

Fake News and Garden Myths

Social media can be so good for many reasons such as keeping in touch with family and friends but when it comes to information of any kind including horticulture, stick to reputable sites.

Use egg shells to add calcium to your soil. True, but our soils have plenty of calcium. If you have a calcium deficiency you will need more calcium than egg shells provide.

Human hair or human urine will get rid of gophers. False, absolutely no truth to this myth.

To get sweeter tomatoes, add sugar to the planting hole. False, tomatoes cannot absorb sugar in this way.

Another tomato myth, use Epsom salts to make tomatoes sweeter. False, Magnesium sulfate is a salt and can cause fertilizer burn.

On the subject of tomatoes, use calcium sprays for blossom end rot. False, blossom end rot is not a lack of calcium. It is a lack of availability of calcium because of inconsistent irrigation.

Plant peas and potatoes on St. Patrick's day. For our area this is false. It is too late; the spring/early summer heat will kill them.

Use coffee grounds to acidify your soil. False, coffee grounds are actually neutral. There are many other good reasons to use coffee grounds in the garden such as a mulch or in your compost.

Add a handful of bone meal to planting holes before planting trees and shrubs. False, bone meal supplies high levels of phosphorus and calcium, elements that are rarely limited in non-agricultural soil. Phosphorus is a mineral, not a growth stimulator.

Put rocks in the bottom of your container for drainage. False, rocks will actually make the soil soggy. It has to do with water cohesion. You can put one rock over the hole in a container.

Plant pennies to add copper to your soil. False, pennies are not made from copper and our soils have plenty of copper.

For more information, go to our website; cecolusa.ucanr.edu