Che landscape professional Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

<u>Question #1 this Week:</u> This flowering plant has continued to overtake my lawn. How do I remove it? It has bulbs on the bottom so you actually have to dig them out which is impossible to do with so many. Thank you. - Dennis

Linda's Answer: The plant in your photo is a species of violet (viola), one of hundreds of species worldwide. Your picture shows wild violets, but you also see violets commonly in landscape plantings, e.g., Pansies and Johnny Jump Ups. The violet is actually the state flower of Rhode Island and three other states (New Jersey, Wisconsin and Illinois).

Getting rid of violets that have encroached into your lawn can be a major task, depending on the size of the area affected. The most earth-friendly way to remove them from your lawn is to dig them out as you are doing.

Violets are extremely resistant to chemical herbicides because herbicides are unable to penetrate the waxy coating on their leaves; in addition, those herbicides are incredibly toxic and dangerous to you and the environment.

If hand-digging is impractical because of the area, a machine can be brought in to remove the top 3-4" of soil that includes the violets. New soil can be put down and the lawn seeded or sodded, but that can be an expensive proposition. Violets like



moist, part to full shade, acidic soil. You can consider tree pruning to allow more light and adding lime to increase the soil pH. A word of warning, never add lime without first doing a soil test first to determine how much (or if) lime is needed.

As with other unwanted weeds and plants in your lawn, the best method of control is to establish a strong healthy lawn that crowds out the undesirables. As I mentioned several weeks ago, avoiding scalping or cutting your grass too short (3 ½" or longer is best).

My best advice is to leave them alone and learn to love them. They are pretty, feed the bees and butterflies and are very hearty.

If you need assistance with tree pruning, a soil test or any other matter involving your landscape, feel free to contact us.

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..

Sprigs & Twigs is now scheduling appointments for 2016 Garden Design, Landscape Maintenance, Tree Care Services, Custom Stonework and Custom Carpentry Services. Visit our web site for details. Call us anytime to discuss your landscape needs and to meet with our staff.

