

ask

the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs



Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

Question of the Week: *Last fall my yard was a mass of mole tunnels, how do I get rid of the moles? Is there a reasonably priced cure? Godfrey, Waterford*

Answer: In the next few months, you'll be seeing those moles again. Over the winter, moles do not die or even hibernate; they just burrow deeper and wait for the ground to thaw. So if you had mole issues last year, there is a high probability they will be back this year. Moles mate in February and March and generally have one litter of young 6 weeks later. A month or so after birth, the newborn moles head out to their new territory. So by the time mid-May to June rolls around, you will have the older mature moles digging their tunnels looking for food, joined by a new group of young ones. Moles are solitary animals so they will all spread out and each will have its own territory.



Moles primarily eat earthworms which they go after by digging tunnels deeper when the soil is dry and shallower when the soil is wet and soft. You will not see moles in hard, dried-out soil. Moles are called "insectivores" because they belong to a group of mammals that eat earthworms and insects; they are not rodents.

Moles are strong, amazing creatures with voracious appetites. They can tunnel up to 18ft in an hour and travel (either forward or backward) 80ft a minute through existing tunnels. They eat over half of their body weight each day and in Connecticut they can get to be up to 7 inches long.

Research and many experts agree that the only effective way to deal with moles is to trap them - using traps set in or on the ground that pierce the mole's body when the trap is triggered. Virtually all other methods are a waste of your money. Things that just don't work are sonic and electronic devices, ground vibration machines, crushed glass, castor oil, razor blades and chewing gum. There are toxic baits and poisons in various forms available that I don't like because they are non-selective and very risky because they kill cats, dogs and other animals as well. Setting up and using the traps is not difficult and there are dozens of models readily available on Amazon.com and locally that range in price from about \$10 to \$40. You are fighting a war of attrition and now is the time to get prepared, because once the ground completely thaws, you'll start to see those tunnels again!

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Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 19 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects..

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