

# 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](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or  
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### Question of the Week: Weeds are growing like crazy in my lawn, what can I do?

This summer so far has been very wet and both the grass and weeds have thrived. When you have lots of lawn weeds that normally is a sign that not enough "good" grass is growing and the weeds have moved in. There are a few different things that could be going on. Last week I addressed pH issues; today I'll talk about soil health.

#### #2 Poor Soil Health Promotes Weed Growth-

When it comes to healthy lawns and strong grass plants, it's all about what you don't see that matters the most. Healthy soil with proper nutrients, full of microbial and earthworm activity is the key to success. An enormous

problem in using chemicals to fertilize and treat your lawn is that they actually "kill" your soil and the micro-organisms and earthworms growing in it. (If you treat chemically, dig a hole and look for the worms; they're not there anymore) That is why after long-term applications of lawn chemicals you observe poorer and poorer looking lawns. These lawns can be saved, but it requires a concerted effort focused on soil health. Sprigs & Twigs has designed and administers a full Organic Lawn Care Program that I've described in this space previously. In addition to measuring pH that I wrote about last week, we also test for % organic content in the soil. Microorganisms and earthworms feast on organic material in the soil and grass plants feast on earthworm deposits and microorganism activity. Organic material also holds moisture in the soil. If your % organic content is too low, compost top dressing can be used to bolster it. Leaving your mulched-up grass clippings on your lawn is a big help in adding organic content. Sprigs & Twigs provides a testing and analysis service for a nominal charge; we would be happy to visit your property, test your soil, provide you with the analytical results from a national laboratory, a written evaluation and recommendations to correct % organic content (and other things) that might be needed. Our turnaround time is about one week from when you authorize the work.

Lawns need key essential ingredients like nitrogen as well as many other trace ingredients to flourish. Sprigs & Twigs only uses slow release-organic fertilizers. Organic fertilizers provide many trace elements, major nutrients, as well as organic matter. On the other hand, chemical fertilizers are almost exclusively limited to high amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium which causes rapid (unhealthy) growth of your grass, makes your lawn susceptible to disease and creates an imbalanced environment in your lawn. Excessive nitrogen and phosphorus leaches away and eventually pollutes Long Island Sound. The nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) fertilizers such as 10-10-10 (and higher) that you find in the garden centers and big box stores are toxic to soil life, pollute the water, and waste your money in the long run. Look for the slow release organics instead.



# Sprigs & Twigs

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100% Organic  
Weed Killer  
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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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