



ask

Celebrating 21 Years!
the landscape professional
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs
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Question this Week: Hi Linda – last week you wrote about “voles”.
How are they different from “moles” ...Ruby

Linda's Answer:

“Voles” and “moles” are very different animals. As you remember from last week's article, voles are rodents that are in the same family as rats and mice and they are “herbivores” - they eat plants. Moles, on the other hand, are not rodents; they are in another group of mammals called “insectivores”. Mole's primary food is earthworms and insects. When the soil is dry, moles dig tunnels deeply to get to the worms and when the soil is moist, they can get their food close to the surface.



This is a “vole”

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.

Moles do not die or even hibernate in the winter; 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 are 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 each have their own territory.



This is a “mole”

So how do you combat them? Research and many experts agree that the only effective way to deal with moles is to kill them with sharp, spear-like 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. There are sonic and electronic devices, ground vibration machines and the like on the market as well as a host of homegrown recipes like crushed glass, castor oil, razor blades and chewing gum that just do not work. There are even toxic baits and poisons in various forms that are non-selective and very risky- they kill cats, dogs and other animals too. Setting up and using the traps requires some practice and patience, but there are number of models readily available with complete instructions. You are fighting a war of attrition so when you see the tunnels get some mole traps in place!!

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 21 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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