



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
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Question of the Week: *Now that the snow has melted, I see that my ever-green Daphne has been crushed by the load of the snow. What can I do to save it?*

Answer: Do not despair, your Daphne will regrow and fill in, but first the broken branches need to be removed. In about a month, when you see new growth starting, prune off the broken branch about a ½ inch below the break. Make sure you make a slight diagonal cut to allow rain water to shed off properly. Check all the other branches carefully, because sometimes branches look fine until you make a close inspection. The breaks usually occur closer to the main stem on a Daphne because of the heavy weight of the snow at the end of the branches.

This has been a particularly bad winter with all of the snow on shrubs and trees. As the weather gets warmer, shrub and tree damage will start to become more obvious and broken branches and yellowed or brown evergreen needles will be evident. Wait until late April or May when the new growth is starting. Test to see if the branch is dead by scraping your fingernail on the stem or bark to see if there is green, live tissue underneath. If so, it's still living and may recover. If the branch is definitely dead, prune it back to ½" above a live bud or to within ½" of a major branch. Remember the diagonal cut to shed rain water. Most shrubs like Rhododendron, Azalea, Yew, Andromeda, Forsythia and Lilac that have been damaged can be pruned and will re-sprout new branches at the site of the pruning cut or at the base of the plant. However, some plants will not re-sprout replacement branches at the location of the damage, such as Red Cedar, Arborvitae, Pine, Spruce, Fir, Junipers and large deciduous trees. Once these plants are damaged, they will not "fill-in" with new growth. Both trees and shrubs naturally repair damage from pruning cuts or wounds by healing over the cuts with special wound-healing cells that close-up the wound. Never apply any wound paint or any other sealant because they suffocate and kill the exposed tissue, creating an entrance for disease and insects.

When it comes to repairing damaged trees, because of the danger involved, it is always best left to professional arborists with the proper equipment and training. Knowing where and how to prune trees is critical; unnecessary damage can be done to trees, people and property by inexperienced people with chainsaws. This is also a good time of year to do maintenance pruning on your trees. As deciduous trees leaf out and grow larger, they need to be pruned to allow airflow through them; otherwise they form a windbreak which can cause great damage to the tree or surrounding property in high winds. You will be very happy when a hurricane comes along and the winds go right through the tree and the leaves don't act like a sail!

Sprigs & Twigs has a staff of trained, expert shrub and tree pruners as well as two state licensed arborists. Call us if we can be of any service.



**"Ask The Landscape Professional" Lectures
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(See the "Learn" tab)**

Sprigs & Twigs is now scheduling appointments for 2015 Garden Design, Spring Leaf Clean-ups, Garden Spruce-ups, Landscape Maintenance, Tree Care Services, Organic Lawn Care, Mowing and Trimming Services, Custom 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 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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