



ask the landscape professional

>Welcome to my weekly series!

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Question of the Week: *I have a question for you about a maple tree in our yard. It's about 30-35 years old and for the last few years it has been dropping leaves. The leaves are large and they dry up on the branches and fall onto the yard. It seems like its shedding leaves for some reason. The remainder of the tree is full and looks healthy but I'm wondering why some leaves die and fall at this time of year. – Linda, Old Lyme*

Linda's Answer: What you are seeing is the tree's normal response to drought conditions.

Trees (and all plants for that matter) take in a phenomenal amount of water through their root systems, use a small amount of it in the process of photosynthesis and then lose 90% of it through their leaves in a process called transpiration.

Some trees in full sun can transpire over 700 gallons of water each day! Even a single corn plant transpires over 50 gallons of water in one growing season! When the tree (or plant) starts losing more water than it's taking in, it will drop some of its leaves to help regulate its water balance. It sounds like your Maple is stressed and needs water; if your tree is a Red Maple, it is definitely stressed for water. Red Maples are naturally found in lowlands and near rivers and ponds. I have been seeing a lot of stressed trees lately, especially Maples. I have a Heritage River Birch in my yard and it looks like fall underneath the tree because it has dropped so many leaves. Allow your hose to just seep water at the base of the tree over several hours for several days a week until we start to receive a consistent natural rain and things should be fine.

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.



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