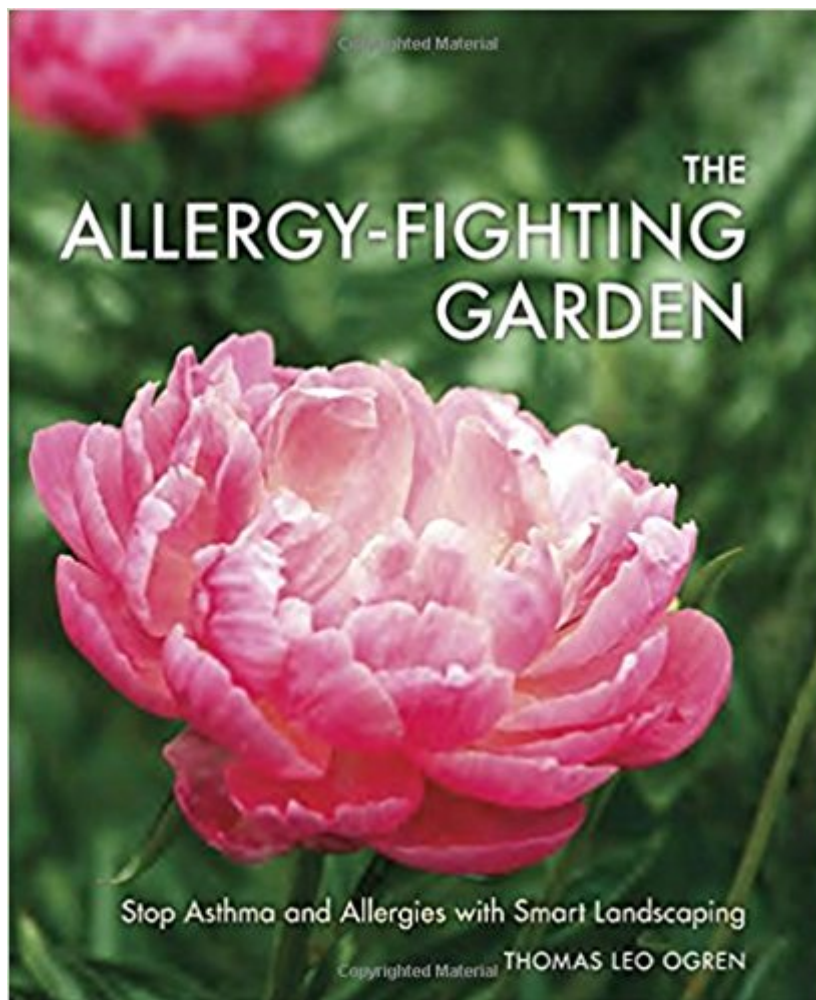




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The Allergy-Fighting Garden: Stop Asthma And Allergies With Smart Landscaping



Synopsis

Breathe Easy with This Groundbreaking Gardening Guide – If you are one of the millions of people with allergies or asthma, this totally unique book shows you how to avoid plants that trigger allergies and to create a garden that will actually protect you by trapping pollen and cleaning the air around you. This revolutionary approach combines the best of horticulturist Thomas Ogren’s previous books – •Allergy-Free Gardening and Safe Sex in the Garden – into a full-color guide, including hundreds of new and updated plant listings and photographs. Ogren’s innovative system for combating allergens is based on the crucial matter of plant sex. By replacing troublesome male plants in your yard with pollen-blocking female “pollen screens,” allergy sufferers can reduce or eliminate their symptoms. More than 3,000 plant listings are included, accompanied by an easy-to-use allergy ranking scale of 1 to 10. With many new pollen-free plants to choose from, as well as clearly marked “worst offenders” to avoid, this is the ultimate resource for home gardeners and professionals alike who want to build healthy, safe, and beautiful gardens that everyone can enjoy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

THOMAS LEO OGREN has a master’s degree in agricultural science and is the creator of the Ogren Plant Allergy Scale (OPALS), a plant-allergy ranking system now used by the United States Department of Agriculture. He is a horticulturist and allergy researcher as well as a former landscape gardening instructor, nursery owner, and gardening radio show host. He lives in San Luis

Obispo, California.

