



ask

Celebrating 20 Years! the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs
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Question this Week: *I'm wondering what this is. It's nothing I planted, which makes me suspicious, but we have so many glorious trees thanks to the squirrels, thought I'd check before pulling. Thank you! ... Sue*

Linda's Answer:

Hello Sue- what you have is definitely a weed. It is called Japanese Hop Vine (*Humulus japonicas*) a member of the Hemp family. As can be seen in your picture, the leaves have 5 distinct lobes; when you touch them they are rough to the touch. This plant originated in Asia and was imported into this country in the late 1800's for use as an ornamental vine and tonic. Unfortunately, it is very invasive and it has become widespread throughout the northeastern US. Japanese Hop likes fertile soil and sunlight; in the right conditions it can grow rapidly - to 10 feet high and 35 feet wide in a year! If left unchecked, it can form dense mats several feet thick. The good news is that in our region it is an annual (dies every year in the cold weather) but regenerates from seeds it disperses the previous year in the early fall. Seeds can remain viable for up to three years in the soil, so the trick is to pull it when you see it and you'll eventually win the battle. Use black plastic bags for disposal and put out with the trash to go to the incinerator.



Invasive Japanese Hop Vine

Japanese Hop has a famous native cousin, the common hop (*Humulus lupulus*), that you may also encounter. Common hop looks similar to Japanese Hop, except it is generally 3-lobed and it is a non-invasive perennial. The female flower cones, called "hops", have been used in beers for centuries for flavor and preservation.

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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