

**Cedar fever season is upon us once again, complete with runny noses, itchy eyes and general misery. But what exactly is cedar fever, and why is it so insufferable this time of year?**

**For starters, cedar fever isn't a flu or a virus – it is an allergic reaction to the pollen released by mountain cedar trees. In Texas, the predominant species of mountain cedar is the Ashe juniper.**

**“Cedar fever is the worst west of I-35, where you have primarily juniper mixed in with oaks and some other species,” said Jonathan Motsinger, Texas A&M Forest Service Central Texas Operations Department Head. “And because all of those junipers are producing pollen at the same time, you’re going to get a higher concentration of pollen in the air.”**

**This is one of the primary factors contributing to cedar fever – the sheer quantity and density of Ashe junipers in central Texas. According to Karl Flocke, a woodland ecologist for Texas A&M Forest Service, the pollen from Ashe junipers isn't particularly allergenic or harmful – it's just so concentrated that, even if you aren't generally susceptible to allergies, it could still affect you.**

**“There are millions of junipers out there all releasing pollen at the same time,” said Flocke, “you can't help but breathe it in, and when you do, your body reacts as it would to any perceived threat - it tries to fight it.”**

**Since the pollen is spread by the wind, cedar fever can affect individuals far removed from areas with a high concentration of juniper trees. And the source isn't limited to Ashe junipers: in more eastern parts of the state, there are also eastern redcedars that pollinate around the same time and can induce a similar response from people's auto-immune systems.**

**For more information about how to identify Ashe junipers and/or eastern redcedars in your own backyard, check out the Texas A&M Forest Service's [Texas Tree ID](#) webpage or the [My Tree ID](#) mobile app. You can also see the distribution of junipers across the state via our [Forest Distribution App](#), which can identify the distribution of native tree species across the state of Texas.**