Gardening Myths & Legends – Which ones really work?

Everyone has a cure for the problems in your garden. But, most of the time their remedy is not treating the real problem – just the symptom. Many times the remedy is making the problem worse. There are even some claims out there which are downright dangerous to plants and gardeners alike. Below are some of the claims. During the presentation, we will discuss why some claims appear to work and some of the research-based information which shows the better solution.

In the space between the lines, make your notes about why you think the myth or legend is true or not true. Some of these items are not true. They are written to help you think about what you hear, and what the research says about many of these home remedies.

Miracle Cures?

• Latest and greatest stuff that…**kills bugs**, increases fruit, prevent weeds, **aerates clay soil**, prevents disease, is 100% organic, adds essential nutrients, **attract the good insects**

• Are you looking for results or entertainment?

• What is a chemical?

Soils

• Is it ok to use coffee grounds in compost? As mulch?

• Why would I plant a penny with my hydrangea?

• Grandpa told me to plant a nail with every tomato plant. Why?

• Wood ashes are a great addition to the garden. Really?

• Epsom Salts are a cure all for countless garden problems. Really? Why?

• Why would I ever need a soil test?

Sanitation

• Why must we sucker and tie tomatoes?

• A bleach solution is the best thing to use for sanitizing pruners.

• As long as I water in the morning (and not the evening), my plants with thrive!

• Baking soda will kill fungus problems on roses and other plants.

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Propagation

- Can I start a rose in a potato? Should I use a quart jar to cover a plant to get it to root?
- Do we need to soak our seeds?
- What are standard propagation practices?

Weed Control

- Mulch – Does it really have weed seeds and termites in it?
- Landscape cloth is the best way to keep weeds at bay?
- Organic weed control is only possible with a hoe or other cultivation.
- I’ve heard that salt and vinegar (not mixed together) kill weeds. Is that true?

Insects

- You must have ants on your peonies for them to bloom properly.
- You can use dish detergent instead of paying extra for insecticidal soap.
- Praying mantids are always good insects.
- All hybrids are bad when it comes to pollinators.

A few other areas of gardening…

- You have to put drainage materials in your containers and pots.
- If you get poison ivy - don’t scratch because that causes it to spread.
- Aluminum pie plates will keep the birds out of your garden all summer long.

Know how to find the right answer

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) the proper method for determining how to deal with issues in the home garden. The IPM method includes identification, monitoring, thresholds, cultural practices and more.
- Knowing how to search for the right information will help you to prove or disprove the latest craze.
  - Call your local Extension Office or Ask a Master Gardener (extension.org).
  - Use the right search terms: i.e. - ‘Tomato diseases University Extension’ to find unbiased, researched based information on your specific topic.
- If it sounds too good to be true…