

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 am sick of all the cold and snow. Please cheer me up!

Answer: Hang in there. In a few weeks the crocuses will be poking above the snow and the warm weather won't be far behind. Crocuses are fascinating plants that are members of the iris family and bloom in a range of colors: yellow, white, blue, violet and striped. Crocuses are found around the world, and over 80 varieties are known.

While we are mostly familiar with the crocus varieties that bloom in the late winter and in spring, one particularly fascinating variety, the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*), blooms in the fall. All crocus flowers have three red stigmas which are also called "threads".

The saffron crocus has been around for over 3000 years and was bred over the centuries to have especially long threads, which when picked and dried are used to make the saffron spice known around the world.



Saffron crocus threads after harvesting

Because it is so strong, only a few threads are needed to flavor food. Saffron has also been used for dyes, in medicine and in perfumes. After Buddha died in 483 B.C., Buddhist priests used saffron colored robes as their official color which persists to this day. Over 95% of the world's supply of saffron comes from Iran where the threads are hand-picked from crocus flowers in the early morning each fall. It takes about 80,000 crocus flowers to produce 1 lb of saffron. It is estimated that worldwide production of saffron is 600,000 lbs., which means that about 50 million crocuses contributed their stigmas! That's a lot of hand-picking! Not surprisingly, saffron is the most expensive spice in the world, retailing at over \$5,000 per oz!



Spring crocuses



Saffron crocus showing three long red stigmas ("threads").

"Ask the Landscape Professional" Now Hosting Lectures

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

Other lectures to be announced.



I look forward to meeting you there!

Sprigs & Twigs is booking 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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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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