

# 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 Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

**Question of the Week:** *The snow is covering most of our plants-particularly the short hellebore and azaleas. Will this cause any harm? Kent H. – Gales Ferry*

**Answer:** Actually, for the most part, snow is good for your garden plants, but there are still a few things you should do. Most evergreens and shrubs have adapted to normal snow loads, but after very wet or heavy storms, they can use your help. Brush snow from evergreens and shrubs as soon as you can. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion. Serious damage can be caused by heavy snow or ice accumulating on the branches. Be careful of where you direct the snow from your snow blower. Also remember that heavy snow accumulations can put significant loads on roofs of buildings and garages.

You should avoid sodium chloride (rock salt) to de-ice your walkways and driveway. While any de-icing agent isn't good for your lawns, plants or shrubs, sodium chloride is the worst. Consider using coarse sand or non-sodium de-icing agents such as calcium chloride, potassium chloride or magnesium chloride. Use as little de-icing agent as you can to get the job done. As we get closer to spring and plants start to come out of dormancy, try to avoid or significantly minimize the amount of de-icing agent that you use. This is the time that the most plant damage can occur.

Even though they look dead in the winter, most perennials are not; they are just dormant. A blanket of snow actually helps perennials including your hellebore survive the winter. Even though the wind above a snow layer may be howling at temperatures well below freezing, the temperature at the soil surface can be at or just above freezing. At those temperatures, soil microbial activity can go on which helps the plants start growing when the temperature goes back up. Snow also provides protection for small mammals and birds that can tunnel into the snow for protection. If there is no snow cover, avoid heavy traffic on your dormant lawn. The dry grass can be easily broken and the crown of the grass plant may be damaged or killed.

If you need professional help this winter, Sprigs & Twigs has a bucket truck and crews that can get snow off your roof and take care of storm damage to your trees.



## "Ask the Landscape Professional" Now Hosting Lectures



I look forward to meeting you there!

The sessions 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 #4 – "Pollinator-Friendly Landscapes"**  
**February 24 from 3:00-4:00. (A Few Seats Available)**

**Lecture #5 – "Pruning Technique Tools & Care"**  
**March 10 from 3:00-4:00. (Seats are Available)**

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](http://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](http://www.sprigsandtwigs.net) or call us for more information.

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REMOVAL**

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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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