



# ask the landscape professional

## Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

### Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: [info@sprigsandtwigs.net](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or  
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**Question of the Week:** *I am highly allergic to pollen and every fall my allergies go crazy. I always thought I was allergic to both Golden Rod and Ragweed, but my neighbor says not so. Are they different?*

**Linda's Answer:** Every year in late August through October, hay fever sufferers everywhere have sneezing attacks caused by pollen from Ragweed. Many people often confuse Ragweed and Golden Rod and blame both for their allergic reactions. Ragweed is the culprit and not Goldenrod. Even though they both bloom at roughly the same time, they are completely different plants and look quite different. To start, Golden Rod is a perennial and Ragweed is an annual. Their stems and leaves are dramatically different - Golden Rod has a single stem with some branches at the top, whereas Ragweed has many branches from the bottom of the plant all the way to the top. Goldenrod has single leaves and Ragweed has lobed or dissected leaves. Golden Rod flowers are bright yellow and pretty and Ragweed flowers are boring and non-descript (see pictures in this article). The biggest difference between the two and most important to allergy sufferers is the way they pollinate. Golden Rod is colorful and attractive and has heavy, sticky pollen, which is well adapted to insect pollinators, whereas Ragweed has light, wind-blown pollen. In fact, Ragweed pollen can travel hundreds of miles in the air.

Golden Rod is a wonderful native plant that has several dozen species and is not responsible for any seasonal allergies. If you have Ragweed on your property and suffer from it, remove it, but plant and enjoy the beautiful Goldenrod in your gardens.

*Did you miss an "Ask the Landscape Professional" article? They are all available on our website.*

*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..*



Golden Rod



Ragweed

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