

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 week's question about oak leaves got me wondering about black walnut trees and leaves. There is a black walnut tree at my church and the nearby garden is struggling. Is the black walnut tree toxic?*

Answer: That is a great question. Black walnut trees have been written about for thousands of years. The Greeks and Romans used the fruit to treat intestinal ailments, and other cultures throughout time have relied on black walnuts to build physical strength, treat skin diseases and even treat dog and scorpion bites. Today, the fine-grained, very hard wood is used in high-quality woodworking and the nuts are desirable for their antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids.



On the flip side, the toxic effects of walnut trees have been observed since Roman times when it was believed they were toxic to all plants. While that has proven not to be completely true, walnut trees are detrimental to many plants and landscapes. Knowledgeable landscapers know that it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to grow plants under or near black walnuts. Research from the mid-1800's into the early 20th century identified the cause of the toxicity as a chemical called "juglone" that is produced by the walnut tree. Juglone is present in all parts of a black walnut tree including the bark, leaves and especially the roots. The black walnut tree can grow to be 100 feet tall and the zone of toxicity can extend around the tree to a radius of 80 feet, expanding as the tree grows each year. Plants that are susceptible to juglone will show signs of yellowing, wilting leaves and will eventually die. There are a number of plants and trees that are resistant to juglone including some species of birch, beech and maple. If you have a black walnut tree, it would be best to segregate the leaves and do not use them to mulch your garden plants or add to your lawn as organic matter. Studies have shown that the toxic effect of walnut leaves can last a month or even longer if they are composted.



I have decided to expand "Ask The Landscape Professional" by offering periodic classroom lectures on a variety of topics.

The sessions will be open to the public and will be held in our Gales Ferry office at 41 Kings Highway, Suite 207. Space is limited and you need to call the office (860-235-0752) to make a reservation.

The first lecture will be "Top Ten Low Maintenance Garden Habits," which will be held on January 21 from 3:00-4:00pm. I look forward to meeting you there!

Sprigs & Twigs is booking 2014-2015 Snow Removal services now and scheduling appointments for 2015 Garden Design, Spring Leaf Clean-ups, Landscape Maintenance, Organic Lawn Care, Mowing and Trimming Services, Stonework and Custom Carpentry Services. Go to www.SprigsandTwigs.net for details. **Call us anytime to discuss your landscape needs and to meet with our staff.**

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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 19 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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