

Gardening Tips

Wood Ash

By John Ferguson

A question we often get asked is "**Can I use the wood ash from my fireplace in my garden?**"

The answer is a qualified YES. Wood ash has a lot of minerals (plant nutrients in it) however it is very alkaline and too much will change the pH of your soil. A trick I use is to collect the ash from my fireplace and place the ash into a 5 gallon bucket with a lid on it to keep it dry.

When there is a breeze and just before it rains, I remove the lid and use my electric blower. I aim the airstream over the bucket and slowly lower it until it starts sucking out the ash and scatters it into the wind. Note: Do not aim the airstream directly into the bucket or it will get all over you.

The wind will carry a very fine dusting of ash all over the yard. The rain (or sprinklers) will wash the ash into the soil. The minerals are returned to the soil where the microbes will make them available to the plants. The later of ash is so small per square foot that it does not affect the pH of the soil.

The next time I need to get rid of ash I wait till the wind is blowing from a different direction so eventually the whole yard is covered. I have been doing this for years with great results.