

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: *What can I do to get rid of winter moths? They get in my house, climb on my siding and even seem to survive through the winter. Help!* Gerald N - Groton

Answer: Winter Moth, *Operopthera brumata*, is an invasive insect pest prevalent throughout Europe that first showed up in Nova Scotia after World War II. Since then, they have emerged in western Canada, Oregon and the state of Washington. Over the last ten to fifteen years, parts of eastern New England have become infested with them. The hardest hit areas are Massachusetts east of Route 495, especially Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. They have also been observed in Rhode Island, southeastern New Hampshire, Maine and Southeastern Connecticut.



Male Winter Moth

Photo Courtesy of Maine Forest Service

The moth, which is the adult stage of the Winter Moth, first shows up around Thanksgiving and will be seen into January if the temperatures remain above freezing. The male Winter Moth has wings and will be often seen in large numbers flying around outside lights. The female Winter Moth has stubby wings and cannot fly. Once the eggs are laid, both male and female moths die but the eggs survive the winter. Each female lays 150 eggs, often in the bark of trees. In April when the temperature averages around 55 degrees, the eggs hatch into caterpillars that eventually grow



Winter Moth Caterpillar Damage

Photo Courtesy of Maine Forest Service

to about an inch long. The caterpillars can show up in incredible numbers. The caterpillars feed on buds of leaves and flowers as well as on developed leaves of apple trees, crabapples, beech, cherries, blueberries, oaks, maples and a wide range of other trees and plants. After several years of complete defoliation, trees are seriously stressed to the point they can eventually die. The caterpillars feed until June and then drop to the ground and pupate below ground level only to emerge as moths around Thanksgiving to start the cycle over again.

Help is already on the way in the form of a small fly called *Cyzenis albicans*, which has shown to be an effective biological control of Winter Moths in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. This fly is a parasite that infests the Winter Moth by laying its eggs on leaves eaten by the Winter Moth caterpillars. The fly eggs hatch inside the caterpillar. This fly is a specific control for the Winter

Moth; when the Winter Moth disappears, so does the *Cyzenis albicans* fly. This control method has been demonstrated in Nova Scotia and in the Pacific Northwest and is being led locally by UMASS Amherst. It is expected within a decade that the Winter Moth will be no more of a nuisance than the Gypsy Moth.

"Ask the Landscape Professional" Now Hosting Lectures

"Ask The Landscape Professional" is 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.

Lecture 2 - "Unusual Native Perennial Plants"

February 3 from 3:00-4:00 (Space is Available)

Lecture #3 - "Surprising Native Shrubs and Trees"

February 10 from 3:00-4:00. (Space is Available)



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, Garden Spruce-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.**

Sprigs & Twigs is a highly regarded, professional, full service, national award winning Landscape Design, Installation, Maintenance, Tree Care and Lawn Care Company. We are completely organic. Visit our website www.sprigsandtwigs.net or call us for more information.

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Sprigs & Twigs



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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