

# Ashes In the Garden: Using Ashes in The Garden



A common question about composting is, “Should I put ashes in my garden?” You may wonder if ashes in the garden will help or hurt, and if you use wood or charcoal ashes in the garden, how it will affect your garden. Keep reading to understand more about wood ash uses in the garden.

## Should I Put Ashes in My Garden?

The short answer to if you should use wood ash as a fertilizer is “yes.” That being said, you need to be careful about how and where you use wood ash in the garden, and composting ashes is a good idea <sup>[1]</sup>.

## Using Wood Ash as a Fertilizer

Wood ash is an excellent source of lime <sup>[2]</sup> and potassium <sup>[3]</sup> for your garden. Not only that, using ashes in the garden also provides many of the trace elements that plants need to thrive.

But wood ash fertilizer is best used either lightly scattered, or by first being composted along with the rest of your compost. This is because wood ash will produce lye and salts if it gets wet. In small quantities, the lye and salt will not cause problems, but in larger amounts, the lye and salt may burn your plants. Composting fireplace ashes allows the lye and salt to be leached away.

Not all wood ash fertilizers are the same. If the fireplace ashes in your compost are made primarily from hardwoods, like oak and maple, the nutrients and minerals in your wood ash will be much higher. If the fireplace ashes in your compost are made mostly by burning softwoods like pine or firs, there will be fewer nutrients and minerals in the ash.

## Other Wood Ash Uses in the Garden

Wood ash is also useful for pest control. The salt in the wood ash will kill bothersome pests like snails <sup>[4]</sup>, slugs <sup>[5]</sup> and some kinds of soft bodied invertebrates. To use wood ash for pest control, sprinkle it around the base of plants being attacked by soft bodied pests. If the ash gets wet, refresh the wood ashes as the water will leach away the salt that makes wood ashes an effective pest control.

Another use for ashes in the garden is to change the pH of the soil. Wood ashes will raise the pH and lower the acid <sup>[6]</sup> in soil. Because of this, you should also be careful not to use wood ashes as fertilizer on acid loving plants like azaleas <sup>[7]</sup>, gardenias <sup>[8]</sup> and blueberries <sup>[9]</sup>.

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URL to article: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/using-wood-ashes.htm>

URLs in this post:

[1] composting ashes is a good idea: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/composting/ingredients/composting-ashes.htm>

[2] lime: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/adding-lime-to-soil.htm>

[3] potassium: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/plants-potassium.htm>

[4] snails: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/insects/organic-snail-control.htm>

[5] slugs: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/insects/kill-garden-slugs.htm>

[6] raise the pH and lower the acid: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/lower-acid-soil.htm>

[7] azaleas: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/shrubs/azalea/azaleas-noteworthy-shrubs-for-any-garden.htm>

[8] gardenias: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/gardenia/gardenia-plant.htm>

[9] blueberries: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/blueberries/growing-blueberry.htm>