



## The Fertile Soil of Youth

Springtime. We already seeing beautiful growth burst from God's creation. Our garden is begging for some special attention to be fertilized and seeded for botanical beauty.

Just like in the garden, in your home you need to PLANT AND CULTIVATE THE SEEDS of patience, kindness and thoughtfulness in your child's heart this Spring. After all, their little hearts are FERTILE soil that is primed and ready for tilling.

All you've got to do is plant and water the RIGHT seeds. If weeds of selfishness, unkindness and anger are growing, the best way to pull those weeds is to plant the opposite kind of seeds. For impatient, demanding, and selfishness weeds, plant patience, giving and thoughtfulness seeds - by using a positive spin on your verbal teaching. For example, instead of saying "don't spill the milk", consider saying "look how careful you are being with your milk." Instead of "don't hit your sister", say "let me see you express kindness to your sister." Or instead of, "stop complaining", say "let me see how patient you can be." Many parents focus on telling their children what not to do, but instruction and teaching about what it is they should be doing will have a far greater impact. For every weed, plant the opposite seed!

Happy. Healthy. Allergy- Season - When all those beautiful seeds are blooming this month (both in your child's heart and in your yard) unfortunately so are those seasonal allergies. With the increased pollen and outdoor allergens, it's crucial to make sure that the air inside your home is as clean and

happy. healthy.<sup>®</sup> as possible. The following is a checklist I've used before to ensure that you are doing all you can to make your home worthy for Springtime combat:

- Dust on top of ceiling fan blades, door frames, bookshelves and refrigerators, as well as air vents.
- Wash your child's bedding once a week in hot water to help kill dust mites. Protect your child from the mites with an allergy-proof mattress pad and pillow cover.
- Vacuum your home at least once a week with a vacuum bag that traps the little rascals (the mites, not your kids!). Don't allow your son/daughter with allergies to reenter room for 20 minutes after vacuuming, as dust mites may still be airborne.
- If your child likes to be on the floor, get them a blanket, a rug you can wash or a vinyl beanbag to sit on.
- Wash the family pets weekly and keep them out of childrens' rooms.
- Run an air filter in your child's room.
- Replace your heating and air conditioning filter.
- Use dehumidifiers in these warmer months to prevent unseen airborne molds. (Year-round dehumidifiers are an absolute must in any basement with underground walls in the South!)
- Switching to hardwood floors, vinyl/leather furniture and removing pets from home are all good ideas for children with severe allergies.

I know it seems unjust that with all the beauty and joy of Spring, with Easter and all the significance of new life because of Jesus, that we also have to endure the allergies, mosquitoes and yellowdusting of our patio furniture and cars. And yet, while Spring's nuisances serve as a reminder to us that we aren't yet in our perfect Heavenly home, the colors of Spring also give us a sneak peek of the beauty that awaits us when we get there!

By Michael G Anderson MD FAAP

Doc Anderson (M G Anderson, MD, FAAP) writes for **North Georgia Kids**, and is a practicing pediatrician in Canton, Georgia. He is a medical director and Asst Prof of Pediatrics at Children's Pediatrics Center, East Main | 391 East Main Street | Canton, Georgia 30114

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