

# Mountain Cedar

*(Juniperus sabinoides, aka ashei)*

Mountain Cedar has a relatively small geographical distribution, but it makes up for that shortcoming with very high levels of highly allergenic pollen when in season. The US Forest Service identifies Mountain Cedar's distribution as limited to Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri. However, if a person is allergic to Mountain Cedar, it is highly likely that they will also experience allergy symptoms to other members of the Juniperus Genus – such as California Juniper, *Juniperus californica* (California, Arizona and Nevada), and Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* (throughout the Midwest and Eastern US). Note that while the common names are a mix of “cedar” and “juniper”, the scientific name of the Genus is the same for all of these (*Juniperus*), and that is why these plants will cross-react with each other. One other very unique trait of Mountain Cedar is that it pollinates late in the year, typically late November through January. That is very unusual for a tree – most trees (and all the other junipers mentioned above) pollinate in the early spring.

One Mountain Cedar tree can produce millions of pollen grains. This pollen can often be seen as “smoke” blowing off of a tree – that “smoke” being clouds of pollen. The pollen can travel for miles, as it is light and very buoyant. One important precaution for allergic patients during this pollen season is to keep their windows and doors closed, and limit outdoor activities when possible.

In addition to the pollen being the cause of “Cedar Fever” in allergic individuals, Mountain Cedar also represents a problem due to its crowding out of native hardwoods and grasses, and its habit of consuming large amounts of groundwater.

