



# 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](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or

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**Question this Week:** *My daughter lives in North Stonington and two years ago we planted hydrangeas around her house. They did fantastic for the past two years!!! This year she had a new gardener who, while she was gone, cut down her hydrangeas to about 4 or 5 inches from the ground!!! Are they going to come up as well this year??? We do see some green coming out from the growing area, but will they get as big as before? I thought you had to leave the old wood on it until they started sprouting and then you could cut off the old areas. ...Mary*

### Linda's Answer:

Thank you for your important question Mary. More shrubs are damaged each year by improper pruning-using the wrong pruning methods, doing it at the wrong time or using the wrong tools. Your daughter's gardener should have never cut the hydrangeas down to the ground at this time of year. There are different varieties of hydrangeas - some bloom on "new" growth, some bloom on old growth and some bloom on both old and new growth, but unless you know the variety you have, it is virtually impossible to tell the varieties apart. If you have "old growth" hydrangeas (ones that bloom on last year's wood), or if you are not sure what variety you have, only prune them in mid to late summer after they flower and even then, never cut them to the ground. Prune them just below the spent flower. In the spring after they start growing, you can cut off the dead stems. If you are absolutely certain you have "new growth" hydrangeas, you can cut them back to the ground in late winter or early spring, but even then some of this type don't like this kind of pruning so do your research. Some examples of each type: old growth hydrangea- "**Oakleaf**", new growth hydrangeas: "**Smooth**", "**Late Panicle**"; hydrangeas that bloom on both old and new growth: the "**Endless Summer**" series and the "**Let's Dance**" series. If you need help pruning, planting or selecting hydrangeas, Sprigs & Twigs would be happy to help.



"Spent Flowers of Oakleaf Hydrangea- time to prune"

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 20 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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