

Recycling fireplace ashes? **Not such a hot idea!**

Many of us want to recycle our wastes, including fireplace ashes. However, there are two major reasons NOT to do this.

1. On average, ashes contain up to 22 percent chemical salts which may convert your soil into a high salt area which is very unfriendly to plants.
2. Fireplace ashes are also highly alkaline with a pH close to the range of household bleach! Would you put bleach on your flower beds and gardens . . . of course, not. Also, ashes are plant and human hands unfriendly.

OSU suggests performing a soil test. If, in the uncommon case you have a documented potassium deficiency and if you need to reduce acidity in your soil, you may apply some ashes, but only once every ten years. See [OSU fact sheet 2238](#) for the recommended amount.

Otherwise, remember the ashes have no nutrients, other than potassium, have undesirable salts, and are very alkaline. Fireplace ashes will reduce soil acidity and add salt to your soil. And don't believe the folks who recommend fireplaces ashes in your garden to reduce slugs and snails – it doesn't work!

References:

<http://factsheets.okstate.edu/documents/PSS-2238-fireplace-ashes-for-lawn-and-garden-use/>

https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/home_gardening/fireplace-ashes-on-your-soil

Common Lawn and Garden Questions – Answered by OSU Extension
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