

LOSING THE SENSE OF SMELL

Garrett Ray

On my morning walk today, I passed some lovely lilac bushes along the Wind Crest path. Lilacs are Nina's favorite flower, not only for the explosion of purple blooms but especially for the lovely fragrance. I moved closer but couldn't smell anything. Zip. Nothing. I sighed and walked on.

This has become a familiar pattern. Among the most common consequences of Parkinson's disease is losing the sense of smell. Don't ask me why. The Parkinson's Association web site lists this among the 10 most common early symptoms of the disease. The association asks, "Have you noticed you no longer smell certain foods like bananas, dill pickles or licorice very well?"

I am not a big fan of either dill pickles or licorice, so it doesn't feel much like a tragedy to me. There are positive consequences as well, as I am an equal-opportunity fragrance-free person. For example, dog poop on the green lawns of Wind Crest may offend lots of my Wind Crest neighbors, but it bothers me not at all.

Oddly, there are a few scents I can enjoy. I can smell the fragrance as I grind coffee beans fresh from the sack in the morning -- even though I can't "wake up and smell the coffee."