

An idiom is an expression with a figurative meaning that nearly always differs from its literal meaning. I think most people would agree that we all hear and use idioms daily. How idioms got started **beats me**, but they seem to be everywhere. Most of us use idioms in our everyday conversation, and we often witness them being used daily in the media. I am of the opinion that we use idioms to enhance our messages to one another while at the same time attempting to create interest. For example, note the idiom **he bought the farm**. Everyone knows that particular idiom has nothing to do with purchasing real estate, but rather it refers to dying. Let's face it; the English language can be very confusing.

Did you know many idioms are associated with gardening? Just for fun, today I would like to share a few with you.

We all know that trees, shrubs and flowers produce and grow from buds. Using idioms, people can also bud. If an individual shows talent in drawing, we might use the idiom that he or she is a **budding artist**. In this case, the word budding, like with trees, shrubs and flowers, describes something that is beginning to develop and/or grow. Even then, we know there are literally no buds on humans. Interestingly, using that same word bud in the idiom **nip it in the bud** means to prevent something from developing or growing. We all know it is good to nip small problems in the bud before they turn into big problems.

I have always thought the idiom **smelling like a rose** is rather interesting. The sweet, heavenly scent of a rose is one major reason why most gardeners grow roses. However, the figurative translation to this idiom has nothing to do with fragrance. If someone comes up **smelling like a rose**, he or she more than likely emerged from a situation with his or her reputation undamaged.

How about the expression **cannot see the forest for the trees**? In all reality, this saying has nothing to do with forests or trees. If someone cannot see the forest for the trees, he or she is likely too focused on a specific detail to see the entire picture.

Then there is the classic idiom **it's raining cats and dogs**! Those familiar with this expression realize that it is literally impossible for it to rain

cats and dogs. Yet figuratively, it means a heavy rainstorm. While checking this one out, I discovered that the origin of this idiom likely dates back to the seventeenth century when a heavy downpour washed dead animals out into the street.

Finally, consider the idiom he gave a **flowery speech**! One might think this particular idiom appropriately fits today's column. If someone gives a flowery speech or writes a flowery column, it actually has nothing to do with flowers. It most likely would be interpreted as a speech or a column that contains all kinds of lovely words but, in reality, one that truly lacks any substance!

I need to get serious, **get back to the drawing board**, and **keep my shoulder to the wheel**. After all, **life is not a bowl of cherries**, and **money doesn't grow on trees**.

In closing, I often tell people that I sincerely enjoy gardening. When asked why, I usually respond by saying gardening allows me to **enjoy the fruits of my labor**. I can assure you, this is one idiom that not only translates figuratively but also literally— both of which are true.