



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: *Help! My family cemetery plot lies under a large oak tree. The grounds beneath it are full of weeds. Can you tell us the steps to restore a healthy grass at this plot? – Janet*

Answer: Unfortunately, healthy grass will not grow under an oak tree. The ground is too dry because the oak's roots are competing for the moisture in the soil (the tree will win), and it's too shady for grass to grow. Grass needs moisture and sun to thrive and under an oak tree it gets neither. Your best bet is to plant dry shade loving ground cover that will flourish under the oak tree. Some choices would be: Barrenwort (Epimedium), Liriope, Bugle Weed (Ajuga 'Chocolate Chip' or 'Burgundy Glow'), Dead Nettle (Lamium), Geranium macrorrhizum (perennial Geranium, not the annual Geranium), Vinca, Christmas Fern, or Lily of the Valley. All of these plants are spreaders to some degree. Some take longer to fill in an area than others. Pull out all of the existing weeds, by the roots, before planting. It would be best to amend the soil with some moisture-holding compost and leaf litter before planting and then mulch around the plants to hold in the moisture and keep the weeds down. The new plants would have to be watered deeply a couple of times per week during the growing season until they get established, but any one of these plants would love it under the oak.



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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..

860-235-0752

CT HIC #577341

