



# 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**

**Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335**



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### Linda's Comments this Week:

Many of you will remember about a year ago, I wrote about scientific studies that showed that playing with soil in your garden actually made you happier and smarter because of the effects of a harmless bacterium, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, commonly found in soil. If that wasn't good enough, on April 14, 2016, a new study published in Environmental Health Perspectives concluded that green vegetation around your home not only improves your health, but causes you to live longer! The study, funded by Harvard and the National Institute of Health and approved by Brigham and Woman's Hospital in Boston, studied over 100,000 women between 2000 and 2008 across the entire U.S. Their work found a direct connection between planting vegetation around your house (within 800 ft) and improved health covering a wide range of illnesses and conditions. The more green vegetation you have, the better. The exact mechanisms aren't completely understood, but thought to be related to green spaces promoting more outside physical activity, reducing carbon dioxide and noise exposure, enabling more social engagement and improving mental health and well-being. The study found lower rates of cancer, respiratory and kidney-disease related deaths that were independent of race or age. This study and earlier studies by others have shown that "greenness" is linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress.



So, go play in your garden soil, plant things and have fun. You'll be happier, smarter and you'll live longer too. What could be better than that!

*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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