



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: *I have a snake plant that was my grandmother's, my mom's, and now mine. It's at least 40 years old and I've had it for 6 years now but in the past few months have noticed most of the leaves are bent in half or completely wilted. I know very little about house plants but would desperately like to save this plant! Do you have any suggestions? Thank you so much! – Terry*

Linda's Answer: Thank you for your question on a popular houseplant, snake plant or *Sansevieria*. "Snake Plant" (also called "Mother-In-Law's Tongue") is a succulent, meaning that this plant stores water in its leaves and rhizomes (a type of thick root). Wilted leaves on snake plants can come from two things: too much water or not enough. You need to check how dry the soil is to help diagnose the problem. Stick your finger down through the soil in the pot. Properly watered snake plants will have dry soil about 2/3 of the way down the pot, but not all the way to the bottom. If the soil is dry all the way to the bottom of the pot, the plant needs more water, but be careful not to overdo it.



If your snake plant is in located full sun, it only needs to be watered about every 3-4 weeks. During the winter months it only needs to be watered every 2 months. When you water it, do not wet the crown of the plant (the base of the plant near the soil where the leaves emerge). Watering this area causes rot which, in turn could cause the leaves to wilt and flop over. It is best to underwater and not overwater this plant and to keep it in a high light window.

Snake plant grows best if its roots are densely matted within the pot with just a little space for further growth. Once its roots look like they are going to crack the pot, then it is time to divide and repot, but use pots that just fit the root system.

Snake plant really does not need to be fertilized, but if you do, fertilize only one time in spring. Good luck!

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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