

Spotlight Stories

With a department as large as Facilities Services, there's always something to learn about the work we accomplish that keeps campus running. For this issue of Just The FACs, student assistant Ella Stewart shares a few insights on campus landscape and sustainability practices so we can spread the word in support of the incredible work our team does daily.

Coffee: Good for Plants/Bad for Plumbing



You've probably heard "coffee is good for plants" for years; but is it actually?

The Landscape unit is here to set the record straight. Yes, it can be!

Coffee contains nitrogen, potassium, magnesium and calcium which are all beneficial for plant growth and vigor. The best way to integrate coffee into plants is in liquid form if it's diluted to look like a weak tea or straight coffee grounds are also good when incorporated into compost or soil mix.

Landscape recommends adding coffee to plants no more than once per month as it can make the soil too acidic if overused. Signs of acidic soil include stunted plant growth and yellowing/browning of leaves.

Although coffee is good for most plants like hydrangeas, rhododendrons, azaleas, blueberries, etc., it's not for all. Specifically, asparagus, brussels sprouts, garlic and most common houseplants prefer a higher pH, resulting in low acidity.

Most importantly, make sure to never let coffee grounds get into the plumbing.

According to O'Connor Plumbing, sending coffee grounds down the drain can cause serious problems for the pipes. Over time, the grounds create build-up in the pipes which can be especially problematic for garbage disposals. The result is a blockage that is stinky, messy, and expensive.

Next time you make a pot of coffee, share the grounds with a plant or two rather than pouring down the drain!