

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: *I have two lawn questions: 1) What is the proper height to mow my lawn and 2) can I do anything about the dead spots in my grass where my dog urinates?*



Grass cut at proper height



Grass Torn by Dull Blade



The most important thing you can do to your property is to cut your grass correctly. Commonly, homeowners mistakenly cut their lawn too short and bag their clippings. Grass should be cut at 3 1/2" and no more than 1/3 of the grass blades should be removed during each cutting.

Grass that is cut too short stresses the grass plants which will then take it days to recover and it also encourages weed growth. When grass is left longer, sunlight is blocked and the shade inhibits weed growth as well as keeps the soil temperatures lower. Studies have shown that grass mowed short will also have shallow root systems which weakens the grass plants and makes them very susceptible to stress and dying during the hot summer months.

It is also important that your mower have a sharp blade so the grass is sheared and not torn. The ragged torn edge will cause the tip of the grass blade to turn brown and create a site for disease to enter the grass.

You should sharpen your mower blade at least once in the spring, and much more often if you use it frequently. Today, there are mulching mowers on the market which are designed to cut and re-cut the grass so that fine pieces can filter onto and decompose into the soil. Grass returned to the soil does not increase thatch in the lawn.

Your dog question is a good one.

Dog urine is loaded with nitrogen which actually over-fertilizes and burns your lawn just like what happens if you put too much fertilizer down. An effective thing to do is to use your hose and put lots of clean water on the spot right away which dilutes the effect of the urine and your grass will be fine.

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Linda K. Lillie is the President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc, the premier landscape tree care & lawn care company in SE Connecticut for the last 17 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation work.

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