



ask the landscape professional

Celebrating 20 Years!
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

200th Edition



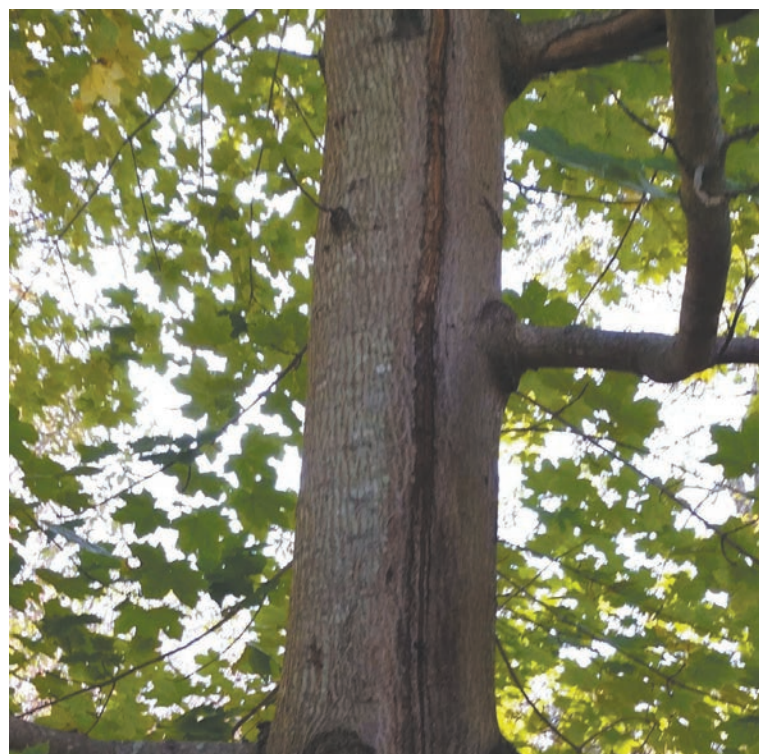
Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs
Best Landscape Company Two Years in a Row
& Best Tree Service!

Question this Week: *What is wrong with my maple tree? Otherwise, it looks healthy and full of leaves, no dying branches. What can I do? Can it be saved? ...Patsy*

Linda's Answer:

Dear Patsy,

That is an interesting question and a great picture. If you hike through the woods, you will often encounter similar looking trees. While I can't be certain without inspecting the tree, it certainly looks like classic lightning strike damage. Because trees are often the highest object in a given area and lightning seeks the path of least resistance to ground, trees often become lightning rods. Varying degrees of damage can occur to the tree depending on the specific tree and weather conditions. If the bark of a tree is wet with rain, and if the tree has a smooth bark like a beech tree, lightning may travel down the outside of the bark without any or much apparent damage. If the tree has high resin content like a pine, a lightning strike may cause the tree to explode because of the intense heat generated inside the tree. The wettest part of the tree and an often observed situation is shown in your picture. The tree's cambium (the outside layer under the bark) contains water and nutrients and is a good pathway for lightning to ground. When lightning goes through that path, the water and sap become superheated and explode the bark off the tree generally in a small channel cut down the tree (as shown in your picture). If the cambium layer gets cut all around the tree, the tree will die. That doesn't seem to be the case looking at your picture, where the damage appears to be up and down. Evidence of the tree healing the wound can also be seen in your picture. What is more uncertain is damage to the root system that is hidden from view. Sometimes it will be very obvious because you'll see cracks in the soil and wilted plants surrounding the tree; other times you'll notice nothing at all. It is safe to say the tree that is struck by lightning is extremely stressed and needs all the nutrients it can get. Water it frequently especially during dry spells to help it's uptake of nutrients from the soil. Deep root fertilization can also help and that's a service Sprigs & Twigs can provide. It is a good sign that you are not noticing any adverse effects so far with no dying branches. The scar on the tree is permanent however. Do not put any paint or covering on the scar because it will encourage insect damage. We would be happy to come over and inspect the tree more closely, give us a call.



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..

Sprigs & Twigs is scheduling appointments for 2017 Garden Design, Landscape Maintenance, Tree Care Services, Custom Stonework, Custom Carpentry Services and Floral & Décor. Visit our web site for details. Call us anytime to discuss your landscape needs and to meet with our staff.



The Landscape Professionals

Sprigs & Twigs is a highly regarded, professional, full service, national award winning company. We are completely organic. Visit our websites or call us anytime.



860-235-0752

www.SprigsandTwigs.net

www.SprigsandTwigsFloral.com