



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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Reader Comment of the Week: *I faithfully read "Ask The Landscape Professional" every week and I want to thank you for taking the time to write it. I am excited and so happy to be working in my garden again with all of this new-found knowledge...Amy*

Answer: You are very welcome. You may be amazed to find out that there is actually a scientific explanation for why you are especially happy when you work outside in the garden! Back in 2008, researchers in UK were studying treatments for lung cancer and discovered when lung cancer patients were injected with a dead version of a common harmless bacterium, not only were their cancer symptoms reduced, their general mood improved and their stress levels and anxiety went down. More recent studies in 2010 concluded that this same bacterium caused improvement in learning ability in laboratory animals. The bacterium being studied is *Mycobacterium vaccae*, which is commonly found in soil. By just walking through your garden or digging in the dirt, you naturally breathe in this harmless bacterium and your body produces increased levels of serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter associated with the feelings of happiness. Some experiments on animals have shown that the feeling of happiness can last as long as three weeks.



All of us have felt true happiness when we are outside in our gardens. Who knew that there was scientific research to back up those feelings of joy! So there you have it, playing in the dirt exposes you to Mother Nature's own antidepressant that can make you smarter too! Time to go back outside and get those hands dirty!!

"Ask The Landscape Professional" articles are all on our website; if you missed any, go to www.SprigsandTwigs.net

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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