



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

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Question #1 this Week: *My daughter bought me an 'Endless Summer' Hydrangea for Mother's Day. I planted it in June. Should I cover it for the winter?*

Linda's Answer: Since you have a new, young shrub, I would recommend that you cover it. This type of Hydrangea blooms on year-old growth. This year's new growth is very tender, so you'll want to protect it from the winter winds. For most other plants, covering them is less of a concern. Here are a few questions to consider.



- Is the plant hardy for your zone? If you are dealing with a native plant that is adapted to this zone then there should be no need to cover it. If your plant is on the edge of its hardiness zone, or if it is considered a "tender perennial" for this zone, then I would cover it. For shrubs, try loosely wrapping them in a blanket of burlap. Tie the burlap all together with some twine to keep it from falling off during the winter. For perennials, cover the roots or crown of the plant with a thick layer of leaf litter and/or pine boughs.
- Is your plant in a place where it could be damaged by snow from the roof or shoveling off the porch or walkway? If so, I would recommend covering it with something sturdy. Try making a "teepee" with plywood. Place the teepee over the plant(s) so the snow impact is absorbed by the plywood.
- Do you have new garden beds or new plants that were added late in the season? These plants, regardless if they are woody or herbaceous, should get some extra protection from the cold. It is a good idea to cover them for the first season or two, until they've matured a bit more. If you mulched your beds in the fall, that should provide good insulation for the new roots. Otherwise, a thick layer of leaf litter and/or pine boughs will do the trick. With new shrubs, a covering of burlap will be sufficient.

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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