Foreword Very rarely do we come across an idea that is both exceptionally good and revolutionary in its scope; the book *The Allergy-Fighting Garden* by Thomas Leo Ogren is such an idea. I was a practicing allergist for more than fifty years. In the past I often advised people to avoid the "toxic" highly allergenic shrubs and trees, but my knowledge of botany was limited. Today, allergies are given short shrift in American medical schools. Students preparing for a medical career will receive only one or two lectures on the subject during a four-year course of intense study. Allergies cause a huge amount of pain and suffering. There are many medical treatments for allergies, and none of them is perfect. All of them have side effects. The very best treatment for allergy is to avoid the offending substance. But when the state or city park department plants trees for shade, for example, they can end up causing intense suffering because of their poor choice of trees. Homeowners, too, unknowingly make poor choices and cause themselves years of allergy as they surround their houses with allergy-causing trees, shrubs, and lawns. However, before this book, if you wanted to plant a landscape with allergy-free plants, you had few places to turn to for advice. Some landscapers knew that fruitless mulberries and olive trees caused allergy, but that was about it. *The Allergy-Fighting Garden* is therefore a greatly needed book. Several things especially make this work so valuable. Ogren's allergy scale, assigning all plants a simple 1 to 10 allergy ranking, is a marvelous idea. All plants are not created equal. Certain plants cause no allergy, some cause very little, and some cause a great deal of suffering. Ogren's allergy scale addresses this problem head-on. Another fine idea in this book is the reasoning about the dioecious species of plants. Dioecious (separate-sexed) plants cause far more than their share of allergies, because the male plants usually produce so much airborne pollen. These species, which include many common plants such as willows, ash, and maples, are often described as the worst allergy offenders. What Ogren figured out here is that the flip side is also true. If the males are the worst, then the females are the best! This is a simple idea, perhaps, but up until now no one has really addressed it. *The Allergy-Fighting Garden* should be on the shelf of every serious gardener. All allergy specialists would be wise to own a copy, and certainly the book should be in the library of every nursery and municipal park department. Perhaps most important of all, this text should be required reading for every college student of landscape design or horticulture. Ogren has made a valuable contribution to our good health, and now it is up to us to put the information to work. David A. Stadtner, MD

Tom, an eminent horticulturist, whose wife has asthma and allergies, became interested in allergy-free gardening more than 25 years ago. His research, lectures and publications have gained worldwide acclaim. As a master gardener, I am ashamed to admit I never considered allergy-free landscaping before now. Tom's book, his fourth on this subject, was an eye-opener for me. I am totally in awe of Tom's important work. I learned from the book that in the 1950's few people had severe allergies, but today asthma is the #1 chronic disease in children in the U.S. Tom explains how we created the problem -- yes, it is man-made. Originally, landscapers used plants propagated by seed, so there were more-or-less equal numbers of male and female. New discoveries allowed growers to produce separate-sexed plants, so they could choose one or the other. As you know, my dear gardening friends, the male produces pollen, the female produces fruit. As the female plants are the messy ones, the USDA recommended only male trees should be planted in towns and cities to reduce the amount of litter on sidewalks. Therefore, less mess, but 10,000 times more pollen than when both male and female were planted. Making it worse, not only do female plants produce no pollen, they trap and remove pollen from the air. The problem was further exacerbated when the trees lost through Dutch Elm Disease were replaced with male trees. Tom suggests you evaluate your existing plants. He does a good job of explaining perfect (bisexual) flowers, monoecious (single sexed) and dioecious (unisexual), suggesting ways you can determine the sex of a plant, giving several examples of each. An earlier book of Tom's has the attention-grabbing title, *Safe Sex*. It's a great title now we know the link between the sex of the plant and its power to cause or prevent allergies. In one section of the book, Tom discusses eliminating allergy-causing mold spores with such considerations as mulches, airflow, and sunlight. He advocates IPM and avoiding insecticides and fungicides ... in my case this is 'preaching to the choir.' As well as advice on home landscaping, Tom shows how we can fight allergies in neighborhoods and cities by writing letters and sending emails. He draws attention to the concern about pollen in our school yards. In addition, he points out that the push to 'plant more trees' has no regard for the allergy problem. The most important part of the book for me is the A - Z listing of allergy-fighting plants. Tom has developed the Ogren Plant Allergy Scale or OPALS. This is a numerical scale ranking such factors as amount of pollen produced, potency of the pollen, how long in bloom, size of pollen grains, etc. It is a 1 - 10 scale with one being the least allergenic. Each plant is ranked against other plants of the same type (obviously, a tree with a high rank will be worse than a perennial with a high rank, because of size.) The A - Z plant list is very comprehensive with cross-references, so you can find a plant when you only know the common name. Each A - Z plant description gives growing conditions and other information as well as its ranking. Finally, the book has an excellent glossary, recommended

