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## **JOHN'S CORNER: MINERALS**

*by John Ferguson*

I recently finished reading a couple books on minerals (elements) and what they do in nature, good or bad and how they are used. I became interested in the subject over 20 years ago when I was diagnosed as needing surgery to correct some problems in my elbow. After attending a lecture by a doctor, on the link between minerals in the soil and human health, I spoke with the doctor afterwards. He told me that I did not need surgery but that I had a mineral deficiency causing the pain and problems. I followed his advice and started taking some mineral supplements. In two weeks I was pain free. The doctor was Joel Wallach and he has a famous lecture on the subject recorded about 20 years ago titled, "Dead Doctors Don't Lie", By Joel Wallach, DVM, N.D. - It is an excellent lecture on nutrition, trace minerals and health (available on CD at many health food stores or online for \$2-3). It is a very informative lecture and he is also very funny and entertaining. Almost everything he says in the lecture has been confirmed by other researchers. There are now hundreds of human health issues that have been linked to poor nutrition and a lack of minerals. This puts our medical community at a tremendous disadvantage when they try to help us.

So what does all this have to do with gardening? We know that fruit and vegetable gardening has exploded in recent years as gardeners just want healthier and better tasting food that's not full of toxic chemicals.

Most of our gardening books tell us that we can raise plants with only 16 minerals. Most of the minerals in the human body (or animals) comes from the food we eat. Some studies have found that there are 90 minerals in the human body. Some may only be found in parts per trillion but they are there.

So the question is; if we get minerals from the food (plants) we eat and if they are not in the soil how can the plants get them? This means we do not get them and as a result the hundreds of health related problems occur. Hence we have a tremendous disconnect between how the plants are grown and our health.

The two books I finished reading on every element (mineral) and how they are used are:

Nature's Building Blocks - An A-Z Guide to the Elements, by John Emsley, Oxford University Press, Revised and Updated 2011, ISBN: 978-0-19-960563-7

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Trace Elements in Abiotic and Biotic Environments, Alina Kabata-Pendias and Barbara Szteke, CRC Press, 2015, ISBN: 13: 978-1-4822-1279-2

Over the years I have collected dozens of articles published in various journals on minerals as related to plant, human and animal health.

Over the next few weeks we will be talking about each element or mineral and what they do. Strictly speaking we will look at each element on the periodic table, however these elements are often absorbed and used when they are combined with another element. When this happens they are generally called minerals. A common example is when sodium (Na) an element, is combined with another element chlorine (Cl) we get the mineral known as halite that we call table salt (NaCl)