



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: *When I buy plants at the nursery and take them home and plant them, they never seem to do well where I put them. I'm tired of spending money without real success. Can you help me?*

Linda's Answer: Before you buy plants at the nursery, you need to determine the characteristics of your planting site. Then you need to choose the right plant for the right place. Just because you have a favorite plant, it doesn't mean that it will do well where you want to plant it. Plants you buy have tags with information about that particular plant: 1) moisture requirements, 2) light requirements, 3) ultimate size, and 4) hardiness zone.

Moisture: The plant tag will note "prefers dry" or "prefers moist" soil. If your environment doesn't match with what the plant needs, it will not be successful.

Light: If the tag says "Full Sun" you will need 6 hours or more of full sunlight for the plant to thrive. If the tag says "Partial Sun," the plant will need 4 to 6 hours of sun; "Partial Shade" means 2 to 4 hours of sunlight and "Full Shade" means less than 2 hours of sunlight.

Full Grown Size of Plant: If the tag says a tree will get 30ft wide, believe it and plant it 15ft away from structures or other trees. The same goes for perennials and shrubs - believe what the tag says. Huge amounts of money are wasted by planting plants way too close together or up against houses.

Hardiness Zone: The US Department of Agriculture has developed a Plant Hardiness Map; the current version was issued in 2012. This is used as a standard to rate a plant's hardiness for a particular region and is based on the average minimum winter temperature. Depending on where you live in this area, you are in Hardiness Zone 6a, 6b or 7a. When you look at a plant tag in a local nursery, it will have the plant's hardiness zone rating which will be appropriate for this area. If you buy plants online, be certain to check their hardiness zone rating.

Getting the right plant in the right place will encourage a plant to thrive, develop a healthy root system and be resistant to diseases and pests. The right plant in the right place will not need continual pruning to keep it in a tight space. The short answer to your question is to read those plant tags and believe them!

"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, Landscape Maintenance, Tree Care Services, 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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