



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: *My boxwoods look terrible with spots all over them and some of the leaves are brown and falling off. What's going on with them and what can I do?*

Answer: Judging from the picture you sent, you have a boxwood disease called "Boxwood Blight". I have observed this all over our area this year. Boxwood Blight is a relatively new disease that was first noticed in Connecticut in 2011. It is caused by a fungus called *Cylindrocladium buxicola* and is causing major problems across the US. You will first notice brown spots on the leaves, which turn completely brown and fairly quickly drop off. The fungus remains on the dead boxwood leaves that land on the ground and infects the soil. Once the fungus is in the soil, it will remain there for years and will re-infect any new boxwood that you plant. All boxwoods are susceptible to the disease and if you have them in your landscape, it's only a matter of time before yours become infected. If your neighbor has Boxwood Blight, you will get it too. The fungus spores are spread by the wind, animals, birds, contaminated tools and rain or splashing water from a sprinkler. The fungus spreads quickly in humid conditions and when the boxwood leaves are wet the fungus will infect the plant.



So what can you do? Although the blight is being actively researched, there are no treatments available that work. Once you see it, you need to remove the boxwood completely, pick up all the leaves, put it in a plastic bag and dispose of it by incineration. Do not take it to the town dump. Until a cure is found, do not buy or plant any variety of boxwood in your garden.

When I design gardens, I do not use boxwoods for a number of reasons. They are a high maintenance plant and require frequent specialized pruning. Although you see landscape companies shearing boxwoods with power pruners all the time, that technique will damage and eventually kill the plant. There is a special method of hand-pruning that boxwoods require.

There are a number of wonderful plants available that can replace boxwoods. If you need help with replacement plantings, safe removal and disposal or boxwood pruning, give us a call, we'd be happy to help.

"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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