Ragweed Season Begins in Southwest Ohio

SOUTHWEST OHIO – The Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency has recorded ragweed in recent pollen counts signifying ragweed has begun to bloom in Greater Cincinnati. Ragweed is a summer annual that produces abundant pollen and is the primary cause of hay fever. Although ragweed is already present, September tends to be its peak month and those who suffer from allergies may have increased symptoms during the next several weeks.

Ragweed plants are dominant in the Midwest and produce billions of pollen grains which are easily caught by the wind and spread throughout the region. The severity of hay fever depends on the amount of pollen in the air and the degree of sensitivity of the person. On cloudy, windless or rainy days, the average sufferer may have fewer symptoms due to little pollination and dissemination of the pollen. When the weather becomes hot, dry, sunny and windy, symptoms may spike and return. A frost usually ends the hay fever season for most sufferers.

To reduce exposure to ragweed and other pollens and molds, the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency recommends:

- Avoid areas with freshly cut grass and avoid lawn care activities, such as raking leaves or working with compost.
- Minimize outdoor activity between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. – when pollen levels are highest.
- After being outdoors, it is best to shower and change clothing, as pollen can adhere to clothing, skin and hair. Be aware that pets can also bring pollen into your home.
- Keep windows closed and use an air conditioner in the home and car as much as possible to reduce the amount of allergens entering.
- Don’t hang sheets or clothing outside to dry. Pollens can collect on them.
- Contact an allergist or doctor for medical advice.

The Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency tracks pollen and mold levels on weekdays and posts the counts by 10 a.m. at 513-946-7753 and SouthwestOhioAir.org. The higher the pollen and mold count is, the greater the likelihood that particles will make their way into the nasal passages and lungs and induce allergic symptoms. Additional information can be found in the Living with Allergies brochure, available for download at SouthwestOhioAir.org or mailed by request.
The Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency works with government agencies, businesses, communities and citizens to achieve and maintain healthy air quality for Southwest Ohio. The Agency is a division of the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) which also encompasses the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District. For more information, visit the Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency online at SouthwestOhioAir.org or interact with us on Facebook and Twitter.

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