



# 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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**Question this Week:** : As you can see in the enclosed picture, I am finding small mounds of dirt on my lawn continuously. What kind of animal (rodent) could be causing them and what can I do to eliminate it?.... R.J. Niantic

### Linda's Answer:

Actually, R.J., what you are seeing is great news for your lawn! It means you have earthworms that are active in your soil. Earthworms are amazing creatures that take care of some of your backbreaking garden work without you even breaking a sweat! Earthworms feast on bacteria, fungi and algae in addition to lots of other things. In the process of eating, they swallow a certain amount of soil that eventually gets passed out of the earthworm's rectum together with undigested organic material. Worm poop (called "casts") is very high in nutrients which is why gardeners and farmers love earthworms in their soil. In



addition to being fertilizer machines, earthworms tunneling through your soil do a great job aerating and breaking up compacted soil. Most of the time, earthworms deposit their casts underground, but when the weather is cool and wet, you often see their castings on the surface, which is what you see in the picture you sent. Casts are harmless and fertile and can be raked out into your garden or lawn or washed back into your lawn with a hose. While we're on the subject of earthworms, did you know? Earthworms: have five hearts, breathe through their skin, have light receptors that sense light and dark, have a brain and nerves that detect vibration and even some tastes. Who knew?

*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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