Letter to the Editor

A Comment on *Odd Way to Say Spodosol*
by D.S. Fanning

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The comments on the origin of the Greek word *spodos* (σπόδος) in Dr. Fanning's article were very interesting (Fanning, 1993). But is there really a *right* or a wrong way of pronouncing Spodosol, or Spohdohsohl (my pronunciation)? The Greek word σπόδος means wood ashes or embers, generally ashes (Liddel and Scott, 1940), or, via Latin, dross, slag, or scoria (Lewis and Short, 1879).

Assuming that Spodosol is a word in the English language, is there a rule that all syllables should be pronounced as they are in the language of origin? We don't pronounce *chaparral*, for example, as it is pronounced in the Spanish language. In fact, there is no sound in the English language corresponding to the double r, or *rr*, of Spanish. As a second example, I never hear any geologist or soil scientist pronouncing *bolson* with the accent on the last syllable as it is pronounced in Spanish (Bates and Jackson, 1980).

My point is that syllables or words of the English language need not be pronounced as they are in the language of origin. Fortunately, we have given up trying to distort our mouths and tongues to pronounce the common vowel in *goethite* and in *loess* as it would be pronounced in the German language.

References


1 Consulting Soil Scientist, 1714 Kasba St., Concord, CA 94518.