reading list, list of useful websites, a pollen calendar, and a USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Tom sent me a free iBook in return for an honest review. I purchased a hard copy from , because I need to take the book with me for reference when I go to the garden center to make my new plant purchases. Some companies have started using OPALS labels, but many have not. I highly recommend this important book for gardeners, landscapers, and anyone concerned with allergies. It is a fascinating subject of interest to all.

Tom is a "spot on" when he writes and speaks about the hazards of planting too many male trees. For example, as an allergy sufferer, I regularly regret the decision of city landscapers in San Luis Obispo, CA, where I live, to plant huge numbers of male birch trees. He knows the allergen propensity of virtually every common plant. Fifteen years ago Tom spotted a full-grown *Podocarpus gracilior*, a fern pine that is one of the back bone plants of modern landscaping nearby the door of my home office. I was having to take antihistamines every time I went to work. Tom told me to get rid of the *Podocarpus*. I no longer needed the heavy dose of antihistamines. Since then I am a total convert to Allergy Free Gardening, the title of Tom's first book which premiered OPALS, the rating scale for plants based on the virility of their pollen. Liz and I re-landscaped our gardens with highly beneficial results. His understanding of the history of plants and landscaping is unsurpassed. We can learn a great deal from the planting practices of earlier peoples. Tom points out that California Franciscan missionaries knew not to plant the ubiquitous olive groves too near residential areas. A lot of sneezing was avoided 150 years before Kleenex and antihistamines. We are giving a copy of *The Allergy-Fighting Garden* to our landscape gardener, just as we have with each of Tom's books. Readers and listeners who've heard Tom Ogren will want to do the same.

As both an organic gardener, environmental biologist, allergy researcher and allergy patient I must write that this is the most comprehensive analysis of the interface between pollen exposure and allergy patient that I have yet read. The book provides information for allergy patients to do something positive to control their own allergic environment that goes well beyond usual recommendations like air cleaners and allergy shots. *The "Allergy Fighting Garden"* takes the reader well beyond the garden, enabling the creation of allergen-free school yards and low allergen city streets. I had high regard for Thomas Ogren's first book but this one is exceptional.

Wow this book has really filled in the blanks for me. I have extreme allergies and can become overwhelmed by anaphylaxis. This is tough when you are a Landscape Architect. I so wish for more research and more education for those who suffer. The Author really raised the red flag for all to take seriously. We should all consider undoing what programs like "clean streets" are really doing to the natural environment and mankind. Seems as if female trees could someday be extinct. Correction would then become difficult at best. Allergies seem very secondary to standard medicine, but for some and the growing numbers it is a breath of fresh air to have an Author aware and willing to offer insight.

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